

Sanchal Foundation Annual Report April 2011 to March 2012

The Sanchal Foundation was set up to promote, foster, aid and assist research for the extension of knowledge in the fields of natural, social, and applied sciences and allied fields. It was mandated, amongst other things, to give awards, scholarships, fellowships, and grants for eliminating poverty, developing education, improving working and living conditions, and promoting health, as well as to organise lectures, symposia, seminars and publish periodicals, books, journals, and magazines for this purpose. As in previous years, the Foundation focused much of its activity through the agency of the Hazards Centre, which had been specially set up by the Foundation to cater to the professional and informational needs of communities in distress. In addition, the Foundation was also able to make some contribution on the issues of human rights, environmental degradation, mutual learning, and women's empowerment by offering small fellowships to individuals active in these fields. The following gives an account of the activities conducted by the sub-groups on Governance, Labour, and Environment through the financial year beginning on April 1, 2011 and ending on March 31, 2012.

Urban Governance

Resettlement

Since 2008 the Foundation, through Hazards Centre, has been assisting over 600 evictees from different demolished slum settlements in Delhi who were denied resettlement because of irregularities committed by officials of Delhi Development Authority (DDA), and have been struggling to get plots in the Bawana Resettlement Colony. The DDA's resettlement policy also does not converge with other resettlement policies prevalent in Delhi – in particular, those of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi's Slum Department, and that of the newly-constituted Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB). After several interventions over four years with the office of the Lieutenant Governor (LG) of Delhi, and with the DDA zonal offices at Pitampura and Subhash Nagar, the Centre's researchers were able to help the *Bawana Sangharsh Samiti* to obtain a historic decision from the LG office on 7th March 2012 which dismissed the DDA's argument that its survey was the only basis for determining the eligibility of evictees for resettlement and ordered that possession of ration cards and voter cards by the evictees was sufficient proof of residence.

The *Bawana Sangharsh Samiti* has come to appreciate that if their claims are finally acknowledged then it will open the door for thousands of similar evictees all over Delhi who have been victimised by the authorities and has collaborated with the Foundation in filing a public interest petition in the Delhi High Court on 31st January 2012, asking for interim relief in terms of a clear interpretation of the DDA policy, given the various ad-hoc decisions taken by various committees of the DDA on eligibility criteria in spite of the LG's clear directions, as well as a stay on all evictions until the matter is decided. In addition, the various loopholes in the DDA policy, which led to the arbitrary interpretations, have been highlighted and a prayer made for a rational policy with provision for participation by the evictees. As interventions continue with DDA, the Ministry of Urban Development, and the Ministry of Urban Housing and Poverty Alleviation, research has been initiated on the norms incorporated in the new DUSIB resettlement policy, framed in 2011, and the basis on which the norms have been derived so as to frame an alternative pro-people policy.

In order to strengthen the element of public participation in governance, a series of training workshops have been conducted with the members of the *Bawana Sangharsh Samiti*, at their request, in Bawana on different aspects of the resettlement policy and the dynamics of community organisation. This has been supplemented with several pamphlets giving details of the policy as well as the struggle of the people, and a couple of booklets on participatory planning and the history of the events at Bawana. These have been widely disseminated in other resettlement colonies and slum settlements. They have become the basis for inviting other community groups to participate in the Bawana struggle and have borne welcome fruit as many of them have demonstrated their support at representations and demonstrations at the LG

office and the various offices of the DDA. A draft booklet on the resettlement and eviction process in Delhi is under preparation for wide dissemination.

Evictions

Demolition of slums has resumed in Delhi since the beginning of 2011 after the Commonwealth Games. The Foundation's researchers, located within the Hazards Centre, have been tracking demolitions at Baljeet Nagar *basti*, Kidwai Nagar Bengali camp, Vasant Kunj-Israel camp, Anna Nagar, Okhla fly over, Wazirpur, Shiva camp, Ravidas camp etc, and offering support wherever needed. Assistance in documentation and filing of papers has been provided to the residents of Kidwai Nagar Bengali camp who have approached the Public Grievance Cell, and the evictees of Shiva camp and Ravidas camp for submitting their papers for relocation. In addition, secondary research has been initiated to locate the 44 *bastis* earmarked by DDA for eviction in the first phase, and to compare their status with respect to the land use designated by the Delhi Master Plan and its actual occupancy. Both DDA as well as DUSIB have been approached in this connection and several public meetings have taken place at the *basti* level during the last one year.

Since the ostensible reason given for evicting slums and relocating them at the periphery of the city is the shortage of land, the researchers have been studying this phenomenon quite closely. It has become evident that the emergence of policies of globalisation has caused land to become a commodity within a market based economy. Consequently, evictions are being promoted in Delhi and many other cities so that land may be transferred from the poor to the rich and the price of land has been rising rapidly, far beyond the reach of the poor. The concept of the "slum free city" embodied in the Government of India's new *Rajiv Awas Yojana* (RAY), as a sequel to the Basic Services for the Urban Poor (BSUP) component of the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM), has also increased the pace of evictions all over the country. At the proposed site for housing under RAY near the resettlement colony of Bhalaswa (where evictees from 11 *bastis* of Delhi were relocated in 2004) several meetings and workshops were conducted with the community people and they have undertaken a study to estimate the value of land before and after eviction.

Right to food

In the year under review the Foundation received numerous requests at the Hazards Centre for information on the state of the Public Distribution System (PDS) and several meetings and workshops were held in areas like Lal Kuan, Tigri, Khanpur, Sangam Vihar Govindpuri, Okhla, ITO, Mori Gate, Bhalaswa, Bawana, and Jehangirpuri on issues of quality and the quantity of rations entitled to be received for separate cards like BPL, APL, and AAY; how to apply for renewal of ration cards; how many ration shops are required under policy; and so on. Then the public disclosure of the results of a pilot project of cash for food undertaken by the Government of Delhi in collaboration with SEWA caused huge uneasiness among the civil society organisations. The Centre aided them in forming an alliance to lead the campaign against cash coupons. The alliance also undertook a survey comparable to the one conducted by SEWA and revealed that the people in the *bastis* did not want cash transfers in lieu of food. At this time a larger coalition emerged in Delhi called the *Rozi Roti Adhikar Abhiyan* (RRAA).

The RRAA undertook a *yatra* in more than 25 *bastis* of Delhi for the protection of the PDS and urged the Government of Delhi not to insist on cash transfers. It organised a *dharna* at ITO where more than 1000 people protested against the Delhi Government cash transfer pilot project, as well as participated in a Convention organised by the Right to Food Campaign on the National Food Security Bill. The RRAA also decided to conduct a more comprehensive survey to assess the utility of the PDS. Hazards Centre helped to design the schedule and over 4005 families responded to the survey. In the first instance, RRAA did the data entry and analysis itself but when it was found that it was not adequately comprehensive and rigorous, the task was entrusted to the Hazards Centre and a preliminary tabular report was presented to the RRAA. However, because of certain differences within the campaign, the Centre dissociated itself from the *Abhiyan*. Other community groups who were also dissatisfied with the functioning of the RRAA then began their own efforts to resist the cash for food project and strengthen demands to revive the PDS and the Centre has been supporting these efforts at Jehangirpuri and Holambi Kalan through public hearings and advocacy meetings.

Alliances

Participatory research, with the assistance of Community Fellows, has been continued this year to study and document how people are acting and thinking at both the organisational and policy levels to claim their entitlements and develop their communities. 3 Fellows were selected in Delhi representing the evicted, women, and homeless communities. They also facilitated the process of understanding the changes in the city by co-ordinating with other groups in the city for mutual sharing of experiences. Through the entire year the Fellows took the lead in organising small *basti* level meetings on different issues such as rations, water supply, and housing. This prompted several individuals from the *bastis* to take a good deal of initiative in organising their communities and leading delegations to the Chief Minister, the Food and Supply Department, Delhi Jal Board, DDA, DUSIB, the Human Rights Commission, and the Information Commission. The Fellows have little skill in documentation so the Foundation's researchers have been assisting them in submitting reports on a monthly basis.

As part of the process of building linkages, the community groups requested for a forum where current issues could be discussed with experts and resource persons. Hence, the Foundation promoted the concept of a monthly lecture on a topic of immediate relevance where knowledge could be shared and people could then begin to take informed decisions. The Hazards Centre organised half-a-dozen public lectures on themes like the Universal Identity Card, Public Distribution System, Resettlement Policy, *Rajiv Awas Yojana*, Legal Tenure, and Citizenship. In the process the Centre had to contact and to persuade officials from the relevant authorised agency and an independent expert to introduce the theme and then respond to queries from the audience. The lectures elicited enthusiastic participation in the beginning and several pamphlets were published to disseminate pertinent information at a public level. However, the subsequent demand by communities for following up the theme with some concrete programmatic action could not be met by the Centre and, hence, the monthly lecture had to be eventually discontinued.

The need for a strong alliance in Delhi has been expressed by many groups and they have often turned to the Hazards Centre to take the lead since it has had a history of functioning as the secretariat of the erstwhile *Sajha Manch*. The Centre has also assisted several alliances dealing with manual scavenging, child rights, food access, sustainable development, water privatisation, housing rights, hawkers, and human rights. However, the Foundation has felt that the different community groups should learn from the past experience and take the initiative in forming an alliance and the Hazards Centre will support the effort. This has happened repeatedly in the year under review, with the groups working on food rations, evictions, housing, mega sporting events, and urban renewal coming together to form collectives from time to time. Each time the Centre has provided information and moral support, but all these collectives have had a short lifetime. Similar alliances have been formed in Nagpur and in Jaipur, where too the Centre has provided small assistance in the form of information and pamphlets on how alliances are formed. At the same time, it has also become apparent that several large NGOs and funding agencies have also begun networking with their 'partners' and 'fellows' and this has not allowed the emergence of any single collective in any city.

Accountability

Numerous applications have been filed during the course of the year under the Right to Information (RTI) Act in different government agencies regarding the preparation of eviction lists, surveys done by the nodal departments, and file notings on the letters sent by the Hazards Centre to various offices. During this period it was found that government departments have now made it a matter of course to transfer the application from one section to another in order to delay the issue and harass the applicant. Another ploy is to have a separate window for submission of the application, another window in another office for payment of the application fee, and yet another window for showing the receipt, before the required information is provided after a lengthy delay well exceeding the regulation period of 30 days. Thus, there is a widespread lack of transparency and accountability in all departments. The Foundation's researchers have discovered that the way to circumvent this tortuous bureaucracy is to ask for file inspections. While this path is obviously useful to those with a high degree of literacy and familiarity with official correspondence it is also of great value because the file yields much more information than the applicant would ordinarily ask for.

In this manner, the Hazards Centre helped the *Bhalaswa Lok Shakti Manch* in filing RTI applications for road construction and in conducting inspection of 4 roads in Bhalaswa along with the Public Works Department officials. Another similar activity was obtaining third party permission under RTI to extract information for the All India *Kabari Mazdoor Mahasangh* about the contract between the New Delhi Municipal Committee and a private solid waste management company. This was a source of inspiration for many other groups to file similar applications and obtain information that would otherwise be restricted under the third party clause. At the same time, the Centre has also been pursuing Section 4 under the RTI Act that provides for *suo-moto* disclosure of information by authorities such as the Delhi Jal Board, the Food and Supply Department, and the Municipal Corporation of Delhi. The most heartening feature of this activity has been that, while earlier the Centre was undertaking the task of filing and submitting RTI applications on behalf of community groups, now the people have taken the initiative to file applications on their own level as a result of the many workshops conducted by the Centre's researchers. Unfortunately, the Centre has been found lacking in documenting this progress and publishing relevant material in this regard.

The Foundation also continued to demand accountability for the Commonwealth Games organised in 2010, and on which the Hazards Centre had brought out two well-researched publications in 2010 that documented both the impacts of mega-sports events world-wide as well as the false promises that promoted the Delhi Games. Post the Games, press conferences were organised through this year to place some critical questions before the media. Among them were queries such as: "If the first report cogently demolished several myths and arguments that support the conduct of mega events, why did the concerned Ministries not launch an enquiry?"; "If there was no doubt that all the Games have suffered deficits ... on what basis did the Joint Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office decide that no further action was required?"; "Why did all Members of Parliament abandon their mandatory rights of oversight and not raise questions?"; and "What does it say about the accountability of parliamentary democracy if the Sports Minister is compelled to comment that the nation is going down a disastrous path at the behest of heads of sports federations, who are doubling as statesmen in Parliament?" No clear answers were ever received from the authorities.

Decentralisation

One of the principal instruments for participatory governance in urban areas is the 74th Constitutional Amendment that provides for elections to urban local bodies and the formation of *Ward Sabhas*, along lines similar to the *Gram Sabhas* in rural areas. However, in the context of the city the electoral ward is too large to allow for participation – in the case of Delhi one ward could have a population larger than 1 lakh. Hence, the Foundation has been propagating the idea of *Mohalla Sabhas* at the level of the electoral booth. The Delhi Government has not been keen even for constituting *Ward Sabhas* and has decided that the formation of *Ward Samitis* constituted of the elected councillors from 3 or more wards is adequate for the purposes of the 74th Amendment. Consequently, this year too, the Hazards Centre organised and participated in numerous community meetings and workshops on the need for decentralisation at the basic level of people's assemblies. It was found during this work that it was the women's groups (in places like Khanpur and Bhalaswa) who were responding the most to the idea of participation, primarily because they were at the receiving end when it came to acquiring certification from the *basti pradhan* or the Councillor or the MLA.

People in many *bastis* which are about to be demolished have also begun to understand the role of the political leaders and the politics of vote banks. Consultations with the community people show that they have lost faith in political parties and are beginning to discuss how leadership should be collective and from within the community. They have grasped that the money sanctioned for development at the ward level is not being used for work as decided under the 12th Schedule of the 74th Amendment, and that they are entitled to take decisions at the *basti* level for their own development, including whether the *basti* should be relocated and, if yes, then where. The paradox is that while they learn this under the threat of eviction, in many cases the eviction process itself throws the community and its understanding into disarray. Hence, the activity around the 74th Amendment proceeds further only where the community has some relative stability in notified slums or resettlement colonies: which is why consultations, workshops,

and public hearings have been more productive in areas such as Bhalaswa, Khanpur, and Mori Gate where community organisations are already active. At the same time the Centre has been amiss in not being able to prepare and publish the posters and pamphlets that had been planned for.

Planning

In November 2010 the Planning Commission and *Wada Na Todo Abhiyan* (WNTA) convened a meeting of over 80 NGOs in Delhi to discuss the Approach Paper to the Twelfth Plan, and the twelve 'challenges' that the Commission had identified. Subsequently, several thematic groups were formed by WNTA to represent different stakeholders and present their views on the 12th Plan. *Swaasthya*, Indo-Global Social Service Society, Green Flag, Action Aid, and Hazards Centre took up the responsibility to organise a national consultation with the urban poor. Hazards Centre took the initiative to organise two meetings in Delhi and two National Consultations, one at Nagpur and the other at Visakhapatnam, in collaboration with several groups working in urban areas, where there was a consensus that the 'challenges' presented by the Planning Commission had no relevance for the working poor in urban areas and that the 'growth'-centred model of planning had to be supplanted by an 'employment'-centred one. Recommendations along these lines were made to the Commission, even though the Commission initially refused to accept them on the grounds that they were not made in a proper format, and incorporated in the chapter on "Urban Poor" in the publication, "Approaching Equity", by WNTA.

The Foundation, through the agency of the Hazards Centre, also organised a workshop in Delhi to familiarise the groups working with the urban poor with the "growth-pole" basis of planning theories and to promote an informed debate on the trickle-down approach. This was received quite well and an incipient need emerged for research and experimentation with a bottom-up approach that focused on livelihoods. The Foundation also suggested to WNTA several times that similar workshops should be held with the other thematic groups too so that there could be a national critique of the planning process and an effort to build an alternative model. However, there was no response from the other sections within WNTA and the effort remained still-born. Hence, in spite of the fact that as many as 9 of the 12 thematic groups echoed the demand to abandon the 'growth'-fixated development model, there was no further progress in this matter and the Planning Commission chose to ignore this recommendation completely while the final Twelfth Plan document remains focused on the idea of 8% growth. At the same time, the Centre continues to engage with other groups and institutions on how alternative planning models may be developed.

Urban Labour

Transport

The Foundation has been intervening in the issue of sustainable transport from a pro-people perspective for a few years now. This year, after some preliminary research studies on Delhi's single Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridor, a series of community level meetings were conducted to disseminate the information and also to discuss the concept of the BRT and the right to space on the road, with a view to advancing the argument that a bus and cycle-based public transportation system is far more sustainable than car-based traffic. A set of pamphlets, stickers, and posters were prepared on this theme and distributed, particularly along the BRT corridor, as well as in schools and institutions. A film and a slide show on sustainable transport were made and screened at meetings and seminars, not only in Delhi but also in other cities. Some workshops were also conducted with various informal sector groupings of auto-rickshaw drivers, cycle rickshaws, vendors, hawkers, homeless workers, and women and children who often walk on the road. The focus of this entire campaign was on the concept of a "car free" city – often seen in juxtaposition to the official notion of the "slum-free" city.

The Hazards Centre also launched, in consultation with working poor groups, a participatory research study of how different sections in society "see" the road. This comprised of interviews and surveys with auto-rickshaws, cycle rickshaws, bus drivers, street vendors, sewer workers, carters, beauty parlour workers, pedestrians, waste pickers, and protestors regarding their use of and restrictions on the road. This set of studies clearly revealed that these, and many other, sections of the city do not see the road

merely as a corridor for mobility but rather as a venue for livelihoods, socialisation, and recreation. Thus, safety and security in the city are also related to this perception of the road. In other words, there is a completely different way of looking at the road than what is publicly presented by traffic planners and city managers (including the police) who have a completely car-centric approach. The Centre is preparing a set of materials to offer this set of perceptions for popular discussion and debate. Through this perception it is also proposing to intervene in the other discussion on the nature of the city and the schemes of urban renewal that are being taken up in cities and towns all over the country.

Urban renewal

The Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JnNURM) was launched by the Prime Minister in December 2005, covering 65 million-plus cities and towns in India over a period of seven years to provide infrastructure and basic services through provision of adequate funding by the Central Government with the proviso that the State Governments and Urban Local Bodies complete a set of 23 'reforms' designed to mandate accountability and investor-friendly policies. The Foundation's researchers at the Hazards Centre have been intensively studying the JnNURM since its inception and assisted citizen's groups to carry out a mid-term review of the Mission in 26 cities in 2009 that severely criticised the JnNURM for failing to address issues of livelihood. Since then the Centre has been constantly pursuing the Ministries of Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation and Urban Development to consider and take note of the findings of this review, and further consult citizens to achieve the participatory objectives of the Mission. In addition, the Foundation's researchers have been helping individual groups and networks in Jaipur, Indore, Ahmedabad, Mumbai, Pune, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Visakhapatnam, Bhubaneswar, Kolkata, Patna, Lucknow, Nagpur, Agra, and several other smaller towns in developing slum and informal sector policies in their respective areas.

The Hazards Centre also began critiquing the *Rajiv Awas Yojana* (RAY) which was offered by the Ministry as a sequel to the Basic Services to the Urban Poor sub-component of the Mission. Several community groups of Delhi came together with the Centre to analyse the survey formats developed by the National Buildings Organisation for RAY, and collaborated to design self-administered schedules that could be used by slum communities for participatory planning by the people. A pilot survey of 70 families in 6 bastis was also conducted to field-test the form and then further modified and improved. Detailed suggestions were made at a meeting with the Mission Director who then promised to call a national consultation to document the lessons learnt from JnNURM. But when, after several reminders, the promise was not kept, the Centre organised a national conference, in association with the Centre for Policy Research, in February 2011 attended by 150 participants from 24 cities. The conference was also attended by representatives from the two Ministries, the Technical Advisory Group, the Planning Commission, and technical advisors to government. Dissatisfied with the responses of the policy-makers, the participants resolved to conduct an end-term citizen's review of JnNURM.

Sanitation

Several groups in Delhi have been provided information by a combination of researchers from all three teams within the Hazards Centre on norms with respect to water supply and sanitation so that communities can begin demanding better services from the Municipality. This work has now spread further afield. For example, *Nidan*, an NGO in Patna, approached the Hazards Centre to assist in documenting the water and sanitation services required in 4 slums of Patna. A team from the Centre provided inputs to *Nidan* in mapping the slums, their settlement, occupational, and drainage patterns. On the basis of the field observations, plans were then prepared for improving water and sanitation services. These plans are to be submitted to the Patna Municipal Corporation (PMC) for utilisation of the 20% budget that is earmarked for slums. This will help in leveraging the resources of the municipality and will be a guide for future planning in the city. The workers and volunteers of *Nidan* were trained in the field while doing this research so that they could prepare similar maps and plans for another 25 slums in Patna.

Researchers from the labour and environment teams in the Centre responded to requests from the National Campaign for Dignity and Rights of Sewerage and Allied Workers for technical assistance in their petition before the Delhi High Court for safety measures to be taken by the Municipal Corporation of

Delhi, by preparing a small booklet on the manner in which the system could be made safer rather than providing personal protection to the worker. The Centre was also approached by the *Safai Karamchari Andolan* to provide technical expertise in the petition filed by the *Andolan* in the Delhi High Court for the eradication of manual scavenging in the Railways. In the process, the Centre's researchers examined the washable aprons made on the tracks near the railway platforms and found this was merely rendering the waste invisible without significantly affecting the safety of the sanitation workers. Researchers are also beginning to investigate the new bio-toilets being installed in railway coaches, to see if they fulfil the demands of safe and sanitary work.

Right to work

The *Sajha Manch*, an alliance of organisations active with the urban poor in the city, of which the Hazards Centre was the Secretariat until 2008, had conducted surveys, consultations, and workshops in 2007 to understand the conditions and requirements of the urban workforce in Delhi. This revealed that urban employment was distinctly different from rural livelihoods, in that there were three categories of work in the city – those who were in wage employment; those who were self-employed; and those who were under- or un-employed. Thus, there was a need to emphasise on the “Right to Work” rather than an employment guarantee scheme, and to specify the “living wages” that every worker should be entitled to. The Centre had taken this work further and proposed a “National Urban Right to Work” draft bill that was circulated to organisations in 20 cities across the nation. In this reporting year, the bill was modified to meet the challenges and opportunities posed by the National Manufacturing Policy (NMP), the National Manufacturing & Investment Zones (NMIZs) and the Centre's researchers participated in several workshops and consultations with sex-workers, construction workers, migrant labour, hawkers, and domestic workers to discuss the wider applicability of the bill. In addition, the Centre organised a seminar with the participation of national trade unions and policy makers to further refine the bill. A small Information Resource Centre was also initiated in Nagpur, in collaboration with the Indian Social Action Forum, on a pilot basis towards the end of the year.

Environment

Drinking water

The Bhalaswa resettlement colony in Delhi is located besides a landfill in the north which receives about 2,200 tonnes of waste per day. On the request of the *Bhalaswa Lok Shakti Manch*, the Hazards Centre conducted a study on ground water quality and health status of the area. Ground water samples were tested for contaminants and the health survey was carried out with 850 individuals, both within the resettlement colony as well as in adjacent areas. The results showed that there were high levels of contamination in the area that posed serious health concerns. A day long workshop was conducted with the people of the colony to explain the results of the water quality tests and associated health problems. Reports in Hindi and English were prepared and disseminated. A press conference was also organised and a letter sent to the service provider, Delhi Jal Board (DJB), asking for corrective measures to be taken by the Board. The people of the colony approached the Chief Minister with a copy of the report and she merely forwarded the application to the DJB. Subsequently, DJB officials came to the colony and simply painted the hand pumps red, cautioning the people that the water is not fit to drink.

On the basis of press reports, the National Human Rights Commission took *suo-moto* notice of the issue and issued a show cause notice to DJB to provide potable drinking water to the residents of Delhi. The Health Department of the Municipal Corporation then came to the colony to take water samples, both of groundwater as well as water supplied by tankers. They declared the tanker water to be potable, but not the groundwater. The Central Information Commission also issued a show cause notice to the DJB to place the details of the drinking water tests that they carry out on their website. The *Bhalaswa Lok Shakti Manch* has been systematically following up with the DJB, the Central Information Commission, and the Chief Minister's office to obtain specific orders requiring the supply of potable drinking water and to get the decisions implemented. This activity has to be placed in the context of the larger study that the Centre had done a year earlier of water supply in several locations across the city, both from ground water and surface water sources, and found that only 2 out of 53 samples were free of biological and chemical

contamination. If community action is able to make the service provider accountable in this case then it will be a source of inspiration for communities all over the city – this is already happening at workshops with the *Mahila Kamgar Manch* at Khanpur in the south, and through student-led research in other settlements.

Occupational health

The All India Artisans and Craftworkers Welfare Association (AIACA) had approached the Foundation in mid-2009 to undertake a baseline study on the environmental and occupational health impacts in six different cottage industries in India. A follow up study was conducted in 2011 where detailed research was done on the occupational health of the artisans and environment impacts of two identified clusters such as *ikat* weaving in Pochampally, Andhra Pradesh, and Hand block printing in Bagru, Rajasthan and offer recommendations on safety measures and alternative technologies, materials, and equipment. During the research, every step in the process was observed in great detail, talking with the artisans at work, and recording the potential hazards and safety measures adopted, both in text as well as pictures. Various physical, chemical, ergonomic, and other occupational hazards prevalent in the two clusters were listed. Subsequently, possible safety measures like hand gears and gloves, ankle cap, mixer, and loom modification were designed for the protection of the artisans and partially tested at a couple of locations with the artisans. Working models were also fabricated to suggest improvements in equipment and gear that would reduce occupational health hazards of textile workers with specific focus on textile production and dyeing activities, and an attempt made to show how these could reduce environmental impacts too.

3 regional workshops were organised among the artisans of Bagru, Pochampally and Bhuj (Gujerat) to disseminate the findings and conduct a trial run of the safety measures. 1 national workshop was also held in Delhi with the partners of AIACA where the study details were shared so that similar studies could be initiated in other artisan clusters. A pamphlet has been produced and disseminated among the artisans to make them aware of the hazards and the possible solutions. A manual on safety incorporating low cost technological solutions in these two clusters is being prepared for publication. A booklet on Indian laws and rules relevant to occupational and environmental health and safety has been published, responding to the need expressed by many artisans who wanted to know about the legal provisions. This booklet has been disseminated for feedback that will make appropriate revisions possible. However, because of a technical dispute with AIACA it has not been possible to complete and pursue the work in this area – except where an initiative by the *Khamir* group in Bhuj has made it possible to begin some work on the problems of artisans making decorative copper-coated metal bells.

Climate change

Since 2009, the Foundation has been working on Climate Change and its impact on urban areas. As part of this research it became clear that both the contribution to climate change as well as its impact were linked to the patterns of resource utilisation in society. In the year under review the Hazards Centre's researchers refined this focus on the contribution of transportation to climate change and how this could be made sustainable. A monograph titled 'Climate Change for the Curious' has been published which explores the international debate on climate change, the setting up of the IPCC, arguments around mitigation or adaptation as the best practice, calculation of carbon footprints, and the social and political issues implicit in all these. The paper also argues that the poor consume far less resources than the rich and yet are denied their fair share of those resources. It is from this perspective of differential resource use that the Centre has also approached the issue of climate change, arguing that those who consume less also, of necessity, pollute less. Such a perspective also shows that the adaptive capacity of the working poor classes to a harsh environment, scarcity of resources, and gradual climate change, is much higher than that of the affluent. This publication has been widely disseminated and the Centre has had to frequently provide research and training inputs to communities to demonstrate that enough resources are indeed available but that the poor do not have access to them because of unequal and biased distribution.

As part of this debate the Centre has also produced a significant body of work on the relative merits of a bus-based mass transportation system, allied to pedestrianisation and cycling, as compared to rail-based or private motorised vehicle-based systems. Much of this has been exhibited in a set of posters that focus

on the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system, of which a network has been implemented in Ahmedabad, only one corridor of 5.8 km has been constructed in Delhi, while other cities such as Pune and Jaipur and Indore have been proposing similar systems – although there are significant differences between these various projects with respect to dedicated open or closed corridors, central or side lanes, signalling measures, and para-transit modes. Towards the end of the year under review the corridor in Delhi has come under severe media criticism and various car-owner lobbies have been systematically building up pressure to open up the dedicated bus corridor to other traffic. Hence, the Centre has initiated a study of the corridor to ascertain pollution levels, number of commuters, differentiation between public and private transport, and the points of congestion and insecurity as viewed by different road users. It is expected that this study will be able to counter, through hard data, the negative projection of the BRT. In the process a student project to develop a low cost handy air sampler has also been launched.

Environmental impact

Research has been on-going in the Singrauli region to assist the *Banwasi Sewa Ashram* in documenting the impacts of the thermal power generation and coal mining that is expanding in the region since 1962. In 2011-12 the Foundation collaborated with the Ashram in designing a health impact survey that was then conducted in 21 villages with the help of the villagers and the Ashram's workers, focusing on respiratory diseases, reproductive problems in women, and symptoms of fluoride and mercury poisoning. A mapping of air and water pollution in the area had been done previously and attempts will soon be initiated to collate the physico-chemical data of pollutants with the biological markers of health impacts. This is planned to lead to an assessment of the damage in the area to natural resources, agricultural production, and human health. If this becomes possible it may be used by the Ashram to launch legal proceedings for compensation. A four-day exposure visit for the Hazards Centre's staff was also conducted in the region to familiarise them with the extent of industrialisation and its associated problems

A beginning was also made this year, through student intern projects to begin mapping the pollution in the 22 km stretch of the river Yamuna flowing through Delhi that receives the effluents from 19 drains flowing into the river from the city. This will enable an assessment of the contribution of various sources to the pollution and, therefore, a proposal to mitigate the damage at source in contrast to the end-of-pipe treatment being currently carried out through the Yamuna Action Plan – which has not been successful at all in cleaning up the river over two decades. In addition, the study will enable urban poor communities – who are presently being targeted in the “clean-up” drive being undertaken the authorities to argue that those responsible for the pollution should be identified first. Also, the Foundation's researchers were able to respond to requests from affected communities in Uttarakhand, Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, and Madhya Pradesh to analyse and critique Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) reports of hydro-electric, mining, solid waste management, urban renewal, and thermal power projects being taken up in these States. It is now proposed to develop a manual on how to do community-based EIAs so that people can develop their own assessment reports.

Administration

Staff assessment

There were 15 researchers assisted by 3 administrators on the Hazards Centre's rolls through the year. They were divided in the three sub-groups detailed above that were provided communication assistance by the media sub-group. A year-end review revealed that the performance of these researchers was not as effective as the previous year primarily because several older and experienced researchers had left the Hazards Centre and the new recruits were still struggling to come to terms with an understanding of their work and the role of the Centre. Thus many were confining their activity to their own assigned domains without being able to grasp the linkages between the sub-groups – something they themselves were beginning to experience. Consequently, there was significant delay in meeting deadlines and keeping to schedules as well as in delivering planned outputs, particularly in filing applications and conducting public hearings through the Right to Information Act, organising conferences on the 74th Constitutional Amendment, and in publications – especially visual material. However, technical assistance to community groups through field based activity was largely satisfactory, and individually all the staff felt

that they had learned enormously through the year. There was both comfort as well as a level of dissatisfaction with the degree of openness within the Centre.

Finances

The books of the Foundation revealed that the year began with an opening balance of about Rs 32 lakhs and closed with Rs 38 lakhs. The receipts were over Rs 73 lakhs through the year, of which Rs 67 lakhs came from foreign institutional grants and the remainder was from local sources. The balance money was mainly the residues from grants made the previous year by Ford Foundation, Christian Aid, Water Aid, All India Artisans and Craftworkers Association, and Climate Works. The main foreign donors this year were Ford Foundation, Action for India's Development, Action Aid, and International Development Research Centre. The Foundation incurred an annual expenditure of a little over Rs 68 lakhs, of which roughly Rs 37 lakhs was spent on human resources.

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