

## **Sanchal Foundation**

### **Annual Report 2016-2017**

Sanchal Foundation continued with the multiple activities that have been the hallmark of its functioning over the years. This was another busy year, but finally the tightening financial constraints have begun to impact on the quantity and quality of work. The various activities undertaken in 2016-17 are briefly highlighted in this annual report.

#### **Livelihoods and Shelter**

##### **Sustainable Livelihoods & Life**

The grant for knowledge production from Misereor-KZE supported the outreach of the Foundation's Delhi central node (at Hazards Centre) and two regional nodes at Ahmadabad and Vishakhapatnam.

In Ahmadabad, the researchers were able to carry forward the campaign to provide decent housing to slum dwellers, moving from accessing 4.4 lakh sq.ft of built-up area for 1200 families to 14.5 lakh sq.ft for 3000 families. This was in spite of the families facing problems of having to prove their identity and eligibility, and facing the stigma of being labelled 'Bangladeshis'. The slogan at the Central Government level of "Housing for All" stands in stark contrast to Gujarat's increasing emphasis on 'zero slums' resulting in loss of homes, as also of children's education, livelihoods, and basic amenities. A significant event was obtaining permission to get trained for livelihoods at night shelters and disseminating pamphlets on housing rights in Gujarati.

In Vishakhapatnam, solar lights were installed in different slums post the Hudhud cyclone to help in the education of the children, subsequent to which the urban local body was persuaded to provide electricity from the grid. Then toilets, connecting bridge, cement-concrete roads, and water supply were also sanctioned. A workshop was organised to strengthen the skills of rag pickers. To further strengthen the demand for entitlements a booklet on the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana in Telugu was published and widely disseminated. An important step forward was slum associations collectively asking the state government for an appropriate legislation to provide land rights to the slums, prior to petitioning the courts for the same.

In Delhi, assistance was provided to community groups on multiple issues of road accidents, demolitions, resettlement rights, children's education and health, water dispensers, air pollution, and in-situ redevelopment. In addition, research efforts were intensified on smart cities and transparency in Allahabad, workers' rights at Jabalpur, water privatisation in Nagpur, and housing rights in Kurnool. In order to cater to requests coming from associations in 25 cities, towns and regions, we also disseminated posters, pamphlets, and booklets on how to conduct surveys, prepare case studies, manage fecal sludge, document oral history, register complaints online, manage community kitchens, demand decent wages, and air pollution

The initiative to develop a low-cost energy measurement device made some progress this year albeit haltingly, with financial assistance provided by Association for India's Development. We hope to have the device ready by next year to provide scientific support to workers' struggles for decent wages. Air pollution and health impacts, climate change, the urban nexus of injustice,

the history of housing schemes, the right to livelihood, privatisation of the city, the demand for universal access, solid waste management, smart cities, child welfare, and homelessness were issues on which the Foundation produced easy-to-understand literature and presentations which were disseminated at seminars and conferences attended by our researchers.

### **Children and Agency**

#### **Life and Agency of Railway Children**

Once the project of capacity building of NGOs working with Railway Children was completed this year, the lessons learnt from the project were put to good use in another project on understanding children's agency, also supported by Paul Hamlyn Foundation and conceived by the All India Working Group on Rights of Children in Contact with Railways. The Foundation's researchers assisted RCCR in completing a preliminary literature survey and then developing the methodology of the study through intensive workshops in April and June 2016 held in Delhi and Kundapura. Subsequent to this, 40 NGOs were drawn into a collaboration to administer the pre-tested schedule and four zonal meetings were held to reorient the NGO workers.

The entire exercise was facilitated by the further development of the App that had been field tested in Jabalpur earlier and was adapted for administering the schedule prepared for the railway children. The schedule followed a logic tree and this, it was hoped, would help to eliminate the biases of the NGO workers, many of whom came with a pre-conceived idea of 'rescue and return' for children that was in conflict with the 'agency' of the child. Thus, by March 2017, the schedule had been administered to over 2000 children at 90 stations and the data had been uploaded on to a central server. We hope to have the quantitative report ready for discussion by June 2017, and then begin the qualitative phase of the study.

### **Communities and Empowerment**

#### **Bridging the Gap between Science and Society**

The grant from Wellcome Trust continued this year and we could sustain people-led research, firstly at Singrauli, where the issue of environmental clearances granted by regulatory agencies to the different industries in the region was being extensively discussed at workshops at the Gram Sabha level. This led to a petition at the National Green Tribunal and the Tribunal appointed a Committee to investigate the various allegations of environmental degradation. The report of the Committee was then disputed by the evidence presented by the affected people, and our researchers played a key role in building the bridge between the people's knowledge and the Committee's technical report and how that could be used by the lawyers at the Tribunal.

The work begun in Delhi through workshops at the school level in places like Pushp Vihar, Tigri, Qutb Enclave, and Bhalaswa was supplemented by a wave of public discussion on air pollution in the city in television panels, university seminars, college debates, and independent think-tanks. The Foundation's researchers participated in many of these discussions and focused on the need to set in place a comprehensive community monitoring system that would both measure the levels of pollution as well as disseminate information on health impacts, mitigation measures, and polluter accountability for citizen's organisations to act. This has paved the way for a preliminary exploration of how low-cost devices could be acquired and installed in the city.

The preparatory work at Nagpur last year to assess the quantity and quality of water supply has not translated into any activity by the local organisations. Nor have we been able to follow up the initiatives that showed much promise at Allahabad and Ahmadabad. However, different local activities like the fire outbreak at Bawana and the survey of damage by the residents leading to due compensation being awarded; the exercise to make pollution data publicly available at small *pan* and tea shops in Varanasi; the effort by construction workers in Jaipur to document their working and living conditions; and the setting up of a workers' safety council at Manesar to access due compensation for injury – all provide opportunities to carry this work further.

### **Collective Efforts**

No social change is possible without larger and larger collective efforts. This is something that the Foundation has attempted to do in several initiatives supported by a range of institutional and individual actors. A two-day evaluation of the Foundation's work was held in June 2016 in which the Foundation's Board, expert advisers, researchers, and partner communities participated. The consensus that emerged focused on the increasing need for collective efforts, the difficulties in accessing funds for these efforts, the emergence of alternative social media as a powerful means of communication, and how to use physical and intellectual resources more effectively and efficiently to meet the objectives of the Foundation.

Two grants from the Centre for Policy Research and the Azim Premji Philanthropic Initiatives have permitted us to sustain the work of the collective Sajha Manch in Delhi. The grant from the former has allowed members of the Manch to collect a series of oral histories from among their members who are all labouring people. Earlier it was hoped that professional historians and their students would take up the task or, at least, facilitate it but failing that the working people took it upon themselves to record their stories. This will soon be available in published form. The grant from the latter supports the activities of the Manch in setting up a Basti Prachar Samit, conducting a series of training workshops, and publishing literature.

The Lok Shakti Manch, supported last year by the Association for India's Development, has continued to take up issues of cancellation of ration cards, by taking their complaints to the Public Grievance Commission; registration of land ownership through payment of circle rates, by campaigning with government; and improving the quality of education, by engaging with the political representatives and the Department of Education on the basis of a survey conducted by the schoolchildren. The Foundation proposed to bring out detailed reports on the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission, the Smart City project, and the Swacch Bharat Abhiyan, but financial limits have prevented many of these activities from reaching completion.

The Independent Council for Road Safety International (ICoRSI) was established in June 2016 and acquired some seed funding from Tata Trusts. This year the Council has organized a panel discussion on 'Promoting Road Safety Worldwide: New Concerns and Issues' at the 12<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion at Finland; co-sponsored the 26th International Course on Transportation Planning and Safety & Young Researcher Symposium at New Delhi; participated in the session on 'Beyond Safety Belts and Airbags' held in Washington; cosponsored the Iran Road Safety Course, held in Tehran; and submitted comments to the WHO on the WHO's draft global targets for road safety risk factors.

### **Cost analysis**

For the year 2015-2016 the Foundation received a little over Rs. 1.1 crore (1,10,35,503), of which about 61% was from foreign grants and 39% was from Indian institutions and individuals. This compares somewhat favourably with last year's receipts of a little over Rs. 1 crore, of which 78% was from foreign grants. However, of the total receipts, roughly 58% could be spent in this financial year itself as against 80% last year. And just over 56% was spent on programme expenses as against 80% last year. The year began with an opening balance of Rs. 27.5 lakhs and closed with a balance of Rs. 57.8 lakhs.

These figures, which stand in contrast to the figures for last year, are explained by the fact that our FCRA certification was not renewed at the end of October 2016, hence a significant amount of the foreign grants could not be utilised and many of our activities were frozen in mid-year. But this triggered an appeal for Indian donations and the response may be seen to be quite healthy. A petition is pending in the High Court of Delhi in this matter, but it is clear that if the Foundation has to effectively survive it will have to find a way to secure financial independence in the future.

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