

ACTIVITY REPORT OF SANCHAL FOUNDATION FOR THE YEAR 2001 TO 2002

For the year under review (2001-2002), the Foundation supported two initiatives:

- I. People-Plan Interface in Delhi.
- II. Women's Experience with Sterilisation in West Bengal.

I. People-Plan Interface in Delhi.

This project was taken up by the Hazards Centre of the Foundation, as a continuation of the earlier project on a People's Master Plan for Delhi, with the following objectives:

1. *To undertake relevant research.*
2. *To conduct a mass campaign.*
3. *To support community organisation.*
4. *To influence public policy.*

The project was completed in February 2002 and the major achievements are as follows:

1. A significant expansion of the network of organisations serviced by the Centre to include diverse interest groups such as rag-pickers, auto-rickshaw drivers, and electricity board workers.
2. A growing demand for information and concerted action by all these groups.
3. The initiation of a systematic campaign through community volunteers at the settlement level.
4. Attempts at organised collective interventions at the policy level.

Ten initiatives on community-led research, six participatory projects with other associations, a mobile exhibition, a monthly newspaper, over a dozen other publications, a number of policy papers, several poster exhibitions and theatre training workshops, five interventions in court cases, five seminars with government agencies, advocacy efforts with these agencies, and over a hundred public meetings were organised (by or in association with other groups) as part of the project activities.

The learnings from the project were as follows:

- *Anti-poor measures are increasing across the spectrum, whether it is in terms of evictions, or provision of services, or reduction in employment.*
- *Many NGOs and funding agencies are collaborating in designing and implementing these harsh measures in the name of urban renewal.*
- *As a response to these measures, alliance building is necessary (and possible) with like-minded organisations on issues of urban governance.*
- *Efforts to build campaigns through people's organisations and community volunteers on common issues have to be intensified.*
- *Information dissemination through appropriate media is crucial for these efforts to succeed.*
- *Support from middle-class advocacy groups and media has receded and it is a moot question whether it can be re-invigorated through a wider campaign.*

II. Women's Experiences with Sterilization

This pilot research project was developed to document the experiences of women who have undergone surgical and non-surgical sterilization to limit the size of their family.

Through women's response, we hoped to find out their reasons for choosing a particular method and their experiences during the procedure. At the same time, we were interested in determining the amount of information women were provided about other options and the risks and/or benefits of sterilization (both surgical and non-surgical). We were also interested to find out whether the women who have undergone the procedure have any health-related problems that need further attention.

The pilot was also committed to developing a more comprehensive programme of research on contraceptive clinical trials, linking it to action and directing the research towards policy and legal reform in the area of international agreements and clinical trials.

The pilot study was carried out in Howrah district of rural West Bengal, by Rajashri Dasgupta and her team. It documented the lived experience of women and allowed them to tell their own story in their own words. A total of 60 women who underwent surgical and non-surgical sterilisation procedures were interviewed. Interviews were conducted with women who had opted either for Quinacrine or surgical sterilisation. A few providers of Quinacrine and Sterilisation services were also interviewed subsequently. The taped interviews are being transcribed and translated.