

**SRUTI Local Self-Governance
Initiatives: 2016-2019**
Lessons and Reflections

Table of contents

S.No.	Contents	Page
1	SRUTI's Intervention on Local Governance with Five Fellows: Learnings and Reflection	02
A.	Context	02
B.	Democratic Decentralization and Local Governance: Understanding SRUTI's Perspective	07
C.	Role of Fellows and their relationship with the Primary Sanghatan	12
D.	Key Activities in the five locations during the previous 3 years	14
E.	Consultations with Sanghatans and SRUTI Fellows <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Mazdoor Kisan Samiti, Bihar ii) Vishtapit Mukti Vahini, Jharkhand iii) Gaon Ganrajya Sangathan, Chhattisgarh iv) Jan Abhivyakti and Hasdeo Aranya Bachao Sangharsh Samiti, Chhattisgarh v) Dalit Adivasi Manch, Chhattisgarh 	19
F.	Synthesis	42
2.	Lessons for SRUTI to take forward from the field	43
3.	Lessons garnered by SRUTI in implementing the project	51
	Annexure A – Profile of fellows	55
	Annexure B – Case studies	58
	Annexure C - Activity Reports (compiled from the SRUTI-APPI Annual Reports)	84

SRUTI's Intervention on Local Governance with Five Fellows: Learnings and Reflection ¹

A. Context:

Society for Rural, Urban and Tribal Initiative (SRUTI) is a non-profit organization, based in New Delhi, India focussing on working “*towards social change at the grass roots, across rural and urban India, through its Fellowship Programme. It is committed to empowering marginalized people to lead a dignified life with access to livelihood, resources, rights and justice... SRUTI not only facilitates and supports social action, but also strengthens it through the intermediary processes of advocacy, engagement, association, capacity building and solidarity. Cross-fellowship learning through meetings and perspective building is also promoted*”.² They have been supporting social action through their Fellowship programme, which has evolved over the years since SRUTI was set up in 1983. Starting from a small support to individual activists, the Fellowship programme continues a nominal support to the social change and human rights activists working across the country in deepening democracy.³

The Fellowship programme run by SRUTI has been supporting community development activities through support to Fellows in the poor, remote locations in India as they feel that “*the only meaningful and sustainable way to engage the disadvantaged is to support grassroots community leaders and help them garner tools and training necessary to help their community exercise their rights and responsibilities.. The core idea of SRUTI Fellowship Program is to support communities tackle their local issues (specific to their geopolitical and socio-economic contexts) and to accelerate the process of building local leadership within these communities. By empowering people at the grassroots to build and access a society based on the values of justice and equity, a life of fulfillment, dignity, and respect can be achieved for all*”.⁴

¹ Undertaken by Adil Ali (adil.ali@aank.in). SRUTI or the author may be contacted for any further details.

² SRUTI website : <http://www.sruti.org.in/?q=page/organisation> accessed 2nd August 2019

³ SRUTI website: <http://www.sruti.org.in/?q=page/srutis-history> accessed 2nd August 2019

⁴ SRUTI Diary 2019.

The areas of work that SRUTI has, and continues to support, among others, are the following⁵:

1. Jal, Jangal, Zameen (an Hindi euphuism for People's Access and Control over Natural Resources)
2. Land and forest conservation
3. Small-holder and sustainable agriculture
4. Right to Food
5. In-situ livelihood
6. Panchayati Raj and Governance
7. Rights to the City
8. Education
9. Right to Information
10. Caste and Gender

There are currently 31 SRUTI Fellows working in 14 states across India. The way the SRUTI Fellowship is designed is that a small honorarium is provided to the selected FELLOW, who is usually grounded/leads a specific sanghatan, mostly unregistered, that has been pursuing the rights of the people, individual and as collective, by organising them. In the functional form, the Fellowship is usually divided between a few activists of the sanghatan, at the instance of the FELLOW.

As we can see above in the areas of work supported by SRUTI, a lot of work supported by SRUTI straddles the domain of governance, which intersects all the issues listed above, directly or indirectly. While there is work on the national and state level through engagement and advocacy, most often it is the involvement with the administration at the district level and below that these sanghatans are most focussed on. Issues of local governance, thus become critical when initiatives to address the deprivation of rights, individual and collective, are taken up by the Fellows and the sanghatans that they support. A significant amount of work pertains to the mobilization of the community to address issues of people's rights over natural resources, access to government schemes and community co-operation in creating resources and assets.

This particular exercise has limited itself to understanding the work of 5 Fellows located in Chhattisgarh (3), Jharkhand (1) and Bihar (1) over the past three years. All the Fellows have been supported by SRUTI over a longer time period and their work has to be understood in a continuum

⁵ SRUTI Dairy 2019.

rather than just been seen through this 3 year time window⁶. The following people have been SRUTI Fellows⁷ and the profiles explain their backgrounds, including the sanghatans that they belong to/support:

State	Fellow	Primary Sanghatan	Operation Area of Sanghatan
Bihar	Kailash Bharti	Mazdoor Kisan Samiti	Gaya
Jharkhand	Arvind Anjum	Jharkhand Visthapit Vahini	Sarai Kharsawan, East Singhbhum
Chhattisgarh	Rajim Ketwas	Dalit Adivasi Manch	Baloda Bazaar
	Alok Shukla	Hasdeo Aranya Bachao Sangharsh Samiti	Korba, Sarguja
	Jang Sai Poya	Gram Ganrajya Sanghatan	Sarguja

Furthermore, it is important to understand the relationship that each of the Fellows have with the Primary Social Group that is mentioned here. It is to be noted that in their individual identities, they are also associated with, and directly work with other organizations, institutions and networks. We will discuss this in the next section.

At the onset, it should be clarified that process documentation process sought to capture the work of the Fellows as it has continued in the field without being guided by SRUTI. As we have already noted, SRUTI currently has 31 Fellows and they chose to work with this set of five Fellows to be able to support their ongoing work around strengthening local governance with the sanghatans that they are engaged with.

According to the Grant Agreement between SRUTI and APPI the following objectives were agreed upon for the support to the Fellowship programme in these 5 locations⁸:

The overall goal of the engagement between AAPI and SRUTI was *“To strengthen the process of ‘Democratic Decentralisation’ in 16 districts (no. of districts might increase over one-two year*

⁶ Support for this process, including the present exercise was provided to SRUTI by the APPI, a philanthropic organization based in India. (<https://www.azimpremjiphilanthropicinitiatives.org/>)

⁷ Detailed profiles are available in SRUTI Diary 2019, reproduced in ANNEX of this report

⁸ The initial proposal covered the Fellowship support in Orissa as well but it was removed in the final stages.

period of time) of the states Bihar (2 districts), Jharkhand (2 districts), Chhattisgarh (7 districts) and Odisha (5 districts) towards socio-economic transformation in rural India by proclaiming, and productively enabling the concept of local self-governance; advocating the vision of Gram Swaraj; and converging these aspects for self sufficient and empowered local communities.⁹”

APPI supported SRUTI in undertaking this work from April 2016 till June 2019 through which SRUTI was able to provide fellowship support to the five Fellows mentioned above and the concomitant capacity building and programmatic support in furthering work on local governance for self-sufficient and empowered local communities with the sanghatans that they work with.

The visualized outcome for SRUTI for the interventions over these three years was to lead towards:

“The theory of change followed by SRUTI lies under the broad rubric of peoples’ centered advocacy and peoples’ movements approach. Strengthening vulnerable communities, capacitating people and systems at the grass root is the overall key objective of the SRUTI Fellowships. Collective action, led ably by committed individuals who have the understanding & expertise to objectively, yet holistically, analyze the ground situation and recognize the factors at play, is critical for effective solutions at the grassroots. This importance of collective social action is the crux of the SRUTI Fellowship Programme; at its heart is the idea of ‘People for Change’.

With these core beliefs; the proposed programme encompasses the interventions in the.. states (Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, .. and Bihar) under the broader vision of ‘Decentralised Democracy’ towards towards

*socio-economic transformation in rural India based on the core philosophy of ‘equity and justice’ for all. This underlines the process of change through the proposed programme as envisaged under SMART goal i.e. socio-economic transformation in rural India by proclaiming, and productively **enabling the concept of local self-governance**; advocating the vision of Gram Swaraj; and converging these aspects for self sufficient and empowered local communities. (emphasis added)*

..Addressing .. core issues will result into implementation of pro-people policies and Acts; proper and effective utilization of funds available to panchayats; transparency and willingness of government and administrative mechanisms and; participatory involvement of local communities in devolution of funds and related processes towards ensuring effective

⁹ SRUTI GRANT APPLICATION FORM-APPI 19th Dec 2015.

governance and implementation of pro-people policies and laws as also recognized and provided under the 73rd Amendment of

Constitution – in the ..districts of the states Bihar, Jharkhand,.. and Chhattisgarh.”

Following the language of the theory of change articulated above, it seems clear that SRUTI sees local governance issues primarily through the lens of mobilization of people-individuals and communities, to collectively address issues impacting their lives related to violation of laws, lack of transparency and accountability of the duty bearers, overcoming barriers to consensual decision making and struggle against exclusion and inequity. The selection of Fellows is thus oriented towards a creating conditions for good governance on the ground, and undertaking interconnected policy advocacy work. The approach juxtaposes itself with other interventions (by other groups) that seek to correct the flaws in the institutional mechanisms of local governments through creation of systems and mechanisms to build/reform the delivery mechanism of government services.

B. Democratic Decentralization and Local Governance: Understanding SRUTI's Perspective

“the community is being made aware of the powers of the Gram Sabha and its role in the development of villages. These activities assume importance in the context of the government’s attempts at reducing the powers of the gram sabha and dismissing its decisions on important matters. Our Fellows view the Panchayati Raj as an essential tool in ensuring decentralisation of power and thus any efforts to dilute its provisions is met with resistance.”¹⁰

“Information sharing and lively discussions on the roles, efficiency and functioning of panchayat members has led to greater collaborations with sangathan members. Due to several other stakeholders actively present in villages, it becomes imperative that sangathan keeps regular touch with functionaries, developing enabling spaces for women to participate, articulate and take up leadership positions. During village meetings, sanghatans have ensured women take up leadership roles in village committees, forest rights committees and core decision making of the sangathan. It has also translated to vibrant Gram Sabhas where women have taken active leadership. Livelihood generation, formation of cooperatives, agriculture development, convergence with social security and line departments are important outcomes for these engagements with panchayats and gram sabhas. Sangathans have also organised resource mapping to better understand and then include their demands with memorandums and village planning processes. In PESA regions, declaration of self-rule, conducting constitutional trainings have been effective in the formation and association with regional,

national networks. A resource centre at SRUTI office established and related trainings with the SRUTI team were also organised to facilitate the processes in the field”.¹¹

¹⁰ SRUTI Annual Report 2016-17

¹¹ SRUTI Annual Report 2017-18

Looking at the direct quotes from the last two annual reports of SRUTI, we can see that the understanding of the need to work on democratic decentralization and local self-governance exceeds the traditional way of looking at Panchayati raj institutions which primarily focus on the economic perspective of devolutions of funds, functions and functionaries and the creation of budgetary allocations that facilitate the ideal operational subsidiarity of activities for the benefit of citizens in the local areas. While recognising these as a necessary part of the decentralization, the emphasis is on enabling effective local governance, highlighting the political aspect of the decentralization process and building the voices of the people in deepening democracy.

*“Decentralization is the transfer of authority and responsibility for public functions from the central government to intermediate and local governments or quasi-independent government organizations and/or the private sector”.*¹² Olsen (2007) refers to the World Bank to distinguish three types of decentralizations within the public sector:

Political Decentralization where there is transfer of political power and decentralization to sub-national levels. Devolution is when there is a full transfer to a local public authority that is autonomous and fully independent from the devolving authority.

Fiscal Decentralization pertaining to resource reallocation to local governments that allow them to function properly and fund allocated service delivery responsibilities, with some arrangements for resource allocation to be negotiated between different local and central authorities.

Administrative Decentralization involves the transfer of decision-making authority, resources and responsibilities for delivery of public services from the central govt. to other lower levels of government, agencies and field offices of line departments with **devolution** being understood to happen when local governments have full responsibilities for hiring/firing staff and assigning authority/responsibility for carrying out task. **Delegation** is the redistribution of authority and responsibility to local unit of government that are not always necessarily branches of the delegating

¹² Olsen, Hans B. “Decentralization and Local Governance: Concept Paper, SDC, November 2007 quoting the World Bank.

authority, with the bulk of accountability still upwards. **De-concentration** is the transfer of authority and responsibility from one level of central govt. to another, with accountability upwards.

In the Indian context, while the Panchayati Raj Institutions have been recognised as a tier of governance through the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, we can see that it has not resulted in full devolution of power to the local communities, even 25 years after the Amendment has come into force. The Devolution Index, recognised by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, for 2015-16¹³, for instance showed that in the Operational Core of Decentralization (where the domains of funds, functions and functionaries are measured) the states covered under here had the following positions, demonstrating that there is significant amount of work that was needed to have effective devolution in these three states (Chhattisgarh, Bihar and Jharkhand). In this case, we can at best understand this as a process of partial devolution and more of administrative de-concentration by the respective states.

State	Operational Core of Decentralization Rank* (2015-16)
Chhattisgarh	12
Bihar	15
Jharkhand	16

*lowest rank being 17 (some states had the same rank)

The table above¹⁴ demonstrates that the three states where the SRUTI Fellows were active are at comparatively the lower end as far as devolution as its actually happened in India. It is thus challenging for any civil society formation-whether an NGO like SRUTI or local sanghatans supported by SRUTI Fellows to be able to work with the Panchayati Raj Institutions to effectively channel the needs and voices of the people on the ground. While this does open up opportunities of advocacy, and that has happened during this period, the challenge of the local governments being fully responsive to the emerging needs of the local communities still remains as they are not only limited by social realities and constructs but also administrative constraints and lack of power to fully address the needs of the people. Moreover, three of the Fellows have work in the Schedule

¹³ MOPR and TISS, **DEVOLUTION REPORT 2015-16: Where Local Democracy and Devolution in India is heading towards?** 2016

¹⁴ Extracted from Table 2.5: Ranking of States in the dimension and aggregate indices of Improved Index of Devolution in Policy, MOPR and TISS 2016

V areas where PESA created a further opportunity for deepening the engagement of the community.

Status of compliance of Panchayati Raj Acts with Section 4 of PESA Act

Sl. No. Provisions of the Act Status (Yes being PESA compliant)¹⁵

	Chhattisgarh	Jharkhand
4(d): Customary mode of conflict resolution by the Gram Sabha	Yes	Yes
4(e): Selection of programme beneficiaries by Gram Sabha	Yes	Yes
4(f): Gram Panchayat to obtain Utilisation Certificate from Gram Sabha	Yes	Yes
4(h): Nomination by State Government of persons of ST not represented in Intermediate and & district PRIs	Yes	Yes
4(i): Consultation with Gram Sabha or PRI before land acquisition & resettlement & rehabilitation	Yes	Yes
4(j): Planning & management of water bodies by Gram Sabha or PRI	Yes	Yes
4(k): Recommendation by Gram Sabha or PRI before grant of prospecting license	Yes	Yes
4(l): Recommendation by GS or PRI before exploitation of minor minerals or mining lease	Yes	Yes
4(m)(i): Power to restrict sale of intoxicant to PRI and Gram Sabha	Yes	No
4(m)(ii): Ownership of Minor Forest Produce to PRI and Gram Sabha	No	No
4(m)(iii): Power to prevent land alienation to PRI and Gram Sabha	Yes	No
4(m)(iv): Power to manage village markets to PRI and Gram Sabha	Yes	Yes
4(m)(v): Control money lending to PRI and Gram Sabha	No	No
4(m)(vi): Control of social sector institutions & functionaries to PRI and Gram Sabha	Yes	Yes

It is in this context that it would be pertinent to view the work around enabling the voices of the people in terms of their engagement in local self-governance, rather than in administrative de-concentration and partial political devolution as it has actually happened. Furthermore, Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act 1996 is applicable in the Schedule V Areas of Chhattisgarh

¹⁵ As of Dec 2017, extracted from Table 3.3 MOPR Annual Report 2017-18

and Jharkhand, covering the areas that sanghatans supported by three of the five SRUTI FELLOWS are active in also provides a further opportunity to engaging the local community in governance. However, *“the efforts towards analysing PESA in the field clearly indicates the need for improving the coordination of the PRIs with the Department of Tribal Affairs and with the line departments. The quantum jump required from “representative democracy” to the political realm of “participatory democracy” is possible only if the Panchayati Raj Departments and the PRIs in the PESA States imbibe on an understanding of this and make an effort towards operationalising this.”*¹⁶

SRUTI’s work thus, while covering some aspects of decentralization, has to be viewed beyond its narrow economic sense to a broader understanding to which the term local self-governance is more suitable. SRUTI’s goal for this project, in fact, specifies this when it talks about “enabling local self-governance”. Starting from the UNDP definition of local self-governance, we will look at the work undertaken by SRUTI Fellows in the three states of Bihar, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh.

*“Local governance comprises a set of institutions, mechanisms and processes, through which citizens and their groups can articulate their interests and needs, mediate their differences and exercise their rights and obligations at the local level. The building blocks of good local governance are many: citizen participation, partnerships among key actors at the local level, capacity of local actors across all sectors, multiple flows of information, institutions of accountability, and a pro-poor orientation.”*¹⁷

This is a broad definition that seems to encompass the work that SRUTI Fellows have been doing and serves to interpret the critical work around other thematic such as access and control over natural resources, smallholder agriculture, caste and gender etc. that SRUTI has been involved in. In a sense, local governance forms a cross cutting issues across the various thematic that SRUTI works on. The work done by FELLOWS has created /strengthened local institutions in the form of sanghatans that articulate local issues on public platform, and pull together other civil society

¹⁶ Devolution Index 2015-16

¹⁷ UNDP 2014 “ **Decentralised Governance for Development: A Combined Practice Note on Decentralisation, Local Governance and Urban/Rural Development**”

formations to promote the rights of the local communities by engaging with the local governments and district administrations. The Sanghatans work as enablers and build pressure on by raising critical issues related to the lives and livelihoods of people, especially the poor and vulnerable among them.

C. Role of Fellows and their relationship with the Primary Sanghatan

The five Fellows supported through this project have a somewhat similar, but still distinct roles from each other with respect to the primary sanghatan that they are involved with. It is important to note the distinction as the SRUTI support to the Fellows is focussed directly on the Fellows and only in an associative manner with the Sanghatan that they are involved with. While the Fellowship is provided to the Fellow (and in each case, the fellow has in turn decided to share this with other activists), capacity building and programmatic support which is discussed with each Fellow, is focussed, mostly, on the primary sanghatan that they are associated with. Each of the Fellows is also involved in other engagements beyond the primary sanghatan that we are discussing here, but we will limit the observations to these primary sanghatans here. The following is the current relationship with the sanghatan:

Kailash Bharti has been part of the **Mazdoor Kisan Samiti (MKS)** in Gaya and has played a critical role in shepherding the group, carrying forward the landmark Bodhgaya Land Struggle of the 1970s. He has been a SRUTI FELLOW since 2001. He is directly involved and provides leadership to the Mazdoor Kisan Samiti, an unregistered group set up by the Chattra Yuva Sangharsh Vahini to take leadership in the Bodhgaya Struggle. Currently, the Fellowship amount is shared between 6 members of the Samiti. For the sake of convenience, it was being routed through the Jan Mukti Sangharsh Vahini, Patna which, through Priyadarshi, also mentors the group. There are a large number of volunteers that work with and assist the core group of the Mazdoor Kisan Samiti. The area that they work is in the agricultural plains with some of the villages in the south bordering Jharkhand being on forest land, where there are tribal communities. However, most of the work of MKS is with the “mahadalits” , who have suffered from centuries of deprivation and still find it a challenge to have a political voice in the area.

Arvind Anjum has been a SRUTI FELLOW since 1999 and he was instrumental in setting up the **Visthapit Mukti Vahani** in Jharkhand, then the state of Bihar in 1988. He shares the Fellowship with two other activists. The sanghatan itself has metamorphosed over time, with many active members moving on the full-time occupations but maintaining a link with the sanghatan. The group itself has been supporting people's democratic right issues in different parts of the two districts (Seraikela-Kharsawan and West Singhbhum) -not necessarily linked with each other. They have recently started working with communities in some villages of East Singhbhum. It thus represents a core set of volunteers who take up, and follow-up on various rights-based issues faced by local communities. While there is an organic link created by the VKV, the local level issues are primarily aggregately separable. To further clarify, the proper rehabilitation demands for Chandil dam oustees is mirrored by the descendants of the Dimna dam oustees but the struggles are inherently local, led by the people directly affected. The Vahini, in its current form, appears to take the form of an unregistered association of persons, driven by a common ideology, that supports various issue-based actions in different parts of the three districts. The group provides support to the local issue-based campaigns by helping them plan strategic action, guidance and network support, while promoting local leadership. The entire area is predominantly tribal and is a Schedule V area.

Jang Sai has been a SRUTI FELLOW since 2011. He works with the **Gaon Ganrajya Sanghatan** with a group of activists and volunteers to promote local governance and reviving traditional gram sabhas in the Schedule V areas of Sarguja, Balrampur and Surajpur districts. Jang Sai shares his fellowship with 2 other activists. The group works to mobilize local citizens to articulate their individual and collective rights, especially in the context of ensuring access of local people to natural resources (public lands, forests and water), the use of Constitutional measures and national laws to advocate for their issues. Jang Sai works with a number of independent thought leaders who guide the sanghatan in articulating tribal rights and identity and in turn, create a loose association of other such groups in different areas of the country. The operational area of the sanghatan is a Schedule V area, and is forested with a predominant tribal population.

Alok Shukla has been a SRUTI fellow since 2011 and is the convenor of Chhattisgarh Bachao Andolan and the founder of Jan Abhiviyakti, an NGO supporting the local communities in their

struggle to retain control over their water, land and forests in Sarguja, Korba and Jhangir-Champa districts of Chhattisgarh. He has primarily used the capacity building and support components available with the fellowship to support the efforts of the Hasdeo Aranya Bachao Sangharsh Samiti that has been active in the Surguja and Korba districts. Alok shared his fellowship with 4 activists and has recently stopped taking any fellowship support for himself. The HABSS is a sanghatan that has been actively taking up the challenges that local people have been facing in filing their claims under the Forest Rights Act as well as to protect the forests and people from the threat of losing their lands and the forests around their villages to the expansion of coal mining in the region. The core group of HABSS guides the sanghatan and is currently active in 20 villages where it mobilises and articulates the issues through the Gram Sabhas.

Rajim Ketwas has been a SRUTI FELLOW since 2010. SRUTI Fellowship support was initially shared with 4 activists, increasing to 8 and is currently shared between 6 activists. She mentors the Dalit Adivasi Manch, a sanghatan active in the Mahasumand and Baloda Bazaar districts of Chhattisgarh and co-ordinates it. The DAM is an unregistered body that has been actively promoting the rights to the poor and marginalized in the region, focussed on getting their claims on lands under the FRA, wages in public works, protecting forests and protecting the rights of women. They have an executive body that takes broader decisions and is elected every three years. It is, in turn, supported by locally nominated leaders across the area. They are active across 80 villages directly currently but continue to support communities from other villages where she was actively engaged with earlier. This region has a mix of forests and agricultural plains and is on the border of Orissa.

D. Key Activities in the five locations during the previous 3 years¹⁸

As it has already been mentioned above, all of the Fellows have been supporting the primary Sanghatan before the start of the current phase of support from SRUTI. For the Fellows, the source of funds is not an important factor, as SRUTI provides the support as a fellowship. It is the responsibility of SRUTI to mobilise funds. Where possible, SRUTI provides additional support

¹⁸ The activities have been picked up from the annual reports submitted by SRUTI to APPI.

for some of the interventions, like perspective development, awareness camps etc. that the sanghatans supported by SRUTI undertake. However, it is important to clarify that these sanghatans are not dependent on the support from SRUTI and undertake resource generation through collection of money, as well as food-grains from the local communities with who they work. The resources provided by SRUTI, in addition to the fellowships, support capacity building, perspective development and deepening sanghatan processes.

The key interventions of the Fellows and the primary sanghatan they work with (on a year by year basis) in reproduced in the Appendix from SRUTI documentation¹⁹. As mentioned earlier, the engagement of other Fellows is not captured here.

Kailash Bharti has been part of the **Mazdoor Kisan Samiti**: The critical focus of the MKS, since its inception, was to ensure the rights of the poor, especially the mahadalits, to homestead and agricultural land based on their historical struggle against the Bodhgaya Math. Their strategy has been to directly engage with the govt. administrative machinery as they have seen that the Gram Panchayats are not able to function in a truly deliberative manner, with deeply a fissured social division and a high number of people in each gram sabha constituency (Bihar has an average of 8781 people in each gram panchayat). With the delegation of powers-funds, functions and functionaries not being clear in Bihar and the state being a laggard as far as devolution is concerned²⁰, it is not surprising that the sanghatan has not engaged with politically stratified gram sabhas where 6-8 hamlets comprise a Gram Sabha, in any strategic manner. However, this is not to say that they have not worked with the Gram Sabhas during this period of the past three years. Gram Panchayats have not formed the only mechanism of engagement with the state for the MKS.

The focus of mobilization was around social security schemes like MNGEGA, TPDS and govt. scholarships. They worked with the community to get school buildings made in the new villages created after their earlier interventions. A survey of 9 villages on the Jharkhand border was done which formed the basis for advocacy to get their recognition as revenue villages. A number of individual forest rights claims were filed (652) but 531 were rejected as documentation showing 75 years of domicile was not shown with them. They were thus a party to a case filed through the

¹⁹ Extracted from the SRUTI annual reports to APPI.

²⁰ For instance, see the CAG Report for Bihar, 2016
https://cag.gov.in/sites/default/files/audit_report_files/Bihar_Performance_Audit_LB_PRI_Report_1_2016.pdf

JaSaVa in the Patna High Court which gave an interim order of not displacing the claimants till the final Court Order is issued. They have continued to create the groundwork for more IFRs in the meantime. Work on the land records and procedural work for agricultural lands has continued during this period. This follow up is critical to ensure that people have a full claim over their lands.

At the other end of the spectrum, so to speak, **Jang Sai**, through the **Gram Ganrajya Sanghathan** has been mobilizing the community through the direct appeal of the Constitution of India and the powers given in the PESA 1996 Act by mobilizing traditional Gram Sabhas. The work of the sangathan over the past three years has been focussed on declaring *Gram Ganrajya Sarkar*'s, (village republics), with a nominated group of people to represent it. The typical composition of the Sarkar consists of the traditional leadership of the village, based on traditionally assigned functions, and a further addition of active community members to the council, taking it to a group of about 15 people. Significant effort has been spent during this period towards shaping these Sarkar's as also (re)creating the tiered system of social justice and decision-making structures through a twelve- village council (Pargana Nyay Sabha) and a broader council across the sphere of influence of a local deity (Garh Sabha). Creating this three-tiered structure and undertaking knowledge interventions to revive these traditional institutions, keeping the statutes and laws of the modern Indian state has been the critical focus during this period.

Sarkar's were formed in Pratappur block and Udgir block with newer ones in Premnagar and Rajpur blocks being formed recently. The concept of the Sarkar is also being expanded through the Sarva Adivasi Samaj and Adivasi Ekta Manch. GGS has continued its work at motivating local educated youth to work with the local schools and support the teachers in the classes. Capacity building of adults has been done by holding large educational camps explaining the features of PESA, 1996 and how they can mobilise community members to demand their rights. Besides this, active work has been done around the displacement caused by MAHAN 2 open cast Coal mines and to stop the displacement of the local communities by MAHAN 3 Coal Block and by the proposed Elephant Corridor next to the Semarsot and the Badalkhor sanctuaries.

Arvind Anjum and the **Vistapit Mukti Vahini**, while continuing to support local struggles against displacement, protection of natural resources and promotion of local voices in governance, have been instrumental in the support to consolidate the Fisher Co-operative in the Chandil Reservoir zone, and in motivating villagers to undertake a lift irrigation scheme-moving from

“sangharsh” (struggle) to “nirman (development). Interestingly, their mobilization for transparency for the use of the Fourteenth Finance Commission funds to gram panchayats, and subsequent planning for the same led to SRUTI undertaking a national level consultation and creating formal recommendations from the perspectives of gram sabhas for the Fifteenth Finance Commission, which is currently undertaking consultations with stakeholders across the country before formulating recommendation for the sharing of revenue between the Union govt., State governments and local bodies.

This, combined with discussions on the Tribal Sub Plan funds to panchayats, lead them to explore taking up village development plans and they focussed on Netra (East Singhbhum) and Hurlung (Sarai Karsavaha) villages, before expanding to 10 villages. Social audits with a focus on MNREGA, Finance Commission Funds and the Birsa Munda Aam Bagwani funds, issues faced by the community on the rule of Aadhar linkage with PDS were critical thematic engagements with the gram panchayats and local administration. Continued dialogues with the traditional gram sabhas and the panchayats in the context of amendment processes to the CNT/SPTA happened during this period. VMV continued to support the rehabilitation demands of the local communities affected by the Chandil and Dimna dams.

Alok Shukla and the **Hasdeo Aranya Bachao Sangharsh Samiti** works in a Schedule V area in the Korba and Sarguja districts and has been constantly engaging in the work to protect the natural resources of the area by asserting the rights of the community over them. They have directly engaged with the gram sabhas and motivated them to dialogue with the policy makers and administrators about land rights and the protection of the local forests, apart from emphasizing citizenship rights and entitlements of the community. The critical focus in the recent years have been to protect the environment and push back on the ingress of coal mining in the area. They have been able to highlight the issue in the national and regional media, mobilize political support and engage the local gram sabhas to demand public hearings before such projects are started. Engagement with the state has been around issues of “False consent” being filed without actually undertaking a public hearing or conducting it in a place where local voices couldn’t be heard. 15 gram sabhas have passed resolutions against illegally obtained environmental clearances.

Besides this, the HABSS has also been raising the issues of forest clearances-and effectively pressured the Forest Department to accept that permission from the gram sabha had to be obtained before tree felling. With large scale forest diversion taking place in the area due to the expansion of the coal mining belt and the use of CAMPA to undermine the claims of the people under FRA, the Sanghatan has been using media advocacy as well as engaging civil society formations like the CBA to raise this issue. They have directly raised issues using the Lok Suraj Abhiyan of the Chhattisgarh govt about illegal diversion of forest lands for coal mining, cancellation of CFRs²¹, IFR claims not being respected, violation of Gram Sabha resolutions not being respected, improper functioning of govt. schools and for proper fund allocation under the Tribal Sub-plan. Campaigns at the village level to raise awareness about FRA and PESA have been undertaken.

Rajim Ketwas and the **Dalit Adivasi Manch** have been working in the Kasdol and Pithora blocks of the newly formed Baloda Bazaar District to ensure that gains that the community have been working on to get their forest right claims is consolidated and that people can now start looking at possibilities of community rights and for forest management under the FRA. They have continued to focus on the various govt. schemes to benefit individuals/families and also engaged in addressing inter-personal issues, especially regarding violence against women during this period.

They have also worked to mobilize the community against the displacement from the Barnawapara wildlife sanctuary and the Sonakhan gold mines. Consolidation of over 600 IFR, and CFR claims for 60 villages have been done across the Mahassumand and Baloda Bazaar districts with the support of the sanghatan. 59 of the CFR were approved by the SDLC but were made in the name of the Forest Management Committee and not the gram sabha. DAM has worked with the gram sabhas to demand for their conversion. 5 village development plans have been drawn up and submitted to the respective gram sabhas. Vigilance committees have been set up at the village level in 80 villages with 5-7 active members, out of which at least two are women. They keep records and watch over the aaganwadis, health centres, MDMS, schools and the PDS. Information centres have been established in 20 villages.

²¹ Kohli K. "An Unresolved Legal Question about Forest Rights" Human Rights Law Journal. <https://cprindia.org/articles/unresolved-legal-question-about-forest-rights>

E. Consultations with Sanghatans and SRUTI Fellows

The key perspective that this exercise has focussed on it to bring out the role of the Fellows and the primary sanghatan that they work with in influencing local governance to give better development outputs to the communities that they work with. Keeping this in mind, and recognizing that different Fellows and the sanghatans have had a differing approach as mentioned earlier, we will take each of them by turn. Given the nature of work, and the selection of the Fellows by SRUTI, a common factor has been the recent assertion for the rights over forest lands, either through individual and/or community claims that is visible in each of the five locations. Also, given that three of the Fellows are active with sanghatans working in Schedule V areas, the role of PESA 1996 in governance has come up significantly. Claims over entitlements and welfare schemes of the governments is also visible in all the locations.

It is important to highlight, again, that this is records the activities of the Fellows and the primary sanghatans that they work with, and not that as SRUTI's project-implementation partners. They have, thus, been able to continue the work that they have been doing, with support from SRUTI, but directed by the key processes emerging from the ground and their own strategic perspective around the issues. SRUTI has played a role in capacity building and education, not just for the Fellows, but also the sanghatan and community leadership through programmes designed by the Fellows at the community level.

Mazdoor Kisan Samiti, Bodhgaya, District Gaya, Bihar

Emerging from the Bodhgaya Andolan²² to get land rights for the landless bonded workers of the Bodhgaya Math in the 1970s, led by the Chatra Yuva Sangharsh Vahini, the MKS was the local

²² For a background on the Bodhgaya movement, please see:

1. http://www.manushi-india.org/pdfs_issues/PDF%20files%2014/2.%20Zameen%20Kenkar%20Jote%20Onkar.pdf
2. http://www.manushi-india.org/pdfs_issues/PDF%20files%2040/when_women_get_land.pdf
3. <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=12&ved=2ahUKewjMreTstPrjAhV-GknAKHWLfbzEQFjALegQIBhAC&url=https%3A%2F%2Frepositories.lib.utexas.edu%2Fbitstream%2Fhandle%2F2152%2F38723%2FFRASAD-DISSERTATION-2016.pdf%3Fsequence%3D1&usg=AOvVaw0vXqnS1BQMhELTLvUATj8O>

struggle group that has continued the work on land rights and social justice, focussed on the mahadalits in the area. The work is spread over about 600 sq. km with about 280 of the 500 odd villages associated with it. This area is spread over the blocks of Mohanpur, Barahchatti, Bodhgaya, Dobhi and Tenpukka of Gaya district. Over time, the MKS has lost touch with 50 of these villages. Most of the landless bonded labourers in those villages, however, were able to get land. With the coming in of the Maoists, the movement subsided but revived again after 1996. It was during this period that 10 new settlements and 13 tribal villages were formed with the support of the MKS.

The MKS meets twice a month with about 100 people attending one large gathering. Local collection is done to cover the costs of the meeting and the location varies from village to village. Additionally, the second meeting is a block level meeting, mostly in Mohanpur. The sanghatan is led by a 13-member District Committee. The President and the Vice-President of MKS are elected. At the other end, each village nominates five members to the MKS who act as village representatives.

In the recent years, as already mentioned, the major focus has been on drawing up individual forest rights claims using the FRA. FRA claims had been made in 13 villages (3 villages in Barrachati, and 10 in Mohanpur block respectively), spread over 5 panchayats. Due process was followed and the claims were endorsed by the gram sabhas after going through the FRC. They have also been encouraging plantation on personal lands. Engagement of the community with the Forest Department was always contentious with the officials extracting bribes for the collection of fuel, fodder and minor forest produce. Organising people created pressure on the officials to stop this practice. Mud ponds have been constructed due to the motivation of the MKS through pressure on various line departments using various government schemes. A community owned lift irrigation scheme, a check dam and a pond have been constructed in Baghlatti village. With the scarcity of drinking water in the area, 250 handpumps were installed in the area due to the advocacy towards utilizing the MPLADS funds during 2017-18. There is a constant effort to keep the members updated about various govt. schemes and policies and there is direct engagement of the sanghatan to ensure that they are properly implemented.

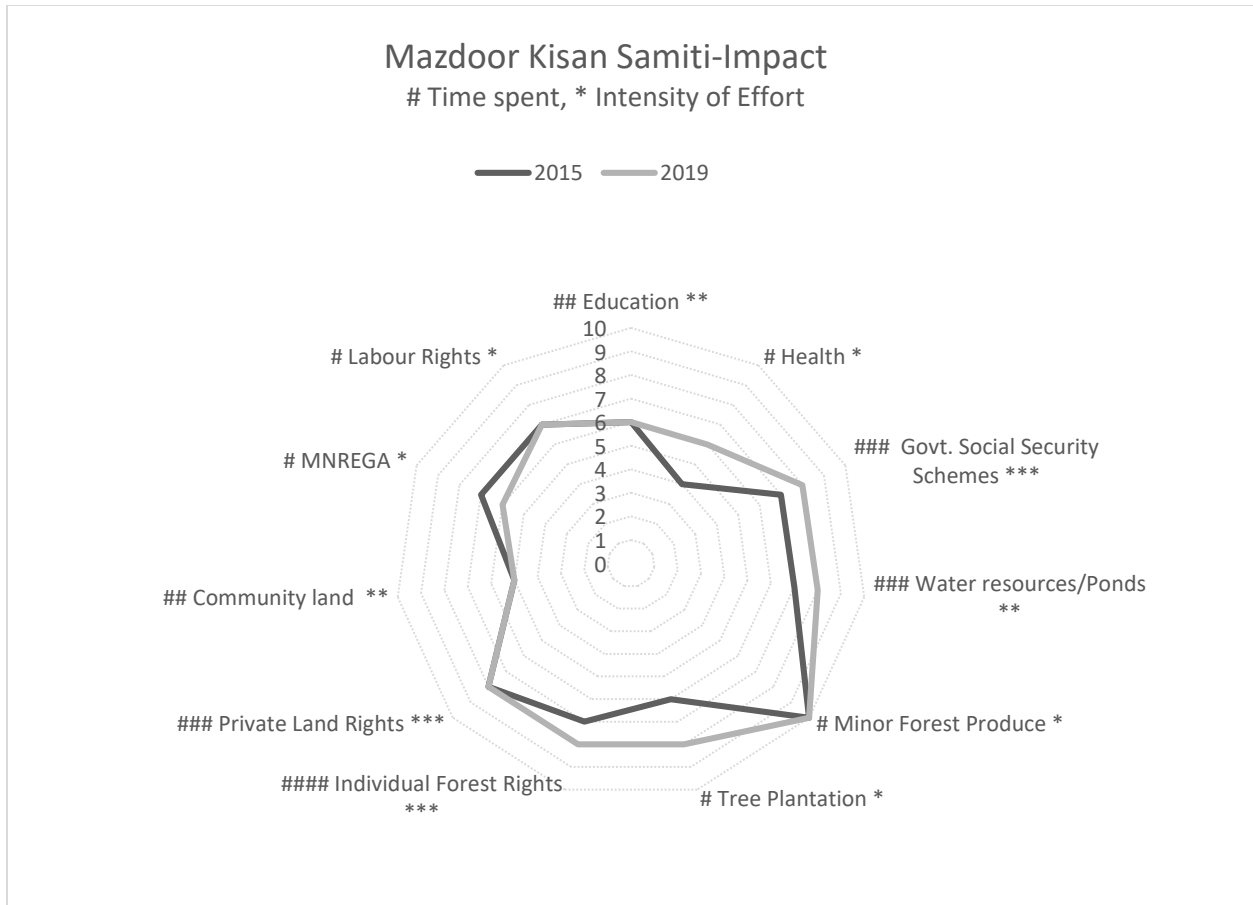
MKS has been helping the community to create new homestead areas and about 15 new villages had been set up. In the last few years, Lok Nayak JP Nagar, Nutanbigha, Dodha, Vahini Nagar and Jay Prabha nagar were settled. The MKS worked with the local communities to create pressure on the government to set up social infrastructure like roads and schools in these localities.

With the second generation growing up after the stranglehold of the Math on the lands, there are new aspirations and migration among the community. MKS has to effectively address this. They have, for instance, already started discussions of agricultural produce prices and the rates at the mandis. Political engagement of the leadership has resulted in some members having contested of posts in panchayat elections. The sanghatan was able to support a candidate who has been elected as Mukhiya in Jaigir panchayat. In other locations, the sanghatan members could not win as they were only got support from one set of people in the community, again underlining the stratified social fabric in the area.

As an exercise to generate the understanding of the core members of the MKS about the impact of their work, the following chart was generated with the lines marking the situation in the two years relative to an ideal situation at the edge of the circle. The # symbol²³ marks the time spent by the activists to on each issue during the intervening years and the * marks²⁴ the intensity of effort.

²³ In this case, 20 points were allocated across issues denoting the distribution of time that was spend on each issue.

²⁴ * denotes the intensity of effort. * being low, ** middling and *** great effort.



There are several clear pointers that are visible here:

1. MNREGA is one area that has seen a decline despite their efforts. The earlier phase saw a lot of work with efforts being made for workers job card registrations, selection of public works like constructions of Ahar and Pokhars, and also afforestation. Some cases of corruption were exposed and procedures made functional. MKS worked with the workers to ensure that they demanded, and got the fair payment for their work. However, with the dwindling interest of the government in supporting MNREGA, and reduced allocation of resources for the same, they have not been able to press for more works and hence this was shown as a decline. Relatively, not much effort and time was also spent on MNEGA during this period.
2. Minor Forest Produce: With the changes in the rules of allowing access to minor forest produce and the collection of Mahua, collection for personal use has been going on without hinderance. Moreover, after the struggle and pressure on the Forest Department, the

extraction of bribes had also stopped by 2015 and it has continued this way. However, the sanghatan continues to stay vigilant.

3. The key areas where MKS focussed on, or continued to focus on during this period was the Private Land Rights, Individual Forest Right claims (preparation of claims in 15 Tribal villages with about 400 claims, OTFD in 10 villages about 500 claims²⁵), water resources and govt. provided social security schemes. From the chart above, we can see that maximum time and effort were spent by MKS for these issues. This included mobilizing people to make efforts to restore existing water resources as Ahar, Pyne and Pokhars as also the efforts to have new handpumps installed. Similarly, the work on Individual Forest Rights continued during this period as well as the settlement of forest villages. Consolidation of the work on private land rights, in a way the starting point of MKS, continued. The focus being that all the families had their land records registered and documentation complete.
4. Community Land: The public work on common lands included demanding for PCC road and/or brick lined connectivity to the new hamlets/villages, as also allocation of land for construction of dwelling for homeless families.
5. Issues of Health and Education continued to be important to the MKS, with the need to develop new social infrastructure in the new villages and expand the outreach in other villages. People were encouraged to take pregnant women for health check-up and to use the institutional deliveries for safe delivery. MKS worked with the people to ensure that they got health cards and pressurized the health staff in to work effectively in the public health institutions in their area.

Illustrative Achievements in last 3 years by MKS in Select Villages

²⁵ The Individual Forest Right Claims have been prepared but the claims have not been submitted yet.

Sr. No.	Block	Panchayat	Village	Achievement
1	Mohanpur	Erki	Rampur Dhantari	10 Acres of land Fish pound with the support of fishery department Brick soling of village streets PCC road Plantation of trees Drinking water pipeline from Nal-Jal Yojna in 2018
2	Mohanpur	Lakhaipur	Navadih Tola	10 families were settled on 20 acres in last 2 years Drinking water pipeline from Nal-Jal yojana in 2018
3	Mohanpur	Musaila	Baghlatti	Check Dam, lift irrigation system, fish pond by villagers On 30 acres of dalit land 30 dalit families were settled Black top road in village Rolled and flattened mud road in village Electrification of village Forest right claims on 200 acres of forest land
4	Fatehpur	Dakshini Lodhve	Azadgram	80 Acre land from sealing for agricultural and residential purpose; 8 families were settled Electrification of village Plantation of trees Construction of Kisan Bhavan
5	Fatehpur	Cherki	Dariyapur	40 families were settled on 3 acre of govt. land Drinking water Plantation of trees
6	Fatehpur	Charukhari	J.P. Nagar	50 families were settled on 3 acres of govt. land All houses were built from PMAY scheme Community submersible pump PCC road Community Hall Plantation of trees
7	Fatehpur	Pakdi	Sabri Nagar	In 1990 on 1 acre 50 dismil land 30 houses were established which now has increased to 50, 30 houses have titles for the land Drinking water and Electricity has reached in the village Under the PMAY houses are built Primary School is built in the village
8	Fatehpur	Pakdi	Lohyanagar	10 families were settled in 1991 here on the main road from Pakdi village, here houses are being built from PMAY scheme
9	Fatehpur	Pakdi	Khaira	On 2 acre of sealing land 40 families were settled Houses are built from PMAY scheme Construction of road Electrification of village Primary school in the village
10	Fatehpur	Dumri Chatti	Ambedkar Nagar	Since 1995 50 families are being settled here on 1 acre 50 dismil land Some of the families have got titles as well

11	Fatehpur	Dumri Chatti	Hanumatta	Since 2000 30 new families are being settled House construction from Indira awas yojna PCC road construction Electrification Titles for homestead land
12	Barahchatti	Jaygir	Premnagar	Established on the land claimed through FRA from the forest area of 2 villages In 2018 people started settling here as of now 125 families are residing here and cultivating on 450 acre of land All houses have access to electricity 2 acre land is also arranged for Sangathan office which is provided by the village
13	Barahchatti	Jaygir	Barandih	This village got associated with the Sangathan in 2008 for FRA claims 100 houses are accommodating families of Khairwar, Bhuiyan, Saav, Thakur castes as well as some muslim families. 30 houses were built again and 25 more houses were built on forest land Houses were built from PMAY scheme Electricity Drinking water Black top road 150 houses were established on 150 acre of forest land
14	Barahchatti	Jaygir	Dihdhari	Village has the possession on forest land since last 20 years 20 houses were settled here Individual claims were filed under FRA
15		Gopalkheda	Piprahiya	20 houses were demolished by forest department which were resettled Chanda Devi a Sangathan karyakarta stopped a JCB, failing the attempt of forest department for demolition of these houses again Some of the houses are connected with road and have access to electricity A community bore-well for drinking water

VISTHAPIT MUKTI VAHINI, Districts East Singhbhum, West Singhbhum and Sarai Kharsawan

VMV was formed in 1987 as a response to the emerging struggle against displacement and the need for proper rehabilitation of the dam affected communities of the Chandil Dam. Due to the organization and consolidated voice of the dam oustees, the movement has been able to engage with the administration and improve the rehabilitation package over time. They have, also keeping

in mind the needs of the communities, being able to organise the displaced people to create and bid for fisheries development and tourist rights in the Chandil Dam. This demand, is not being made by other dam movements also. At the current moment, there are three full time activists - Arvind Anjum, Kapur Bagi and Sunita (who works with Tana Bhagats), supported by 17 volunteers who are working in and around Jamshedpur. VMV is in turn, working closely with other state level groups such as Visthapan Virodhi Manch, Jharkhand Van Adhikar Manch, Jan Sanghash Samiti and other dam movements at Icha or Koel Karo.

Starting from the issue of displacement due to the large dams, the VMV has engaged itself in issues of people's access on their resources and worked for the empowerment of the gram sabha as a viable institution that can carry the voice of the people. Given that this is a Schedule V region and that traditional forms of governance have continued to exist in the region, being reinforced through Tenancy Acts such as the CNT and the Santhal Parganas Tenancy Act that curb the alienation of lands from the tribal, dalit and other backward class communities, the collective decision making processes on the ground are still strong. However, even with the PESA 1996, the Jharkhand govt. has still not complied with most of its provisions and rules have still not been framed.

Keeping this in mind, there continues to be a tension between the Panchayat leadership and the traditional leadership coming from the Majhi Pargana, Padha Panchayats and Dokolo Sohor systems of governance that continue to hold sway over the region. There are various issues like the leadership positions being hereditary and that women do not usually have any role in them. More-over, these tend to be community arrangements and not village level consultative and decision-making platforms. Even in the panchayats, there have been changes that have delegated powers initially to the Ward members, by passing the Sarpanch and further that village development committees have been appointed that have Rs 5 lakh discretionary spending each year and by pass the elected council.

The initial focus of VMV was on land alienation and forest protection. They have supported the rehabilitation demands in other big dams like the Suvernakha and others and those due to industrial acquisition. They work closely with gram sabhas in their areas as they feel that gives an opportunity for people to exercise direct democracy and thus it is important. In the past three years, VMV has focussed its work on the Land Acquisition Act, Forests Rights Act and the Fourteenth Finance Commission grants to the gram panchayats.

Their work is spread across 11 blocks in the 3 districts, with support to local communities being provided in West Singhbhum only since the past two years. Work on social audit to bring transparency and the implementation of the Fourteenth Finance Commission award has helped in promoting gram sabhas as effective institutions that can hold the Panchayats and Line departments to account. The current agitation in the Dimna submergence zone has also gained due to this and they now see this as a collective process led by the gram sabha to correct the historic wrong when Tata's acquired their lands even before independence (please see case study). The VMV also continues to support the Chandil dam oustees in strengthening their fisher's co-operative as well as progressively guide them towards a constructive development phase by promoting water use, tourism (boating contract for oustee families). Alternatives livelihoods are being promoted. The focus on the use of FRA has been to file CFRs, rather than IFRs in the recent period as there have been recent encroachment of forest lands.

As the table below illustrates, a major focus of their work has been on empowering the gram sabhas in the area and generating consensus to work on specific issues, whether its negotiation with the TATAs and the district administration or the proper implementation of MNREGA. While these village level interventions have continued over the years, VMV also initiated a dialogue between traditional leadership and elected panchayat leaders to establish integration between traditional gramsabhas and PRIs. Given that the VMV is primarily made of the volunteers, who work with local communities, on their leisure time, it is remarkable that they have been able to sustain their activism and engagement at a level that can make a significant difference. This support is still considered important, even for Chandil dam oustees who recognise that people like Arvind Anjum, Balram and Shastri offered constant support and transmitted information, provided organizational and logistical planning support and helped the local community to strategize. They also served as a vital conduit to other such social movements. With the local group in the Chandil area maturing, they have been involved in policy dialogues with the State administration and can now negotiate not only issues of compensation but also alternative livelihoods.

S.No	District	Block	Panchayat	Village	Issues /work
1	East Singbhum	Bodam	Lailam	Brajpur, Punsu, Nutandih, Lailam, Pagda, Kumari and Rapacha	Dimna Dam Displacement Issues, Empowerment of Gram sabha and FRA
			Bonta	Chimti, Bonta, Kutimakali, Bhadudih, Saldoha, Haludabni, Patipani, Mirzadih & Gedua	Dimna Dam Displacement Issues, Empowerment of Gram sabha and FRA
			Bodam	Sutaridali Dangar	Empowerment of Gram sabha and FRA
			Beldih	Jarki Gobarelaad	Empowerment of Gram sabha and FRA
		Patamda	Mahulbana	Mahulbana	Empowerment of Gram sabha and MGNRGS Implementation
			Dighi	Jalla, Lekdo	Empowerment of Gram sabha, Implementation of MGNRGA and Library
			Khedua	Bamani	Empowerment of Gram sabha

			Bidara	Macha	worked towards proper function of Community Health Centre
		Jamshedpur	Bayangbil	Kudada	Empowerment of Gram sabha and FRA
			Luabasa	Kairbani, Khakhadipada, Dhanchatani, Hurlung	Empowerment of Gram sabha and FRA
			Mango	Baliguma	Land rights, Housing rights for landless
		Potka	Potka	Roladih, Samarsai	Empowerment of Gram sabha, Against land grab of Bhushan Power plant
			Asanbani	Ghotiduba, Dingaarsai, Asanbani, Tilamuda	Empowerment of Gram sabha, Against land grab of Jindal Power plant
o		Musabani	Terenga	Netra, Chakuliya, Kumirmudi	Empowerment of Gram sabha, VDPS Process and FRA

			Forest Block	Forest Block	Empowerment of Gram sabha, VDPS Process and FRA
2	Saraikela Kharsawan	Chandil	Ruchap	Gangudih	Ownership Right and Rehabilitation and resettlement of Displaced people from Chandil Dam,
			Chilgu and other Connected Panchayats	Chilgu	Ownership Right and Rehabilitation and resettlement of Displaced people from Chandil Dam,
		Ichagarh	Bandu and other affected panchayat	Hurlung	Ownership Right and Rehabilitation and resettlement of Displaced people from Chandil Dam & VDPs process
		Kukadu	Adiya and Affected Panchayats	Adiya	for the rights of Chandil Dam displaced

3	West Singbhum	Tantnagar	Angardiha (Newly Added)	Angaridiha	Empowerment of Gram sabha, VDPS Process
		Manoharpur	Raidih	Ganmor	Empowerment of Gram sabha, VDPS Process

Gram Ganrajya Sangathan

GGs traces its roots to the resistance of the local communities to the creation of the Semarsot sanctuary and Tiger Reserve and the eviction of 52 villages in 1996-97. B. D. Sharma, the former SC/ST Commissioner visited the area at the behest of the then Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister, Digvijay Singh and inspired the local youth. With the initial success in pushing back the Tiger Reserve, the community members were motivated and started protecting their forests. At the time, there had also been a significant amount of land alienation of the tribal population by non-tribals. The Gaon Ganrajya Sangathan was formed by a youth group inspired by the Bharat Jan Andolan and was initially referred to as the Gaon Ganrajya Golden Yuva Toli. They continued working across these 52 villages and other villages around the area. With the advent of Maoist mobilization in the area, this kind of work slowed down. However, a large amount of alienated land was returned to the tribals during this period. Low- key work continued on the issue of local self-rule and Parsagodi gram sabha emerged as a Community Court, where local people would come to settle their cases. The local Youth Toli continued to support traditional gram sabhas and motivate them to address community issues.

A major turn for the sangathan came when the Mahan 2 Coal mines started acquiring land without the consent of the gram sabha. The youth came forward in Chaura village, motivating the women and then the adult males to join the protest and decided to hold a rally on 24th Dec 2008. The rally became violent and vehicles were burnt down. 6 people were accused of damaging property and

the Company demanded Rs 37 lakhs in compensation. A case was filed and it took 10 years before GGS won in 2017.

12 villages affected by the coal mines came together to resist coal mine operations.

At this time a victory procession was planned and it was decided that the message has to be spread through a Mahasabha where the following resolutions were passed:

- Stop illegal mining and use the FRA and PESA to stop it
- No contractors to be allowed, and selection of all people has to be by the gram sabha
- Political parties to be discouraged as they have not done anything for the development of people
- MAHAN 3 should be stopped
- All development work in the area should be done only with the permission of the gram sabha

The Mahasabha had more than 1000 people from about 60 villages where it was decided that Gaon Ganrajya Sarkar's will be formed in each village to preserve the culture and heritage using traditional governance that is acknowledged in Schedule V of the Constitution and PESA 1996.

Consequently, 19 villages in Udgir Block, 23 in Pratappur block, 3 in Rajpur block and 17 villages in Premnagar block declared themselves as Gaon Ganrajya Sarkar. A formal structure was revived with 12 villages coming together to form a Pargana Nyay Sabha to handle issues that could not be dealt with at the village level or were in the nature of inter-village issues. As a third layer of self-governance, Gadhsabhas were formed. The gadhsabhas follow the local deity's sphere of influence. The Pratappur Gadhsabh (Samlai Mata and Garh Mahadeve) comprises of 84 villages, the Ramkola Garhsabha (Jalamukhi Devi) having 74 villages and the Basraj Kuwar Garhsabha (Basrajkuwar) having 87 villages. The Koopa Garhsabha (Danav dewta) is currently in the process of being formed.

The formation of the Gaon Ganrajya Sarkar is through the representatives of the community. Apart from the traditional leaders like the Mukiya, the Baiga Alwa, Guddhi, and others, about 8-10 active community members are involved in the Sarkar who take decisions. Existing PRI members are also part of the Gaon Ganrajya and they work with this body to take forward development and governance related aspects. Apart from its vigilance role on developmental works being

undertaken in the village boundaries, the GGS has actively sought volunteers from among the community to help the local aaganwadis, govt. primary schools and middle schools to give three hours as additional teachers.

GGS has installed stone tablets articulating the main points of the Indian Constitution on village boundaries demarcating them as villages under PESA, 1996. They have been filing IFR claims in Jagannathpur, Parswar, Panpapur and Chaura villages. So far 210 IFR have been filed. They have also filed 3 CFR management claims, and 40 villages have filed CFR.

The GGS is an active member of the Chhattisgarh Bachao Andolan, Bharat Jan Andolan, Tribal People's Forum of Adivasi leaders formed only in 2019, Sarv Adivasi Samaj and Adivasi Mahasabha.

Jan Abhiviyakti and Hasdeo Aranya Bachao Sangharsh Samiti

Alok Shukla has been supporting the HABSS since 2012. The sanghatan emerged as a response to the rapidly expanding coal mining in the Hasdeo Aranya, a biodiversity rich forest area spread over Korba, Surajpur and Sarguja districts. Protection of their forests and livelihoods was critical from the tribal communities living in the Schedule V area. People from 35 villages came together to collectively stop this encroachment after having tried to stop the coal mining through petitioning the government, without success. Jan Abhiviyakti had been studying the spread of coal mining in the area which has 30 coal blocks. 18 of the 30 possible coal blocks in the area had already been allotted. In the initial meeting, representatives from 35 villages of 20 panchayats took part. Over time, only 20 villages from 7 panchayats are still active as it's difficult to stay in constant communication across the 35 villages for the activists.

They have been asserting their rights of ownership and use of the natural resources in the area, using the gram sabhas and powers conferred through the PESA Act 1996 to strengthen their claims. They have also used the FRA to lay individual and community claims in the area. Jan Abhiviyakti

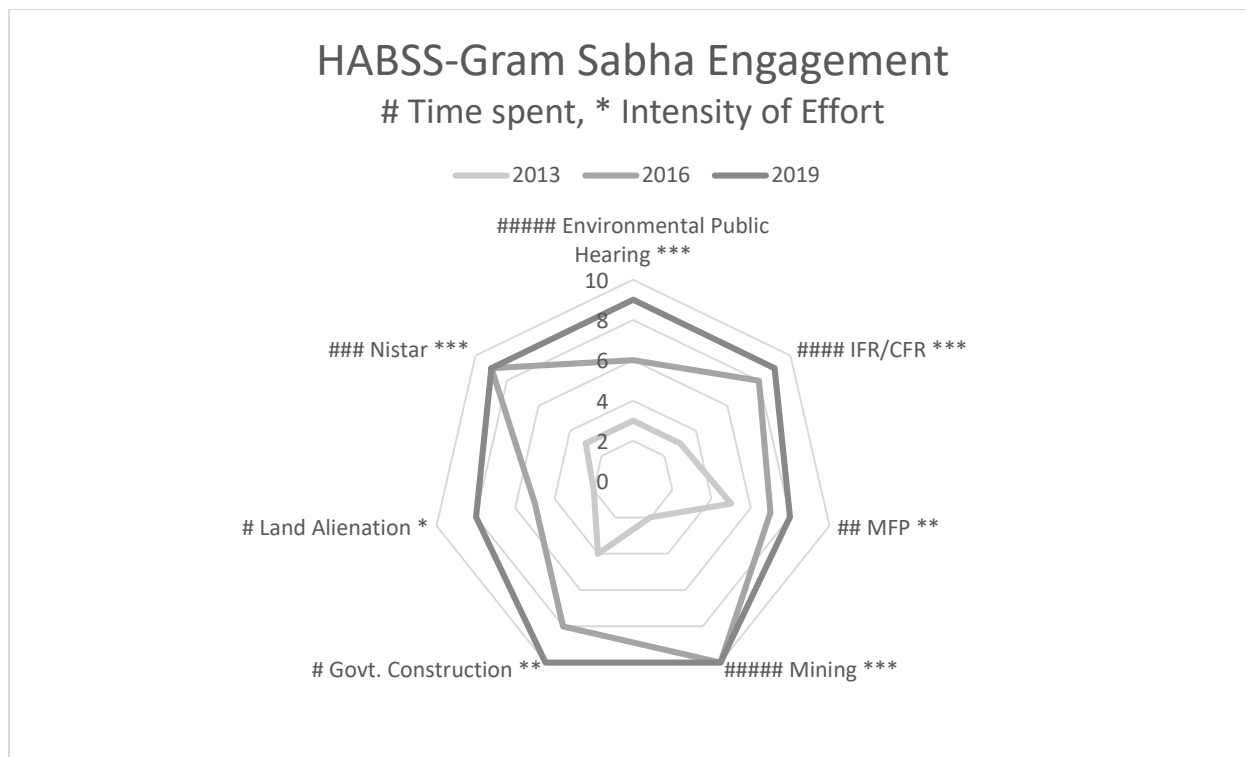
has also worked with the sanghatan to create awareness about the environmental impacts of mining and ancillary activities.

The HABSS was formed with 7 convenors from different villages. The membership includes people from all communities while this area is predominantly tribal. The 7 convenors led the sanghatan since its inception but 4 of them have passed away. The current leadership has continued and is nominated by the mukhiyas. Umeshwar acts as the convenor of the HABSS and the Samiti is supported by the Jan Abhiviyakti activists. They collectively, with the village mukhiyas, decide an annual plan and the Core group meets on the 14th of every month to take stock and make decisions.

Over time, the active villages have reduced as mining activity expanded. Protection of the forests and seeking compliance from the coal mine operators go hand in hand but the dynamics at the community level are different and that has created confusion at the village level about how to proceed together. Mixed with this, is also the role of contractors and possibilities of low paying employment which has created mixed incentives for people. After protests were organised at the tehsil and the district level, the government responded by withdrawal of MNREGA works and by stopping the processing of IFRs. Further protests were done with 14 Gram Sabhas passed resolutions against mining in the Hasdeo Aranya region. Mobilization led to questions being asked in the Chhattisgarh Vidhan Sabha also.

Support from Jan Abhiviyakti comes in the form of information, legal support, organizing media coverage and facilitating issue-based and strategy planning. The HABSS feels that this support is important to be able to project the work outside but they are now strong enough to be able to take up issues at the local level on their own.

Capacitating the gram sabhas has been the focus of the work here and the gram sabhas have taken it upon themselves to protect the natural resources in the area. They have been instrumental in stopping forest fires, in demanding that the Forest Department take permission from the gram sabha before any tree felling operations.



Time spent and intensity of effort is mapped for the period 2016-2019.

The Chart above denotes the efforts made by the HABSS to mobilise the gram sabhas and the resultant actions showing the change that has taken place in deepening various aspects of issues that are relevant to the community here.

Issue	Till 2012	2013-16	2016-19
Environmental Public Hearing	At this time, environmental public hearings were being organised and people would also register their protests. However, they would not be conducted at the location itself.	With increased awareness, people started demanding that projects cannot be commenced without the statutory public hearing and free and informed consent of the gram sabha.	Awareness on rules and procedures, including the use of the media led to the more scrutiny and false documents being submitted to show the public hearings had been conducted were rejected.
Forest Rights Act- IFR/CFR	People were not aware about the Act, apart from the fact that they can get a land title. Awareness creation on this issue started in 2012	People had started demanding for IFR and CFR after they started demanding the same. Due processes were established and IFR and CFR were filed after endorsement from the gram sabhas. 7 CFR	12 CFR were allocated in Korba district. The local community also felt that they could now have a say in the protection of forests and they started protecting the forest

		were allocated in Sarguja district during this period.	from forest fires as well as illegal felling.
Minor Forest Produce	Contractors would control the tendu leaf collection and would give minimal rates. Saal Seeds were taken at Rs 5 per kg. However, there was no pressure from the Forest Department or District Administration on the collection of MFP so char, Mahua, Tendu leaves were freely available.	Without pressure from the Forest Department, Saal, Mahua, Char, Bhera and Harra could be collected. Govt. started purchasing seeds on a fixed rate and took over Tendu leaves as well, leading to better rates and reduced exploitation. This acted like a floor for the private contractors who wanted to buy Tendu Leaves.	Purchase of Tendu leaves reduced but rates increased, along with bonus. There was also reduced use of other MFP, based on actual requirements. There is now awareness about the collecting of MFP without damaging the forest.
Common Resources/Nistar	While there has been a community level understanding of nistar and people have been using them, but people did not know their legal rights. Over time, these had become individual claims leading to over-exploitation.	Through the training and awareness building, people started understanding the relevance of common nistar resources. People articulated this through the gram sabhas and started responding to emergencies like forest fires. However, it would be premature to say that they felt ownership over the forests. The traditional methods of environmental conservation were recalled and brought forward while filing common Forest rights claims.	Understanding of common patrimony was matched with some CFR being allotted. Gram Sabhas passed resolutions where partial CFR were granted. There is now social awareness about protection of forests.
Govt. Construction activities	People had not say in any government works and did not have any information about it. Work was done through the Sarpanch and Sachiv, and people	After awareness, people started raising questions in the gram sabhas and they became an effective forum to demand accountability	People are aware about their rights and assert them in the gram sabha. All govt. works are now discussed in the gram sabha and work can't be started

	accepted whatever payment was made to them	from the Sarpanch and Sachiv.	without the concurrence of the gram sabha.
Sale and purchase of land	Land transactions were totally undocumented and people would sell off the lands they had traditionally occupied-agricultural or forest. People had no idea about how the buyer planned to use the land. Awareness building around the issue had just begun at the time	With increased awareness, sale of land declined. All sellers had to inform the gram sabha about the buyer and related issues.	With the assertion of control by the gram sabhas, sale of forest land being used by people has almost ceased and this has supported forest management and led to better management of minor forest produce too.
Mining	Very limited information but people were resisting displacement.	The Sanghatan helped people understand their legal rights and the correct procedures. Interventions to strengthen gram sabhas were also made. Awareness about Schedule V area and PESA was made and how environmental protection is closely related to tribal art, culture.	Consultation with gram sabha before permission for any new mines has now become the norm. People participate in these public hearing and put forth their views. They use legal arguments in order to put their point across.

Dalit Adivasi Manch

Dalit Adivasi Manch was set up by Rajim Ketwas, who has a background in activism starting with the Chhattisgarh Mukti Morcha and worked on issues of dalit bonded labourers. Moving to RCDRC, she quit in 2006 and started mobilizing labourers from the dalit and tribal communities under the name Dalit Adivasi Vikas Manch. In 2010, it was formally named Dalit Adivasi Manch to articulate issues faced by the Dalit and Tribal workers. They currently directly work in 80 villages. The current focus of the DAM has been on:

- Since 1 Jan, 2014 there have been attempts made by the sangathan members for the conversion of Van Grams (Forest Villages) to revenue villages. In Mahraji village, only 24 people (families) had individual titles (pattas). Demands have been on for the recognition of individual rights of 68 families, and many rounds of talks have already taken place with the SDM, district collector. In these areas, GPS mapping has also been done in the past time.
- It is this region in the entire state where members of Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (OTFDs) have got individual titles. Because of the nature of implementation of FRA, whereby the administration demands more ‘proof’, and ignores the conditions of FRA in granting of individual titles, it is a big achievement. The process of CFR recognition has also not been done well. However, through constant efforts, and with interactions growing with the administration in the past few years, 68 CFR titles have recently been sanctioned. Talks are now ongoing to get these in the name of Gram Sabhas, rather than in the name of forest management committees (which has been done at present). The claims for CFR had been filed 2013 onwards.
- The legislation of Forest Rights Act (FRA) is significantly important to create awareness on land and forests. Aspects of conservation, provisioning of MFPs, village planning, activation of Gram Sabhas as bodies of planning and the rights of communities in reserve forests, critical wildlife areas have all come following the systematic understanding of FRA. Only a few villages in Mahasamund district know about it. Meetings have been done with the Collector to keep the administration activated and updated regarding different provisions of the act, so they can also make efforts from their end. The law has been difficult to internalize. But several initiatives – trainings, advocacy etc has been very useful.
- Baloda Bazar is a new district, and the District Level Committee and Sub-District Level Committee were formed only in 2015. This period has been marred with frequent transfer of officials, including SDM. This causes problems as the rapport building with each takes time, and the understanding of issues is lost each time with each official. There is also the risk of someone coming who would not identify with their tasks, or their trainings of law could be lacking. The sangathan then has to take up a more proactive role. In this period of

past 5 years, CFR titles extending rights to about 800-2000 acres have been given in 42 villages. This has considerably strengthened the confidence of sanghatan members, sarpanches and mukhiyas and they are now willing to contribute more time, energy and resources in mobilization and trainings.

Discussions with the DAM activists highlighted that they spend most of their efforts on supporting the community in the following issues.

Average Time Spent on relevant issues (spread of a month in days) DAM²⁶					
Issues	Puniram (Kasdol)	Bihari (Saraipali)	Durga (Mahasamund)	Tulsi (Kasdol)	Varun (Kasdol)
FRA	12	15	8	6	5
MNREGA	3	5	3	5	5
Other Govt. Schemes	8	5	4	5	5
Inter-Personal, Esp. DV issues	2	3	10	5	5
PRI mobilization	5	2	5	9	10

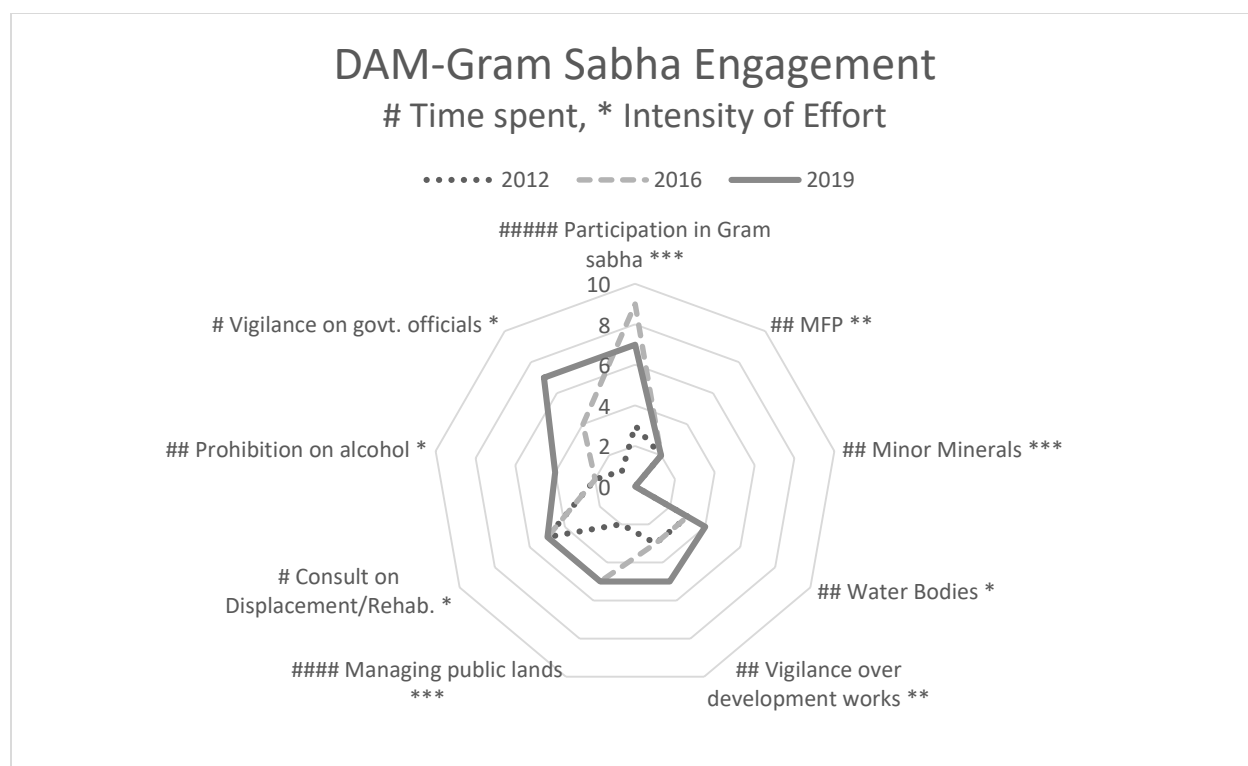
With the work spread over three blocks, there are different points of focus in different locations. Based on a rough understanding with a limited number of activists, a time distribution indicated that significant time of the Sanghatan has been devoted to issues around FRA in the recent past and they feel that there have been able to work on multiple levels -with the community, gram sabha and panchayats, district administration, as well as other groups working on this issue. DAM feels that they have had success in their work on the implementation of the FRA due to the following:

- They have made systematic efforts to include the names of all family members in the forest land patta
- Undertaken perspective development to appreciate the importance of forests and rights of the people
- Made efforts to bring in collective pressure through rallies and meetings
- Advocacy and engagement with officials
- Organising exposure visits of community members to other states

²⁶ DAM activists in different locations showing differing amounts of time dedicated to different issues based on priorities of emerging issues in their area of work (stylized month)

They also feel that the mobilization of the gram sabha was enabled due to the need of the gram sabha to endorse the claims of people. This, in turn, has led to more effective participation in the gram sabha and people have realized that it can be used as an effective forum to address their issues.

A mapping exercise done with the 11 activists -sanghatan volunteers, heads of Forest Rights Committees, and Sarpanches generated the following graph depicting the results of work done on various issues at the community level. The irregular shaped figures depict the distance from an ideal type situation which would bring all the points to the outer rim. The chart depicts the distance from this optimal situation at different time intervals in the journey of DAM. The * and the # representing the intensity of effort and the time spend respectively.



From the chart above, we can see that DAM exerted most of its efforts in the three areas:

1. Access of people to minor minerals, stones and sand for which they could not get any response due to policies of the state.

2. Managing Public Lands and Participation in the gram Sabhas are linked for them as claims of IFR and CFR were filed and had to be endorsed by the gram sabhas. Most of the claims were admitted and sanctioned by 2016 and hence there is no change in the levels. However, they have also noted that participation in gram sabhas went down after the claims had been processed.

Moreover, we can see that vigilance over development work and on govt. officials went up during the period 2016-19. This is again connected with the prior mobilization of the gram sabhas that occurred in the earlier phase and the creation of vigilance committees during this last period (2016-19).

F. Synthesis

This is a story of a creative tension between the mobilization of the people to demand their constitutional and human rights. Most of the them pertain to life and livelihoods that are significantly impacted by the actions of the state and from developmental processes beyond the local. The state has put in administrative mechanism of devolution and giving partial decision-making authority to lower levels of administration. This has, in principle, been done so that local level issues can be addressed and solutions created that are in the best interest of the local population.

We have, at length, talked about the engagement of the sanghatans with the local communities in the preceding sections. The Indian state responded to calls for giving a local voice in governance through the enactment of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment (73rd CAA), 1992 and the PESA 1996 Act, which directly impact the voice of the people at the grassroots. While the states have passed confirmatory Acts incorporating the salient features of the 73rd CAA, the adaptation of the PESA Act has taken a different route, with some states making a separate Act (Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh), while others (Chhattisgarh) amended the state PRI Act to incorporate PESA provisions. The Central PESA Act itself, while recognizing the specific needs to tribal communities residing in Schedule V areas has created enough administrative flexibility in itself to dilute the rights of the local tribal communities²⁷. The state continues to hold power, and administratively, the government is not conducive to hand over full power to the local communities. Some detailed critiques available, for instance in Ratho, 2007.²⁸

Furthermore, the National Advisory Committee in 2012, had recommended amendments to the PESA Act to further strengthen it.²⁹ However, there was not been any legislative progress on this.

²⁷ See:

1. Mahipal “Panchayats in Fifth Schedule Areas” EPW, May 6, 2000
2. Kothari, S “To be Governed or to Self-Govern” The Hindu Folio, July 15, 2000
3. <https://thewire.in/politics/pesa-tribal-advansi-rights>

²⁸ Ratho S “, *Tribal Welfare Through Panchayats: The Experience of PESA in Orissa*, RGICS Paper No.55 (New Delhi: Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Contemporary Studies, 2007) [PDF Version: 2010]

²⁹ See:

1. <http://www.netindian.in/news/2012/12/21/00022516/nac-approves-working-groups-proposals-panchayat-extension-scheduled-areas-a>
2. <https://www.fra.org.in/document/NAC%20Recommendation%20on%20PESA,%201996.pdf>

A critical element here is the criticality of the gram sabha being able to actually decide on any acquisition activity in the area (PESA Sec.(i): *the Gram Sabha or the Panchayats at the appropriate level shall **be consulted** before making the acquisition of land in the Scheduled Areas for development projects and before re-settling or rehabilitating persons affected by such projects in the Scheduled Areas; the actual planning and implementation of the projects in the Scheduled Areas shall be coordinated at the State level;*). As it has been pointed out in Ratho (2007), the critical language in PESA referred to “consultation” with the gram sabha and not its “consent”. This creates an ambiguity allowing the administration to continue any development activity, with or without concurrence of the gram sabha.³⁰ Moreover, as Mahipal 2000 as noted, the dualism created by adding Panchayats after Gram Sabha has also created an opportunity to violate the spirit of PESA. While the revised Land Acquisition Bill sought to add the provision of free and informed consent, at least in non-governmental acquisition of lands, further Amendments have sought to remove and/or limit this and various State Governments have passed their own laws that seek to limit this. Thus, there is a concerted effort to take away the voice of the local people from determining what happens to their lands and the natural resources around them. This project has created a local level momentum in each of the five locations to push forward the voices of local people in determining their future-the core of any governance agenda.

Keeping in mind that the sanghatans have sought to use these instruments provided by the state and have interpreted their spirit while the administration has sought to by-pass even the letter of these laws. There has been a significant gain for the process of deepening citizen participation and engagement in development processes and in the assertion of their legitimate claims during this period.

³⁰ Raghunandan, Gayatri “Free Prior and Informed consent: Where Indian Legislation Stands: Briefing Note. IWGIA, May 2017

Chaturvedi, Ipshita [*“A Critical Study of Free, Prior and Informed Consent in the Context of the Right to Development – Can “Consent” be Withheld?”*](#) Journal of Indian Law and Society, Vol 5 (winter) 2014.

Lessons for SRUTI to take forward from the field

The focus of SRUTI in the Fellowship programme is to be able to work with the Fellow to support the sanghatan that they are working with and is not oriented towards project targets. This is the spirit in which the entire programme was conducted over the past three years with these specific Fellows and the primary sanghatan that they are involved with. SRUTI feels that its own critical contribution is in perspective development and helping create epistemic links between local struggles and broader developmental processes. They serve a bridge to connect small communities of protest and creative mobilization with broader networks and alliances that can offer them support to deepen their engagements at the local level.

At the individual level:

At all locations, we can see one broad theme -that being of the filing and follow-up of individual forest rights claims and this has been a critical support that SRUTI and its Fellows have been extending at all the sanghatans. Combined with CFR claims, most on “nistar” rights, rather than collective forest management by the community, the harvesting of the commons has been a significant gain/hold for the sanghatans. At different rates of success, sanghatans have engaged with taking forward the demand for social security schemes provided by the state for the benefit of the people. This have ranged from MNREGA works, PDS to scholarships for children/widows etc. Access to the government services likewise have continued. At least in one location, systematic support to women on issues of domestic violence has resulted in the district administration requesting support from the Fellow to continue the work in supporting access to justice for the survivors.

Men and women from the community have had the opportunity to go through perspective development and some of them have emerged as active volunteers and supporters of the sanghatan -for example, some of the youths are supporting the GGS call to volunteer as teachers in government schools in the area.

At the Community level:

Awareness building camps across the five locations have played an important role in sharpening the focus of each of the sanghatans by exposing the community members to an understanding about how state and corporate run processes have a direct result on their lives and livelihoods. These awareness camps have enabled the community to articulate the due course of law in demanding their rights, and by proper procedures, and keeping in mind the realities on the ground- this has ranged from health cards for the poor in Gaya, the public hearing for mining activities in Korba or the demands for compensation by the descendants of the Dimna Dam near Jamshedpur.

Dialogues of the traditional leadership towards local self-governments in Sarguja to that between traditional and elected PRI representatives in Jharkhand have helped in improving communications and co-operation at the community level.

There have also been creative community led developmental activities created due to this enabling conversation. Two case studies-one from Jharkhand and another from Gaya in here highlight this cooperative engagement at the community level.

At the State Level:

Constant engagement with the local administration, District Authorities and the State bureaucracy and government have been made during this period. For instance, the interim decision of the Patna High Court to stay any demolition till the Court finishes the proceedings on the case for IFR has restricted the threats and destruction that the Forest Department was doing in the Gaya. Similarly, after the successful sammelan of gram sabhas against mining, Alok Shukla was invited as resource person by the state government to brief senior government officers about the FRA.

The following State level advocacy meetings, where SRUTI was able to engage stakeholders beyond the Fellows, took place during this period:

State	Sangathan	Issue	Date /Location	Outcome of deliberations
Chhattisgarh	Jan Abhivya kti	1. One Day Consultation with Stakeholders on the issue of Cancellation of Community Forest Right of Ghatbarra. In 2011 Gram Sabha of Ghatbarra received CFR later on Collector cancelled the CFR without reason but through RTI it was found that the reason to cancel was the land is allocated for mining.	April 2016 at Raipur	The case has been highlighted in national and international media and now the case is going on High Court https://thewire.in/politics/bypassing-the-law-to-make-way-for-coal-mine-in-chhattisgarh https://in.boell.org/2019/06/07/historical-injustice-and-bogus-claims-large-infrastructure-conservation-and-forest-rights
		2. A day public deliberation on the occasion of World Environment day bringing the issue of continuous violation of Role of Gram sabha, to highlight illegal procedures being followed by District administration, Forest department and mining companies in implementing FRA.	5th June, 2017 at Paturia Dand, Korba	Around 24 Gram Panchayats met and marked the incidences of illegality in the procedures FRA implementation. Everyone came in the same platform in this regard and got mobilized.
		3. Continuous illegal coal block mining auction, allocation and expansion have become the threats for forest dwelling people in the state of Chhattisgarh and issue have been challenged through public meetings, conferences, dialogue, campaigns.	in the last few years	The mobilization of sangathan leaders, civil society actors, political parties, Gram sabha members have been done and this has led to raise the issue, for administrative pressure and further build the strategies.
		4. Public Hearing on EIA which brought around 5000 mining project affected people.	29th October 2017,	various initiatives of local people were marked to safeguard their rights and it is because of threats of land grab by the corporates for mining.
		5. A sammelan was organized on the issue of Natural resources, PESA, Gram sabha	15th Oct 2018, Rotary Club, Raipur	awareness building on the issues at the backdrop of state election.
		6. A convention with 150 Gram sabhas for asserting their constitutional rights and establish control over their forest resources.	24th February, 2019	this could establish the advocacy with State Tribal Minister for implementation of FRA
	Dalit Adivasi Manch	1. Sangathan plays an active role in addressing gender issues comprising domestic violence, Gender violence in the community, public spaces, women	Women Convention on 20th March, 2017	Awareness about Detail Information Report (DIR) among women, Police and men. Awareness about gender violence among men as well. it brought the community

		reservation, encouraging women to become PRI Members and empowering them.		integration giving due respect to all as human beings.
		2. 24 villages in Sonakhan region were marked without consulting Gram sabha for Gold Mining in 2015 and with community mobilization, legal interventions and media advocacy the intend activity of Gold Mining has been scrapped by the present state Govt.		The issue got media highlights. https://scroll.in/article/836501/vedanta-plans-to-develop-indias-first-private-gold-mine-in-chhatisgarh-and-locals-are-worried The awareness about the ownership and control over natural resources has been sharpen among people. The Gold mining project was scrapped. Sangathan could gain the trust of people. People are united now. http://www.sruti.org.in/?q=news-media/turning-tides-sonakhan
		3. Sangathan Mobilized and prepared people to raise and articulate their issues concerning Govt. schemes for Lok Suraj Abhiyan State Govt. initiative.	From 26th Feb to 20th May 2018	Greater mobilization led people to access their basic facility which they are entitled to.
		4. Addressing Farmers issue in the state a farmers meeting was organized on 27th Jan 2018.	27th Jan, 2018 Mahasamund	It was the opportunity to raise and be aware of the issues related to agriculture. The demands of proper determination of MSP, annual bonus for farmers producing rice, debts waive off were sharpen and built the pressure on the state Govt. to heed their demands.
	Gaon Ganrajya Sangathan	The process of Sangathan's work has involved with continuous dialogue with administrative officials taking the issue of FRA and PESA		A strong assertion of rights over natural resources through FRA, LARR and recognition of the power of Gram sabha under PESA has been seen in the last years.
Bihar	Mazdoor Kisan Samiti	1. Address the inequality and landlessness in rural Bihar	15 th May 2017	Built the discourse on the gaps between urban and villages.
		2. Address the threats of Bhudan Kisan who are at the threats of losing land.	9 th -10 th July, 2018	The issue was brought to Bhudan District officer, who assured to look at the issue.
		4. On plight of farmers and issue of migration in the state	11 th June 2018 at Pachrukhiya	The mobilization of farmers brought them in one platform and in understanding their issues they could built strategies

				to highlight them and let Govt. intervene their problem.
		5. On farmers' issues and PRI a one- day state level convention was organised.	18 th February 2019 at Patna Gandhi Maidan	
Jharkhand	Visthapt Mukti Vahini	1. VMV played a very active role in addressing the threats of Land Alienation policies in the form of CNT/SPT Acts, Land Bank, LARR, Dilution of PESA, Jharkhand Momentum 2017. VMV has involved in extensive mobilization process of Gram Sabha through various activities.		The extensive mobilization of people built the pressure on Govt. of Jharkhand to stop in bringing Amendments to CNT/SPT Act. The power Gram sabha has been revived and the awareness has increased about the issues.
		2. Involvement of Sangathan in State Social Audit Process		The culture of accountability about the public money has been inculcated among Mukhiyas and Govt. officials.
		3. Various trainings, village level meetings have been organized on village development plan, democratization of democracy through power to function, power of functionaries and power of finance under PRI and PESA.		The processes have been helpful to understand people's participation in local democracy. Financial power of Gram sabha is recognized. Understanding the utilization of Fourteenth Finance Commission grant and ground experience led to be held National Consultation in Delhi.

This documentation process was done at the end of the project cycle and looks at the activities based on the overall goal of the project viz

“Socio-economic transformation in rural India by proclaiming and productively enabling the concept of local self-governance; advocating the vision of Gram Swaraj and converging these aspects for self sufficient and empowered local communities.” The Grant Agreement alluded to

the following factors in the understanding of the need for action and the Project was able to take corresponding actions to create empowered local communities that have been able to engage in deliberative democracy, giving voice to their issues and seeking a collective solution for the same.

Diagnosis-APPI and SRUTI Grant Agreement	Actions on the ground
<p>The proxy roles played by male counterparts and relatives have restricted the effective role of women within PRIs. This also needs to be addressed by bringing women PRI members together and capacitate them to use delineation of functions provided under PRIs.</p>	<p>Training of 6200 EWRs in the Baloda Bazaar area Training of 3120 EWRs in Ranchi</p>
<p>The undermining of the legitimacy of tribals and other natural resource dependent communities, in the reclamation of access to and control over land and forest resources, still persist.</p> <p>Alienation of communities from their traditional natural resources and subsequent displacement and migration related issues continue to disturb the lives of people at the grassroot.</p>	<p>Use of the FRA and PESA Acts to protect and claim their rights over the natural resources in the area. FRA has been used by all the Fellows and powers of PESA and the inherent centrality of the gram sabha has guided all the working in pre dominantly tribal area in Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand. With the focus on consolidating land rights and settlement of new villages on Gaya, the MKS has been instrumental in creating interest in land and giving a viable asset in the hands of erstwhile landless bonded families.</p>
<p>The dominant class and caste in the rural society controls the poor and deprived sections. Though the Constitution attempted to change the situation, and minimize the political and social divide in the villages, there is no sign of change in the mindset of the dominant classes and castes in the rural society.</p>	<p>Consolidation of land rights-both homestead and agricultural in Gaya after a long struggle for the mahadalits to get land title. Organising the poor, dalit and tribal communities who are marginalized, DAM has created opportunities that allow them to challenge the local dominance.</p>
<p>Deprivation of basic access to health, food, water, livelihood, education etc. is still a reality in the lives of millions in India's tribal and rural heartland</p>	<p>With the focus on enabling local governance, the citizen centric approach in each of the area has resulted in better access to services and govt schemes</p>
<p>Entrenched displacement and migration, renders impossible the participation of sufficient local voices in Village Decision Making. This in turn hampers the inclusive and participatory governance envisaged by PRI.</p>	<p>Collective village decision making-from the collective endorsement of a large number of IFR claims through the gram sabhas, to other engagement with traditional forums has created a participatory governance process where, with mixed success, we can see the development of village development plans to Forest Protection committees and other vigilance groups from the community.</p>
<p>The Constitution visualizes panchayats as institutions of self-governance. However, despite the conceived federal structure, most of the financial powers and authorities to be endowed to panchayats are usually left to the discretion of concerned state legislatures. Consequently, the powers and functions vested in PRIs vary from state to state. This creates dissonance at the ground-level understanding and working of the PRI</p>	<p>Advocating with the Fifteenth Finance Commission to create a direct window for gram Sabhas</p>

Lessons garnered by SRUTI in implementing the project:

Project Implementation: At the onset, it may be stated that SRUTI, as a policy, does not implement projects through its partners. However, the fact is that this project was drawn up with certain specific deliverables that were accepted by APPI and SRUTI. An external evaluation of the work has been conducted and the report for that has been finalized establishing the status of how far and well those deliverables achieved.³¹ Being that as it may, what is important- in the context of partners being able to take forward their own work in the area, is that they continued their work in the manner in which they have been doing over the past few year and have been able to build upon it.

The one critical new element was the introduction of the Village Development Plan, an instrumental tool that permits the communities to draw up their specific requirements. This is based on local conditions and the needs and aspirations of the local community. It articulates the manner in which public spending may optimally be channelled for the betterment of the community. SRUTI did suggest that the Fellows may undertake such an activity and organized capacity building interventions for the same. Each of the Fellows, in their own way, also undertook the exercise with some specific Village Development Plans actually being made and submitted either to the Gram Sabha or the Gram Panchayat for consideration and review. In all 28 Village Development Plans were prepared. One of SRUTI's fellows in Orissa had worked on such village Development Plans and had the technical understanding for facilitating the same. However, they could not use that knowledge due to language issues and sought to bring in other experts to guide the process. The SRUTI team felt that if Orissa, as originally proposed would have been retained, they would have been able to take forward the VDP process their effectively.

It is in this context that SRUTI sought to underline the fact that they do not work with specific deliverables with the Fellows, as the nature of support is a small livelihood support, coupled with perspective development/knowledge for the Sanghtans. All the Fellows shared that they do make an annual plan and share it with SRUTI However, this was not a fixed commitment but an indicative plan which would be modified based on emerging issues from the ground. They also appreciated the flexibility that SRUTI had shown in adjusting to the same. From SRUTI's side,

³¹ The External Evaluation Report is available with SRUTI and with APPI.

suggestions were made, more in the spirit of deepening their work, rather than in persuading them to implement an activity that SRUTI had committed towards. SRUTI, accordingly, sources funds, if required for the same. Having said this, SRUTI estimates that their financial contribution would not be more than 20-30% of the expenses made by the Sanghatans to mobilise people around issues, most of it coming through local contributions.

The Fellowship itself is dynamic, but rooted with a specific sanghatan, with the Fellow being the prime recipient. There are currently 31 fellows supported by SRUTI across 14 states and they are, in turn, sharing this small amount with over 160 workers. This particular support, under discussion, has been restricted to just 5 Fellows and primarily the 5 sanghatans that they are involved with. Some of the support has been provided to related activities beyond the 5 sanghatans-either at the behest of the FELLOW or in the state level advocacy work done by SRUTI.

The sharing of the Fellowship seems to be an established practice and it is not clear if this is on the behest of SRUTI or that of the Fellow. What is clear, however, is that there is no interference from SRUTI about who (and till what time) the Fellow shares this amount with. They are, at the moment, in the process of creating a direct transfer mechanism to the selected recipient of the Fellowship, in the ratio determined by the Fellow. This mechanism, again, is a broader issue beyond the current documentation. However, one interesting aspect shared by one of the Fellows was that they do not disclose that some of the active members of the Sanghatans are sharing the fellowship.

There has been a shift in the nature of engagement of SRUTI where it would earlier seek to stay in the background and provide support to the Fellows, to a period when they actively engage in the field level processes, especially around perspective development and participation in activities, moving from a supporter towards being a stakeholder. This in turn is also connected with SRUTI's own perspective to be able to act as a support organization, located in New Delhi, to play a role of supporting the convergence of social and human rights groups to be able to effectively raise grassroots issues.

They feel that, as a direct result of the current project, been able to bring the voice of the grassroots to the formal consultations of the Fifteenth Finance Commission. This, itself, is a process that was led by one of the Fellows supported by the current project. VMV, in Jharkhand, started looking at the actual use and disbursement of the XIVth Finance Commission Award to Gram Panchayats

in Jharkhand and this led to SRUTI taking up the issue at the national level, engaging other Fellows and stakeholders. The interconnectedness of issues emerging out of the Village Development Plan done by a Fellow connecting up with an advocacy agenda undertaken by SRUTI is a critical observation here. Similarly, the work being done by sanghatans across the country on the implementation of the Forest Rights Act led SRUTI to bring together disparate voices and acting as a neutral facilitator to help formulate a common strategy. Their own role in facilitating and encouraging the Bhoomi Adhikar Manch is also recognised.

The support has thus allowed SRUTI to move beyond an anchor holding a loose network of Fellows around the country to emerge as a support group that can facilitate/hold various alliances and campaigns of human right, social justice and on governance together while not letting the little voices from the ground be lost in the den of “policy asks” and techo-administrative discourse that dominates modern day advocacy processes.

The support of the APPI has also resulted in SRUTI being able to enable/undertake more perspective building and awareness programmes in the field than would have otherwise been possible. They have, for instance, not been able to conduct the same with Fellows in other states. This has led to helping strengthen the second line of leadership of the sanghatans and that of the community members increase at a rate faster than would have been possible otherwise. SRUTI does realise that this also meant that their own team members participated in a larger number of events and cross-visits of sanghatans compared to the time that they would usually invest in reflective processes with the sanghatans. Clearly, the availability of resources from APPI has supported most of the sanghatans to accelerate their work and engagements with the community. The commentary on the efficacy of the use of these resources is available in the External Evaluation of the project. The overall feedback from the sanghatans was that they have been able to take forward their own agendas on giving voice to the people in determining the nature and type of development that want in their local areas. While specific exercises were conducted in 3 locations (with DAM, JA, and MKS), even in the other two (GSS and VMV) it was clear that the people saw the gains in the type of work that have been able to undertake in this period and value the partnership with SRUTI. What is critical here is that they have been able to use instruments provided by the state to articulate their needs and rights -using the provisions as laid out in FRA, in PESA and by the respective panchayati raj in each state, to push forward the claims made by

the communities. Claim making by citizens has always been a process of spreading the risks to be able to access schemes from the government³². The Fellows, keeping in mind the ground reality, have been able to guide the sanghatans to effectively channel such claims-either engaging directly through the panchayati raj institutions or with the government departments that work with the PRIs. They have thus been able to engage with the state governments, primarily responsible for the delivery of services and schemes. They have been able to create a strong base for the people to demand accountable and transparent decision-making through the gram sabhas. This will, in turn, help democratic decentralization as more and more functions are effectively devolved to local governments in the area. This echoes the slogan that was heard throughout the journeys to these locations- *“Lok Sabha na Rajya Sabha, Sabse upaar Gram Sabha!”*

³² “Three broad patterns emerge. First, the data reveal a strikingly high incidence of claim-making; a great deal of claim-making activity, moreover, occurs in places (poor and remote) and among groups (the poor and lower castes) where we might least expect to see it. Second, the claim-making channels pursued are diverse, ranging from direct (face-to-face) contact with local village officials, bureaucrats, and state and national level politicians, as well as mediated contact through a range of non-state actors and institutions. Third, these approaches to the state are not mutually exclusive, but are combined into diverse claim-making repertoires of varied content and breadth. Within these repertoires of action, direct and mediated strategies appear to complement one another.”

Kruks-Wisner, Gabrielle “Navigating the State: Citizenship practice and the pursuit of services in Rural India” *Harvard University South Asia Institute, Working Paper May 2015*

Annexure A: Profile of Fellows from SRUTI Diary 2019

1. Gaon Ganrajya Sangathan; Fellow: Jang Sai Poya

(Areas: Korba, Balrampur, Surajpur and Surguja districts, Chhattisgarh)

Jang Sai became a member of Bharat Jan Andolan in Madhya Pradesh & Chhattisgarh at the age of 13. In 2001, Jang Sai led a 3-year long struggle for proper rehabilitation of those displaced by Madamsilli, Dudhwa and Sondur dams in Dhamtari district. The success of the struggle saw him emerge as a young and committed gond adivasi leader in the area. He was also a part of the movement demanding forest rights for adivasis living in the Badalkhol Wildlife Sanctuary area. He is currently working towards strengthening self-governance, especially of natural resources, through the implementation of participatory democracy processes and Panchayati Raj Institution mechanisms in Schedule V Areas. Jang Sai's own village, Parsagudi, is widely considered as an ideal example of Gram Sabha functioning in Surguja.

Gaon Ganrajya Sangathan is currently involved with the issues of illegal coal mining in the area that began in 2008 without the consent of the Gram Sabha and has been a threat to people on various fronts. The sangathan members for the past decade have been strengthening the institution of Gram Sabha as per PESA 1996 in the Schedule V district, empowering people for the use and utilisation of natural resources and to further enhance their livelihood. The focus has been on equipping people through peaceful, democratic processes and building of local decision-making institutions.

2. Jan Abhivyakti; Fellow: Alok Shukla

(Area: Korba and Surguja districts, Chhattisgarh)

Alok started work with Nadi Ghati Morcha opposing privatization of Shivnath river and intense proliferation of sponge iron plants. After a few years of intensive work, he began focused work independently on forest rights and local governance. Alok became a SRUTI Fellow in the year 2011, taking up issues of environmental damage due to concentration of thermal power plants in Janjgir Champa. He is part of founding group and first Convenor of Chhattisgarh Bachao Andolan providing advocacy, legal and solidarity assistance to 32 member organizations.

Jan Abhivyakti is working in villages of Surguja and Korba which were categorized as 'No Go' areas by MoEF for any mining activity to protect the ecologically sensitive and bio diverse forest areas of Hasdeo Aranya. The unscientific rationale of more thermal power plants, coal mines and indiscriminate tree felling has been raised by the sangathan. The region falls under Schedule V and PESA provisions allow gram sabhas to be the most significant decision-making body. The sangathan with support from local communities asserts the

role of constitutionally recognised power of gram sabhas and panchayats in any development planning of the area. The sangathan has expanded the work to Janjgir-Champa district in the recent past on regional and national advocacy on the utilisation of fossil fuels and the need for clean and efficient energy sources

Alok has been campaigning to sustain the work and spread public awareness and perspective building with related stakeholders in the administration, media, political leaderships and local people. He is widely recognized across the state and national platforms as a young leader committed to the values of social change, with focus of getting the constitutionally recognized rights of adivasis and forest dwelling communities.

3. Dalit Adivasi Manch; Fellow: Rajim Ketwas

(Area: Mahasamund and Baloda Bazar districts, Chhattisgarh)

Rajim started grassroots work in 1987, at the age of 19, with Ekta Parishad in Dantewada. She subsequently joined the workers' rights movement in Bhilai under the leadership of Shankar Guha Niyogi, founder of Chhattisgarh Mukti Morcha (CMM). She was an active member of the CMM movement which demanded a separate regional identity for the predominantly adivasi areas of Central India, and for upliftment of workers and peasants. After the split of the movement following the tragic death of Shankar Guha Niyogi, financial constraints and a series of personal challenges led Rajim to opt out of grassroots work in favour of economic stability in her home district of Mahasamund. It was here that Rajim was exposed to the difficulties faced by the dalit community in Chhattisgarh.

Inspired by the work of Shankar Guha Niyogi and his philosophy of 'sangharsh and nirman', Dalit Adivasi Manch was founded with the primary objective of working on natural resource rights of dalits and adivasi communities. The sangathan sees considerable participation of women, and takes up issues of trafficking, sexual violence, domestic labour wages, health and employment. Youth leadership amongst the community has also gradually emerged. In the past few years, active implementation of the Forest Rights Act 2006 has seen the assertion of adivasi and other forest dweller communities over forests and forest produce. The sangathan continues to actively involve the district and state administration for effectively implementing the Right to Education Act 2010 and improving the provisions of Chhattisgarh Food Security Act 2012.

4. Visthapit Mukti Vahini; Fellow: Arvind Anjum

(Area: Singhbhum and Saraikela Kharsawa districts, Jharkhand)

Arvind bhai was an active member of JP Movement during his youth in undivided Bihar. He was also the founding group member of Chhatra Yuva Sangharsh Vahini. He spearheaded Chandil Dam Struggle in 1986, one of the early notable people's movements against big dams.

The formation of VMV came about specifically to address rights of displaced families. He became SRUTI Fellow in 1997 and since then continued to guide and help design campaigns and training work with network groups and others. His primary concerns remain the provisioning of long-term livelihood opportunities for displaced families, vocational training and diploma education.

Some notable wins were 52 villages saved by VMV from submergence due to proposed dam height increase and getting a stay on construction of two steel plants being done illegally by Jindal group. Current campaigns also focus on the ill-effects caused by sponge iron plants, develop further work on perspective building with youth, providing ways of dignified living, promoting organic methods of agriculture, tree plantations and organising regular health camps for the purpose of developing a sense of community responsibility.

*5. Mazdoor Kisan Samiti; Fellow: Kailash Bharti
(Area: Gaya district, Bihar)*

Kailash Bharti was part of the historic, peaceful Bodh Gaya movement in the 1970s, against the illegal occupation of 9,700 acres of agricultural land by Bihar's feudal Sankaracharya Math in Bodhgaya. Marginalized communities were made to work as bonded labour on this land perpetuating the cycle of impoverishment, dispossession and exploitation. Most members of the sangathan used to work on the same land for which they joined the struggle.

In 1987, the Supreme Court ruled in favour of possession of the land by 10,000 families, most of them from the highly marginalized musahar community. This marked a decisive and inspirational victory for land reform in Bihar where pattas were given to women for first time in land reforms history. Despite being uneducated, Kailash's exposure to the land movement and other leaders of land rights gave him a deep understanding of the root cause of inequality.

In Gaya, Mazdoor Kisan Samiti has been working with the most dispossessed and marginalised communities who have historically suffered under feudal social and economic relations. The administration and governance systems are reluctant to proactive take anti-poor positions, due to inherent bias and lack of political will. The sangathan has, over these years, mobilised public support for assertion of rights over land, forest areas and claim their rightful demands for drinking water, health and education. Community-led efforts led by sangathan members for construction of wells, life irrigation has brought much needed relief to the people.

Annexure B: Case Studies**a) JHARKHAND**

जमीन से उभरे संघर्ष 1 –

झारखंड डिमना बांध के विस्थापित परिवारों के लिए न्याय की पहल :

डिमना बांध का निर्माण सन् 1942-43 में 12 मौजों को विस्थापित करके किया गया। ये गांव हैं: सालदोहा, गेरुआ, ब्रजपुर, भादुडीह, लायलम, नूतनडीह, पुनसा, बोंटा, कुटीमाकली, हलुदबनी, मिर्जाडीह और पगदा। विस्थापित परिवारों का पुनर्वास भी नहीं किया गया और बाँध बना दी गयी। हम उन्हीं विस्थापित परिवारों के लिए न्याय की पहल आपको सौंप रहे हैं।

विस्थापित परिवारों की जमीनों के बदले में उनको औसतन प्रति एकड़ जमीन के लिए करीब 230 रु० मुआवजे के रूप में दिया गया। यह राशि जमीन के मूल्य के हिसाब से बहुत ही कम है, बल्कि नगण्य है। आप याद कर सकते हैं कि 1942-43 में टिस्को के सबसे कम वेतन पानेवाले कर्मचारी को भी एक वर्ष में इससे अधिक राशि वेतन और अन्य सुविधाओं के रूप में मिलती थी। इसका मतलब यह हुआ कि टिस्को के सबसे कम वेतन पानेवाले कर्मचारी को एक साल में प्राप्त रकम और सुविधाओं से कम रकम एक एकड़ जमीन के लिए मुआवजे के रूप में देकर जमीन के मालिक की छुट्टी कर दी गयी। यानी एक एकड़ जमीन के लिए एक साल का गुजारा का पैसा देकर किसान को जमीन से बेदखल कर दिया गया। ऐसा हम इसलिए मानते हैं कि उस समय एक एकड़ जमीन से साल भर में उससे अधिक रकम का उत्पादन किया जा सकता था। अगर वह जमीन किसान के पास रहती तो वह हर साल उतना उत्पादन करते रह सकता था।

लेकिन उसे सिर्फ एक साल के उत्पादन की कीमत चुका कर चलता कर दिया गया जबकि कंपनी उस जमीन का उपभोग आज भी कर रही है; कंपनी का मुनाफा दिन-दूनी रात-चौगुनी बढ़ता गया। कंपनी का लगातार विकास होता गया। इस कंपनी के मुनाफे से टाटा घराना अनेकों व्यवसाय खड़े करता गया; यहां तक कि उसने इंग्लैंड में हाल में कोरस नामक स्टील कंपनी को खरीद लिया। टिस्को से कोरस तक की कंपनी की यात्रा के दौरान विस्थापितों को क्या मिला? सिर्फ एक साल के गुजारे का खर्चा।

उसके अलावा, विस्थापितों का कोई पुनर्वास नहीं किया गया। अन्य कोई सुविधाएं नहीं दी गयीं। विस्थापितों के बच्चे और पोते-नाती आज वैसी ही हालत में हैं जैसे उनके बाप-दादे थे, बल्कि उससे भी बदतर हालत में।

लगभग सभी विस्थापित अनपढ़ थे। टाटा कंपनी ने देखा कि यह जमीन उसके काम की है और उसने अपनी पैसे की ताकत और उस ताकत से जुटायी गयी सरकारी ताकत के बल पर कौड़ी के मोल जमीनें ले लेकर हमारे अनपढ़, गरीब और कमजोर बाप-दादों को जमीनों से बेदखल होने के लिए मजबूर कर दिया।

डिमना बांध के विस्थापित परिवार आज इस ऐतिहासिक अन्याय को दूर करने और न्याय पाने की माँग कर रहे हैं। हमें अपनी जमीनों के लिए उचित मुआवजा और पुनर्वास चाहिए।

विस्थापित कई बार अपनी मांगों के लिए आवाज उठाते रहे, लेकिन कंपनी सिर्फ टालती रही। 06 जनवरी 2009 में झारखंड मुक्ति वाहिनी और लायलम एवं बोंटा पंचायतों की ग्रामसभाओं के नेतृत्व में विस्थापितों की एक रैली और प्रदर्शन हुआ। जनवरी 2009 को विस्थापितों की मांगों का एक स्मार-पत्र उपायुक्त, पूर्वी सिंहभूम, और टाटा स्टील को एक विशाल रैली-प्रदर्शन के माध्यम से सौंपा गया। इसके बाद क्रमश लगातार रैली-प्रदर्शन, धरना, उपवास, जन जल सत्याग्रह आदि आयोजित होती रही।

उपायुक्त की पहल से विस्थापितों की समस्या अनुमंडल पदाधिकारी, धालभूम, को समाधान के लिए सौंपी गयी। अनुमंडल पदाधिकारी की अध्यक्षता में 23 बैठकें हो चुकी हैं। प्रत्येक बैठक में बड़ी संख्या में विस्थापित आते रहे। अनुमंडल पदाधिकारी ने वार्ता के लिए उपाध्यक्ष, कॉर्पोरेट सर्विसेज, टाटा स्टील और निदेशक, जुस्को नगर सेवाएं, को बुलाया पर वे कभी बैठक में नहीं पहुंचे। कुछ बैठकों में टाटा स्टील के भूमि विभाग के पदाधिकारी आये, और कई बार कोई भी नहीं। वे अधिकारी भी कोई भी निर्णय देने में अपने को अक्षम बताते रहे। इन स्थितियों में 22वें बैठक तक बात विशेष आगे नहीं बढ़ी, टाली ही जाती रही, परंतु 23वें बैठक में टाटा स्टील के भूमि विभाग के पदाधिकारी ने माना और क्षतिपूर्ति देने की आशवासन दिया। मुआवजा की मामला लंबित है। अब तक क्षतिपूर्ति की दर तय नहीं किया और न ही क्षतिपूर्ति दिया।

बैठक के माध्यम से अधिग्रहीत भूमि के सीमांकन का कार्य संपन्न किया गया। इसमें पाया गया कि टाटा स्टील ने विस्थापित परिवारों की 102 एकड़ जमीन पर अतिक्रमण कर रखा है। इसके अलावा, 5.84 एकड़ जमीन पर किसानों की फसल वर्षा काल में जलाशय के पानी से बर्बाद होती।

पहले विस्थापित इलाकों में विकास का कार्य करने के लिए कुछ समय तक टी.एस.आर.डी.एस. द्वारा एक केंद्र चलाया जाता था। लेकिन एक दशक पहले यह काम रोक दिया गया था। झारखंड मुक्ति वाहिनी और लायलम एवं बोंटा पंचायतों की ग्रामसभाओं के नेतृत्व में विस्थापितों की आंदोलन के पश्चात लायलम एवं बोंटा पंचायत में अस्थायी रूप से स्वास्थ्य सुविधा उपलब्ध कराया जाता है। प्रति गांव के चौक-चौराहों में सोलर लाईट लगायी। प्रति गांव में डीप बोरिंग के माध्यम से पेयजल की व्यवस्था की। डिमना बांध के किनारे लगे जहरीले अमरी पौधों की झाड़ियों को साफ किया। खेती के विकास के लिए सिंचाई की व्यवस्था हेतु पुनसा गांव में लिफ्ट इरिगेशन (9५०० फीट) की व्यवस्था किया। लायलम एवं बोंटा पंचायत के ६वीं एवं १०वीं के छात्रों के बेहतर शिक्षा के लिए फ्री कोचिन सेन्टर का व्यवस्था किया।

संगठन की मांगों है कि i (डिमना बांध के विस्थापितों को बकाया मुआवजा, नौकरी और पुनर्वास की व्यवस्था की जाये ii (झारखंड सरकार की पुनर्वास नीति के तहत विस्थापितों को कंपनी के मुनाफे का एक प्रतिशत दिया जाये iii (डिमना बांध में नौकाचालन और मत्स्य पालन का अधिकार विस्थापितों के समूह को दिया जायेiv) टाटा स्टील के कर्मचारियों की तरह विस्थापित परिवारों को भी नौकरी, चिकित्सा और शिक्षा की सुविधायें दी जायेंv) बिना अधिग्रहण किये किसानों की जिस रैयती जमीन पर खंभे गाड़कर जमीन का अतिक्रमण किया गया और जो जमीनें डूब में आती हैं उनके लिए क्षतिपूर्ति दी जाये। किसानों की रैयती जमीन को अतिक्रमण और डूब से बचाने की व्यवस्था की जायेvi) विस्थापित परिवारों के शारीरिक रूप से सक्षम व्यक्तियों को टाटा स्टील और जुस्को में स्थायी नौकरियां दी जायें और उनको तथा उनके बच्चों को रोजगार के लिए तकनीकी शिक्षा और प्रशिक्षण दिया जायेvii) डिमना बांध के किनारे लगे जहरीले अमरी पौधों की झाड़ियों को साफ किया जायेviii) विस्थापित गांवों में विद्युतीकरण और पेयजल की व्यवस्था टाटा स्टील द्वारा की जायेix) डिमना बांध में पर्यटकों के लिए शौचालय बनाये जायेंx) लायलम और बोंटा पंचायतों में खेती के विकास के लिए सिंचाई की व्यवस्था की जाये।

Case story 2

Life irrigation begins at Hudlung village in Jharkhand, 2, July, 2017

“खेत में पानी देखकर मिला सुकून...”

“It is good to see water in our agricultural fields” says Lakhi Hansdah, one of the farmers of the village Hudlung where lift Irrigation was recently inaugurated, with the water being supplied to their nearby farm lands. With the inauguration of this long awaited lift irrigation system, Visthapit Mukti Vahini (VMV) is moving towards to completing the cycle of ‘*Sangharsh and Nirman*’. Most successful rehabilitation efforts for the sangathan has been lowering 2 meters of dam height to save 52 villages from submergence, getting increase in rehabilitation package thrice through negotiations and advocacy with related stakeholders, establishing the right over reservoirs for fishing by formation and running of cooperatives comprising of displaced locals. Following the inauguration of lift irrigation at Hudlung, the water will now be available for agriculture for the villages that are situated away from the dam site.

As we are aware that Chandil dam, situated in the district of Kharsanwa-Saraikela of Jharkhand was build in 1990 and had displaced 14 thousand agricultural dependent families, leaving them with no alternative livelihood. The 'Lift irrigation' is a ray of hope for the displaced farmers. In the long struggle for the rehabilitation of the affected people Visthapit Mukti Vahini has become the instrument in bringing a successful rehabilitation policy, and has constantly strived for the development of locals and sought for innovative ways of earning a livelihood. Almost 90% of the population of the area is dependent on farming and the soil is suitable for various crops. The water from Chandil dam could not be used so far for irrigation as the canal which was to be provided by the state government is still under construction, and now there is no other way to supply water.

Believing in *“माछ, गाछ और चास से होगा झाड़खंड का विकास (The development of Jharkhand will take place through fishing, afforestation and agriculture)* VMV carries out its endeavors and this idea has been expressed through various community based activities like fish rearing through cage culture, yearly tree plantation program, organizing health camps etc.

Lift irrigation system is another example of development activity set up by the sangathan along with the village gram sabha of Hudlung, utilizing water from Karkari River with the help of 600 meter pipe, fixing 5 points in different places for irrigation. It was inaugurated on 4th July 2017 in the displaced village of Hudlung, Ichhagarh (tehsil). This occasion saw the active presence and participation of hundreds of men

and women from the village. The establishment of this irrigation system would supply water for 100 acres of agricultural land in the area throughout the year, helping villagers whose livelihood is primarily based on agriculture. This is also a big step in moving towards organic and chemical free farming.

This method would be beneficial as there is no wastage of water in this system. Water would be stored in a nearby reservoir in the hills and is supplied through drains or pipes to the farms and the irrigated water would again drip into the low land and go to the dam. Thus, much of the water is recycled and can be used again. The water quality is maintained by prohibiting the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, helping us combat water pollution and creating and promoting new markets for organic agricultural products with higher incomes to farmers.

The most debatable concept of development through increasing industries, big dams and infrastructure has been continuously challenged by VMV. From its inception, the sangathan has been advocating for better rehabilitation and resettlement policies for displaced communities and has believed and promoted the sustainable and environment friendly development process that evolves from the efforts and requirements of local communities.

Our endeavours and collaborations continue to bring technically advanced yet relevant processes in planning and execution to the people working with communities. SRUTI Fellows over the years have engaged with advocacy efforts, policy interventions, trainings and capacity building, understanding legal and administrative complexities in decentralized planning and allow for bottom-up approaches to dictate plans, strategies and actions.

Case Story – 3

A win for social movement groups in Jharkhand : State government introduces Domicile Policy

Jharkhand, ever since its formation as a separate state in the year 2000, has faced major political uncertainties. Governance duties of the state have suffered immensely due to the politics of petty gains, dictated by vested interests of industrial giants. Dignified employment for young people, especially among the tribal communities, continues to be a distant dream for many. A resource-rich state, Jharkhand is visibly coerced to give way to indiscriminate mining, power projects and huge dams. Approaches to resettlement and rehabilitation have been patronising and grossly insufficient, unless people have successfully mobilised themselves to make their rightful and constitutionally-recognised demands.

In East Singhbhum-Jamshedpur region of the state, the efforts of **Visthapit Mukti Vahini**, led by **senior activist and SRUTI Fellow Arvind Anjum** have brought the issues of dam-displaced people out in the public sphere. More than three decades of work in Chandil and adjoining areas have created many wins for the sangathan – including the development and promotion of the widely appreciated model of cage culture, improving conditions for better resettlement and rehabilitation, and facilitation of youth groups as the **Chhatra Yuva Sangharsh Vahini (CYSV)** to put forth policy needs on education, health and employment.

In the past few years, tree plantation programmes and value-creation through planting and taking care of fruit-bearing trees in schools and common lands have allowed the sangathan to consolidate the years of struggle in this area. It has also allowed communities to develop inter-dependence, providing livelihood security and strong perspective-building on the needs of ecological conservation. Intervention in matters of policy making has also been timely and allowed for voices from the margins to assert their priorities.

Following directives on formulating the long-awaited domicile policy from the cabinet after the all-party meeting on 7th April, 2016, the debates on identity, statehood and indigenous people's rights have assumed a different direction altogether. There are many disagreements with policy, including protests launched by the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha and other opposition parties. The proposed policy attempts to define who could be called a *sthaniya niwasi* or a local resident of Jharkhand. It enumerates categories to define and limit groups of people, to ensure safeguards for *local people* in jobs at the local level.

But what significance does it really hold?

The issue has been laced with many important questions after the state was formed in the year 2000. An earlier attempt was made by Shri Babulal Marandi (the first chief minister of the state) in 2002 to ascertain a domicile policy for a state; which was envisioned as a space where tribal communities, ***original inhabitants*** of the land, could preserve their traditions and prosper financially and politically, with complete control over their jal, jangal and zameen. To determine this policy, land surveys done in 1932 were proposed to serve as cut-offs. However, huge protests by opposition parties had provided excuses to successive governments to ignore the issues.

The land surveys records – existing reminders of the capture of land and forests by state authorities in the name of improving administration - historically used, managed and conserved by the indigenous populations, are still today the only comprehensive database for administrative planning and execution. Opposition groups have registered their protest primarily on using these land records compiled in the colonial period, alleging inherent discrimination against adivasis.

Official notification of the policy is still awaited. It primarily addresses the employment for Class III and IV jobs – for giving primacy to ‘local residents’ in filling vacancies of teacher, Jan Sevak, Panchayat secretary, constable, chaukidar, forest guards, ANMs etc

A win for social movements -

It is important to highlight the role of social movement groups in this. The **Janmukti Sangharsh Vahini (JaSaVa)**³³ which has led the fight of people affected by large projects for more than three decades now. It has held several meetings with representatives of political parties in the past, urging them to frame a pro-poor and pro-people policy framework. Series of consultations, conferences on issues of identity, economic, socio-political and history of Jharkhand have informed participant groups and sangathans on the need for clarity in administrative policy.

“Affirmative action policies like reservation of jobs for SC/ST are aimed at addressing the higher paying posts or facilities for employment among adivasis, as they apply only for better jobs for students after completing their graduation (while the majority are even unable to finish school) – the need to demarcate ‘locals’ arise due to the huge disparity among rural-urban communities, absence of employment opportunities at the local level and the historical appropriation of tribal interests by other groups, settling over time”, said **Arvind Anjum, National Convenor, Janmukti Sangharsh Vahini.**

“Most of the policy provisions have incorporated the suggestions we made. It is indeed good if a government is finally putting a policy in place. We will have to see what initiatives they now take to ensure proper employment in the region. In the long run, a policy will serve the social, cultural and political interests of adivasis”, he adds. However, the provision for declaring the spouses and children of government officers as locals goes against the premises of the debate as they anyways have a residence certificate in their living area, and serves all purpose for them. The domicile policy is aimed at addressing deep-rooted issues of inequality and unemployment, and hence must not be confused for regulatory provisions for residents of the state to access jobs/schemes.

The political establishment has received accolades for framing an ‘all-inclusive and historic policy’ for the state. In reality, it has been groups like **Janmukti Sangharsh Vahini**, along with active assertions from student groups in the state, and other progressive forums and networks associated with JMV, which have kept the pressure on successive governments to come up with the policy directives. It will be

³³ Janmukti Sangharsh Vahini (JaSaVa) is a forum of progressive individuals, sangathans and civil society organisations working towards ensuring peace, harmony and dignified living among the most marginalised sections of people. It was formed in 1989, as an extension of Chhatra Yuva Sangharsh Vahini, formed by Jai Prakash Narayan in 1975.

interesting to see how further deliberations are organised for building consensus on the issue. There are very valid concerns raised by movements and opposition parties, such as the issue with using the land records from 1932, and it is imperative that these concerns are kept in mind while taking further action – legislative and administrative.

BIHAR

Case story – 1 – Mithilesh Nirala and his participation with sangathans work

एक छोटे किसान के घर में अपने तीन भाइयों में बड़े बटेश्वर उम्र 50 साल एक बदलाव की कहानी उनकी के जुबानी।

बिहार राज्य के गया जिला मुख्यालय से चालीस किलोमीटर दक्षिण डोभी प्रखंड के एक छोटा सा गाँव गया डोभी मार्ग से चार कि०मी० पश्चिम गमहरिया बसा है। जहाँ मुलाकात होती है एक अधेड़ किन्तु जवान बटेश्वर जी से। जिन्होंने बताया। जब मात्र आठ साल का था तब से छात्र युवा संघर्ष वाहिनी का सदस्य बना बोधगया भूमि आन्दोलन के बाद अपने को अकेला महसूस करने लगा एक जो बदलाव का जुनून था एक नई उर्जा संचारित कर रही थी अतः अट्ठासी के बाद वाम धारा में विलय हो गया गाँव गाँव जाना समस्याओं से अवगत होना और उसके समाधान के लिए उपाय करना पेशा बन गया। इसी क्रम में जैसे जैसे मैट्रिक पास किया और पढाई के बोझ से मुक्त हो गया।

मन बेचैन था जो मैं कहना चाहता था वो कह नहीं पाता था और जो कहता था वो लोग समझ नहीं पाते थे। बड़ा जटिल समस्या था। बचपन में नाटकों में हिस्सा लेता था और वाहिनी में समस्या आधारित संगठनात्मक गीत लिखता था बस फिर क्या था इसी को माध्यम बना कर आगे बढ़ने का निर्णय लिया और कुछ साथियों के सहयोग से मागधी कला मंच नामक कला जत्था का निर्माण किया तथा अंधविश्वास, दहेज, अशिक्षा, लिंग भेद, पर्यावरण, समानता, स्वास्थ्य, भ्रष्टाचार एवं अन्य कई और समाजिक बुराईयों के विरोध में गीत लिखना नुक्कड़ नाटक लिखना और अपने कला जत्था के माध्यम से जनता के बीच रखने लगा।

सभी ने मिलकर तय किया एक एक जत्था के सदस्य एक एक हरिजन बहुल गाँव को चिन्हित करेंगे जहाँ वे बच्चों को पढाएंगे और उसी गाँव से अपना जिविका भी चलाएंगे और सप्ताह में एक दिन कला जत्था में समय देंगे। सभी राजी होकर अपने अपने चिन्हित गाव में चल दिए।

मैं अपने घर से करीब पचास कि०मी० पुरब टनकुप्पा प्रखंड के बरचैता गाँव को अपना प्रयोग भूमि के रूप में चिन्हित किया और चल दिया वहाँ लोगों से मेल मिलाप करने में ज्यादा समय नहीं लगा बहुत कम

समय में सबके चहेते बन गये। किन्तु शोषक वर्ग के लोग विरोधी बनते चले गये। इसकी परवाह किसे था अपने धुन में अपने सपनों को साकार करने की दिशा में आगे बढ़ रहा था लोगों का सहयोग भरपुर मिल रहा था। ग्रामिणों में शिक्षा का भूख जगाने में कामयाब हो गया था और मेरे पाठशाला में अट्ठारह लड़कियाँ और बारह लड़के जुड़ चुके थे सभी का नाम जब लिखने लगा तो उनके नाम दिन महिने पर आधारित था।

मैंने कुछ दिनों बाद सभी लोगों का नाम बदल कर सुन्दर नामों का नामकरण किया। जब उन बच्चों को जब बदले हुए नामों से पुकारता था तो वे बहुत खुश होते हर दिन एक बच्चे के घर खाना था सो रोज मेरी दिवाली थी। किन्तु यह ज्यादा दिन नहीं चला लगभग दो सालों के बाद साथियों की जिम्मेवारी बढ़ी और हम बिखरते चले गये। फिर भी हारना कहाँ सिखा था अकेले गाँव के लगभग सत्तर प्रतिशत वयस्कों को साक्षर बना एवं तीस नौनिहालों में शिक्षा का भूख जगाने में कामयाब हो गाँव को अलविदा कर वापस अपने गाँव आ गया। यहाँ भी रहकर कोई निजी कामों में मन नहीं लगा। सो गाँव में व्याप्त समस्याओं को लेकर जागरूकता का काम में जुड़ा रहा जिससे लोगों के साथ लगाव बढ़ता गया।

वर्तमान में सरकारी वादों और कानूनों को अमलीजामा पहनाने के उद्देश्य से मजदूर किसान समिति संगठन के माध्यम से लोगों में जागरूकता लाकर वैसे भूमिहीन लगभग एक हजार परिवारों को लेकर जो दो गाँव बेला और बेलहंडा जो 1913 के अंग्रेजी सरवे के पहले हैजा नामक बيمारी के चपेट में आने से बेचिरागी हो चुके गाँव कआनेपुनः वाहिनी नगर एवं लोक नायक जय प्रकाश नगर दो नूतन ग्राम बसाया गया है संगठन के सहयोग से उक्त दोनों नूतन ग्रामों में एक ओर छप्पर लोगों को मरसर हुआ है तो दूसरी ओर उक्त जमीन पर काबीज होकर खेती किसानों भी कर रहे हैं जिससे लोगों के चेहरे पर संतुष्टी भरा भाव झलकता है वही अपने अधिकारों की रक्षा के लिए जुझारू भी दिखाई देते हैं। माह में तीन बैठक प्रत्येक गाँव में की जाती है जिसमें आजीविका से लेकर अपनी आम समस्याओं पर खुलकर बहस चलाते हैं। तथा मिल जुल कर निदान करते हैं।

- निराला

Case story – 2

Patna HC raps up state government: Big win for Forest Rights campaigns in Bihar

An interim order was passed against malfeasance while implementing the FRA

On 22nd of July Patna High Court passed an interim order in a pending writ petition (Janmukti Sangharsh Vahini & Ors. vs. State of Bihar & Ors.) relating to the Forest Rights Act (FRA) and its

implementation in the State of Bihar. The petition was filed bringing to the notice of the Court a slew of illegalities being committed by the State government while implementing the FRA, resulting in widespread rejection of claims on multiple specious grounds. The High Court order while requiring further affidavits from the State government to explain its position over FRA, makes a very significant interim direction, which is clearly applicable to all forest dwellers in the State of Bihar;

“It is directed that during the pendency of the matter of an individual concerned, he shall not be dispossessed and status quo shall be maintained and in case it is found that in any case dispossession has taken place before deciding the claim, this Court may consider taking action against the officer concerned.”

While many interim orders were passed by various High Courts directing there will be no dispossession until the court proceedings are over, these invariably protect only the parties who are actually before the Court. This is the first order which applies across the board to all forest dwellers in the State, thus extending the protection of Section 4(5) of FRA to them. This judgment will safeguard the claims filed in the year 2008 by Other Traditional Forest Dwellers. It will also encourage people who are yet to file their claims.

Bodhgaya (Gaya, Bihar) land struggle began in 1978 against the Mahants of Shankar Math. Although the movement was initiated in 1975-76, it was only in the 1978 that things really started taking shape. In the harvesting season in November 1978, the activists of the movement jointly decided to keep the harvested crops along with themselves rather than to give to Maths. As a result of the movement launched by Chhatra Yuva Sangharsh Vahini, 8000 out of the the 12000 acres owned by the Gaya Math are now in control of the labourers. Bodhgaya land movement is also known as the struggle of women for equal land rights within the family and community to get registered the land in the name of women rather than in family or household (probably for the first time in a peasant movement in South Asia as recognised by eminent researchers and authors).

Since the year 2008, Janmukti Sangarsh Vahini (JaSaVa) is been actively working for implementation of FRA in Bihar. The PIL was filed on December 2014 stating the struggle for the claims of IFR and CFR from 4th of January 2008 by **Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (OTFD)**. The Sub Division Level Committee (SDLC) and District Level Committee (DLC) rejected 531 claims of 652 claims and gave a reason that with these claims the proof of 75 years of possession of land was not submitted. The committees didn't even inform the applicants or gave them time to appeal again.

Immediately JaSaVa presented a case study and drew the attention of the secretary of nodal agency for ST/SC that in Banka district 700 claims were rejected in the same manner.

The struggle was not very easy; people were arrested twice once on 5th March 2014 near Chief Minister Residence and again on 9th April 2015 outside the Bihar Legislative Assembly in Patna while protesting for the cause. Making the officials recognize the rights of people was a very hard task. With the continued follow-up over the issue at all levels, the Sangathan attained yet another victory over land and forest issue.

To observe this Historical victory of people “**Vijay March**” was organized by SRUTI Fellow's group Jan Mukti Sangharsh Vahini on 11th of September in the areas of Bodhgaya Movement. During the March; people from three blocks and 80 villages gathered at Mohanpur, Barachatti road and covered 16 kilometer distance in three and half hour while marching towards Mohonpur.

Before the march, members of sangathan also took out a cycle march from 6th to 9th September 2017, covering 76 villages' awareing people about the historical judgment passed by Patna High Court on Forest Rights Act and its implementation in the State of Bihar and also inviting people to participate in Vijay March.

Case story -3

बघलती गांव में लिफ्ट इरीगेशन और सिंचाई के अन्य प्रबंध

फरवरी महीने के अंत में ग्राम विकास योजना के काम के सिलसिले में मेरा बघलती गांव में जाना हुआ . में लोगों से बातचीत के दौरान प्रशासन (महादलित समुदाय भुइयां का टोला) गांव के दलित टोला भुन्टोली की उपेक्षा झेल रहे लोगों ने अपनी तमाम समस्याओं के बारे में खुलकरबात कीउनकी समस्याओं और . जुले प्रयास से विकसित हो रही सिंचाई व्यवस्था के बारे में भी -गांव के लोगों के मिले ,चिंताओं के बीच का शायद इससे बेहतर उदाहरण 'एवरी क्लाउड हैज़ ए सिल्वर लाइनिंग' अंग्रेजी की कहावत .पता चला 55 गांव की लगभग .मैंने पहले कभी नहीं देखा थाएकड़ सिंचित ज़मीन में से एकड़ की सिंचाई इसी 30 .व्यवस्था से की जा रही है

बघलती गांव के लोग



हैं (का पानी जमा करने वाले तालाब

करीब 1400 लोगों की आबादी वाला बघलती गांव, बिहार राज्य के गया ज़िले का एक दलित बहुल गांव है जो इस क्षेत्र के अधिकांश गांवों की तरह स्वास्थ्यशिक्षा , और सिंचाई जैसी मूलभूत सुविधाओं के घोर अभाव से घिरा हुआ है एकड़ खेती की 1200 गांव में करीब . एकड़ ही सिंचित 55 जिसमें से केवल , ज़मीन है कुएं 15 सिंचाई के साधन के रूप में गांव में . ज़मीन है रेन वाटर रिजर्वॉयर्स यानी बरसात) आहर 11 कुएं और

सिंचाई के साधनों के बारे में बातचीत के दौरान गांववासी रामस्वरूप मंडल जी ने बताया कि गांव में भूजल का स्तर काफी नीचे है जिस कारण यहां ट्यूब वेल लगाना काफी महंगा है सिंचाई के बाकी साधनों के बारे में बताते हुए उन्होंने आगे बताया, “सालों पहले गांव से किमी दूर 15 कनौदी नदी से एक पेन छोटी) कुछ समय . जाते थे (सींचे) से गांव के बड़का आहर में पानी आता था जिससे धान के खेत पट (नहर अब बरसात में भी , बाद ऊंची जाती के दबंगों ने नहर से गांव के बीच की ज़मीन पर कब्ज़ा कर लिया . गांव के आहर सूखे रहते हैं”

मुहाने नदी

मंडल जी ने आगे बताया ,मीटर की दूरी पर मुहाने नाम की एक बरसाती नदी है 800 यहां से करीब“ , जिस पर लिफ्ट इरीगेशन सिस्टम लगाने के लिए मैंने गांव के लोगों के साथ मिलकर तमाम सरकारी अधिकारियों और जनप्रतिनिधियों से बात की अब . आश्वासन तो काफी मिले लेकिन हुआ कुछ नहीं . सरकार कुछ नहीं करेगी तो हम यूं ही तो नहीं बैठे रह सकते एक दशरथ मांझी ने अकेले पूरा पहाड़ तोड़ , . हमने तय किया कि अब खुद ही कुछ कर दिखाएंगे . दिया था और हमारे गांव में तो सैकड़ों दशरथ मांझी हैं श्रमदान किया और एक लिफ्ट , लोगों ने चंदा इकठ्ठा किया (भुन्टोली टोला के) गांव के ट इरीगेशन सिस्टम. एक पोखर और एक चेक डैम बनाया जिसे बेहतर बनाने के प्रयास अभी भी चल रहे हैं ,”

गांव के संयुक्त प्रयासों से बनी व्यवस्था के बारे में सुनाने के बाद मैंने इसे देखने की इच्छा जताई गांव . वासियों के संगठित प्रयास से जो सिंचाई की एक नई व्यवस्था बनी है वो कुछ इस तरह से है-

1) लिफ्ट इरीगेशन सिस्टम: 2018 में भुन्टोली के लोगों ने लिफ्ट इरीगेशन सिस्टम पर काम शुरू किया और जनवरी में इसे 2019





.पूरा कियाइसके लिए एक चालित पंप-हॉर्स पाँवर का बिजली 10, नदी के पास एक शेड में लगाया गया हैइंच का एक 4 इस पंप से . इस पाइप ,फीट दूर नदी के तल तक जाता है 150 फ्लेक्सिबल पाइप इंच के 8 फीट के बोर में बिठाए गए 10 को नदी तल में बने एक पंप .पीवीसी पाइप से जोड़ा गया है से फीट की 3000 इंच की 4 पीवीसी पाइप से गांव में एक सिंचाई का नेटवर्क बनाया गया है 4 फीट के पाइप सिस्टम में 3000 इस . और ,अलग जगहों पर पानी को ज़रूरत के अनुसार निकाला जाता है-इनमे से तीन से अलग ,आउटलेट हैं साथ सिंचाई के लिए भी इस्तेमाल -जिसे मछली पालन के साथ ,चौथे से एक पोखर में पानी भरा जाता है .किया जाता है

- a)- ऊपर से बाएं :10 हॉर्स पाँवर का पंप b)- ऊपर से दाएंनदी : तल पर बोरिंग
c)- नीचेपीवीसी पाइप सिस्टम से निकलने वाला आउटलेट :

नदी के पास बने पंप शेड में हर वक़्त गांव का एक व्यक्ति मौजूद रहता है जो बिजली की उपलब्धता के अनुसार पंप को चालू करता हैजिस वक़्त म .ैं वहां गया उस समय वहां मदन मांझी थेउन्होंने मुझे , हॉर्स पाँवर 12 इस लिफ्ट इरीगेशन सिस्टम के बारे में और जानकारी दी और बताया कि उनके पास एक का डीजल पंप भी है जिससे एक और सामानांतर लिफ्ट इरीगेशन सिस्टम बनाया जा सकता है लेकिन फीट पा 2000 इसके लिए कम से कम औरइप की ज़रूरत होगी .

तमाम परेशानियों के बाद भी गांव के लोगों का हौंसला बुलंद है और वे इस सिस्टम को और अधिक विकसित करने को लेकर प्रतिबद्ध हैंमदन जी अपने प्रयासों को एक पंक्ति में सारबद्ध करते हुए कहते .
एक गांव में रोटी और दो गांव ,हमारा दो उद्देश्य है“ ,हैंमें मछली की कभी कमी ना रहे.”

गांव के इस शानदार सफल प्रयोग को देखकर मन में यह जानने की भी इच्छा हुई कि आखिर लिफ्ट इरीगेशन का खयाल आया कहां से .मेरी इस जिज्ञासा का जवाब दिया गांव के युवा जोगिन्दर मांझी ने ?
दादाओं की असफलताओं स-हमारे बाप“ ,जोगिन्दर ने बतायाे हमने इसे सीखासाल पहले 40 करीब . 1 करीब) उन्होंने स्थानीय कुम्हारों से एक हाथ. लम्बी (फीट 5कई नालियां बनवाई और उन्हें खेतों में बिठायाइन नालियों में एक डीजल पंप से नदी से खींचकर पानी डालने की कोशिश की लेकिन यह , इनसे सीखते हुए हमने आज का ल .प्रयास असफल रहािफ्ट इरीगेशन सिस्टम विकसित किया.”

2)- पोखर: लिफ्ट इरीगेशन की ही तरह गांव के लोगों ने मिलकर एक पोखर का निर्माण में शुरू 2007 इस पोखर .समय पर गांव के लोग मिलकर श्रमदान करते हैं-जिसे और बड़ा बनाने के लिए समय ,किया में लिफ्ट इरीगेशन सिस्टम के ज़रिए साल के उन महीनों में पानी जमा किया जाता है जब बारिश नहीं होती है.



गांव के लोग मिलकर इस पोखर में मछली पालन करते हैंजिनमें , इससे .मांगुर और स्थानीय पहाड़ी मछली को पाला जाता है ,रोहू साथ ही ,गांव के लोगों को सस्ते दामों में मछली तो मिलती ही है स्थानीय बाजारों में बेचने पर जो आमदनी होती है उसका इस्तेमाल गांव में विकास के अन्य कामों में किया जाता है.

3)- **चेक डैम** :बरसात के समय जंगल से आने वाला पानी पहले सीधा मुहाने नदी में चला जाता था ,2011 में गांव के लोगों ने एक इस पर एक चेक डैम को बनाना शुरू किया जिस पर अभी भी काम चल रहा हैयह सुनने में जितना आसान लगता है उतना अस .ल में है नहीं. 2012 में नक्सलवादी गुट एमसीसी के लोगों ने पास के गांव के रसूखदार (माओइस्ट कम्युनिस्ट सेंटर) आज यह .जिसे गांव के लोगों ने श्रमदान कर फिर से बनाया ,लोगों के साथ मिलकर इसे तोड़ दिया था चेकडैम बघलती गांव को सिंचाई का एक और विकल्प उपलब्ध कराताहै.

सिंचाई की यह पूरी व्यवस्था बघलती गांव के भुन्टोली के लोगों ने बिना किसी सरकारी मदद के तैयार की हैएकड़ की खेती वाले गांव के 1200 लेकिन ,ज़ाहिर तौर पर इसकी जितनी तारीफ़ की जाए वह कम है . हमारे सरकारी तंत्र की अनदेखी और साफ़ तौर पर अफसर .लिए यह काफी नहीं हैशाही के जातिवादी पूर्वाग्रहों के बीच भुन्टोली के लोगों का यह प्रयास एक मिसाल हैजो साबित करता है कि लोग सरकारों , .से नहीं सरकारें लोगों से चलती हैं

सिंचाई के संकट से लोग पार पा भी लें तो शिक्षा और स्वास्थ्य की समस्याएं आज भी बघलती जैसे कई गावों में अपने विकटतम रूप में मौजूद हैंबिजली ,किमी है 8 बघलती से निकटतम स्वास्थ्यकेंद्र की दूरी . ये सब तो यहां ...किमी दूर है 3 सरकारी सस्ते गल्ले की दुकान ,घंटा ही मिलती है 10 दिन में औसतन असल में गांव के लोग क्या कुछ सह रहे हैं वो एक ,की समस्याओं की एक बानगी भर हैदिन गांव घूमकर शायद जाना नहीं जा सकेगा .

Case story – 4

People's Movements ensure Land Reforms in Bihar

'Mission Dakhal Dahani' by Bihar Navnirman Abhiyan: A successful endeavour in ensuring land rights for peasants

So far

- Landless families have successfully occupied 300 acres of land

- About 1, 40,000 claims have been recorded
- West Champaran district alone has accounted for 1, 80,000 claims out of these.

At a national-level, claims of 18 lakh people were recorded under the *dakhal dahani* campaign. This tabulation has been done by the state government and uploaded on the Bihar Revenue website

Landless peasants of Parchadhari Sangathan in Bettiah (of West Champaran district, Bihar) successfully occupied 300 acres of land that was promised as per the land reform and redistribution programme of the Bhoodan movement. The historic action called ‘Mission *Dakhal Dahani*’ took shape as a collective affirmative action by the State government of Bihar and Bihar Navnirman Abhijan* Mass movements.

In August 2015, the representatives of this movement came together to present a people’s manifesto keeping in mind the upcoming assembly elections. The state government proactively addressed this issue and directed the concerned departments to take it forward in consultation with of Bihar Navnirman Abhijan. It was a result of constant efforts and dialogue among people’s movement groups and the representatives from the administration, namely the Department of Revenue and Land Reforms, Government of Bihar.

The Dakhal Dahani campaign has emerged following these advocacy initiatives. **The campaign has been a concerted effort that overcame many obstacles and repeated reluctance from the administration, going on to prove what constant dialogue and grassroots mobilisation can achieve.**

The mission’s focus was to secure pattas for those who are cultivating land, and getting actual land possession for agricultural workers and farmers who till now only have pattas but no access to the land. This dispossession also gets accentuated due to power dynamics in the society. Fighting this needs active support from the administration since rural power relations are heavily tilted in the favour of dominant caste groups, and are often sites of conflict and violence against the marginalised sections of people.

About one and a half years ago, the movement pressurized the government to take up a time-bound exercise to identify landless peasant families that were allotted land through Bhoodan or the Bihar Zamindari Abolition Act and assign them land in a demarcated area. They also demanded that this should happen simultaneously with ‘parcha’ (land titles) distribution for peasants who have been occupying or cultivating land for years. This effort came to be called *dakhal dahani* campaign.

The campaign took shape during the Chief Ministership of Jitan Ram Manjhi who prioritised this issue and took it forward as a government initiative. However, a time limit of merely one month was given within which thousands of landless peasants were expected to submit their claims to the concerned government departments. **Despite the highly impractical deadline, wherever landless peasants were mobilized and the sangathan had a strong presence, most claims were actually filed within one month!** Many mass movement groups actively working on the issue of land reforms ensured speedy filing of claims and **so far about 1,40,000 claims have been recorded.** This process saw proactive response from the administration, through later extension of the application till July 2015. Many claims were settled in this period.

At a national-level, claims of 18 lakh people have been recorded under the *dakhal dahani* campaign. This tabulation has been done by the state government and uploaded on the [Bihar Revenue website](#). **West Champaran district alone has accounted for 1,80,000 claims out of these.** Out of these, the state government has assured possession to nearly 50% of the claims. This process is ongoing.

Implementation of mission *dakhal dahani* or even the Forest Rights Act 2006 has seen extremely slow progress in Bihar. **In such times, issues taken up by the sangathans under the umbrella of Bihar Navnirman Abhiyan³⁴ concerning marginalized communities and farmers are crucial to make the government machinery accountable.** The success of Bettiah's struggle is evidence of progress by people's will and it is leading the way in achieving land rights for the toiling masses of the state.

CHHATTISGARH

Jan Abhivyakti

Case Story – 1 – January, 2018

Chhattisgarh Gram Sabhas come together to assert their constitutional authority and ask governments to correct institutional processes in due recognition of rights

³⁴ Bihar Navnirman Abhiyan is a coalition lead by SRUTI Fellow group Mazdoor Kisan Samiti, Gaya, of 29 sangathans in six districts of Bihar to take forward rights of people for the use, management and conservation of forests and committed to the proper implementation of the Forest Rights Act in Bihar

Over 150 Gram Sabhas come together for their Constitutional Rights and Control over their Forest Resources. State Tribal Affairs Minister assures that implementing Forest Rights Act in letter and spirit is the foremost priority of Chhattisgarh Government.

On 24th January, Morga village in Korba district of Chhattisgarh witnessed the coming together for more than 150 villages and representatives of their respective Gram Sabhas. At this crucial juncture where adivasis and other forest dwellers across the country had just heard the news of the Supreme Court order evicting them from forest areas, there was considerable opposition and anger among people owing to the non-implementation laws like FRA and of non-recognition of the rights of Gram Sabhas.

In response to the order passed by the Supreme Court on 13th Feb, and the subsequent protests around it, the political class has been already exposed in their anti-tribal and anti-forest policies. To deliberately stand away from arguing a PIL filed by Wildlife First and other so-called conservation groups challenging the Forest Rights Act, 2006; the central government allowed for the Supreme Court to order evictions of forest dwelling communities, whose claims have been rejected.

While coordinating the sammelan, convenor of Chhattisgarh Bachao Andolan Sh. Alok Shukla presented the current context and status of PESA and Forest Rights Acts in Chhattisgarh. He also raised concern over Supreme Court's judgment ordering eviction of rejected claimants, which he feared may lead to the second historical injustice against adivasis and other forest dwellers. He termed it a grave mistake to consider rejected claimants as encroachers since the entire process for recognition of forest rights was still pending and never properly followed, as a result of which there is a dire need to revisit all claims.

Convenor of Hasdeo Arand Bachao Sangharsh Samiti and the current Janpad Sadasya (Block Development Councilor) of the region argued that over the last 15 years, provisions of PESA and FRA had been consistently ignored in order to benefit a few large corporate houses. In fact, Chhattisgarh even failed to frame rules to ensure implementation of PESA Act even 22 years after the legislation. As a result, the interests of adivasis and other forest dwellers, as well as vital concerns of conservation of environment and forests have been regularly sacrificed for the sake of profits for a few companies. Satyam of Bhumi Adhikaar Aandolan explained the provisions under 5th Schedule and PESA Act and stressed on the need to have localized governance institutions and self-rule as envisaged under the PESA Act.

Witnessing solidarity of other social movements across the state

Sh. Keshav Shori of Kanker spoke about the situation in Bastar and highlighted how due implementation of PESA and Forest Right Act including recognizing the communities' access and control over their forest resources was critical to ensure peace and normalcy in the region. The continued deprivation of adivasis and local communities from their traditional forest resources was largely responsible for current state of fear in the region.

Sh. Sonu Rathore of Urjadhani Bhoo-Visthapit Sangharsh Samiti Korba highlighted how rights of gram sabhas to “free prior informed consent” before forest diversion in Schedule 5 areas have been consistently violated. He also highlighted how nagar panchayats were constituted to avoid PESA provisions which need to be corrected. Sh. Nand Kashyap of Kisan Sabha and Chhattisgarh Bachao Andolan informed about the key constitutional and legal aspects of the recent Supreme Court order and termed it unfortunate.

Sh. Devendra Baghel of Sonakhan area welcomed the state Government's recent decision to take back the historic land of Sh. Veer Narayan Singh from Vedanta and expressed hope that the Government will also take measures to protect the forest rights. Veteran kisan leader Sh. Anand Mishra gave vivid examples of how adivasis and their traditional knowledge and culture has been responsible for protection and conservation of the forests, in the absence of which no forest conservation is possible. In light of this, the present order of the Supreme Court is extremely sad and needs to be revisited.

This unique event saw a huge mass mobilization with representatives from over 150 gram sabhas, Panchayati Raj Institutions, and social movement leaders. The sammelan was attended by Honourable Minister for Department of Tribal and Scheduled Caste of the Chhattisgarh Government who patiently listened to representatives from different gram sabhas of Chhattisgarh and addressed their key concerns.

State government lends an ear to the ground

The sammelan was an expression of Constitutional rights provided to Gram Sabhas in Schedule V areas under the PESA Act. Gram sabhas from different parts of Chhattisgarh also expressed their solidarity and support with the struggle of Hasdeo Arand Bachao Sangharsh Samiti to conserve and protect Hasdeo Arand forest region. At the end of the sammelan, a charter of demands and concerns was also presented to the Honourable Minister Dr. Prem Say Ji. He listened patiently to the points raised by all speakers, interacted with the members of gram sabhas and addressed those issues in his speech.

He assured the gathered audience that unlike previous governments, the current Congress Government led by Sh. Bhupesh Baghel is committed to protect and further the interests of adivasis and forest dweller communities and for strengthening all legislations that protect and further the rights of adivasis and their control over their forest resources. He mentioned that implementation of Forest Rights Act 2006 in letter and spirit was the foremost priority of the current Chhattisgarh Government. Other important parts of Hon'ble Minister's address are as follows.

- The state government believes that forest dwellers have enjoyed traditional rights and responsibilities to conserve, manage and protect the forests. No one can take away these rights from them. Forest Rights Act is merely a recognition of these traditional rights.
- The previous government did not implement this Act properly, perhaps due to two reasons – their central concern for corporate and industrial interests, and they did not want that the credit for such people-centric laws should not go to the Congress government
- Hon'ble Chief Minister Sh. Bhupesh Baghel and the entire government is also concerned by this Supreme Court order. Even the Congress National President Sh. Rahul Gandhi has written two letters to the state government advising them on the need for intervention in this issue.
- The state government has already issued directions on 22nd January to revisit all previous claims and rejections and in this regard, also organized a consultation with all collectors and administrative officials to ensure that forest rights get recognized properly in the state. In this regard, we have also started a process to ensure fresh and effective implementation of the Forest Rights Act in its entirety, including its provisions for Habitat Rights, full control to gram sabhas over minor forest produce, recognition of gram sabhas powers to manage and conserve forest resources.
- Clear and effective rules will be framed to implement the provisions of PESA Act in letter and spirit.
The Minister also expressed concern over the rising human-elephant conflict in the region and assured of the current Government's efforts to come up with an effective solution to the problem. For this, the Chhattisgarh government would take steps towards notification of the Lemru elephant corridor.
- The Hon'ble Minister assured the gathering that rights of adivasis and forest dwellers shall be protected and industrial development shall not take place at the cost of gram sabha's rights.
- The Minister also announced a proposal to develop the building for a new middle school, for which budget provisions shall be made in the next financial year.

In the charter of demands submitted to the Honb'l Minister and the state government, action was demanded against all illegal industrial and mining projects where diversion has taken place without completing the recognition of forest rights and without the consent of Gram Sabhas. Along with a ban on industrial or mining activity in any bio-diverse and wildlife rich areas, demands were also made to recognize the rights of the Gram Sabhas to take full control of minor forest produce and transit permits, and honour their rights to appoint their own Secretaries. The demands to recognize the provisions of PESA was also echoed along the sammelan. Members also called for recognition of

rights of Gram Sabhas to determine and give permission for any land acquisition, address false processes adopted by the administration and companies in this matter. and to be made under the LARR 2013. Finally, to take into account the 'historical injustice' meted out to people in the state, the FRA was sought to be implemented in letter and spirit.

Dalit Adivasi Manch

Case Story 1

The villagers of Mahkoni, from Mehraji Gram Panchayat in September 2017 confiscated sawing machines of the forest department that the forest department was using for cutting trees. The forest department without taking permission of the Committee constituted for the protection of wildlife, forest and biodiversity, as under Section 4 (1) (e) of the Comprehensive Tribal Rules published under the Forest Rights Act, 2005 went ahead to fell trees with saw machines under Compartment Number 381 of the village. The villagers on being informed of such felling informed the Sangathan. The villagers and the Sangathan members along with the constituted Forest Rights Committee of the village got together to take appropriate action against such felling of trees by the Forest Department. After taking a collective decision of confiscating the saw machines, the villagers, FRC members and the Sangathan members went ahead and took the machines with themselves. Despite facing pressure from the Deputy Ranger of the Forest Department, the machines were not returned to the officials.

The village has received their Community Forest Rights, under the Forest Rights Act, 2005. Compartment number 381, where the felling of trees was taking place also falls under the Community Forest Right claims that the villagers have been granted, thereby making the villagers the decision making body of activities being done in the area. With the Sangathan members joining the village body, the case of using saw machines to fell trees, and the confiscation of these machines was noted in the Register of the Committee constituted for the protection of wildlife, forest and biodiversity, as under Section 4 (1) (e) of the Comprehensive Tribal Rules published under the Forest Rights Act, 2005. With the agreement of all the Committee members, signatures of all were taken for the noted case. A meeting of all village heads was called in the area, where 13 village heads along with the Chairperson and Secretary of the Forest Rights Committee took part. During the meeting, everyone showed their discontent and anger to the realization that the entitlements of Community Forest Rights instead of being given to the Gram Sabha have been given to Forest Management Committee.

It was mutually decided that the Community Forest Rights would again be filed and given to the Collector. They also came to the consensus that the use of funds by the Forest Department for of felling trees without the consultation and permission of the Gram Sabha, Forest Rights Committee and Forest management

Committee have to stopped and the felling of forest trees would not be allowed. All villages mutually took the resolve to protect the forests of their villages.

Case Story 2

Village Daldali, under the Gram panchayat Maharaji has a main pond that has been used by the populated area since the village settled, over which the village also has nistari rights. For the deepening of the pond, work under MGNREGA was initiated on January 1, 2019. The Sarpanch of the Panchayat was served notice by the Forest Department on 18/01/2019 stating that the pond deepening work was a violation of the Forest Protection Act 1980, informing that this area comes under the Reserved Forest area under Compartment number 383. The Sarpanch was asked to serve an explanation within 2 days for the same. The Sarpanch informed the villagers, Panchayat members and Sangathan members of Dalit Adivasi Manch about this notice. Together with the Sangathan, the villagers and the panchayat members approached the Subdivision Committee of Kasdol, Forest Officer of Balodabazar about the Notice Number A/ 29, served on 18/01/2019 to the Sarpanch by Forest Range Arjuni. On 28/01/2019, the villagers and Sangathan submitted an application regarding the same notice. They submitted their community forest rights claim to the Sub Division Level Committee on 29/01/2019. Since the pond comes under the claimed area of CFR, on 02/05/2019 work resumed on the deepening of pond under MGNREGA. The work was finally completed on 27/05/2019.

By the collective efforts of the villagers along with the Dalit Adivasi Manch, no actions were taken by the Forest Department when the work again on the pond re-began.

Case Story 3

Bharat Lal Kondh, son of Raghunath Kondh is a resident of village Kasaundi, falling under Gram Panchayat Sonakhan, Tehsil – Kasdol, District Balaudabazar Bhatapara, Chhattisgarh. From his forefathers to grandfathers, his family has been occupants of the forest land, doing farming for their living and livelihood. After the cutting of paddy, and during the process of farming, in 2015 the Forest Department under Ranger Geeta Thakur brought a force of forest officials and confiscated his cattle and plough tools from the field threatening him for life imprisonment for cutting trees. Warning Bharat Lal to not do farming on this land again, they asked him to come to the Forest Department office with an amount of Rs. 10,000 charged on him as fine. Bharat Lal informed the karyakartas of Dalit Adivasi Manch about this incident.

Sangathan karyakartas along with Bharat Lal approached the Forest officer Geeta Thakur and informed her about the Forest Rights Act, after which the confiscated plough tools and cattle of Bharat Lal were returned to him.

In 2016 again, the Forest Department put barbed wires around the forest boundaries blockading it completely. Bharat Lal's land falling under the wired land was also blocked away. After facing beatings by the Forest Department, his cattle was again confiscated by the Forest Department and was threatened by the Forest Officer from the Range Office. With the help of Dalit Adivasi Manch, Bharat Lal approached the Forest officer and presented to them his copy of the forest right lease. On the letterhead of the Sangathan a written complaint against such activities of the Forest Department were given to the DFO of Balaodabazar. Informing Range Officer Geeta Thakur and other Forest officers about the Forest Rights Act, the Forest Department has stopped troubling Bharat, returning back his confiscated cattle. Bharat is now being able to continue doing his farming smoothly.

Case Story 4

The turning tides in Sonakhan

The cancellation of lease for 2.7 tonnes of gold mining illegally acquired by Vedanta is a welcome move. But much remains to be done to tackle corporate loot in the state and recognize the rights of adivasis and forest dwelling communities.

The state of Chhattisgarh has been witness to large scale coal-mining and extraction of iron-ore, thermal power plants and the construction of large highways for the transport of coal and other material. With a rich forest cover, the state is a natural target of economic and political expansionist programs of large corporate groups, backed by repressive regimes of the state and national governments. The notification of 14 new coal blocks in the Sarguja region and rich Hasdeo Aranya forest regions has already been challenged in the courts for violating environmental and procedural processes. Through the back door, the issues emerging from the Coal-Gate scam have been diverted to 'auction' these coal blocks to private players and its subsidiaries. The changes introduced through the Coal Bearing Act, 2014 allows for diversion of forest land for coal.

In January, 2019, the newly elected Congress government in the state met representatives of Dalit Adivais Manch, a sangathan which has been spearheading the movement against illegal leasing and cancelled the lease given to Vedanta to extract gold from the region. There is renewed enthusiasm among the villagers as this announcement comes as a huge win to the long struggle to protect their lands and habitats, as also a recognition of their rights over forests and natural resources.

The context of struggle

The Barnawapara region in northern Chhattisgarh has been facing an unprecedented crisis. Along the eco-sensitive zone of Baghmara – 474 hectares of land in 24 villages were to be effected by gold mining in the Sonakhan region. Earlier, another 133 hectares of rich forest land was to be diverted for mining purposes. In February 2016, national newspapers first reported on the London-based mining giant, Vedanta group winning the bid to mine gold in the Baghmara area. The locals neither had any idea that such a plan was in place, nor the local village councils were consulted to discuss the impact of these mines. With the direct patronage of the state government led by Mr. Raman Singh, many concerns raised by local villagers, activists, environmentalists including the District Forest Officer (DFO) were sidelined.

The proposed mining region is home to a large array of wildlife including bison, bear, leopard, tiger, deer and many others; and is also the area of the free movement of elephants. The marked region for gold mining in Sonakhan also has more than 2 lakh trees including many species of bamboo, tendu, mahua, and many other minor forest produce and many varieties of timber. Destruction of these rich, dense forests would cause the destruction of precious wildlife and increase the man-animal conflict many times, already creating havoc across the state. Migration of the elephant and the tiger regularly causes the destruction of homes and agricultural fields, also leading to loss of lives. But the state government did not seem to pay attention.

The unity amongst locals

Dalit Adivasi Manch, a local group of activists has been leading the struggle on these issues from the forefront. The notification of the Sonakhan region for gold mining came as a surprise to them as well. Soon after, the village Sonakhan in Kasdol block (of the newly formed Baloda Bazar district) became the symbol of resistance to indiscriminate looting.

Gram Sabha resolutions unanimously opposed the attempts to mine the area for gold. The area is home to Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh, the celebrated leader who was murdered publicly for participating in the rebellion of 1857 against the British rule. Revered by locals across caste and class, the news of proposed mining brought them together. As the villagers were also aware about what happens to a region after mining takes place, they were in no mood to give up their land, forests and long association with nature for any compensation or to facilitate the greed of a private company. India imports 700 metric tonnes of gold every year. Even if all the 2,700 kg of gold were mined from Sonakhan, it would only account for 0.39 percent of the yearly imports leading to an income for Rs. 820 crores for the state exchequer. The destruction of forest cover and bio-diversity in comparison was beyond comprehension.

The struggle in Barnawapara

Many forest regions in the country face a variety of conflicts. Although it is beyond the scope of a singular note to highlight the decades of exploitation people have faced at the hands of the forest department, it is important to say that forest dwelling communities continue to suffer at the hands of its officials, including the administration and officials who treat them as backward, encroachers and antagonistic to the development needs of the nation. The progressive legislation of 'The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006' recorded these experiences as 'historical injustice'. The provisions of the legislation attempt to correct these injustices, which continue to be conveniently disregarded in a variety of ways – from the lacklustre approach in recognition of community rights, forcing evictions for the formation of wildlife corridors, to illegal plantations on agricultural lands, and the shadows of extortion and violence that these communities live in.

The Barnawapara region has 22 villages. Rampur was the first village to be evicted in 2013. However, 9 families did not move out or were offered the compensation package as the laws treated elder sons of the family as a separate family but females were denied their due. These 9 families continued to live in the village, with regular threats and damages done by the forest department officials who threatened them to move out. From damaging holy sites, water sources and schools, these officials put notices threatening the demolition of their houses using JCB machines. People continued to cultivate their fields and gather firewood, although they had to keep paying small bribes over this time as they were constantly threatened and notices and tolls were extracted from them.

Sonakhan: A movement for protection, conservation and building livelihoods

Baloda Bazar district has recently received community claims for 64 villages after a rigorous process of re-formation of Village Forest Rights Committees (FRCs), following up of claims at the Sub-Divisional Level Committee (SDLC) and the District Level Committee (DLC) as mandated in the Forest Rights Act, 2006. Attempts were made to sideline these demands and continue with plans of forest diversion and plantations under the newly passed Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA, 2016). Along with the lack of information available at the ground and the many processes in which the Forest department continues to deny adivasis and others the rights recognised under the FRA, there were also many instances of coercion and violations at the ground.

The recognition of rights in the year 2018 itself was a huge achievement considering not many areas in the country were seeing positive intervention when it came to the recognition of community rights. While there were also attempts to not give these rights in the name of Gram Sabhas, but in the name of Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMs), the sangathans opposed them and got the titles issued for Gram Sabhas. There are attempts now to implement traditional conservation methods, bring together communities to organise for collecting minor forest produce, build support for value addition and

formation of cooperatives for the same, and bring women at the forefront for protection of several species of medicinal plants and wildlife.

In many ways, the struggle in and around Sonakhan can be seen as a successful instance of positive struggle for recognition of rights, social, cultural and economic. Through democratic organising and collective bargain, along with successful effort at bringing together stakeholders from across the state, the sangathan has allowed for constant negotiations with officers, district and state administration and others. The cancellation of mining lease to Vedanta in recognition of these struggles was much-needed and is a positive attempt on part of the state government which is taking initiatives to bridge the gap between the mainstream development discourses and the exploitation of local communities.

We support the struggle in Sonakhan and other places in the country in favour of recognition of democratic rights and traditional ownership and control of jal, jangal, zameen by local communities.

Gaon Ganrajya Sangathan

Case Story 5

The journey of realising self-rule in Sarguja

The strength of peoples' collective and mobilisation bears positive results when the masses set out to claim the implementation of laws and acts that are made for them. The discourse of Gaon Ganrajya Sangathan (referred to as GGS henceforth) reflects this rightly so. Falling under the Fifth Schedule, PESA Act has played an instrumental role in helping people assert and hold on to their customs and bring into effect the system of village republics – *gaon ganrajya sarkar*.

Located in the dense forests, a threat to habitation and livelihood was felt deeply by the people of the area, when MAHAN-II project was initiated in the area, letting the forest land be grazed into open cast mines. With difficulty in establishing communications together, Lakshmi, (an active member of GGS) set out to travel and meet Jainath Keram, Surjapur district leader of Gondwana Gantantra Party. Regularly working on this issue, he suggested mobilising people into a Sangathan, to be able to effectively voice out their dissatisfaction against the mining project. This sowed the seeds of Gaon Ganrajya Sangathan. With training and guidance by Keram ji, the village groups slowly began to formalise into a Sangathan under the leadership of Jang Sai Poya.

Throughout the fight against the mining projects, the Sangathan has faced trouble not only at the hands of the mining agencies but also from contractors, company officials, middlemen and brokers. Sangathan members have been circled and both attacked and threatened from time to time. Several cases lodged on them along with on villagers, took several years and the undiminished support of the villagers, for the Sangathan to successfully sail through.

Associated with Bharat Jan Andolan since 2003-04, Lakshmi was one of the member's who saw the evolution and strengthening of Gaon Ganrajya Sangathan, which was founded around 2008-09. The Sangathan garners its support from all villages in the area, even where mining has not been notified or is not going to be affected, because of that overall support has been extended by them to fight together.

Manoj, another active member associated with GGS traces his association to the Sangathan since his education days at Kalyanpur. Since this area too was affected by mining, the issue got him close to the Sangathan, where he took on the responsibility of not just spreading awareness, but also engaging with the young members around him. Having taken the initiative of ensuring high women participation by Manoj, it was realised that the struggle of people would have meaning only when all join together. With no land, there would be minimal scope for agriculture, ultimately jeopardizing the supply of food and grains for generations. These constant debates on how the mining would change each one's lives determined the resolve of the people to stand together in unity against this project.

The onset of the project brought with it promises of newer employment opportunities, and lucrative compensation packages. While some villagers did give in and took the compensation, others never got theirs. Lack of papers, accumulation of compensation by district agencies, corruption cases and provision of compensation at rates lower than promised were some of the issues that the villagers faced. Since the project went on undeterred despite the fact that the Gram Sabhas didn't yield their consent, the Sangathan not only submitted memorandums to tehsil offices, district collectorate and other places but also actively rallied and have been fighting for the issue.

Over the years GGS has been working hard to not only revive the traditional gram sabhas but also promote local governance through these institutions in the districts of Sarguja, Balrampur and Surajpur, all three Schedule V areas. Powers given under the PESA Act of 1996, in Schedule V areas, has been the backbone of GGS. Over the last few years, the Sangathan has widened its focus, actively advocating and declaring the villages to be republics or Gram Ganrajya Sarkars, represented by nominated members. These republics have been shaped so as to establish a decentralised system of both decision making and fight for social justice. It is divided into a twelve village council – Nyay Pargana Sabha and a broader council associated with the local deity – Garh Sabha along with the Gan Sabha being the third pillar.

Sangathan's strength of collectively taking decisions and fighting for their rights has been visible through their efforts around the issues of open cast mining through Mahan II project and stop the displacement of villages due to the proposed Elephant Corridor project and the Mahan III project. The acceptance of the Nyay Sabha's decisions by government authorities highlight clearly the strong belief of all people in the institution.

The Sangathan's fight to save their forests against the recent development of a Rekhu Centre highlights the effectiveness of the three-tiered system holds in the area. The cutting of trees by the forest department, for wood, despite the Gaon Sabha voicing their protest against such illegal felling fastened the need for action. A meeting of Nyay Sabha of the 12 villages Pargana was convened to table this matter. Attended by the villagers of these 12 villages, along with the district collector, representatives from Forest and Police departments and the Sangathan members, the issues were voiced against the excesses of the forest department.

With the Collector re-affirming the need for Gram Sabha's consent in undertaking any such activity, the forest department was severely reprimanded for its actions. A detailed discussion about the construction of Rekhu Centre finally was concluded with the Centre being inaugurated in 2019. Nevertheless, the Sangathan has now set out on filling up claims for Community Forest Rights of the area and has also completed GPS mapping. All the village areas of the Sangathan that come under the Sanctuary area under the guidance of their Gan Sabhas, have prepared their

Community Forest Right claim forms and done their GPS mapping, and now only need to submit the claim forms.

The operationalism of the Sangathan is also visible in its approach towards addressing issues related to socio-cultural norms in a PESA village. The importance of Sangathan’s verdict on any issue is reflected through another incident that took place.

Addressing the issue of same *gotra* marriage that was brought to the Sangathan, when the girl’s family tried to navigate their way with the help of the police, the police clearly refused to intervene. Quoting that unless the Gaon Ganrajya Sarkar takes a stand and gives any directives, any initiatives by the police would be withheld. The police said that first, the Gaon Ganrajya Sarkar would need to give permission after hearing the matter, and only after they give due permission will the police help to take any action on the issue. The Sangathan in this issue, played a significant role in not only reprimanding the couple (the brother-sister duo) for their actions, but took decisions on how the baby born out of the wedlock would be looked after and what would unfold for the boy and the girl.

With the participation of 8-10 active community members, existing PRI members, along with traditional leaders like the Mukhiya, the Baiga Alwa, Guddhi, and others, all work together as a part of Gaon Ganrajya to not only keep a watch and fight towards/against development and governance but also be a close vigilant and preserver of the community and the traditions, customs, norms and practices of the tribal communities in the Schedule V PESA areas.

Annexure C: Activity reports (compiled from SRUTI-APPI annual reports)

Gaon Ganrajya Sangathan

Operational Area – Sarguja, Surajpur and Balrampur districts, Chhattisgarh

Link with local Sangathans

Key activists: Jang Sai Poya, Lakshmi

Self Identity:

Formal Membership of platforms/networks:

Activity Profile

Outcome 1: Empowered and aware individuals and families and; collectivisation of families through SRUTI Fellow Groups (Jan Sangathans) in the focussed areas of four states on their entitlements rights and policies (FRA, MGNREGA, RTF, TSP, ITDP, PESA and other entitlements) in 39 blocks of 16 districts (blocks/districts might increase over one-two year period of time) in four states Bihar, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh through information dissemination, meetings, sharings, trainings/ workshops and

engagement in the grassroots.

Year 1: Adivasi are in the verge of losing their land which they have used and conserved from several generations. Today, there is growing realizing that the adivasi groups have failed continuously to protect their land, and know of their duly recognized rights under the Indian Constitution. This realization led the community leaders and other educated people to bring the constitution in the midst of every individual in the community. ‘Samvidhan-Prasikshan: (Constitutional-Trainings)’ as they are called popularly, these have become effective tools in mobilization of communities which have been divided hitherto, but are now facing upcoming displacement due to stone, bauxite and coal mining projects. Regular insistence on behalf of mining company officials (with the active support, of district and block administration) on the payment of meager compensation, illegal diversion of forest land, forceful use of Coal Bearing Act in superimposition to PESA rules (ignoring of the rights of Gram Sabhas to determine any development activity in their areas), coercion through forced and forged signatures in consent forms, minimal employment for affected communities are some of the issues that are tackled through these trainings. About 250 sangathan members have been trained through 20 intensive focus-group discussions, workshops on PESA, trainings with sangathan members in 12 villages. • The sangathan has plans to undertake a Constitution-March in the upcoming months, which would also involve distribution of booklets mentioning provisions in the Indian Constitution regarding peoples’ rights over resources, tribal rights, FRA, the innate relationships between nature and local communities etc. (b) Consistent awareness camps were organised in the three states (Bihar, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh) regarding various schemes that ensure a life of dignity for those from ST, SC and other minority and marginalised communities. during this reporting period these workshops were organised in Parsagudi, In forest and tribal areas, a major area of focus has been the proper implementation of FRA and the Tribal Sub Plan which ensures basic resource rights of adivasis. Apart from these, regular problems related to proper ration distribution through PDS, compulsory schooling of children as enshrined in RTE, access to drinking water, sanitation and health facilities are resolved on an everyday basis. (c) In the village of Jagarnathpur a adivasi mahapanchayat was organized on 22nd of January. The day was focused on the issues surrounding the area along with legal aspect to deal with and thus there was Shilanyas (पर्यर-गाड़ी), in the village quoting the entitlements in the Indian constitution. Likewise as the community plan is to do shilanyas and marking the village boundary in every village of the area and through organizing Maha Panchayat.

Year 2 :

initiated a process of self-rule in the village under the section 244 (1) and (2) of PESA Act in 5 villages. Through this process of self-declaration by a village there is a process to form a local government under the provision of and re-formation of traditional village government. To build perspective on this Gaon Ganarajya Sangathan has organized 2 nos. of perspective building meeting in Jagannathpur and Kotiya village of Pratapur block in Surajpur district on 2-3 April and 15-16 May respectively. 34 young leaders (12 women and 24 men) participated in Jagannathpur and 38 (13 women and 25 men) attended in Kotiya village. The

general content of such meetings were- To understand the special feature of the area as provisioned in the Constitution of India, To understand the Schedule V area, Understand the local governance processes under PESA Act, What are the customary laws and practices etc. (b) A one day training program was organised on 3rd December 2017 at Pandonagar. About 2500 people, including youth volunteers attended the training. The workshop was organised as part of series of meetings, shivirs and workshops following the establishing of village republics in 12 villages. In the period of 3 months the sangathan organised 16 meetings with participation from 400-500 people to even larger mobilisations of about 2000-3500 people. (c) In Surajpur district of Chhattisgarh, Jang Sai Poya along with Gaon Ganarajya Sangathan has organised 4 camps on the PESA act and other constitutional provisions provided for welfare of tribal communities under the Constitution of India.

Outcome 2: (i) Inclusive, participatory, effective and regular Gram Sabhas as well as its involvement in ensuring accountability and transparency and; assuring ownership over resources at the village level with strategic involvement of marginalised and vulnerable communities. (ii) Capacitated SRUTI Fellow Groups (jan-sangathans) and selected Gram Sabhas to develop the value assessment of natural resources, infrastructural and social capital of their respective gram panchayats.

Year 1 : Gaon Ganrajya Diwas was commemorated on the occasion of enactment of PESA 1996, was organized at Chandrely of Surguja area on 24th Dec 2016. Almost 400 people from different villages like Semra, Silouta, Kotwar, Pendari, Tukudard, Kanaknagar, Manpur Pataguri, Jagarnatpur, Madannagar etc. participated in the program. This celebration was the day to come together and talk about the various issues around the PESA, FRA and since Mahan-III mining as prominent issue which was focused more. Local adivasi leaders brought about all issues of securing their existence and identity which are attached with land protection and the sense of losing land has become the driving force to bring all adivasi and other people dwelling in the area and talk in the common place. (b) Meeting on PESA was organised in Korba and Surguja regions, Chhattisgarh on 11 September 2016. The importance of village development planning was also underlined and discussed during the meeting. Further village development and resource mapping programs were planned to map the economy and geography of the area.

Year 3:

Similarly, 2 meetings have organised in Sarguja region of Chhattisgarh by SRUTI Fellow Jang Sai Poya. As we have reported earlier that a web of self-rule and governance in peoples' hand in real terms being transformed into a movement known as 'Gaon Ganrajya Sarkar' in Sarguja region which require a comprehensive technical/legal/ procedures understanding to systematise this assertion created among the communities at very passionate and energetic manner. Again it is a challenging situation to channelise the energies in a positive direction. SRUTI Fellow Jang Sai is aware of this fact and taking pro-active measures to balancing actions towards strengthening the local governance. These workshop have organised in Parsagudi

and Chandroli with the participation of around 80-90 community leaders and villagers in months of April and June respectively.

Outcome 3: Responsive, accountable and transparent government and administrative mechanisms; developed state level platforms/ coalitions of SRUTI Fellow Groups (jan-sangathans) and other key stake holders leading to policy advocacy at state level towards devolution of powers as provided under the 73rd Amendment.

Year 2 : In the last six months there are total 23 activities undertaken by SRUTI Fellows in 3 states on formation, strengthening and capacity building of formal –informal vigilance committees at various levels on for various purposes and ensuring the active and assertive participation of these committees in systemic processes.

Most of such committees formed to ensure proper implementation of PDS system, MNREGA and Anganwadis in the respective regions and monitoring committees on mid-day meal and scholarships to tribal students and children from Mahadalit categories in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Bihar.

Gaon Ganarajya Sangathan focused on Quality education and growing safferanisation and regimentation in the region of Sarguja.

Jan – March

Gaon Ganrajya Sangathan, CG - Trainings facilitated the process of formation of village republics and at present 20 villages in Pratapur block and about 25 villages in Udgir Block have declared their traditional gaon sabha. Stone slabs declaring the self rule of villages have been put up. The gram sabhas are the empowered decision making bodies within these villages and play a significant role in safeguarding people’s rights. They are also carriers of the traditional way of living and resolving conflicts within the community. Each block is also established as Gadh sabha and blocks within one geographical area are recognized within a Kut sabha, which further strengthens the decentralized village republics and vests them with autonomy. This has reduced police harassment on tribals and minorities in the region and has developed a more inclusive mechanism of grievance redressal. Village republics have also empowered the people to assert for the recognition of their rights at State level as well. One case in point is the fraudulent SECL mining in the second phase of MAHAN project which did not take free and informed consent of the gram sabha before starting the process of eviction and extraction. This was met with mass resistance and village meetings were conducted in the 16 affected villages in Surajpur tehsil. Finally, a public demonstration from Jagannathpur to Surajpur was led with about 500 hundred tribal men, women and children in February, a memorandum of key demands was submitted to the SDM pressuring the administration to take due action.

Engagement and dialogue with district administration and other relevant authorities is a regular work of SRUTI Fellows in their respective regions. For proper and fair implementation of forest rights Act it is now

more frequent meetings organized with the authorities and many other issues force to Sangathans to meet different authorities in the region.

Meeting with State Tribal Commission - A meeting was held with district collector at Surajpur district headquarter on the issue of proposed Elephant Corridor in Tamor Timla which is close and adjoining area of Semar sot and Badalkhor Sancturries. A delegation of Gaon Ganarajya Sangathan (including Sarpanches from 4 villages, Heads of these villages (traditionally recognised) and Sangathan's leadership.

April - Sep

Gaon Ganarajya Sangathan along with Sarva Adivasi Samaj and Adivasi Ekta Parishad has intensively worked and popularised the concept/idea of Gaon Ganarajya Sarkar (Village Republic) in entire Sarguja region.

Oct-Dec

Support was extended to sangathans in Bihar and Chhattisgarh (for travel, printing of pamphlets and awareness building in Gram Sabhas). This was extended as part-support to workshops and shivirs being organised in the process. A strong national campaign has emerged on the proposal of utilising CAMPA funds, against the non-granting of rights in existing and proposed Critical Tiger Habitats. Advocacy groups and sangathans have mobilised support from affected areas and adivasi groups have also declared these orders as violative of their rights under PESA, FRA and other recognition of rights. Legal documentation of cases, filing and legal training of community leaders are also ongoing.

Year 3:

Gaon Ganrajya Sangathan - On 9th August 2018 the Adivasi diwas was observed by the sangathan at Surajpur where Adivasi Mahasabha, Sarva Adivasi Samaj and others were present. This was the occasion to educate the politicians of the area about Fifth Scheduled area and PESA and to ask them about their efforts on implementing these rules. This was to urge the leaders to be accountable to people who have voted for them. The SC/ST Atrocity Act also was brought to the discussion. The issues of Education and Health and agriculture were raised. The big danger from Corporate and mining industry is an unavoidable fact which has to focused during any gatherings of people and it was discussed during this celebration of Adivasi diwas. The protection of land is a common issue which has bound people together to fight against the threats. In order to revive the zeal and responsibility given to committee members there was a daylong meeting organized on 9th Sept, 2018 in Pratappur. The traditional village headmen from 46 villages and people from 72 villages were present. 9th September was chosen to establish one more area level committee (Garh Sabha) in Bachharaj Kuwar therefore the program took place that day.

The efforts creating different level committees at village level, Panchayat level and Area level in implementing PESA have helped Sangathan to analyse the power that the gram sabha has. this is also a

process of knowing their area with the available resources such as human, natural and economic resources and thus the strength to stand together for their democratic rights.

The continuous effort to empower gramsabha and to shield the land and forest through PESA and fra has been major focus of Gaon Ganrajya Sangathan. In the process of asserting the rights under these legal frameworks the sangathan has realized the role of gram sabha and thus the determination to empower them is one major aspect now.

The area of Sangathan being a Fifth Scheduled area PESA is seen as powerful tool to secure tribal rights and the enactment of this very Act is commemorated every year on 24th December as Gaon Ganrajya Diwas thus the day was observed at Pratappur this year as well. This occasion brought together around 316 people from 3 districts (Surajpur, Balrampur and Ambikapur) of Surguja Region and they were all the representative of each Gram Panchayat who hold the authority under PESA. It is important to mark that the Adivasi community is at a stake of losing their land, livelihood and forest due to global marketing and global culture. It is a survival strategy for them to establish and sustain the entire living style, good community culture and practices that they follow. Keeping this in mind the speakers of the day focused on how to secure their existence by protecting their land, livelihood and cultural practices.

This occasion was an opportunity to build awareness and strength among people for their legal rights over land, forest and culture by asserting PESA and fra. it was also a platform to interact with other existing local Tribal networks to continue with process of establishing democracy through people's participation in decision making through local governance.

The active involvement of youth can be seen in the sangathan as they are given the opportunity to form leadership among the traditional leadership in tribal community. In order to cater their needs for better education and livelihood opportunity the library centre and agricultural activities are being initiated. As of now there is one library which is running in one of the sangathan villages. On 30th December 2018 around 30 youths came together rallied from Dharampur Panchayat to Gaura, Koteya, Manpur, Maadidaand, kerta, Pampapur, Jagannathpur, Madanpur, Ganeshpur and Gotegaon to demand for fair treatment of marginal farmers while exporting rice. It is observed that these farmers are not provided with labours to help them in the market and on the other side the big traders from outside are treated well with lots of facilities. The proper price is not given to the small farmers in the market. This rally has resulted with giving consideration to the Adivasi farmers with their products.

(Jan-March)

Chhattisgarh

a) A padyatra was organised from Fatehpur village in Sarguja district to Udaipur district on 05th March for PESA and fra implementation. In the area, the Parsa East Kante Basin Coal block has been allotted to Rajasthan Rajya Vidyut Utpadan Nigam, a subsidiary of Adani group for mining expansion. Both the mining

and power plant projects have been repeatedly violating several environmental norms with the support of the district administration and state governments. There have also been several instances of wrong prosecution of community members who have raised objections. The constitutional rights of Gram Sabhas have also been put at stake and sidelined even after resolutions have been passed to disallow mining and allotment of coal blocks. The yatra on 5th march covered about 28 kms against administrative apathy and illegalities in the process. The memorandum was submitted through the SDM on the land acquisition process of villages Salhi, Hariharpur and Fatehpur; violation of stage-I clearance given to Parsa Coal Block, in violation of the Forest Rights Act; prosecution of officials of Adani group for forging gram sabha resolutions submitted to the Environment Appraisal Committee (EAC), demand of community rights and immediate distribution of titles recognising the community rights given to village Ghatbarra and Salhi.

Gaon Ganrajya Sangathan has focused on establishing revitalizing the traditional rule conferred by PESA in the Fifth Scheduled Area. The efforts since past years have been peoples ‘coming together and assert the right under PESA and fra. The sangathan has built rapport with likeminded networks in the area like Sarva Adivasi Samaj, Karamchari Sangh and it has been an enabling process for people to come into assertion of their existence, livelihood and culture. the threats that the adivasis are facing of being alienated from their land, their identity and over all existence have built a sense of strong bond among people in the area. This is possible through the process of continuous gram sabha and trainings ranging from the small village level to area level in Surajpur and Pratap pur. These trainings are on constitutional rights, PESA and fra. The members from networks of the area have taken active role and spare their time to organize every Sunday a meeting to bring people under the understanding of these rights. They have established two Garh Sabhas (Area Level Committees) namely Pratappur and Ramkola. People have taken an initiative to establish the parallel structure under PESA to monitor the entire system existing in their society. The various indigenous initiatives like running the schools by the help of community, are taken and people are partaking in moulding their society. Thus people are enabled to understand the power of gram sabha.

Outcome 4: Developed state level alliances/ coalitions with CSOs to build pressure groups, policy advocacy and collective campaign at state and national levels on state specific issues/ concerns gazed and analysed during the individual and community level processes in the 4 states towards devolution of powers as provided under the 73rd Amendment.

Year 2: Jan Abhivaykti and Gaon Ganarjya Sangathan , in collaboration with Chhattisgarh Bachao Andolan on issues related to PRIs and FRA in 8 districts of north Chhattisgarh including Korba, Ambikapur, Raigarh, Rajnandgaon, Balrampur, Surajpur, Dharamjaigarh and Koriya to build pressure on the state machinery and authorities to recognize the real constitutional powers given to the Gram Sabhas especially in schedule V area. The campaign was done from 19-23 July 2017.

Outcome 5: (i) Research and documentation on policies related to decentralised democracy and create knowledge centre to multiply effects (ii) Reflection, learning and change.

Jan Abhivyakti

Operational Area – Korba and Sarguja districts, Chhattisgarh

Link with local Sangathans

Key activists: Alok Shukla, Jaynandan, Umeshwar Singh

Self Identity:

Formal Membership of platforms/networks:

Activity Profile

Outcome 1: Empowered and aware individuals and families and; collectivisation of families through SRUTI Fellow Groups (Jan Sangathans) in the focussed areas of four states on their entitlements rights and policies (FRA, MGNREGA, RTF, TSP, ITDP, PESA and other entitlements) in 39 blocks of 16 districts (blocks/districts might increase over one-two year period of time) in four states Bihar, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh through information dissemination, meetings, sharings, trainings/ workshops and engagement in the grassroots.

Year 2: 2 days capacity building workshop on ‘resource mapping and keeping records of bio-diversity’ was held at Madanpur (Korba) by Jan Abhivyakti on 27-28 April 2017. The main topics covered are on how to maintain bio-diversity register, how to identify the traditional uses of a particular plant/tree, from where people can get information on the use value of trees and plants, how to revive the traditional ways of medicine and how to map the resources village forest etc. Agriculture scientist Shri Anand Mishra along with Alok Shukla and Parminder Khanna have facilitated the workshop. Around 30 youth (boys and girls) from 4 villages participated in the workshop and taken a responsibility to initiate the process of create a bio-diversity register in their villages. (b) 2 comprehensive camps in Madanpur village, Korba on 9th August (world indigenous day) and 12th August on FRA and issues related to diversion of forest land in the area. These camps were organised in the context of preparation of Gram Sabhs before the compulsory Gram Sabhas organised from August 16-19 in the region. Though Gram Sabha meetings take place regularly in the area but this time there was an special attention being paid by the district collector to take consent from gram sabha on diversion of forest land and it was scheduled in the agenda prepared at collector office and circulated to respective gram sabhas. To understand the entire agenda and what should be the Gram Sabhas response these camps helped alot. 2 special camp have organised at Dalit Adivasi Manch's area focused on the preparation of Gram Sabhas for upcoming official gram sabhas.

Year 3:

- A) A two-day workshop was organised at Hotel Kumkum, Ambikapur on 12-13 October with 30 participants on fra and environment laws. In the wake of mining activities in the Hasdeo region, several violations have come to light in expanding the area under coal mining. These have been highlighted in the media also and cases are being filed in the high court. Organised by Jan Abhivyakti, it brought environment experts and sangathan members. It also raised violations being done on fra - including illegal diversion of land, notifications being done in areas where community rights were recognised.

Jan Abhivyakti organised a meeting on 25th May on the cancellation of individual pattas granted earlier under the fra to facilitate coal mining. The meeting was done at Ambikapur and attended by around more than 800 people. The meeting focussed on legal provisions and understanding the changes introduced by the state government in the laws concerning mining allotment, forest diversion and other related laws, including PESA and fra.

Outcome 2: (i) Inclusive, participatory, effective and regular Gram Sabhas as well as its involvement in ensuring accountability and transparency and; assuring ownership over resources at the village level with strategic involvement of marginalised and vulnerable communities. (ii) Capacitated SRUTI Fellow Groups (jan-sangathans) and selected Gram Sabhas to develop the value assessment of natural resources, infrastructural and social capital of their respective gram panchayats.

year 1: Meeting on PESA was organised in Korba and Surguja regions, Chhattisgarh on 11 September 2016. The importance of village development planning was also underlined and discussed during the meeting. Further village development and resource mapping programs were planned to map the economy and geography of the area.

Year 3:

- A) On the coal mining issue in Chhattisgarh, a research was published on the impacts of coal mining, collated by the sangathan working in Hasdeo Aranya region in Korba district. The book titled 'Commercial Coal Mining and MDO' has been published by Chhattisgarh Bachao Andolan and authored by Alok and Priyanshu. 1000 copies of the book were procured by SRUTI for dissemination and awareness generation on mining and forest rights

Jan Abhivyakti has been working with developing the Gram Sabhas as empowered bodies who have taken up the struggle against illegal mining actively, particularly in around 13-14 coal blocks in the region of Sarguja, Korba and Ambikapur districts. Strategy building with sangathan members, mukhiyas and ward members

has been an integral part of the work during this period, especially in the wake of threats faced by sangathan members, cases filed against them for opposing illegal interventions of the forest department and non-recognition of community rights over forests and land. The district administration of Sarguja also put undue pressure on the Secretary to prepare false consent letters from the villages where the proposed expansion of the Parse East coal mine is to take place. The sangathan brought the issue forward and has challenged it in court. The assertion of Gram Sabha members with the active support of Panchayat representatives without fear of prosecution has brought vigour to the efforts of the sangathan for forest conservation and mitigating the risk on the lives of people. 4 village level meetings were organised during this period.

g) In the working area of Jan Abhivyakti in Chhattisgarh, mukhiya meetings were organised in Hasdeo region and in Surguja, Raigarh, surajpur districts. These were part of the voter awareness campaign to include demands on fra and illegal mining in the election manifesto of candidates. In the village meetings, discussions were undertaken on the village economy, how they could prosper and the strategies to be undertaken in the discourse of modern development. The corporate led model of development in Chhattisgarh has caused huge damage to the forest and bio-diversity in the region which has to be addressed through democratic organising and advocacy efforts.

A training was organized on 26-27 June, 2018 on CFR and Forest Management held at Patrapalli village in Mahasamund district. 40 people from Patrapali, Jampali villages attended the training.??

Jan Abhivyakti - A training on Forest Rights Act was organised on 13-14 January with 20 sangathan members at Madanpur village. The repeated attempts to dilute the legislation, rights of the gram sabhas in PESA region to take on the challenges faced in the region due to forest and environment clearances given to Prase Kante mining were the major points of this training. It was done with PRI members, sangathan members and it was decided that resolutions would be passed from 15 villages to raise objections against illegally obtained environment clearances and the administrative collusion in the process.

c) Trainings were organised for sangathan and PRI members on 26-27 March at Madanpur for discussing further action plans and restating positioning of village gram sabhas under PESA. The training was attended by about 40 people form 15 gram sabhas, including mukhiyas, sarpanchs and sangathan members.

Outcome 3: Responsive, accountable and transparent government and administrative mechanisms; developed state level platforms/ coalitions of SRUTI Fellow Groups (jan-sangathans) and other key stake holders leading to policy advocacy at state level towards devolution of powers as provided under the 73rd Amendment.

Year 1 : Hasdeo Arand Bachao Sanghrash Samiti – Jan Abhivyakti in Chhattisgarh have worked with a focus on enabling communities to demand the recognition of their individual and community rights over forest lands using various institutional forums following capacity-building workshops. Communities have been

organised against threats to forest conservation, which has taken the form of protests and meetings with the block and district level administration.

1) The people of Madanpur, Paturia Dand, and Gidhmuri villages in Korba district opposed the illegal felling of trees being carried out by the Forest Department. In the name of forest conservation and maintenance, the forest department undertook the exercise of cutting and pruning of trees, including young and robust trees with complete disregard to the working plan and without carrying out any consultations with the gram sabhas that hold community rights over the said areas. By building pressure on the Forest Department, the community ensured that the Department give in writing that it would not be repeated in the future and that the Gram Sabhas would be consulted prior to undertaking such an exercise.

2) In Surguja district, many individual forest claims were filed in the months of September and October, 2016. However, no work could be done for its follow up and execution. The Collector and officials further put the inspection process (of individual claims) on hold as required under the Forest Rights Act for the recognition of these claims as they received a proposal for forest diversion for the same area (for coal mining) and attempted to delineate forest boundaries to carry out the proposal. The village community organized a protest in front of the block office in Udaypur block and submitted a memorandum addressed to the SDM, and asked for early settlement of forest rights claims.

3) A delegation of 12 villages of Podi block conducted a 1 day demonstration at Podi block against illegal tree felling and attempts of the administration to carry forward the process of forest diversion. The delegation met several local administrative officials and asked for their support in community efforts to conserve the forests. They also discussed the provisions of FRA that empowered the gram sabhas to conserve and manage the community forest resources. In the same meeting, they also followed up on the pending forest rights claims.

4) The community members of Hasdeo Arand Bachao Sanghrash Samiti have submitted several letters and memorandums, highlighting the community's resolve to conserve the Hasdeo Aranya forest, to the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF); Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA), Forest departments at the state and centre level; district collector and other officials. Specific letters have also been sent to the Environment Action Committee (EAC) and Forest Advisory Committee (FAC) members of MoEF - outlining the issue of forest diversion in the area. Additionally, a number of RTIs have been filed and followed-up to gather information on upcoming plans for the region drawn by state and national governments. Several informative articles in local and regional media were also published on raising issues of corruption, illegal diversion of forest land, administrative neglect and prioritisation of coal mining in eco-sensitive and bio-diversity rich areas. It builds effective momentum for the sangathan and allows for building cross-issue solidarity and advocacy. The role of Chhattisgarh Bachao Andolan (state-level alliance) is instrumental in the coordination of legal cases filed against cancellation of nistari rights granted earlier under CFR, advocacy with parliamentary and state assembly members, capacity building/meetings with sangathan members and for introduction of strategic plans in working districts.

Year 2: April – September

In the last six months there are total 23 activities undertaken by SRUTI Fellows in 3 states on formation, strengthening and capacity building of formal –informal vigilance committees at various levels on for various purposes and ensuring the active and assertive participation of these committees in systemic processes. Most of such committees formed to ensure proper implementation of PDS system, MNREGA and Anganwadis in the respective regions and monitoring committees on mid-day meal and scholarships to tribal students and children from Mahadalit categories in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Bihar. Jan Abhivyakti focused on illegal tree cutting and violations of compliances for mining companies.

Engagement and dialogue with district administration and other relevant authorities is a regular work of SRUTI Fellows in their respective regions. For proper and fair implementation of forest rights Act it is now more frequent meetings organized with the authorities and many other issues force to Sangathans to meet different authorities in the region. During this last six months several such meetings have done. Some of the meetings are reported below-

Meeting with State Tribal Commission

Jan Abhivyakti An issue of cancellation of Community Forest Rights of Ghatbarra village is being followed up with the concerned ministry and administration and as a last resort the Hasdeo Arand Bachao Sangharsh Samiti has approached to the high court of Chhattisgarh. This is a unique and rarest incident showing the complete negligence towards FRA, a central Act passed by the Parliament. The Act clearly mentioned that there is no provision of cancelation of any given rights under the Forest rights Act. In 2011 Ghatbarra Gram Sabha has received Community Forest rights which provided all the ownership and management rights to the Gram Sabha, later the district collector cancelled the CFR without any reason. Information received through RTI on this issue the district administration mentioned that this forest was allocated to the mining before and thus no Forest rights can be extended to the gram Sabhas while the Act clearly says that without proper recognition of right of forest dwellers any land or forest cannot be allocated to any other activities. One day consultation with stakeholders was also held at Raipur in April on this issue.

Oct-Dec:

Jan Abhivyakti raised the non-implementation of Forest Rights Act with district officials, SDM and others through representatives of the sangathan. With the proposed attempts at diluting the FRA through the use of CAMPA, several rounds of meetings were held with officials.

April – September

In last six months one district level deliberation was organized in Hasdeo Arand region- A district level deliberation on violations of role of the Gram Sabha under the Schedule 5 areas was held on 5th June 2017 at Paturia Dand in Korba district. Alok Shukla One of the SRUTI Fellows (Jan Abhivyakti) and Hasdeo Arand Bachao Sangharsh Samiti, jointly organized a district level deliberation to highlights the illegal procedures

being followed by the district administration, forest department and mining companies to take over the forest for non-forest activities. The deliberation was also organized to observe the world environment day with the pledge to save the forest and environment from the companies. Ex-cabinet Minister Shri Arvind Netam, Agriculture scientist and environmentalist Shri Anand Mishra, Comrade Nand Kashyap, Bijay Panda and Advocate Priyanka Shukla were the main panelists to listen the grievances of members of Gram sabhas, Sarpanchs, members of Sub-committees and members of Hasdeo Arand Bachao Sangharsh Samiti made presentations before the panel. Hasdeo Arand is a very critical and important region to maintain the bio-diversity and climatic changes observing due to the growing temperature of the earth. This dense forest earlier declared as No-Go region for the non-forest activities by the Ministry of Environment and Forest later it was opened for some pre sanctioned projects now it is completely open for extraction of coal. To protect the forest and region around 24 gramsabhas in two districts Korba and Sarguja formed the Hasdeo Arand Bachao Sangharsh Samiti as a federation of Gram sabhas. All the gram Sabhas have received the community forest rights under the forest rights Act with the ownership and management rights over around 50000 hectares of forest. Now the district administration and forest department initiating the process of allotment of coal blocks for extraction. There are so many violations are taking place. Gram Sabhas are opposing it constitutionally but the administration is denying the role of the gram sabhas on this issue. Around 500 people from 24 Gram Panchayats participated and shared their views and incidents of violations. At the end of the deliberation it is resolved that Shri Arvind Netam along with other panelists will write a report and meet to the Governor to share the details and will request to intervene and also send the report to Tribal Advisory Council for further intervention on this.

Oct-Dec

In Chhattisgarh, rampant illegalities in coal block mining auctions, allocation and expansion have mobilized sangathans, civil society actors, political parties and others working in the region. Hasdeo Aranya Bachao Sangharsh Samiti with leadership from 20 core villages from Premnagar tehsil (Surajpur district) and Udaipur tehsil (Surguja district) have time and again raised their objections to the clearances give to the Parsa Coal Block. For over 5 years now, padyatras, mass processions, awareness meetings and group discussions, public meetings, seminars, conferences and dialogue with administrative representatives have been organized to raise the issues of bio-diversity, implementation of FRA, conservation, forest governance and rights of adivasis and forest dwelling communities.

A day long training program was organized at 24th October at Madanpur panchayat for mukhiyas and sangathan leaders for preparation of the public hearing. 50 people including panchayat and ward members, sarpanch and other sangathan members raised their issues in the wake of threats faced by them, administrative pressure and for further strategy building. Awareness building meetings were held during the six days from 24th to 29th October in the 20 core villages in Hasdeo region where senior members of Chhattisgarh Bachao Andolan and other pro-people forums raised the issues with the people. Public Hearing on Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) was organized on 29th October, 2017 for Parsa Coal Block in project area on 29th October, 2017 where about 5000 project-affected people were present.

The various initiatives of the local people in order to protect environment, land and above all their rights on the same are strongly found in the Sangathan region and it is because of threat of continuous land grabbing process by the corporate for coal mining in the area.

Jan Abhivyakti has filed RTIs to seek information on how much funds are coming to Korba and Sarguja district through CAMPA and DMF.

Jan Abhivyakti in Raigarh, Korba and Rajnandgaon on farmer's issues and against forced land acquisition.

Jan Abhivyakti has organized a campaign from 1-28 September in 3-4 phases in 3 districts on the issues related to forced land acquisition and diversion of forest land and also contributed a crucial role in farmer's movement initiated in Rajnandgaon.

Jan Abhivyakti planned and scheduled an intensive mass awareness campaign to encourage people to 'question the authorities' when they will come to your villages during the Lok Suraj Abhiyan in Korba and Sarguja districts. Preparation meetings were held in 20 villages to articulate their question in the format provided by the officials during this campaign. Volunteers and Sangathan team members helped the communities to frame and articulate their grievances. Main focus was given to the illegal diversion of forest land to coal mining, cancellation of CFRs, peoples have not received the amount of land as filed under individual forest rights, violations of Gram Sabhas resolutions in schedule V areas and PESA, Funds allocation under Tribal Sub plans and schools run by the Tribal welfare departments are not in good conditions. This campaign helped people and Sangathan to sharpen the perspective and confidence to raise voice before the authorities

Year 3:

Jan Abhivyakti organised a one day consultation on commercial coal mining and MDO model of coal mining on 9th April 2018 at Vrindavan Hall, Raipur. Mr. Saumya Dutta and Priyanshu Gupta made presentations on Energy scenario of India and post Supreme Court judgment on coal auctioning system how the sector adopted new ways to allot coal mining to miners. In this new policy adopted by the State Government for allotment of coal blocks for mining, the role of gram sabhas have reduced drastically and accountability towards communities are almost scraped. The consultation has attended by several groups working on coal, forest and governance issues especially in schedule V areas in Chhattisgarh. Arvind Netam, Anand Mishra, Nand Kashyap, Alok Putul among many more eminent social activists attended.

c) Sangathans across the state organised and attended the Kisan Sammelan at Ranjandgaon on 14-17 September to raise awareness on the plight of farmers and forest workers and raised demands related to increasing the MSPs and prevent them from facing direct losses due to unevenness in the market.

On 15th October, 2018 a sammelan was organised at Rotary Club, Raipur by Jan Abhiviyakti along with Chhattisgarh Bachao Andolan with about 75 people. In the run up to state elections, sangathans had been mobilising support on their issues. This sammelan was organised on the issue of rights over resources, tribal communities and rights extended under PESA to Gram Sabha. A parcha was prepared following the sammelan and given to other regional and national networks for awareness building on the issues in the state.

CHHATTISGARH

A state-level convention was organised on 24th February, 2019 at Morga village in Korba district. Over 150 Gram Sabhas come together for asserting their constitutional rights and establish control over their forest resources. State Tribal Affairs Minister assures that implementing Forest Rights Act in letter and spirit is the foremost priority of Chhattisgarh Government.

On 24th February, Morga village in Korba district of Chhattisgarh witnessed the coming together for more than 150 villages and representatives of their respective Gram Sabhas. At this crucial juncture where adivasis and other forest dwellers across the country had just heard the news of the Supreme Court order evicting them from forest areas, there was considerable opposition and anger among people owing to the non-implementation laws like fra and of non-recognition of the rights of Gram Sabhas.

In response to the order passed by the Supreme Court on 13th Feb, and the subsequent protests around it, the political class has been already exposed in their anti-tribal and anti-forest policies. To deliberately stand away from arguing a PIL filed by Wildlife First and other so-called conservation groups challenging the Forest Rights Act, 2006; the central government allowed for the Supreme Court to order evictions of forest dwelling communities, whose claims have been rejected.

It is a grave problem to consider those whose claims have been rejected as 'encroachers' since the entire process of recognition of rights has never been properly followed, and much of these are still pending. There is a long-standing demand to revisit all these claims, and sensitize the administration at the district and state level on issues in the process of recognition of rights.

Adivasis and their traditional knowledge and culture has been responsible for protection and conservation of the forests, in the absence of which no forest conservation is possible. In light of this, the present order of the Supreme Court is extremely sad and needs to be revisited.

Over the last 15 years, provisions of PESA and fra had been consistently ignored in order to benefit of industrial interest groups, and allowed for wide commercial exploitation of forests. Chhattisgarh has still not framed rules to ensure implementation of PESA even 22 years after the legislation. As a result, the interests of adivasis and other forest dwellers, as well as vital concerns of conservation of environment and forests have been regularly sacrificed for the sake of profits for a few companies.

The new state government has been elected with the widespread support of adivasis and forest dwelling communities, who were angry with anti-people policies and widespread violence and prosecution. It is

important to realise that due implementation of PESA and Forest Rights Act including recognizing the communities access and control over their forest resources is critical to ensure peace and normalcy in the region. The continued deprivation of adivasis and local communities from their traditional forest resources was largely responsible for current state of fear in the region. Rights of gram sabhas to “free prior informed consent” before forest diversion in Schedule 5 areas have been consistently violated.

The solidarity built among social movement groups activated legal recourse and made demands for oversight of institutions, allowing these issues to gain visibility. Effective mobilisation at the ground, along with advocacy with the opposition parties through educating them on these issues allowed issues to gain political prominence. The Chief Minister Shri Bhupesh Baghel has, after taking over office, publicly acknowledged the commitment of the state government to rights of adivasis and made promises to correct historical and contemporary injustices meted out to them.

Witnessing solidarity of other social movements across the state - This one-day sammelan was unique as it saw coming together of representatives from over 150 gram sabhas, Panchayati Raj Institutions, and social movement leaders. The sammelan was attended by Honourable Minister for Department of Tribal and Scheduled Caste of the Chhattisgarh Government who patiently listened to representatives from different gram sabhas of Chhattisgarh and addressed their key concerns.

Sangathans in the state have been constantly trying to come together and build public support and create awareness among communities. It has also been a long recognition that there is need to work closer with the administration. SRUTI Fellow Alok Shukla was requested to facilitate a training for officials of the state and districts so that they could identify their roles better when it comes to the implementation of the Forest Rights Act. This training included district collectors, officials of the state departments and other representatives who have been urged at the behest of the Chief Minister's office to take forward the rightful implementation of the Forest Rights Act.

The state administration also took note of the struggle in Sonakhan area following delegations meeting them to create pressure for the recognition of rights in the Barnawapara Wildlife Sanctuary was historic. Among the first decisions taken by the newly elected government then was the cancellation of lease illegally given to Vedanta in the historic land of Sh. Veer Narayan Singh.

In the coming together of representatives of social movement groups and Gram Sabhas asserting their constitutional authority, we see an expression of constitutional values whereby communities are directly being able to question how issues of development are envisioned for them. Through years of direct association with political parties in raising these issues in the assembly and outside, and with an effective support from the local and regional media to address their concerns, Gram Sabhas have emerged as the primary negotiators with the state and national governments. It has addressed illegalities of the forest and environment ministry in giving clearances to companies in disregard for issues of environment conservation

and protection of wildlife. Gram Sabhas have also worked effectively towards passing resolutions to recognize peoples' rights to protect their forests and improve their livelihoods, already enshrined in the progressive legislation of PESA and Forest Rights Act, 2006.

An important causal factor for this expression to come out so strongly is the significance given by sangathans to build legal understanding on how Gram Sabhas can be the only constitutionally recognised body which can effectively address bottlenecks of the development paradigm. It can also be through the authority of Gram Sabhas to emerge as robust mechanisms of democratic decision-making in the atmosphere of onslaught on the rights of people, and those who continue to struggle for it - be it members of civil society, lawyers, activists or vocal men or women from the communities themselves. The Gram Sabhas in Hasdeo Arand have opposed coal mining in their region, came out and expressed their questions and opinions in national and international media agencies, and supported democratic struggles in the state and outside. State government lends an ear to the ground

The sammelan was an expression of Constitutional rights provided to Gram Sabhas in Schedule V areas under the PESA Act. Gram sabhas from different parts of Chhattisgarh also expressed their solidarity and support with the struggle of Hasdeo Arand Bachao Sangharsh Samiti to conserve and protect Hasdeo Arand forest region. At the end of the sammelan, a charter of demands and concerns was also presented to the Honourable Minister Dr. Premsai Singh Tekam. He listened patiently to the points raised by all speakers, interacted with the members of gram sabhas and addressed those issues in his speech.

He assured the gathered audience that unlike previous governments, the current Congress Government led by Sh. Bhupesh Baghel is committed to protect and further the interests of adivasis and forest dweller communities and for strengthening all legislations that protect and further the rights of adivasis and their control over their forest resources. He mentioned that implementation of Forest Rights Act 2006 in letter and spirit was the foremost priority of the current Chhattisgarh Government. He also promised that PESA rules would be prepared soon by his government and that the state government would take all initiatives to make sure there would be no industrial or mining activity taking place at the cost of the gram sabhas.

In the charter of demands submitted to the Honb'l Minister and the state government, action was demanded against all illegal industrial and mining projects where diversion has taken place without completing the recognition of forest rights and without the consent of Gram Sabhas. Along with a ban on industrial or mining activity in any bio-diverse and wildlife rich areas, demands were also made to recognize the rights of the Gram Sabhas to take full control of minor forest produce and transit permits, and honour their rights to appoint their own Secretaries. The demands to recognize the provisions of PESA was also echoed along the sammelan. Members also called for recognition of rights of Gram Sabhas to determine and give permission for any land acquisition and address false processes adopted by the administration and companies in this matter. Finally, to take into account the 'historical injustice' meted out to people in the state, the fra was sought to be implemented in letter and spirit.

Please read the recent interview of Jaynandan Porte from Hasdeo Arand Bachao Sangharsh Samiti on the ill-effects of mining in Hasdeo region, and the journey of their struggle.

Link to English interview - <https://caravanmagazine.in/communities/coal-mining-hasdeo-forests-protests>

Link to Hindi interview - <https://hindi.caravanmagazine.in/communities/coal-mining-hasdeo-forests-protests-hindi>

(October – March) CHHATTISGARH - Jan Abhivyakti organised a campaign undertaken from 20th – 30th January, 2019 for special awareness drive to gram sabhas where detailed discussions on the legal provisions of mining, clearances, rights of Gram Sabhas under PESA. The campaign was also an attempt to reach out to different villages to secure their participation and support for upcoming sammelan at Morga village in Korba district. Resolutions were passed from 20 villages Gram Sabhas in the Hasdeo region against the illegally obtained mining clearances.

A wall-writing campaign was also done where slogans on mining, forest rights, PESA were done. A total of 100 slogans were done across 20 villages. This allows for making visible the issues faced by people and creating awareness at the same time.

Outcome 4: Developed state level alliances/ coalitions with CSOs to build pressure groups, policy advocacy and collective campaign at state and national levels on state specific issues/ concerns gazed and analysed during the individual and community level processes in the 4 states towards devolution of powers as provided under the 73rd Amendment.

Year 2:

Jan Abhivyakti organised a daylong meeting was held at Indian Social Institute, Lodhi road, New Delhi on 3rd May 2017 to build an understanding on the current status of coal mining allotments in Schedule V area and the how the Gram Sabhas can intervene in the process of allotment. People from Centre for Policy Research, Journalists, Academicians and social scientists participated and discussed on the issue. SRUTI Fellow Alok Shukla along with members of Chhattisgarh Bachao Andolan and legal experts on PESA joined the discussion.

Oct-Dec

Jan Abhivyakti - Following up from meetings with village leaders, panchayat members and others in the preparation of the public hearing which was organised on 29th Oct, awareness building meetings were held during the six days from 24th to 29th October in the 20 core villages in Hasdeo region where senior members of Chhattisgarh Bachao Andolan and other pro-people forums raised the issues with the people. The meetings also helped in the mobilisation and spreading awareness for the upcoming public meeting on PESA, FRA and rights of Gram Sabhas on 8th January at Raipur.

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Jan Abhivyakti and Gaon Ganarjya Sangathan , in collaboration with Chhattisgarh Bachao Andolan on issues related to PRIs and FRA in 8 districts of north Chhattisgarh including Korba, Ambikapur, Raigarh,

Rajnandgaon, Balrampur, Surajpur, Dharamjaigarh and Koriya to build pressure on the state machinery and authorities to recognize the real constitutional powers given to the Gram Sabhas especially in schedule V area. The campaign was done from 19-23 July 2017.

Outcome 5: (i) Research and documentation on policies related to decentralised democracy and create knowledge centre to multiply effects (ii) Reflection, learning and change.

Dalit Adivasi Manch

Operational Area : Mahasamund and Baloda Bazar districts, Chhattisgarh

Link with local Sangathans : Local level committees formed of elected representatives, Barnawapara Sangharsh Samiti, emerged out of struggle of entry and access to forests in 20 villages.

Key activists: Rajim Ketwas, Devendra Baghel, sarpanchs from villages in core decision making committee

Self-Identity: Sangathan has historical association with struggle of dalits, adivasis and marginal farmers. Strong foundation of anti-atrocity struggle and challenging caste and gender discrimination.

Formal Membership of platforms/networks: Chhattisgarh Mukti Morcha, Chhattisgarh Bachao Andolan

Activity Profile

Outcome 1: Empowered and aware individuals and families and; collectivisation of families through SRUTI Fellow Groups (Jan Sangathans) in the focussed areas of four states on their entitlements rights and policies (FRA, MGNREGA, RTF, TSP, ITDP, PESA and other entitlements) in 39 blocks of 16 districts (blocks/districts might increase over one-two year period of time) in four states Bihar, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh through information dissemination, meetings, sharings, trainings/ workshops and engagement in the grassroots.

Year 1

(a) Sangathan has brought the people of the community together as it has organized 15 meetings in some selected villages of Kasdol and Pithora blocks. Along with discussions on CFR and IFR, forest products and

establishment, forest management committees have been formed under FRA which is also keeping an eye on the implementation of issues like MGNREGA payments, provision of widow pensions, and water availability.

(b) On the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti, there was a convention and meeting organized at NRC (where malnourished children are taken care of; there is also hospital with 10 beds in it) in Palai of Kasdol block. At the convention, many anganwadi workers and women were present. Some women participated from far away regions of Mahasamund district in the convention. The objective of the convention was to assess the status of malnutrition among children and work of anganwadi. Six severe malnourished children, who were between ages of 6 months to 3 years, were also taken there for treatment

(c) In commemoration of International Women's Day, Dalit Adivasi Manch, Chhattisgarh organized a sammelan on Violence against Women on 20th March, 2017 where 221 women and men from 22 villages took part. This was to talk and discuss about the violence women face in their daily lives. Some of the resource persons and the guests comprising of social workers, lawyer, woman journalist and police sub inspector were called who enlightened the participants on the violence and most of all encourage them to speak out and file Detail Information Report (DIR). The issue of women reservation was also highlighted by a journalist. The women mukhikas shared the common but grave incidents of violence that occur in their lives. They were applauded for their role in the community there was discussion which recognised that the great task ahead is to change the feudal and patriarchal mind-set of men and some women as well.

Year 2

a) Dalit Adivasi Manch organized a series of perspective building meetings, shivirs and discussions at village, hamlet and GP levels during 16th – 26th August, 2017 in Pithora and Kasdol Blocks of Balaodabazar district. 12 meetings and shivirs were organized with an average participation of 30-40 young men and women on various issues related to their lives – i) SC/ST atrocities committed by so called upper caste people and officials of the forest department and others; ii) Violence against women (focused on domestic violence), iii) poor quality of school education in government run schools; iv) lack and unfair implementation of Right to Food (PDS) and v) child labour issues.

(b) Sangathan organised 1 training programme on the idea of consent of Gram Sabha under Forest rights Act where the community Forest Rights are settled. It is mentionable that due to an intensive and technically sounds efforts around 600 forest dweller families received land rights under forest rights (Recognition) Act. Each forest dwelling family received an average of 3 acres of land as claimed during the process. (The details of each family can be shared). Also 6 Community Forest resource rights are at final stage of verification and hopefully it will get finalised in couple of months. To build a perspective of ownership over forest resources as recognised under the Act the Sangathan organised a two days long training for FRC members, Gram Sabhas members and Sangathan's cadre at Pithora on 23-24 May 2017. Total 46 Participants attended the training programme. The sessions were facilitated by Devendra Baghel and Rajim Ketwas from Dalit Adivasi Manch

(b) a) 40 villages in the Barnawapara wildlife sanctuary are being threatened with eviction from their villages. 24 villages in the Sonakhan region are expected to be affected after auctions allotted the 608-hectare gold mine to Vedanta in 2015 for gold mining. The auction process did not notify or consult concerned Gram Sabhas and

people have been in opposition to the process, as this is also the land of Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh, and it holds special sentiment for them. Settlement of rights - of the applied claims - individual and community under FRA, have also not been settled. Following the NTCA letter from 28.03.17 directing all Conservator of Forests to hold-off the process of granting of rights, confrontations of local people with beat guards and others at Forest Department have increased. Fines have been imposed and people are being prosecuted for collecting MFPs through the filing of cases, wanting to collect toll taxes and others for vehicles or for transport of tendu etc. The department is proactively interpreting this as a reason to stall the granting of rights under FRA, and at the same time urging people to leave sooner. The Secretary (MoTA), wrote a strong letter following the NTCA letter regarding the non-consultative process taken up by MoEF on 29.05. 2017. The National Commission of Scheduled Tribes (NCST) has issued a letter to MoEF and other concerned ministries on 10.01.2018 following advocacy and national campaigns against the letter and asked for non-displacement of tribals without settlement of rights, or without their consent. Following complaints, the NHRC has also pulled up MoTA and MoEF for their lack of action in securing the rights and livelihoods, and forcing of acquisition by the GoI. Civil society groups allege using of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 in the name of preserving tigers, to facilitate land acquisition. Environment groups and critical wildlife experts have also questioned the MoEF and asked why they have completely ignored the model of the cohabited existence with people. A one-day convention on Forest Rights Act was conducted in Barnawapara wildlife sanctuary to discuss these issues on 22.10.17 with 232 participants to plan a working strategy . Forums like CFR-LA, Campaign for Survival and Dignity and others have developed a strong campaign on this issue with some support from the media at the regional and national level.

b) Dalit Adivasi Manch has been conducting a campaign through spreading awareness of FRA and training youth and leaders from on the community about the provisions within FRA and the due procedure for filing CFR and IFRs. In the process, 5 meetings with mukhiyas were held in the month of October, 3 follow up meetings with SDM/collectors were done in the month of November and 2 meetings were done in the month of December.

c) As a response to the sustained pressure built by the campaign, the SDLC approved CFR claims for 59 villages in Mahasamund and Balaudabazar district. but the sangathan found out that they had been granted in the name of 'Van Prabhandan Samiti' (Forest management Committee- branch of the forest department) Fellow and Sangthan karyakartas registered their protest with the District collector and held him accountable to comply with the provisions as per FRA, CFRs need to be approved in the name of Gram Sabha. d) On the occasion of martyr day of Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh, one day state level convention was conducted on 19.12.17. The convention was attended by over 1500 participants with Gram Sabha leaders and community from the 80 villages in fellow's field area, as well as representatives of sangathans from other parts of Chhattisgarh. e) Dalit Adivasi Manch has also initiated the process of Participatory Rural Appraisal at village Maharaji. Resource mapping and socio-economic survey of the village has been completed so far.

Dalit Adivasi Manch witnessed difficult times in past few months. It faced different challenges from administration especially from forest department. While on one hand sangathan continuously worked for rights of adivasi and other forest dwellers on their traditional forest land, on the other hand the forest department was reluctant to recognize the rights and not willing to transfer power to gram

sabhas. The forest department used force and violence for vacating the villages falling under Barnawapara wildlife sanctuary. Context - Rajkumar kondh's family members who reside at rampur village was assaulted by Sanjay Rautia, an on duty forest ranger. After the assault on 15th January, the intent of law was further compromised when the Baya police station accepted the FIR filed by Sanjay Rautia and refused Rajkumar's family to lodge a counter FIR for assault. Rajkumar was then arrested while on his way to Raipur with sangathan members for a press conference on 18th January, and was kept in custody for two days denying him bail. The tensions between the forest department and the forest dwelling communities of Barnawapara have been steadily increasing over the years as restrictions have been more and more strictly imposed, curbing their day to day life as well as livelihood needs. Following the above incident, a public demonstration was organized by Dalit Adivasi Manch at Baya on 23rd January 2018 to resist the violent behaviour of forest department on people living in the sanctuary. Around 1000 people participated in the meeting including 22 villages that lie under sanctuary area. Alok Shukla from Chhattisgarh Bachao Andolan (CBA), Janaklal Thakur from Chhattisgarh Mukti Morcha (CMM), Riyapen and others from Manav Adhikar Sangathan and Rajnandgaon farmers leader Swadesh Tekam also were part in the meeting to stand in solidarity. Unlawful and inhuman behaviour of forest department on the people living in sanctuary and how the department is using threat to vacate the villages instead of recognizing their rights, were discussed. After the meeting, they visited the victim's family at Rampur village. The process continued through advocacy with network group and consulting lawyers for legal advisor on the issue and further process of claiming community forest rights. Jan sangharsh samiti was born out of this struggle and struggle had continued for a month. The struggle had gathered support from various human right groups, civil society and local and national media groups. Acting on the plea filed by Dalit Adivasi Manch, a special delegation of NHRC also visited the Barnawapara area to take cognisance of the issue. The key demands were take back the cases booked against Rajkumar under IPC act section 294, 186, 332 and 353 be dropped immediately, and that due investigation should be done by registering the FIR filed by Rajkumar's family and within the purview of law, the said ranger should be relieved from duty. Secondly, the individual and collective forest rights claims filed by the villagers that are still pending at the DLC must be settled immediately.

(d) An awareness campaign was organised from 10-16 December 2017 in the working area of Dalit adivasi manch on increasing understanding of FRA provisions regarding proposed displacement in the Barnawapara area. The 7 day was spent by sangathan leaders to train young members about filing claims, understanding the laws relating to tribal rights, FRA and the proposed plans for establishing critical tiger habitats (cth) in the area, following the NTCA order recently. The land revenue amendment introduced recently by the state government of Chhattisgarh was also discussed.

(e) Dalit Adivasi Manch organised 1camp in Sonakhan region on 9th August followed by an event on the occasion of World indigenous day. In this camp SRUTI Fellow Rajim Ketwas and Devendra Baghel shared information about the proposed gold mining project in the region and discussed about the potential threat to the communities and nature also what has to be done to check and counter this. They have also shared about the legal processes that have to be followed by the company before land acquisition for the purpose. It has decided that during the Gram sabhas scheduled on from 17-20 August each gram sabhs from affected villages will prepare a resolution against displacement due to the gold mining project. Another such camp taken place

at Maharaji village in which more than 120 people gathered among them around 30 elected representatives participated. the main focus was given to pending CFR claims and approach road that need to be repaired.

Year 3

(April-September)

Chhattisgarh –

A) A 2-day training was organized on 29-30 June, 2018 on CFR and Forest Management held at Sahiyabhata in Barnawapara area (Kasdol Block, Baloda Bazar district). 50 people from Mohda, Dheba, Gajradih and Aamgaon villages attended the training.

B) Dalit Adivasi Manch in CG (a) conducted 4 focussed workshops with young adults, women and inform them of the provisions of laws. There also followed up with getting legal aid for woman survivors that the sangathan gets done, in addition to providing support for due process of law and proper rehabilitation. (b) The sangathan also organised the celebration of World Indigenous Day at Sonakhan village where discussions on the importance of the historic day, its history and how it came to be recognised after a long struggle was done. In addition, about 60 participants including 12 women with young karykertas also vowed to save forests and take up conservation activities.

(Jan-March 2019)

Chhattisgarh, Dalit Adivasi Manch - Gram Sabha meetings were organized following the need to mobilise for several programs. About 10 meetings were done in 3 block of Mahasamund and Baloda Bazar districts. Discussions with mukhiya, ward members and members of FRC were regularly done to keep updates on the status of claim filing, organising planned programmes and mobilising support among them.

a) Dalit Adivasi Manch organised awareness program for Voters – Around 42 villages were visited in Kasdol and Pithora Blocks in order to spread political awareness for upcoming assembly election of the state. It is a high time that people take part for fair election process and elect the right candidate to represent them and their issues.

b) A day public meeting named as Rashtriye Ekjutata Sammelan was organized in Raipur on 31st October highlighting the issues of various activists working for human rights. The sangathan took active part in the sammelan.

c) Visit to Public Hospital – the various hospitals which serve around 40 villages in Pithora Block were visited to ensure comprehensive health facility to the villagers. It was to find out the various services provided by the Govt. so that the people of the area can access without any hindrance.

d) Martyr day Commemoration - The martyr day of Veer Narayan Singh was observed on 10th of December where thousands of people came together to take part on the occasion. It was an opportunity for sangathan to bring people in one platform and discuss the local issues and build strength and unity.

Outcome 2: (i) Inclusive, participatory, effective and regular Gram Sabhas as well as its involvement in

ensuring accountability and transparency and; assuring ownership over resources at the village level with strategic involvement of marginalised and vulnerable communities. (ii) Capacitated SRUTI Fellow Groups (jan-sangathans) and selected Gram Sabhas to develop the value assessment of natural resources, infrastructural and social capital of their respective gram panchayats.

Year 1: 7 gram sabhas were organized in different villages to give information on FRA and how to do panchnama and Satyapan for Forest Right Patta claim. (b) A 2-day training was organised with women PRI members at Pithora on 21-22 September. Women have been at the forefront in the communities' demands of forest land and there is constant effort by the sangathan to develop their capacities for making effective demands, leading deliberations, meeting administrative officials and participate in mass awareness programmes (c) As part of the ongoing campaign to demand community forest rights claims, 12 focus group discussions were organised in Mahasamund and Baloda Bazar districts, where SRUTI Fellow Rajim Ketwas anchored discussions in village meetings. Formation of Forest Rights Committees, proper mapping of common resources were primary mandates for these FGDs. Recently the Collector of Balodabazar declared that the Community Forest Rights for 60 villages were approved and pattas would be distributed soon. Post declaration two day meeting was organized on 27th and 28th November in Maharaji village. Around 100 people including Sarpanch from different GPs, Sangathan karyakartas, representative of APPI, comrade from Delhi and other villagers attended the program. On the first day, discussion was on Forest Rights and Community Forest Rights. CFR for 60 villages were approved and three CFR of villages Khukrikona, Saliabhata and Banglepali were rejected. When inquired, authorities replied that there was no record of domicile since 75 years. In the meeting the new name 'Van Adhikar Samity' was proposed instead of Van Suraksha Samiti. The second day meeting was on Violence on women.

Year 3:

6 meetings were held for Gram Sabha Members for awareness and perspective building in the past one year - The process of ensuring inclusive participation in the gram sabha is taking place gradually. Sangathan efforts are constantly directed towards ensuring that in women's voices and participation is increased despite reservation because of entrenched patriarchal practices. Another area of focus has been to lessen the stronghold of dominant castes in gram sabha processes is to ensure productive participation of members from marginalised communities. Dissemination of proper information about gram sabha meetings, decisions and processes has been the first powerful step in building the capacities of various representatives who are taking up people's issues.

CHHATTISGARH - In the working area of Dalit Adivasi Manch, 6 meetings were organized in these three months in different villages of Kasdol Block raising the issues of fra, MNREGA, Pension, and Right to education. The concerned schools were visited and took account of the condition. The teachers were met and asked them to be more responsible towards educating children. The efforts on the implementation fra is carrying forward focussing on the OTFD's right under the same act. This process has been done mainly in two villages Arjuni and Kukrikona. Around 42 individual claims have been filed though these claims have

been rejected in the sub-divisional level stating that accurate documents are not submitted. The sangathan organised meeting on 15th October and worked towards producing suitable documents to file the claims. Bringing all issues to the district collector of Balodabazar, sangathan representatives informed him and asked him to work towards solving the issues.

a) In the working area of Dalit Adivasi Manch , Focus groups discussions were organized with sangathan members, panchayat representatives and Sarpanchs. On 20th April, meeting was done at Gerra village with about 40 members. On 21st May the village meeting was done at Kukrikona with 150 members from 5 villages. On 22nd May it was done at Mahraji village with 50 members from 6 villages and on 16th June at Khosda village. The meetings were done on the issues of fra, MGNREGA, Pension schemes, Panchayats and their powers and responsibilities and entitlements in other social welfare schemes. A list of eligible members was revised and names were added to follow up with the block office.

b) Dalit Adivasi Manch organised village level meetings held in Kasdol and Pithora blocks of Baloda Bazar district in preparation for surveys and action towards formulation of village plans at Daldali, Khosda, Mahkoni, Devtarai and Gindola villages. Decision was made to address village specific issues in a special Gram Sabha meeting. Memorandum of demands were prepared for agriculture department to install diesel and electric pumps to address drought like situation in the area. 3 families made demands to dig wells in their village while 2 families made requests for land-levelling. 20 families made applications under the PM housing scheme through the Gram Sabha. c) At the village meetings in Khosda, discussions were held with 568 people on MGNREGA, Pensions, Forest Rights and survey for village planning. 65 individual claims were prepared and filed out which 64 claims were settled and pattas were also distributed. The sangathan has been following up for the one remaining adivasi family's claim and for recognition of community claims filed. d) Regular meetings were done with mukhiyas from 40 villages who decided to use the ongoing Gram Suraj Abhiyan for their grievance redressal and follow up of applications of individual and community claims and filing of new claims. These meetings were attended by a total of 542 people.

e) In the village meeting at Sandi, discussions were held on fra, MGNREGA, Pensions and housing scheme following which it was decided that a grievance redressal committee under Section 4(1) would be constituted. In the special gram sabhas of October, it was decided that these resolutions would be passed.

(Jan-March 2019)

Chhattisgarh - Dalit Adivasi

Manch organized meetings with mukhiyas and PRI members for mobilizing communities for following up of community claims in Baghmara, Ganjardih and Jaypali villages. The sangathan also met the district collector of Baloda Bazar for follow up of CFR claims. In the past months, the district administration had promised distribution of titles of 7 villages. However, after delay from their end, finally the titles were issued in the name of JFM committees, although it was supposed to be given in the name of the Gram Sabhas. The sangathan regularly kept following up and finally claim titles were given in the name of Gram Sabhas of these 7 villages.

CHHATTISGARH

Village: Ganjardih

Meetings to discuss the Village Development Plan was conducted from 2nd to 7th December 2018. 24 people participated in the meeting. It was a micro level planning meeting for VDP where people first identified the problems had brain storming and then tried to figure out plans to solve those problems. Few of those listed needs of the village were an anganwadi building, construction of tarmac road, primary school. The irrigation facilities in this village is not functioning and during the meeting a suggestion came that water from the Jauk river can be used for irrigation by setting up pipelines. The village also showed the concern for decreasing level of ground water and scarcity of clean water. People also suggested that there is a need of a higher secondary school as the present school is 15 km away from the village. In last three months 248 people were involved in the micro level Village development plan meetings.

Village - Gindola

On 5th of December 2018 54 people had a meeting to discuss Community Rights matters of Forest Rights act and to form a committee. During the meeting it came up that the gram sabha is yet to recognise the community rights of the village and they are restricted to use the forest produces like bamboo, kendu leaves etc. These restrictions are laid down and controlled by the forest department. During the meeting it was decided that the newly formed committee will undergo training on Community Forest Rights. In last three months 342 people participated in the meetings.

Village- Saraipali

On 6th of December 2018 representatives of the village to discuss the micro level village development plans. During the meeting it was decided that a survey will be conducted to get an overview of the problems prevailing in the village. The immediate needs of the village were pipeline for irrigation, health centre, levelling of land for cultivation and subsidised manure for farming. In last three months 329 people attended the meeting.

Village- Mahkoni

On 9th of December 2018, 40 people conducted a meeting to discuss village development plan. The first set of needs which came up were CC road, dam for irrigation, anganvadi and play ground for school. In the second set of needs which were raised by women, were the need of clean drinking water, hand pumps, and proper monitoring of the schools. In last three months 348 people attended the planning meetings.

Village – Sirmal

On 12th of December 2018 a meeting was conducted for micro level planning of village development plan. One of the major problems the village is facing is the lack of proper roads because of which common people are facing obstacles to properly access the medical and health care facilities. There is a need of four lane road to solve this problem. In this village too there is lack of irrigation facilities , school play ground and village roads. People also suggested the need of digging a pond where they can start pisciculture which in long term can generate livelihood opportunities. In last three months 247 people participated in the planning meetings

Village – Arjuni

On 14th December 2018 a micro level planning meeting was conducted where people raised the need of Gaushala , anganwadi and constructing roads connecting other villages. Few other needs which came up in

the meeting were Criminating ground, Community hall, waiting room. They also raised the concern for setting up irrigation equipments and check dam for minimising the scarcity of water.

Village- Daldali & Khasoda

In both these villages the meeting were focused on the use of forest produces and the recognition of community forest rights. During the meetings people decided to safeguard the forest and sustainably use the forest produces and also try to promote livelihood opportunities. There was also a decision to open a bank account for the working committee. The committee will work to aware people about the community forest rights and the uses of forest produces. They also decided to compile all the grievances of people to the concerned Authorities.

(Jan-March 2019)

Chhattisgarh

Dalit Adivasi Manch - Village resource mapping was done at Khosda village and Mahkoni village with the support Richa and Jitendra (who are members of PEACE, Delhi). They spent 7 days each with villagers to prepare micro-plans and conduct detailed discussions of forest conservation, the history of forest area in the region, discussing provisions of the Forest Rights Act, CAMPA and other legislations. The resource mapping has led to the preparation of village development plans, and the draft plan has been submitted to the Gram Sabha, and is under review. A total of 10 village development plans have been finalised in the sangathan area.

(Jan-March 2019)

Chhattisgarh

- a) Sangathan representatives from Dalit Adivasi Manch, working in the Sonakhan region met the newly elected Chief Minister of the state, Mr. Bhupesh Baghel. Immediately following the new Congress-led government in the state took power, the government promised the cancellation of the proposed mining lease given to Vedanta for gold mining, a contentious issue raised by the sangathan in the past 2 years.

Outcome 3: Responsive, accountable and transparent government and administrative mechanisms; developed state level platforms/ coalitions of SRUTI Fellow Groups (jan-sangathans) and other key stake holders leading to policy advocacy at state level towards devolution of powers as provided under the 73rd Amendment.

Year 1: On ten years of completion of the enactment of Domestic Violence Act 2005, a district level meeting was organized by Dalit Adivasi Manch in Mahasamundh on 26th October 2016. Around 60 participants including district committee members of women and children, other members of ‘One stop

centre' (Sakhi Centre) and women and men from different blocks were present in the meeting. In the meeting awareness about different forms of violence on women and different cases come related to violence on them at home were discussed. It was clear that very few cases were filed in Women Protection Offices in Blocks. According to the RTI report, 3 Cases were filed in Mahasamundh block and 3 cases were pending in Court, 13 cases were filed in Bagbahra, 6 cases in Saraipali and no cases were filed in Pithora block and Balodabazar District. But around 76 cases had come to the Organization called Sajak that was led by Rajim Ketwas. In that region, due to the impact of sangathan, many women could approach the sangathan without fear. (b) District level consultation on FRA and Adivasi issues was organized in Balodabazar where sangathan's mukhiyas (Pradhan) from 60 villages were presented and talked about the current issues focusing on FRA. Since the Community and Individual rights are not been given to the community by the administration yet therefore it was the primary discussions and appeal to get the same. Bringing in the light about the CFR claim where only 164 claims out of 2200 claims are ready to distribute to the communities. Though the CFR is ready for these above mentioned villages but the approved claims have not included pasture land and Cemeteries. The issues of women's health, gender violence and the absence of health workers also were heightened during the program.

The sangathan has by now realized that there has been long struggle on the implementation FRA and this led the members in despair though they have not lost hope and kept the determination to struggle as all gave the word in the sammelan on CFR and forest produce under FRA which was organized on 28th March 2017. People have found strength in Sangathan in paving the way to obtain their rights. There has been time when people in the villages have been divided and the sangathan has become the medium to bring them together and now they have focus on to save their forest land for the Gold mining that is intended by the CG Govt. in the area of Sonakhan. Another challenge that was spelled out during the sammelan which took place in Sonakhan was that people do not believe that they would get the CFR and they still are not aware of the FRA. The long sustained struggle to get Forest right has compelled the Collector and other official to think about it and now the formation of Forest right committee comprising of 13 – 15 members was soon to be processed wherever the committee is not formed yet. This sammelan also brought the committee president who enlightened the community about the problem of implementing FRA. Thus the FRA implementation through Gram sabha has been the main focus of sangathan this year, and it have succeeded so far to convince the official to approve the claims put forth by the people and distribute the CFR for 62 villages and for other requirement the officials have agreed to take early actions.

Year 2:

In Dalit Adivasi Manch area Forest rights Committees were formed as per the Forest Rights Act (2006) in the following villages- Kohakudha, Jogidipa and Salihabhatha from Gram Panchayat Chikhli; Chanhaat from gram panchayat Navagaon; Sonakhan and Kasondi from gram panchayat Sonakhan, Kumhari Korradih and Achanakpur from gram panchayat Rajadevri; Mahraji, Mahkoni, Daldali, Khosdha, Gidola and Kukrikona from gram panchayat Mahraji and Arjuni, Ganjardih, Saraipali and Sirmaal from gram panchayat Arjuni. At

present, 786 hectares of land has been verified as forest land by the Sangathan and has been verified at the Tehsil level. Dalit Adivasi Manch initiated the formations of vigilance committees at village level. The committee consists 5-7 active members (atleast 2 women must be there). So far such committees have formed in 80 villages. these committees maintain the record and watch on execution of various village level institutions such as Aganwadis, Health Centres, Mid-day Meal, Quality education in schools, fair price PDS shops, and other developmental agencies deployed in the villages. During this quarter these committees were more active on issues related to Aganwadis, PDS, and Mid-day Meal (i) Mid Day Meal-The committees inspect mid day school meals on timely basis, after getting complaints of discrepancies and after due intervention the food quality has improved and the food is served to the kids only after the teachers have eaten first. (ii) Vaccination - Sangathan has also been facilitating vaccination camps in villages and maintains a regular check to ensure that the kids are properly vaccinated. (iii) PDS: 217 Ration cards were issued under the Food Security Act and fresh applications were filed for 14 families. Owing to a scarcity of water in Mirmida village, project to dig a tubewell in the village was also approved. (iv) Old age Pension - Pension funds had been due for three months in six villages of Devtarai Panchayat, for which an intervention at the gram sabha was done, notifying the Sarpanch and village leaders to release the funds. Pension for two months was released by the end of the week. $221 \text{ old age pension } 300/\text{pm} = 221 * 300 * 3 = 1,98,900/-$ have recovered due to Sangathan's efforts.

Oct-Dec

Dalit Adivasi Manch organised 6 training sessions for panchayat members for discussion on fund cuts for panchayats, fencing done through CAMPA on forest land which have been filed under claims. In Baghmara village, claims have been passed but titles have still not been received. Due to proposed mining, the Forest Department attempted to fence the area but later withdrew its plans due to opposition from Gram Sabha members.

Engagement and dialogue with district administration and other relevant authorities is a regular work of SRUTI Fellows in their respective regions. For proper and fair implementation of forest rights Act it is now more frequent meetings organized with the authorities and many other issues force to Sangathans to meet different authorities in the region. During this last six months several such meetings have done. Some of the meetings are reported below-

Meeting with State Tribal Commission

Dalit Adivasi Manch On 29th August 2017 there was a meeting with Adivasi Ayog regarding a illegal land grabbing of Adivasi land by non adivasi. In Sukhipali village of Gopalpur in Chhattisgarh, tribal land is bought illegally by businessmen and that amounts 300 acre and further sold to Zindal company. But people came to know this when company was cutting down the Mahua trees which were the source of their livelihood. Sangathan is helping the people to regain the land. They met the Collector but he directed them to take the matter to the court. Meeting the Adivasi Ayog complain letter against Rajendra Patel was given to them.

Dalit Adivasi Manch played an active role during the Lok Swaraj Abhiyan initiated by the state government of Chhattisgarh that is an initiative by Chhattisgarh government in three phases started from Feb 26 and ended on 20 May. Lok Suraj Abhiyan has introduced to build connect between the government and people with the help of officials of concerned departments. This was divided into three phases. In the first phase there were village level shivirs organized by the officials to collect the grievances of people. In the second phase there were a pro-active attempt to resolve the issues and concerns raised by the people. And at third phase the remaining or policy level issues have addressed by the concerned departments. Dalit Adivasi Manch actively involved in this process since its first phase started. Sangathan encouraged people to raise and articulate their grievances in the given format and also assert for this before the responsible officials. It made very good results and almost 80% issues related to welfare schemes as Old aged pension, MNREGA, PDS, Aanganwadi have resolved at within 15 days of first phase. At second phase people approached to the collector and other concerned departments especially for the pending claims of FRA which has taken time but by the end of the third phase of Lok Suraj Abhiyan around 250 families in 15 villages got proper entitlement on around 1400 hectare land under Forest Rights Act.

Oct-Dec: Oct-Dec

Dalit Adivasi Manch raised the non-implementation of Forest Rights Act with district officials, SDM and others through representatives of the sangathan. With the proposed attempts at diluting the FRA through the use of CAMPA, several rounds of meetings were held with officials.

Jan-March

A convention was organized on 19th December 2017 marking the occasion of death anniversary of Shahid Vir Narayan Singh by Dalit Adivasi Manch (DAM). It was held at Dashera maidan in Balodabazar district, Chhattisgarh. Around 5000 people participated from 3 districts namely Balodabazar, Kasdol and Mahasamundh. Among the participants were gram sabha members, activists, lawyers and politicians. Some of the speakers were Suresh Sharma Congress leader (Balodabazar), Narendra Ratre from Bahujan Samaj Party, Nakul from Cement factory worker's union, Alok Shukla from Chhattisgarh Bachao Andolan (CBA) and Janaklal Thakur from Chhattisgarh Mukti Morcha (CMM). Some of the burning issues related to forest rights claim, forceful eviction by forest department, mining related displacement and farmer's issues in chhattisgarh were addressed in the convention. Further strategies were discussed to strengthen FRA process. After the convention a peaceful protest march was conducted and a copy of memorandum of demands concerning above issues, was submitted to SDM.

Dalit Adivasi Manch filed an RTI to seek detailed information on Sonakhan Gold mining

During the Lok Suraj Abhiyan by the state government of Chhattisgarh, Dalit Adivasi Manch utilize the opportunity to organised an intensive campaign in around 15 villages to encourage villagers/ Members of Panchayats, MNREGA workers and who are involved in collection of tendu leaves to submit their grievances

at mass scale related to their rights and livelihood. The campaign received well by the villagers and PRI members and highest applications were submitted to the administration from the area in limited period.

Year 3:

Sangathan members participated in public meeting in Baloda Bazar on the amendments to SC/ST Atrocity Act, organized on 2nd April, 2018. On 25th April, Rajim and other sangathan members visited the DGP office, in follow up with getting FIR registered for a rape survivor. Due to constant pressure building, the registration of complaint could be done. On 3rd May, sangathan member visited Pamgadh in relation to instance of violence against Dalits. On 6th June, a public meeting on Van Satyagrah was organized at Rajnandgaon. A regional network, Chhattisgarh Mukti Morcha has been raising the issues of farmers. The public meeting raised the non-provisions of providing MSPs to include chana farmer. Demands were made to increase the MSP and to facilitate better procurement methods

As part of the ongoing work to secure rights over natural resources, a series of meetings and workshops were organised by Dalit Adivasi Manch - Follow up of claims filed under fra – 14 individual claims were rejected among the 24 families under fra at Mahraji and 28 families Kukrikona village, which has been followed up with the district level committee and meetings were held with the District Collector. The district administration finally agreed to recognize these claims as they have been supplied with all documents from the forest department, panchayat and gram sabha letters which attest to the validity of their claims. The community claims filed also have not been recognized, and the sangathan has been meeting officials for the settlement of these claims as well. The sangathan expects to see positive movement in upcoming months.

On 25th September, 120 people including members of Forest Rights Committees of Mahraji, Daldali, Khosda and Kukrikona held a meeting with the District Magistrate, Baloda Bazar district regarding the non-recognition of their community claims filed way back in 2014. All villages had filed individual claims but many are still pending despite regular follow-ups. The administration said that verification of all community claims have been made and the SDLC would soon pursue the matter. On 27th September, due to constant dialogue and pressure building on the district collector, claim titles of 24 families at Mahraji and 32 families at Arjuni village were distributed. It was a huge win also because the sangathan was able to secure the names of women in the claim titles – which had been largely ignored.

Ironically, only a day after the district collector had assured of settling rejected claims, the forest department damaged the standing crops of one pattaholder Kamaldev Barik in Sonakhan village, questioning his rights to till their own land. The sangathan has been trying to register a criminal offence against the erring forest officials and has written to the police and district magistrate.

d) Community Rights - On 12th July, a meeting was organised at Astha Bhavan in Pithora with 80 mukhiyas for a discussion on the status of community rights. In village Pathiyapali, CFR rights have been recognised only for nistar, not including the rights of forest management, procuring bamboo and its sale. Following the

claims filed in 2008, the titles were issued and the village got work done on road building, land-levelling, ration cards got made and is now getting access to welfare schemes but many other villages are still away from getting their entitlements under various local governance schemes. A discussion followed on the need to adopt organic farming practices, increase soil fertility by use of manures and the need to conserve forests to have clean air and water, which will deplete sharply if the cutting down of forests are not stopped. Representatives from Mahraji village shared their success story where they had filed individual and community claims in 2014 with the block office after the preparation of claims and their verification from the Gram Sabha. Through continuous follow up and pressure building, they had now received titles for community rights. Residents of Mahraji also had to face struggle in getting their village recognised as a revenue village following the formation of the sangathan in 2001. The processes of resource mapping, GPS map preparation and working with SDM and Forest Department officials had been constantly done. This sharing allowed for all village leaders to go back with determination to continue their work on securing community rights.

e) On 16th August, a regional meeting was organised at Kurupath village in Sonakhan region where community members and mukhiyas from 12 villages participated. Rich discussions followed on how the village members can better conserve and manage their forests, deciding on planting fruit-bearing trees. 200 trees including mango, plum, pomegranate and other trees like banyan, peepal etc were planted on this day. All members agreed to take forward the plantation of fruit-bearing and traditional trees in their area and also form committees under Section 4(1)(e) and for its verification with the Gram Panchayat so that their community claims could be followed up.

f) On 20th August, another meeting was organised at Kasaundi village in Kasdol block with mukhiyas from 9 villages. After a discussion on what the forest rights claim status was, issues raised were sangathan building measure, local fundraising and development of a resource centre-cum-sangathan office. Claim filing methods was discussed along with the need to come together to make demands for their rightful entitlements. The allocation of funds to the panchayats, the grants made under the 14th Finance Commission were also discussed and PRI representatives and other vowed to gather more information on this aspect so they could effectively monitor the outflow of funds, and make demands for relevant work in their area. Learning from experiences in Mahraji, people realised that they cannot keep on waiting for the government to reach out to them, rather they should actively assert their rights and secure benefits under various schemes and programmes. Experiences were also shared from Maharashtra and Odisha where forest management has allowed people to sell MFPs and not part with their incomes paying bribes to the forest department.

g) On 18th September, the sangathan had a meeting with SRUTI representative Satyam and Ramit Basu who had come for the purpose of evaluation and field visit. During the session, elaborate discussion was done on the PRI system, its rights and powers. It was stressed that while it was very important to secure rights over natural resources, it was also important to focus on things like health, education, developing livelihoods, pensions, PDS so an overall development of the village can take shape. It is a long and there are several

pressure operating on community members, especially women because of which they cannot always take active participation in the development process. The sharing also included discussion on the sangathan's work on addressing violence against women where the sangathan conducts focus workshops with young adults, women and inform them of the provisions of laws. There is also provision of getting legal aid for woman survivors that the sangathan gets done, in addition to providing support for due process of law and proper rehabilitation.

Outcome 4: Developed state level alliances/ coalitions with CSOs to build pressure groups, policy advocacy and collective campaign at state and national levels on state specific issues/ concerns gazed and analysed during the individual and community level processes in the 4 states towards devolution of powers as provided under the 73rd Amendment.

Year 2:

Jan-March

Dalit Adivasi Manch, CG - For the purpose of leaning from fellow sangathans and network groups and planning for collective intervention, a farmers meeting was conducted on 27th January 2018 at Mahasamundh with different sangathans and organizations. Around 2000 farmers from all over Mahasamundh and Baloda Bazar district were present for the meeting. Leaders such as Dr. Bimal Chopra MLA, Janaklal Thakur (CMM), Swadesh Thakur, Surendra Sharma, Arvind Netam, Sohan Porai, Rangulal Thakur, Jugnu Chandrakar, Mithles Chandrakar were present in the meeting. Detail discussions were on farmers issues including the promisses made by government determining MSP for rice, annual bonus for farmers producing rice, waive off debts of farmers etc. but none of these were achieved. Bonus-day was celebrated after 5 years that was not enough and demand was made for annual disbursement of bonus amount on rice. Using this platform Rajim from Dalit Adivasi Manch shared information on the violent situation in Barnawapara seeking their support and solidarity against forceful displacement of the villages.

Year 3:

(July-Sept) In Chhattisgarh, members of Dalit Adivasi Manch undertook advocacy meetings, deliberations with district officials for proper implementation of fra including community claims and following up of cases of violence against women

(Jan-March)

CHATTISGARH

- A) 10 people from Dalit Adivasi Manch participated in the sammelan of Gram Sabhas organized by Chhattisgarh Bachao Andolan at Morga village, Korba district. It was instrumental learning where the assertion from the ground was echoed among all participants, in the presence of the Honb'l Minister for Department of Tribal and Scheduled Castes, Dr. Prem Say Ji.
- B) A maitri (friendship yatra) was organised from Giraudpuri to Sonakhan, covering 40 villages of Kasdol block in Baloda Bazar district from 15-16 February, 2019. The yatra was organised in the wake of recent events of violence in some villages, and the sometimes increasing conflict among the

dalit and adivasi communities. It was also an attempt to spread the message of communal harmony and create awareness on instances reported from across the country. In the yatra, discussion was also held on women's rights and rights over forest and forest management. The culmination of the yatra was done on 17th Feb at Sonakhan, celebrating the legacy of adivasi leaders Guru Ghasidas and Raja Ramrai. The sammelan was attended by about 600 people.

Outcome 5: (i) Research and documentation on policies related to decentralised democracy and create knowledge centre to multiply effects (ii) Reflection, learning and change.

Year 1: Booklets were produced by Dalit Adivasi Manch after research on FRA implementation, tribal rights dilution, women's rights and related issues. A handy reference material - this was published after the sangathan felt that extensive trainings must also be followed by use of easily available and lucid text. About 2000 such booklets have been printed. The printing of 20 maps for villages which have received CFR titles (in the month of March) was also done by the sangathan in the reporting period

Year 2

(2) Information Centers have been opened in 20 villages of block Kasdol in the operational area of Dalit Adivasi Manch to empower the masses with the knowledge about welfare schemes as well as legal and constitutional rights. The information centers are equipped with stocked with newspapers and books of social awareness and wellbeing

Visthapit Mukti Vahini

Operational Area – Saraikela Kharsawan and West Singhbhum districts

Link with local Sangathans

Key activists:

Self Identity:

Formal Membership of platforms/networks:

Activity Profile

Outcome 1: Empowered and aware individuals and families and; collectivisation of families through SRUTI Fellow Groups (Jan Sangathans) in the focussed areas of four states on their entitlements rights and policies (FRA, MGNREGA, RTF, TSP, ITDP, PESA and other entitlements) in 39 blocks of 16 districts (blocks/districts might increase over one-two year period of time) in four states Bihar, Jharkhand and

Chhattisgarh through information dissemination, meetings, sharings, trainings/ workshops and engagement in the grassroots.

Year 1:

Sangathans in Jharkhand have been speaking out against unconstitutional and undemocratic way of amendment in CNT/SPT Act which was originally meant to protect the rights of adivasis and indigenous people. The protest gathering was organized by CNT/ SPT Act Bachao Samanwaya Manch, Kolhan in collaboration with Munda sangh, Majhi Pargana Mahal and Adivasi Bhumij Sardar Samaj at Gandhi Maedan in Chaibasa on 21st March 2017. Around three thousand people gathered in the protest meeting. Among the participants were different community leaders, local MLAs, Dr. Karma Oram. The highlighted points were related to CNT/SPT Act and attempt to amend the act which was earned by Adivasis and indigenous people after a long struggle and movement against exploitation and injustice done on them. The amendment was for the interest of capitalists and businessmen and not the adivasis (b) Visthapit Mukti Vahini, Janmukti Sangharsh Vahini and many other grassroot sangathans have organized public meetings in various places and also participated actively in different meetings on Displacement, Land Rights. On the amendments to CNT and SPT Act, there has been widespread agitation. On 6th October at Karandih, and on 19th October at Govindpur, meetings were organized and gave full support to state level campaigns against the draconian legislation. On 12th October the three members of the sangathan visited Badkagaon Hazaribag where 4 protesters of NTPC were killed by the police and it was a solidarity visit. 24th October was day kept apart to have public interaction on CNT and SPT Act and these discussions revolved around the protection of Jharkhand identity and existence.

Year 2

Jharkhand (b.i) Vishtapit Mukti Vahni and Chhatra Yuva Sangharsh Vahini organised 24th October as a commemorative day in the name of an activist Sitaram Shastri who had an important play in Jharkhand movement. It is the death anniversary of Shastriji. This day was observed at Lekdo village in Potamda. 500 plants of mango, Jamun, Jackfruit, guava, saal, tik, Mohiguni and sitafal were planted by the sangathan members to bring his dream into reality who had transmitted his thought through the slogan i.e. माछ (मछली), गाछ (पेड़), चास (खेती) और शिक्षा से होगा झारखंड का विकास (The development of Jharkhand will take place through fishing, afforestation and agriculture) and the process is on through the work of sangathan. The various issues related to agriculture, health, education, displacement are always in the limelight in the sight of sangathan. ii) A public meeting was organized on October 23rd, 2017 at Patamda Block Development Office and demanded for the better facility of the farmers and dam displaced people. iii) An issue with Adhaar Card was raised keeping in mind that the requirement of Adhaar in benefiting all Govt. schemes is made compulsory and this has the greater impact on rural poor. In order to give finger print while receiving ration they have to leave every work at home. Due to lack of proper network the problem of link failing is

seen every time thus they face trouble in getting things done in one day. In this regard a march was led from Beltaand to patamda Block Office on 13th of November 2017.

Outcome 2: (i) Inclusive, participatory, effective and regular Gram Sabhas as well as its involvement in ensuring accountability and transparency and; assuring ownership over resources at the village level with strategic involvement of marginalised and vulnerable communities. (ii) Capacitated SRUTI Fellow Groups (jan-sangathans) and selected Gram Sabhas to develop the value assessment of natural resources, infrastructural and social capital of their respective gram panchayats.

Year 1:

Gram Sabha Meeting: Gram Sabha to Gram Swaraj

Seminar on Gram Sabha “Gram Sabha se Gram Swaraj” was organized on 19th March 2017 by Visthapit Mukti Vahini at Gorangkochoa village in Ichagarh, Saraikela Kharsawa district, Jarkhand. Around 25 people participated in the seminar including many Gram Sabha Representatives from different villages, PRI members, Sangathan members, members from Tribal Research and Training Centre (TRTC) and Activists. The main focus of the seminar was on how to achieve gram swaraj from gram sabha. Firstly, different problems faced in gram sabhas were broadly discussed and then further strategy were planed. It was brought to light that many company and governmenta agents always disturbed the proceedings of gram sabha and tried to confuse people. Companies/govt. also has created agents in many villages that always do the work of brainwashing. They could be controlled only through strengthening sangathans. Previously due to continuous meetings at village level, sangathan was strong and so also the gram sabhas but since a year regular meetings were not conducted. It was suggested that regular meetings in the local level was so important to impart and spread ideas. (b) a Conference on Faith and Right to Expression on 2nd October 2016 at Jamshedpur. Contextualizing the present scenario of the country the discussions on positive and negative forms of faith was held and this also led the participants to seriously talk about the right to express as it is the soul of democracy and the constitutional right given to the citizens. (c) a district level conference for youth on Youth’s vision for their villages. It was held at East Simbhum on 16th October 2016. 50 youth took part in it and participated very actively. This was to bring the youth together and give a space to express their thought and views. Many primary problems of various villages were pointed out and this whole process of expression vividly showed that every young soul wanted to be a part in making the better society but they

have failed to dream a happy village that is built upon trust and hope. To shape their vision the sangathan is ready to put effort.

YEAR 2:

3 awareness camps on irrigation schemes provided by the state government of Jharkhand and built awareness on various methods of irrigation such as lift irrigation and promotional schemes. These camps were organized in Chandadih, Asanvani and Chakulia villages of Chandil block. Around 30-45 villagers attended such camps. (b) Visthapit Mukti Vahini, Jharkhand organised 5 discussions with young sangathan members in Sarikela Kharsawa district. 2 meetings were organised at Patamda village and 3 meetings were organised at Tatanagar. About 30-35 members participated in these meetings which had discussion on the Chandil and Dimna dam struggles, irrigation requirements for agriculture, the decline in agricultural outputs and the need to adopt the cooperative models. Following the initiatives of the sangathan, some sangathan members have adopted organic farming methods and are trying to build large-scale awareness about them.

Year 3

There have been several mass level awareness building camps organized by the fellows and we could support 2 camps in the past one year as detail is given below -

Consistent awareness camps are being organised in the three states regarding various schemes that ensure a life of dignity for those from ST, SC and other minority and marginalised communities. In forest and tribal areas, a major area of focus has been the proper implementation of PRA and the Tribal Sub Plan which ensures basic resource rights of adivasis. Apart from these, regular problems related to proper ration distribution through PDS, compulsory schooling of children as enshrined in RTE, access to drinking water, sanitation and health facilities are resolved on an everyday basis.

(April – September)

Jharkhand -With an active involvement of Visthapit Mukti Vahini, Jamshedpur; Kendriya Jan Sangharsh Samiti organized ‘The International Day of World’s Indigenous People’ on 9th August and it was the first time that there was a public gathering on this particular day at Satyagrah Sthal, Tutwa Pani More, Latehar, Jharkhand. Around 5000 people, young and old, men and women assembled to take part in the program which majorly focused on the ongoing struggle against the State Land Acquisition Law 2017, against displacement in the name of developmental project and protection of wild life.

The focal point was very clear that the govt. is favouring the corporate for its own benefits without considering the lives of the tribal. Through the speeches by the representatives of the sangathan at the program, the status of tribal communities and their ongoing struggle was highlighted. The struggle is for, in the words of Jaipal Singh Munda “..To secure a station of honor in the national life of India.” The incalculable issues that the tribal face mostly are it is because of the corrupt and greedy people sitting in the govt and corporate houses.

This, a day long program was well organized with some cultural dance and songs from the affected area under tiger reserve and Netarhat field firing. The program was facilitated by few women of sangathan, and the youths were in-charge of managing the crowd during the program along with their sangharsh geet. One striking point that can be vividly seen was that their instant collection of Rs. 13000/- as generous contribution by the people and this has been the culture of sangathan to organize such programs. This was a learning point for any outsider and especially for other sangathans who depend on various funding agencies to sustain their fights. KJSS can smoothly organize public meetings like this through the contribution collected by local people.

Year 3:

Jharkhand - 2 workshops have organised in Saraikela Kharsawan distrcit with community leaders and elected members of PRIs on the Social audit mechanism and how citizen's active participation build the process. These workshops have organised in collaboration with Jharkhand Social Audit Unit and Visthapit Mukti Vahini. Sangathan member Kumar Dilip has contributed tremendously in the work of social audits covering around 8 districts of Jharkhand. MGNREGA audit is mostly focused but the team has done auditing for 14th Finance commission and Birsa Munda Aam Bagwani. Dilip, being the regional coordinator has played important role in the entire state process of auditing taking initiative of establishing Mazdoor Manch in the panchayat level, Block level, district level and state level to raise the labour issues to the concern department. The achievement of doing social audit could be seen that now the culture of accountability is being developed. The understanding is being established among Mukhiyas, Secretaries, BDOs that they have to be careful about the public money. The involvement of gram sabha is ensured in the process and this is purely of sangathan's principle to bring people together and participate in decision making process.

7 proper Trainings on VDPs were organized and more than 10 village level meetings with Gram sabha members were held to build clearer perspective on developing village development plans. The detail is as follows - (April-September) Jharkhand A three day training program on Panchayat Development plan was organized by Visthapit Mukti Vahini from 20th to 22nd June, 2018 at Vikas Bharati Jamshedpur, Jharkhand. Around 25 people from 4 panchyats attended the entire sessions. Amit Narkar from Goa, who has been an important part of National Centre for Advocacy Studies (NCAS) facilitated this training program. The initial discussion touched to build the understanding of the meaning of development. The present scenario in the country indicates that the understanding of development by the Govt. is very different than the understanding of or the real need of people. During the session it was taken care that the same approach cannot be applied in planning for panchayat development especially concerning with the development of common people. Gramsabha is significant part in planning for development and it is the primary part to decide for better lives of people. The power of people through gramsabha was highlighted to understand the importance of peoples' participation in the process of democracy not only in electoral process but in planning for development. The understanding of funds and its utilization was discussed in detail. This was empowering for participants to question about fund and utilizes them for the actual needs.

The source of fund for Panchayat development such as 14th Finance Commission, funds under various schemes and funds from different operational departments were discussed. Giving the background of Panchayat development plan the participants were asked for their decision whether they want to take seriously and work towards this and they all agreed to do that. Every panchayat was asked to report how the panchayat planning is done and many informed that they are not involved in the process. This is why it is essential for every person in the Gramsabha to be aware of the development plan process. Further the step of panchayat development planning was detailed and every participant was divided in the groups to do the same planning based on the steps discussed. The presentations of each group clarified the doubts and build the understanding. One point that came prominently during discussion at this point was the influence of powerful people in the panchayat. The powerful people mean the male, rich, upper caste, upper class people who influence the decision making of Panchayat pradhan. This happens in each panchayat and the main cause in failing of PRI is this because to listen to these powerful people has become some sort of culture for our society. This could be dealt only through the knowledge and unity among people. The importance of maintenance and monitoring of the plan implemented is discussed in the nut shell. An example of Kerala was taken and discussed the political process that was taken in implementing PRI though the role of movements in this process cannot be ignored. It was the give the confidence and determination that the process can be brought in the field and it is possible if only the political will of Govt. and the awareness of people are established. The purpose of this workshop was to ensure people's participation in the process of planning and to recognize the power of Gramsabha. The Panchayat development planning is very important and the participation of people is all the more important. The participation ensures ownership over the work of development. The perspective on development, participation, planning process etc were major points to be understood by the participants and this was served through sessions and discussions.

At the end of the workshop two villages were selected to visit. These villages are Netra in the District of East Simbhum and Hurlung in the district of Saraikela Kharsawan. Each village meeting saw the presence of around 30 people. The crux of the understanding on PDP was told to people. The amount of fund that is disbursed in the name of their panchayat brought them the apprehension and they were ready to work on to properly implement for their development. At the end of the meeting both the villages decided to have further meetings to have the understanding of how to go about and plan for their villages. Since the season is for agricultural work but they have planned to give time and work on it.

VDP Training (2nd phase) in Jharkhand - A two-day workshop on Participatory Village Development Plan was held at Jan Vikas Kendra Sundarnagar, Jamshedpur from 22nd to 23rd August 2018. Around 40 people participated from the various panchayats of three districts of Jharkhand. This second phase of workshop (the first phase which was held in June 20th to 21st) was to produce concrete plan for the village development. The major focus this time was to come up with two village development plans of two villages namely Netra and Hurlung. This would be as practice based as well as their proposed plan. The workshop focused on the following points

- To build the understanding on the power and politics of Gram sabha and about participatory village development plan
- To have detail discussions on 14th Finance Commission and learn to focus on financial entitlements under various Govt. schemes and agencies along FFC
- To discussion on process of developing the plan for village development
- Information, its sources and its use.

The entire session led the participants to realize this which brought the willingness to come together to come up with a plan for their villages. The political power, which is the power of decision making and implementing that decision, the Govt. has and same has been given to the local Governance therefore it is very essential to understand the fundamental spirit of decentralization of power. The knowledge that the political power of Govt. is ensured by the common people of the country and this could be easily challenged by them through the implementation of Panchayati Raj System.

The detail discussion on 14th Finance commission and its utilization process helped the participants know the area and possibility of utilizing it for developmental work. Each Gram Panchayat is entitled around 15 to 30 lakh financial resources from 14th FC and absolutely nothing is done except some construction in the past four years. Under 14th FC a large and untied amount is given to 6 lakh gram panchayat in the country which was to focus for the development work in the rural area. This discussion was helpful to achieve the understanding of 14th FC fund and this amount as participants opinion says, is called “the Mukhiya fund” in Jharkhand which gives the sole power to Gram Panchayat Mukhiya to decide the expenditure plan.

The demo mini gram sabhas of two villages namely Netra and Hurlung was conducted and it helped the participants to run through and be involved in the process of developing a concrete village plan based on their actual needs and funds available. The two group presentations of the mini gram sabha and further group discussions cleared many doubts and taught them to utilize funds from existing schemes in the Panchayat. This exercise led to see village development plan as comprehensive village development plan. The exercise on the extraction of information by using internet was conducted stepwise as it is an important part in the process of formulating village development plan. The information of few panchayats was extracted using www.planningonline.gov.in. The knowledge and information empowers the person and this process of knowing about their panchayat will surely help them to get ready for further work.

The workshop ended with a note that the participants would go back and conduct the VDPs in their villages but the focus would be to Netra and Hurlung villages and further follow up has to be done. Megharai ji from Netra would organize a meeting of villagers, ward members, Mukhiya and gram shachiv(panchayat secretary) and the aim is to be ready with a proposed development plan for their village till 2nd October Gramsabha which would to take place with the entire Gram sabha members of Terenga Panchayat (Netra village comes under Terenga Panchayat) along with other panchayats if possible.

Follow up meetings - Our Fellow Arvind Anjum and other karyakarta of the sangathan have put effort to continue with the same zeal after two workshops on VDPs. Their guidance and presence in the village level meetings helped people to organize Gram sabha in some panchayats. The gram sabha was organized in

panchayats namely Pathra of Barahgora block and Ganmor Posoita of West Singhbhum along with Netra and Hurlung villages prior to 2nd October and the orientation of Village development was given to the Gram sabha members. The resource mapping of the Panchayat and the panchayat development plan process have been initiated in these villages. Chhattisgarh - A training was organised by Dalit Adivasi Manch on 27-28 August with 26 participants at Pithora. The meeting was facilitated by the team from Samarthan who have been involved as resources person to develop local technical expertise for effective activation of panchayat committees and on rights of panchayats and devolution of funds.

Jan-March) Jharkhand - After two rounds of training on participatory Village Development Plan (VDP), in the month of July and August 2018 at Jamshedpur, the Gram sabha members were expected to have the capacity of preparing the plan for village sustainability. In this process, fellow and karyakartas organized village level meetings in various villages. In the last six months there have been 10 villages as well as Panchayat level meetings in Pathra, Sinduriaya, Agardih, Hurlung, Jhimri, Netra, Raidih, Bonta and Karandih and Ganmore. These villages come under 3 neighbouring districts of West Singhbhum, East Singhbhum and Saraikela Kharsawan. It was observed that villagers were keen to come together and organize small hamlet level meetings to take the VDP process further.

In Hurlung village of Ichagarh block of Saraikela Kharsawan District (Jharkhand), villagers organized two meetings on 15th October and 24th October 2018. They identified the needs and requirements of the village and submitted those in a form of a plan to Mukhiya (Sarpanch) and BDO of Ichagarh and demanded to incorporate their plan with the larger plan of the Panchayat. Though no further action was taken by the panchayat and block administration after the plan submission, but now the gram sabha members have the capacity of understanding finance commission grant and to question its utilization.

A village, where road connectivity is abysmal and which has been denied access to the government schemes & entitlements, now this village has a dream of making it a better place to live and have proper livelihood opportunities.

On 22nd January Around 15 people gathered together for a village meeting where Arvind Anjum, Nidhi ji, Siddharth and Elin joined them. Siddharth, Nidhiji and Elin were taken to the spot where lift irrigation is established. The lands which get irrigated by lift irrigation and crops were shown and told how this system has been an essential means to reap two season crops. The work of sangathan, agricultural works, lift irrigation, fisheries and the status of tree plantation was discussed as the initiation of meeting. The fishery is running well but there is a lack of proper channel to sell the fish. Arvind Anjum suggested them to join with Chandil Dam Cooperative Society in selling fish. The agricultural crisis due to the least amount of rainfall this year in the area has given very less agricultural yields to sustain them. The use of lift irrigation has been little help in this adverse situation as they are able to irrigate 500 acre lands for second cropping season which Rabi crops.

The discussion regarding the follow up with the submission of village initial plan to Mukhiya and BDO was carried out and Kiran veer the sangathan karyakarta informed that they would organize a meeting with Mukhiya very soon. Arvind Anjum threw light on the FC grant and helped them to realize the importance to

utilize it based on their needs. It is also to ask accountability from the concern Panchayat members and secretary about the funds which people are entitled to. The very act of knowing the power of gram sabha and questioning the power of established panchayat system could be seen as process of gram sabha empowerment.

The major challenge in the process of developing VDP which they coined out is the social dynamics among villagers although all belong to Santhal community. The village is divided into two fraction. The sangathan is intervening in this matter though it has failed to bring the entire village together.

In recent months, there is a continuous political turbulence in the state, which resulted in the mass mobilization of people to demonstrate against the state policies. These circumstances have created new challenges for people to focus on the processes of participatory village development plan.

The continuous engagement in participatory village development plan in village and Gram panchayat level sangathan has realized the need of engaging youth and women in the process. The two workshops were organized in the month of February and March 2019. The first was on Youths role and the second was on women's role in VDPs. Around 70 participants took part in the workshops which was to ensure the participation in the process of power devolution at the panchayat level.

The first 3-day workshop on Village development plan was organized for youths from 5th to 7th February 2019 in Hazaribag, Jharkhand. Around 30 youths hailing from the districts of Giridih, Boakro and Hazaribag took part in the workshop which began with commemorating Gandhi's 150th Jayanti which was to imbibe his idea of local governance. It was focused that the role of youth is essential while bringing about change in society. In order to impart knowledge and build perspective the experienced people like Vishwanath Azad ji, social activist Bhikhari ji and Kumar Dilip were present as resource persons. Kumar Dilip took sessions on concept, process and importance of village development plan. Vishwanath ji talked about the availability and utilization of natural and local resources. P.L. Bhikhariji focused on some of the fundamental legal aspects covering PRI, PESA, RTI etc. some of the case studies were highlighted on using RTI and he also took session on how to file FIR when required.

The major challenges and issues that emerged out during group interactions were the lack of awareness about the power of Gram sabha, power dynamics in the society and the massive level of corruption in financial aspect of PRI. The various methods were used for youths like providing space to be opened up to connect their issues in given world scenario where market is leading the global society. The appreciation towards their roots is important in order to appreciate the importance of village and its development.

Thus this 3day workshop was focused on bringing social change, to control corruption and to make youth more sensible and conscious about their responsibility in making society a better place. And off course it was to promote youth's participation and contribution for sustainable planning process.

The second three-day training at Badlao Institute of Training and Management Kanke, Ranchi was organized from 25th to 27th March 2019 on women's role in Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) and village development plan (VDP). Around 40 women from 11 districts namely Ranchi, Bokaro, Simdega, Godda, Sahebganj,

Hazaribag, Koderma, Chatra, Ramgarh, Garhwa and East Singhbhum of Jharkhand had come to part take in this training. The main objective was to focus on to increase participation of women in PRI and VDP process as 50% reservation is set constitutionally for them and the scenario of the country now reflects that women are always been kept aside in these processes. Realizing this the sagathan in Jharkhand has taken this as an essential work to promote women for their rights. The training was facilitated by Kumar Dilip, Vishwanath Azad ji, Bhikhari Sahu, Basant ji and Binni ji.

The three day sessions covered the following points

1. Constitutional provision under PRI for women 2. History and Concept of PRI 3. Concept of Village and self rule according to Mahatma Gandhi 4. Concept of Development 5. Self- rule in today's context 6. Entitlements to Various Govt. Schemes 7. Legal education on PRI in Jharkhand, PESA, RTI, FRA, MNREGA 8. Process in developing VDPs. The sessions were carried out in lecture mode, group discussions, group presentation, documentary movies. The entire sessions vividly brought out the status of women in present scenario and the challenges women face in patriarchy and feudal society. women have been oppressed for very long time. They have not been included in the decision making processes at home, in the work and in society. It was also discussed that now a small number of women have been empowered and have stood up for their rights. And it is time that women come forward and take part in every process.

Mahatma Gandhi was quoted several times during sessions for his dream about village – self-rule and his model is seen as an ideal one for village development plan. The participants were led to list out the available resources in their villages which helped them to learn and identify available Human resources, Physical resources and natural resources.

While discussing about the concept of Panchayati raj and Gram Sabha the participants were informed about the levels of governance in the country. Local governance is of people's governance and each gram sabha member is an essential part of this system thus everyone should participate in taking informed decision. In this process gram sabha members should be aware of fundamental legal provisions and in the case of local governance it is important to know the powers of gram sabha i.e. power of function, functionaries and finance. Knowing these powers brings power to people in decision making process.

Thus the training was focused on educating participants on above mentioned topics and ensure their active involvement in PRI system in their own respective villages and panchayats.

Training and Meetings on VDPs at Netra Village

On 25th and 26th March 2019 a two-day panchayat level meeting was organized at Netra village of Terenga Panchayat in the district of East Simbhum, Jharkhand. Around 50 Gram Sabha members from 6 villages of Terenga Panchayat gathered together and discussed about the process of gram sabha under PESA in detail. It is to note that this region comes under PESA area and the all gram sabha members are from Santhal community. Arun Singh and Vinod Nehra from Dungarpur, Rajasthan facilitated the meeting for both the days. The following points about Gram sabha processes were discussed and mark them as essential part in the Gram sabha: -

On formation of village level committees 1. Village development plan –a. process of gram sabha, b. resource mapping- i. Natural and manmade resourcesii. to lay out the geographical area of village for visual presentation (nazari naksha)iii. to lay out the gram sabha meeting (gram sabha baithak ki naksha) c. identification of needs, d. developing the village plan, e. convergence with the concern departments, 2. Forest rights and Gram sabha – a. Individual Forest right claims b. Community forest claims c. Management of natural resources and forest products 3. Entitlement to Government schemes 4. Sources of funds for Gram sabha/ panchayat 5. Gram sabha to fight social evils 6. to preparpare draft of the arations (Gaon nrajya ghoshna) and to submit the lining departments and authority such – to the Governor, to the commissioner of ST commission, Police SP, Collector, BDO, DFO, Mining Dpt and Panchayat members To inform the Mukhiya for the GS meetings village development plan

7. On how prepare records of Gram sabha

8. The rights under PESA.

The training was an opportunity for gram sabha members to understand the PESA and to assert their constitutional rights. The detail discussion on the above points has helped the them to grasp the information about what are the different aspect to look at in the process of developing the plan for each village.

Discussion and action on FC grants - There was another meeting that took place in Vikas Bharati on 1st November, 2018 on 14th Finance commission which saw the presence of around 25 men and women from 17 gram panchayats in the 3 districts of Saraikela Kharsanwa, East Singhbhum, and West Singhbhum in Jharkhand. This meeting brought out a variety of experiences taking part in the gramsabha. Few informed that the gram sabha is taking place regularly but on the other hand most of them said that no gram sabha has been taking place. Now the GS members have learnt about the amount under 14th Finance commission and other Govt. schemes which has empowered them to ask question to the concerned authority. The panchayat authorities are now ready to work together though it cannot be take place without people’s involvement. There are some panchayats which are not providing the data if asked the members are ready to file the RTI to extract concerned data. These processes are ongoing to gather more data and experiences on the FFC and expenditures made in the panchayat. This is useful before the National level consultations are organised to suggest ways forward for the 15th Finance Commission.

The representatives of various villages have been given the survey form which contain the questions based on the utilization of 14th Finance commission in their respective panchayat and the process of survey would be facilitated in the coming weeks. The date to complete the survey was given as 15th November. Around 9 villages have completed the survey on 14th Finance Commission and submitted till now and 8 villages yet to complete. This compilation is ongoing and is allowing the sangathan to gather more precise information as the first round of collected data had several gaps in it.

Two trainings on Village Development Plan in the month of June and August respectively has been a driving force to see village development plan process as a campaign called ‘Gram Vikas Abhiyan’ has started. It has

helped villages in the sangathan area to come together and understand the importance of people’s participation in the process of their development.

The impact of these two rigorous trainings is visible now as people of the sangathan area are taking initiatives to organize small meetings in their villages to mobilize people to participate actively in the gramsabha. On 2nd October, gram sabhas were organised in different villages and people becoming aware of the importance of it took part. Around 5 Gramsabhas were held in the Hurlung, Netra, Angardih, Ganmor and Pathra villages where the village development plans were discussed. The decisions taken in the gramsabha in each village was brought in the light of Mukhiyas and BDOs and there was also a discussion on 14th Finance commission amount and some suggestion for 15th Finance commission.

On 9th October a meeting at Vikas Bharati Sundarnagar (Jamshedpur) was held to evaluate the Gramsabha held on 2nd October in different villages. Around 6 representative came together shared the experiences. This was also to ensure the active participation of people in the gramsabha.

The preparation of village development plans in different villages is now on the cards as sangathan members have expressed some confidence in facilitation the planning process along with elected representatives, mukhiyas and other sangathan members. They are also expecting to organise a vibrant Gram Sabha to take ownership of the process. In the current period, due to agricultural activities in past months and festivities people could not be brought together to start the process of preparation of plans. Starting the month of January, the VDP preparation is planned to begin in 10 villages

Outcome 3: Responsive, accountable and transparent government and administrative mechanisms; developed state level platforms/ coalitions of SRUTI Fellow Groups (jan-sangathans) and other key stake holders leading to policy advocacy at state level towards devolution of powers as provided under the 73rd Amendment.

Year 2: In the last six months there are total 23 activities undertaken by SRUTI Fellows in 3 states on formation, strengthening and capacity building of formal –informal vigilance committees at various levels on for various purposes and ensuring the active and assertive participation of these committees in systemic processes.

Most of such committees formed to ensure proper implementation of PDS system, MNREGA and Anganwadis in the respective regions and monitoring committees on mid-day meal and scholarships to tribal students and children from Mahadalit categories in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Bihar.

Visthapit Mukti Vahini focused on Social audits and utilization of funds received by GPs through fourteen finance commission which is untied and to be utilized for the village development with the consultation of gram Sabhas and standing committees of respective Gram Panchayats.

Visithapit Mukti Vahini is collecting documents/information on financial resources disbursed to the Gram Panchayat levels.

Visthapit Mukti Vahini - Campaigns on proper and fair implementation of Forest rights Act, PESA and Bio-diversity Act are an ongoing activity in all 3 states by all Fellows working in the states with the collaboration of other active networks and alliances. During this quarter an intensive campaign was run by Arvind Anjum (Visthapit Mukti Vahini) against the proposed amendments by the state government in Chhota Nagpur tenancy Act (CNTA) and Santhal Paragana Tenancy Act (SPTA). Both the acts are safeguards of original natives (tribals) of Jharkhand. The current regime is seeing these acts as hurdles on the way of development projects. Statewide protests are going on in Jharkhand against the proposed amendments. Visthapit Mukti Vahini along with other state level networks and alliances are coming together and registering their protest against this.

Visthapit Mukti Vahini along with other state level networks and alliances and Bhumi Adhikar Andolan (a national level alliance) against the proposed amendments in CNTA and SPTA in Jharkhand in July 2017.

Outcome 4: Developed state level alliances/ coalitions with CSOs to build pressure groups, policy advocacy and collective campaign at state and national levels on state specific issues/ concerns gazed and analysed during the individual and community level processes in the 4 states towards devolution of powers as provided under the 73rd Amendment.

Year 3:

The campaign against the notification of eviction for 8 villages without entitling the forest rights to people in the name of preserving Tiger in the area has been another extends area of work for KJSS in Latehar and Palamu. The sangathan has been able to access to 6 villages who have not given any consent to be evicted though according to Media other villages have readily accepted the offer. It is also observed that the core area could be expanded in the due course of time as it has happened in the past. The wild life corridors are other issue that requires focusing on. Considering these issues the fellow made a plan to conduct village level meetings in the entire area. These meetings continued for 12 days from 8th September to 19th September. The village level meeting was fundamentally important to realize the power of Gram sabha in the PESA area and to demand for their rights over natural resources. The process has surely helped people to find unity and energy in the struggle.

Outcome 5: (i) Research and documentation on policies related to decentralised democracy and create knowledge centre to multiply effects (ii) Reflection, learning and change.

Mazdoor Kisan Samiti

Operational Area – Gaya district, Bihar

Link with local Sangathans

Key activists: Kailash Bharti and other sangathan members as part of a historic land rights struggle

Self Identity:

Formal Membership of platforms/networks:

Activity Profile

<p>Outcome 1: Empowered and aware individuals and families and; collectivisation of families through SRUTI Fellow Groups (Jan Sangathans) in the focussed areas of four states on their entitlements rights and policies (FRA, MGNREGA, RTF, TSP, ITDP, PESA and other entitlements) in 39 blocks of 16 districts (blocks/districts might increase over one-two year period of time) in four states Bihar, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh through information dissemination, meetings, sharings, trainings/ workshops and engagement in the grassroots.</p>
<p>Year 1:</p> <p>Facilitation of 8 workshops in Patna, Bihar on building understanding of forest rights and PRI system 2. Furthermore; regular trainings, workshops and shivirs were organised to discuss the issues in the local geographical context. Relevant legal knowledge on forest rights including the process of filing of claims, understanding process of land alienation, raising questions on administrative apathy towards the implementation of governace schemes, corruption in the service delivery. In the working regions, burning issues of regional and national importance were regularly disussed through village meetings, with many suggestions followed up by the sangathans. This included issues of water pollution, delay in payment of wages, drought or crop-loss due to rain, promotion of organic farming, utilisation of MFPS etc. Special perspective building sessions were organised for women representatives from panchayats and the community at large. Mazdoor Kisan Samiti, Bihar- Mahila samelan/ Women’s Convention, 11-12 December 2016 Perspective building workshop for women to broaden capacities in understanding the political situation and important historical milestones which speaks about women’s roles and participation. The workshop was also to enhance skills of leadership and representation from women. Around more than 170 women and 30 men assembled in the Jivan Sangram complex, Bodhgaya. The workshop was designed with the idea of building aspects and understanding of women’s roles, leadership and participation in different areas. (b) Consistent awareness camps were organised in the three states (Bihar, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh) regarding various schemes that ensure a life of dignity for those from ST, SC and other minority and marginalised communities. during this reporting period these workshops were organised in Baghlatti, Soniya Kevalia, Barachatti (in Mohanpur and Barachatti blocks of Gaya district of Bihar) (c)</p>

Mazdoor Kisan Samiti, Bihar -27-30 December 2016 Yuva Sanskaar Shivir/ Youth cultural camp Majdoor Kissan Samiti organised a youth camp from 27 to 30 December for 135 young boys and girls(almost equal participation) at Jivan Sangam campus , Bodhgaya. 12 boys from Betiya , 9 boys from Dhanbad, 5 from Tata, More than 100 Students studying in 10 the class were from Bodhgaya,5 from Jamshedpur and girls (a little less than 50%) studying matriculation in Bodhgaya participated in this camp.One of the markers was participation of youth from 10 villages from adivasi communities who have settled in gaya for more than 15 years.

The dialogues and conversations revolved around “discrimination” based on caste, religion and gender and each participant asserted how to inculcate such habits and behaviour in their daily lives and practices. The general consensus, the range of issues discussed, and elaborated with examples was visible at the end of the camp. The youth who participated in this workshop belong to areas where majority are from marginalised and oppressed communities. Considering, it’s enounced to be one of the most backward places of Bihar, the participation and engagement of youth in these camps was commendable. On the last day of the camp, raised slogans like “our choose lives...our rights” ends with a promising note. YEAR 2: Gaya district of Bihar has organised a two day workshop on formation of Forest rights committees and role of Gram Sabha prescribed under The Forest Rights Act. The process of filing claims on forest land in underway so far 652 such individual claims have been filed by the Sangathan and its first time when this Act is being exercised in Bihar. Though the non-cooperative characteristic of at SDM and DM levels these claims are still not recognised but Sangathan is following up the process in other potential places in Fatehpur, Mohanpur, Barachatti and Sherghati block of Gaya district. The workshop was held at Bodhgaya at Sangathan's camp office and facilitated by Shri Ashok Priyadarshi and advocate Manoj Kumar on 22-23 April. Total 26 Participants attended the workshop.

YEAR 2 :

a two days long perspective building workshop on History of Panchayati Raj and the current status and how to make it more effective and functional at Barabar Village in Mohanpur block on 8-9 June 2017. Around 200 people (mostly women and men) participated from 11 villages situated in the Gurpa hills. Since the area is fully covered by the forest and people have migrated for last 10-15 years from Jharkhand and living in Bihar without any recognition or citizenship rights. Now the Sangathan is planning to mobilize people from such villages and formed gram sabhas as per the Forest Rights Act under the provision of self-declaration. Sangathan and villagers have already done a basic survey and mapping of area and location of villages and harmonized with the land records of Govt of Bihar. The process of self-declaration will help further to convert these village into revenue villages then the governance processes will be accessible by the villages.

(3) Mazdoor Kisan Samiti organised a tow days perspective building meeting on 27-29 May Women Leadership Training Mahila Shivir at Buddha Home of Children, Silonja, Bodhgaya. The training was facilitated by senior leader of Bodhgaya Land Rights Movement Ms Kanak. 56 women including ward members and Sarpanchs from Fatehpur, Mohanpur, Barachatti and Sherghati Blocks of Gaya district attended the training. The main focus was given to the active role of women in gram sabha and planning for

overall development of villages. (4) Gaon Ganrajya Sangathan has organised 2 trainings on how to read and understand the Constitution and provisions for Schedule V area in Jagannathpur on 6th April and 16th May. Both were the one day training programmes followed by the detailed perspective buiding meetings on related issues. Total 48 young community leaders including 21 women and 27 men attending the training programme. The seesions were sfacilitated by Jang Sai Poya (SRUTI Fellow) and Laakhan Sing Payan from Sarva Adivasi Samaj.

(b) During October 2017 to March 2018, 4 district level programs and 15 village/block level programs were organized in Gaya, Patna and Banka. Following his regular work with the sangathan, Advocate Manoj Kumar Sahay was assigned to be the main resource person handling the campaign in the month of July. He, along with members of Adivasi Mazdoor Kisan Mukti Vahini visited Chandan, Belhar, and Bonsi blocks (Banka district) for conducting GPS training. About 30 sangathan members village and on an average 30-35 people attended the village meetings. The resource person illustrated the use of GPS machines and how they can be used for preparation of maps, useful in filing claims under the FRA. Workshops were also organised in 14 villages of 5 districts of Bihar (see information in campaigns) with young workers - creating awarenss on the process of claim filing, resource mapping. Use of GPS extends maximum benefits in terms of reduction in manual work, accuracy in measurement of land, maintenance of transparency and uniformity in processing claim requests, facilitation of a better reporting mechanism and proper maintenance of records. The GIS is enabling citizens with adequate details about their entitlements under the Act and assisting them in acquiring evidence based information in support of their claim to forest land under the FRA.

(c) Mazdoor Kisan Samiti organized a special series of awareness building among the communities on Targeted public distribution system and especially for Mahadalit communities in Bihar. Scholarships for students from the Mahadalit communities and forest rights as provisioned in Forest rights act who have been residing in the forest and Mukhyamantri housing scheme applicable in the state. The series started from 17th July to 23rd July in Barachatti and Fatehpur Blocks of Gaya district. 8 such meetings held and covered 10 villages and reached out to around 1200 families. (d) Janmukti Sangharsh Vahini organised a two day seminar on Champran Kisan Struggle at Betiah district in Bihar on 04th Nov, 2017. 40 participants from across the state attended the meeting. At the centenary celebrations of the historical Champaran struggle people raised the issues faced in social movements, the legacy of the struggle and how they can together continue to bring the issues of common people to the forefront.

Year 3

- A) Mazdoor Kisan Samiti spread legal awareness camps in about 20 villages in Gaya and Banka district through Shri Manoj Sahay who has been requested to facilitate the process of creating awareness on fra, local governance schemes and help communities to file suitable applications and help them with following up at appropriate administrative blocks. In the month of August and September 5 village level meetings were conducted in 5 different villages namely Bankat, Lebra, Dheradih, Kohvari and Chalaitanr of Barachatti and Mohanpur blocks in the districts of Gaya. the Gram sabha members of each village participated the meeting and discussed about the available resources for their

sustenance. Land is among main resources the struggle is based on the same. There has been violence in the villages and it is very important to settle the issue first. There have been firing in the Bankat Village of Mohanpur Block and a man of Kohvari village which comes in Barachatti block is put to the jail in the land related case. The Sangathan has always played an important role in raising the daily struggle and tried finding solution through dialogue between the two groups. A committee comprising of 25 people was made at Lebra Village in Mohanpur Block. The committee is to now work on the village issues and village development.

Bihar, Mazdoor Kisan Samiti - 2 Village level meetings in the month of November and December were organized by Priyadarshiji and other Sangathan karyakatas in the district of Gaya. Having access to information Priyadarshi ji has always been the mediator who empowers people by transmitting the information. The information could be of changes in state or centre policies or any news that affect people in the ground. The meetings were held to mobilize people and prepare them to attend Kisan March in Delhi which took place in the month of November. It was the process of who should attend the march and how to travel to Delhi. Around 75 villagers were chosen who attended the Kisan March from Ramleela Maidan to Sansad Marg. In the month of December, the meeting was organized in the preparation of state level Sammelan which was to take place in Patna Gandhi Maidan in the month of February. This event was to highlight people's issues and demand Govt. to heed them. The meetings are the opportunity for villagers building awareness and perspective on the issues that affect their lives.

Skill building workshops/Training were facilitated to trained local leaders of respective Sangathans from and within the communities. In Bihar, legal workshops were organised in 6 villages of Gaya and Banka district with the support of Manoj Sahay, sangathan members and lawyer who has been coordinating work on the campaign to implement fra in the state. Awareness generation on fra and spreading information about the scope of the HC order on maintaining status quo on forest land.

(July-Sept) In Bihar, Mazdoor Kisan Samiti had organised legal workshops. Planned workshops could not take place due to the agricultural season.

(April to Sept)

BIHAR

Adivasi Mazdoor Kisan Mukti Vahini organised a 4-day cycle yatra was conducted from 10th to 14th September in the Districts of Banka, starting from Chandan block in the village Hadiyakura covering other blocks namely Katoria, Baunsi, and Belhar. Around 50 people participated in this yatra. People from Mazdoor Kisan Samiti, Gaya also participated in the yatra. The most villages are majorly the residence of Santhali Tribes who are being exploited by Forest Department. The main focus on this yatra was to bring the Forest Right entitlements to people's lives. Each village saw the peoples gathering which was to bring awareness to people. This was a platform to bring zeal among people in forming sangathan to work for their

development. The expansion of sangathan is seen now in 19 villages of Chandan, Katoria, Belhar and Bhaunsi Blocks of Banka District.

Outcome 2: (i) Inclusive, participatory, effective and regular Gram Sabhas as well as its involvement in ensuring accountability and transparency and; assuring ownership over resources at the village level with strategic involvement of marginalised and vulnerable communities. (ii) Capacitated SRUTI Fellow Groups (jan-sangathans) and selected Gram Sabhas to develop the value assessment of natural resources, infrastructural and social capital of their respective gram panchayats.

Year 1:

By the month of June, a regional meeting of the sangathan was organised at Gaya district with 80 volunteers. A day-long meeting with community members, sangathan volunteers on land rights, forest rights implementation and governance schemes for social welfare was organised on 24th July. The meeting was a convergence of about 125 people who are now working in 5 districts of Bihar, trying to increase the scope of work at the state level. It was also a method of stock-taking and planning new strategies in the wake of fresh developments in different districts. It was soon followed with a training of using GPS technology for community mapping held on 30th August. (b) The sangathan has helped prepared the appeal submitted to the high court in regards to Forest Rights Act. In September, the sangathan was involved in campaigning, taking a global positioning on forest rights claims. Around 2000 maps were prepared in this process. Around 104 people attended the jan sunvai (public hearing) from 23 Dec to 26 Dec and 12 to 13 workers were involved in making maps, training in GPS system and data entry. From around 2.2 million claims filed in Bihar, around 1 lakh comes from district. There were demonstrations and discussions around it organized by the sangathan. (b) there has been training programmes in order to build a legal understanding of various matters undertaken in the previous quarter (Q3). Two things that have happened includes creation of tribal villages in Fatehpur block, and 5 more villages which are not revenue villages received titles (conversion from forest villages to revenue villages - one of the prominent reason cited to remove villages from entitlements of schemes of social welfare) from them. There is a process to build a body for at these tribal villages. Recently there have also been awareness and campaigning in regards to privatization of health and education. Also, a hike in prices of electricity was a main point of debate and discussions. In three villages there have been instances of false cases and there have been ongoing conversations with lawyers about the same. There has been a lot of follow up meetings of the events of the past during the reporting period. (b) 1. Workshop on proper implementation of Forest Rights Act 2006 was organised with 120 participants including panchayat members, community leaders and representatives of administration on 19th August 2016 at Gaya, Bihar. 2. Gram Sabha meetings delegate responsibility to particular members and committees

to effectively plan work. Sangathans in the working regions have involved with resource mapping through the use of GPS, planned on undertaking anthropological researches on tribal community and culture and submitted memorandums to the administration for better utilisation of funds. Bihar - 23-26 December 2016 Public hearing in four blocks and building of legal knowledge and perspectives. From 22 December to 26 December 2016, public meetings and hearings were conducted respectively in four blocks of Bodhgaya ie Mohanpur, Barachita, Fatehpur and Tenkupa. Around 100 karyakarta were involved in this process. During this gathering, youth were also identified for the youth camp. Discussions revolved around the issues of the village as well as people engaged in discussions ranging from policies like Forest rights Act, topics relevant to issues of land, entitlements, land ownership and rights; laws regarding forest and land rights; abuse and misuse of law; implementation of different acts and schemes etc. More than 600 men and women from Mohanpur assembled on 22 December 2016. In the second day more than 550 people participated in Fatehpur block. Around 300 men and women were from adivasi communities from gurpa only. 200 people from Tenkupa participated.

Year 3:

Priyadarshi ji from JaSaVa takes an active role in information dissemination for the Sangathan Mazdoor Kisan Samiti Bihar. Under his guidance 9 books were purchased for the Sangathan use. It is realized that the Karyakartas need to be updated with every discourse that are existing in the country. These books are based on different subjects which provide perspective about the issues in the country.

- a) 1 workshop was organised in Mazdoor Kisan Samiti' area in Barachatti at block head quarter of Gaya district on May 22, 18. The workshop has facilitated by MK Nirala, one of the Karyakarta of the Sangathan who has attended some workshops recetly. It was a cross-learning and sharing initiative. MK Nirala has good amount of understanding on these proceses in general but he focuses on Education and NREGA. He explained the provisions available under these two acts.
- b) A two day Bhudan Kisan Sammelan was organized on 9th and 10th July 2018 at Shilaunja, Bodhgaya, Bihar by Mazdoor Kisan Samiti. Around 300 people had assembled from 36 villages of Gaya Districts mainly from blocks of Fatehpur, Mohanpur , Barahchhatti, Dobhi, Tenkupa, Bodhgaya. Context - In the year 1950 to 60 the Bhudan land distribution to the landless has been one among grand programs in Bihar. The process of Bhudan is prominently carried forward in the district of Gaya and this was a form of justice given to the landless in those days when the land was mainly under landlord or state. Bhudan andolan was led by Jai Prakash Narayan under the guidance of Vinobha Bhawe. A legal framework was introduced to distribute Parcha (Land Paper) of Bhudan land and in order to execute them the Bhudan Offices were established. The land parcha is given to Bhudan Kisan when the entire process of mutation (दाखिल – खारिज) is done. It is done in the revenue department but lots of cases are found where mutation is not done accurately. There is another problem now the hike of land price and this has attracted the land givers to file case against the Bhudan Kisan to get back the land

given by their ancestors and thus there is conflict among Bhudan giver and Bhudan kisan. The givers are using the witness of Bhudan District officers. The forest department in another side has claimed that the Bhudan lands have been done even from the forest lands and these people occupying the same land to be displaced now. Although fra entitles them with the rights of land and thus the claim by forest department is illegal.

This program brought farmers and workers together with their diverse issues related to land and forest. The ample number of cases that was talked about and the sharing of strategies to deal were done by those who had similar kind of land issues. The serious attention was given by the karyakarta of the sangathan. The advocate Manoj Kumar also gave his suggestions in this process. Each senior and main karyakarta of the sangathan highlighted the issues in the ground. Kumar Shambhumurti the Bhudan District officer was the chief guest who presented the status of Bhudan issues in their district. Dr. Kanak a Woman leader of Bodhgaya also spoke to people to be united and ask them to bring the women issues in the forefront. The guidance of C.A Priyadarshi ji was seen in whole through the program who constantly made effort so that people may understand the issue. Adv. Manoj Kumar emphasized the legal awareness of fra and its implementation. People who are not connected with sangathan were also part of this sammelan and this would the opportunity to increase the power of sangathan. The understanding the threat by the issues of Bhudan land and forest departments drove them to come together to uphold their land rights. And thus it was very essential process to organize Bhudan Kisan sammelan makaware of the scenario in the state.

a) In the Majholiya village of Gaya district, big success was achieved as a new hamlet of Jay Prabha Nagar was established. On 15 January a public meeting was organized for the inauguration of Jay Prabha Nagar, where Sangathan karyakartas addressed around 500 people in the meeting. Jay Prabha Nagar is situated on 3.5 acres of Bihar government's land where 66 Dalit families (of Chamar and Bhuiyan castes) from nearby villages Ramnachak, Bankat, and Majholiya villages are settling down. Some part of this hamlet's land used to be a Kachahri of Shankaracharya Math, which was demolished during Bodh Gaya movement (In the late 1970s). Later some people from the local dominant caste claimed this land illegally, but the Sangathan's long struggle paid off and now landless people from various Dalit groups are settling here.

b) A meeting was organized in Katoriya block of Banka district on 27th January. People from Chandan, Baunsi, Katoriya, Belhar, and Fullidumar blocks participated in the meeting. The core issue discussed in the meeting was the maximum participation in the mass demonstration of Patna. To ensure this, it was decided that the cycle march will be organized in the Banka district before the demonstration of Patna. A meeting in Jhajha on 2nd February and one in Hadkhaar on 10th February were also announced in this meeting.

(Oct to Dec) BIHAR

A workshop on Village Development Plan Preparation from 9th -11th Nov, 2018 was organised at Jeevan Sangham, Domuhan-Bodh Gaya, (Bihar) in the working area of Mazdoor Kisan Samiti.

Objective: Capacity building of sangathan karyakartas for preparation of effective and participatory village development plan.

Kailash Bharti a prominent member of the sangathan since its beginning, made all the necessary arrangements for the workshop. Around 50 persons (men & women) associated with the sangathan took part in the workshop. Priyadarshi Ji, the mentor of the sangathan also participated in the workshop on day-2 with three guest speakers (Bindu Ji, Devkumar Ji & Manilal Ji). From SRUTI Siddharth and Elin attended the workshop.

Kumar Dilip facilitated the workshop for all three days. Kumar Dilip hails from East Singhbhum district (Kolhan Area) of Jharkhand state. Dilip is actively working on the various issues of tribal and native communities of the area as well as on panchayati raj and village development plan. Following were the key activities & finding from the workshop:

On day 1 of the workshop SRUTI team members, Kumar Dilip & all the participants discussed the 'question of development'. It further proceeded with the discussions on 'form of development', 'who should be deciding the structure and framework of it' and the 'concept of panchayati raj'. Day one ended with a brief of workshops activities for next two days.

On day 2, the facilitator explained the concept of panchayati raj and sangathan karyakartas also shared the realities of their communities in context of gram sabhas and panchayats. Kumar Dilip further explained about the grants which are provided by 14th finance commission (FFC) & central and state schemes to gram panchayats, how to prioritize schemes (grants) as per the requirements of gram sabhas and conditions for FFC grants. In the last session of day 2, the facilitator explained the process of preparing a gram panchayat-village development plan (GP-VDP). He insisted on the need of identifying and marking of village resources and preparing a plan to use these to solve village issues by Gram sabha members (every villager who is 18 years of age or more). Later four groups of participants based on the particular areas were formed and provided with a chart paper. All four groups were asked to prepare a village development plan and present those on the final day of the workshop.

On day-3 all four groups presented their plans in front of all the participants. A specific pattern could be seen in these plans, where irrigation, health, education and drinking water were the most highlighted issues.

The workshop further discussed different schemes which can be effectively used to improve village infrastructure. Dilip asserted on being aware and said, "People should know how much money is coming for gram sabhas under different welfare schemes from panchayats and other government institutions. We need to know gram sabhas are entitled with which grants and where these can be used. Then only we can question the accountability of bureaucrats and elected representatives.

This followed with Kumar Dilip providing information about www.planningonline.gov.in website. He explained how internet can be used effectively to be aware and well informed on proposed and currently running schemes.

Observations: In the initial part of workshop, it was observed that the participants were not convinced with the idea of preparing development plan for their villages. Prevalence of corruption, which they experience in their regions, is the prime factor responsible for their adamant approach; but the information and experiences shared by trainers and speakers enabled them to understand the importance of gram sabha and its power, preparing them to engage in the process.

Challenges: This fact came into the light that panchayat representatives are not willing to share the information regarding various schemes. On the other hand information on this matter is available only on internet, which is not accessible to all people in the villages. The lack of participation of youth in the sangathan is also could be seen as a challenge in this process as they are more accommodated to the new technology. In order to equip and familiarize with new technology it is essential to identify and train a particular team of people from sangathan who would be supportive in extracting the available information.

Summary for Visit of Somiya Village, Panchayat: Jaygir Block: Barahchatti for Village Development Plan Preparation From 31st Dec 2018 to 1st Jan 2019 in the working area of Mazdoor Kisan Samiti.

Objective: To start preparation of final village development plan from Somiya village (Panchayat- Jaygir) of block Barahchatti.

A more detailed format was prepared by SRUTI team to effectively map village resources after the 3 day workshop of Jeevan Sangham (Bodhgaya). Before starting day 1 (on 30th Dec-18) this format was shared and explained to sangathan karyakartas Budhan Singh, Kailu Mandal and Kailash Bharti and few villagers. Further next day activities were discussed with the same persons.

On day 1, a meeting with villagers and sangathan karyakartas was held. In this meeting around 30 villagers were present. The format was explained by Sidharth to villagers. Later 4 groups were formed from all the participants. Each group was assigned to fill a specific set of village resource information. By the end of the day all four groups submitted their part of the format with required village resource information. The ended with a brief discussion on the combined format filled by the villagers to mark the main issue of village and how available village resources can be utilized to prepare a VDP.

On day 2, a meeting of sangathan karyakartas was held in Rampur village (Panchayat-Irki) of Mohanpur block. All karyakartas were provided with the above mentioned format to replicate the resource mapping process in their respective areas. It was decided in the meeting that a village meeting will be organized in Somiya Village between 15 Jan to 20 Jan-2019 to work on the Planning aspect of VDP.

Outcome 3: Responsive, accountable and transparent government and administrative mechanisms; developed state level platforms/ coalitions of SRUTI Fellow Groups (jan-sangathans) and other key stake holders leading to policy advocacy at state level towards devolution of powers as provided under the 73rd Amendment.

Year 1:

(a) The Yuva Shivir at Gaya (detailed reporting : 5.2.5) also involved varied cross-sharing processes within the youth from different corners and sections of the states. (b) A one day event on 15th May 2016 was organised on campaign initiated by sangathan in Bihar to discuss the various factors contributing to increased inequality and landlessness in rural india with a widening gap between village and urban areas.

The campaign put forward four pillars as a potential foundation for rural development - women empowerment, youth empowerment, pro-people technology and communication. The national-level event was organised with members from various social organisations working with communities across Bihar. The core aspect of the meeting focused on how feudal and caste forces can be challenged in the context of villages by using the four aforementioned pillars to achieve development of our rural areas and equality amongst its population.

1. In Bihar, the campaign on the effective implementation of FRA has been carried forward. Regional sangathan meetings started off in July with representatives at Fatehpur block in Gaya district. Raising the problems of corruption, discriminatory attitude towards poor and forest dwelling communities, the regional meetings charted out ways - of using GPS mapping in filing of claims, improving legal knowledge of members, assertion of FRC members and direct engagements with district and state representatives (including nodal departments).

2. In Bihar, the state level campaign on Dakhal Dahani, the land rights movements has gained prominence in the past few years. Although the administration has cracked down on activists and stakeholders many a times, there is legal recourse which has helped the campaign to gain effective ground.

Year 2: April – September

In the last six months there are total 23 activities undertaken by SRUTI Fellows in 3 states on formation, strengthening and capacity building of formal –informal vigilance committees at various levels on for various purposes and ensuring the active and assertive participation of these committees in systemic processes. Most of such committees formed to ensure proper implementation of PDS system, MNREGA and Anganwadis in the respective regions and monitoring committees on mid-day meal and scholarships to tribal students and children from Mahadalit categories in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Bihar. Mazdoor Kisan Samiti focused on scholarships and MGNREGA in 3 blocks of Gay district.

Oct-Dec: Mazdoor Kisan Samiti organised 2 trainings in Nov 2017 with active gram sabha members for effective monitoring of social security schemes - of MGNREGA payments, pensions and primary education. The issues of district-administration led funds allocation was also disussed and applications were made to address the concerns of the sangathan.

Oct-Dec

Mazdoor Kisan Samiti - Two day program on the ‘Scope of Farming and Agriculture’ which was attend by people from various states like UP, WB Jharkhand and Bihar. The program was organised on 22nd October with 30 participants. Supporting agriculture has been a focus area for the sangathan and a cooperative like structure was establishment for the procurement and sale of grain. The sangathan aims to continue this in the coming months for ensuring better rates for farm produce.

Engagement and dialogue with district administration and other relevant authorities is a regular work of SRUTI Fellows in their respective regions. For proper and fair implementation of forest rights Act it is now more frequent meetings organized with the authorities and many other issues force to Sangathans to meet

different authorities in the region. During this last six months several such meetings have done. Some of the meetings are reported below-

Mazdoor Kisan Samit organized two meetings with SDM Mohanpur and barachatti Tehsils and submitted memorandums on several issues emerged during the village meetings.

Mazdoor Kisan Samiti A public meeting was organized by Mazdoor Kisan Samiti at Fatehpur block on issues related to Forest rights Act and the violations being done by the forest department. 356 Individual forest rights claims were filed and submitted to SLDC by the respective Gram Sabhas but the forest department is not paying any attention or gravity to the resolutions made by the gram Sabhas and SDM office is also not showing any respect to the Gram Sabha. Around 700 people /forest dwellers came together and submitted a memorandum to SDM seeking cooperation from the office. Mazdoor

Kisan Samiti An incident of bulldoze the house/huts of forest dwellers (mostly tribal) in Pirahi village of Mohanpur block in Gaya district took place on 12th June 2017. Around 26 such huts have destroyed by the forest department with the help of police force. SRUTI Fellow Kailash Bharati along with other main leaders of Mazdoor Kisan Samiti met SDM at Sherghati divisional office and submitted a letter against the act committed by the forest department and made a request to look into the matter as it is completely against the spirit of forest right Act. The SDM, Sherghati ensured the leaders that it will not happened again and people can rebuild their houses.

Mazdoor Kisan Samiti has initiated a basic survey of land and forest in the new area of Gurpa hill at Jharkhand Boarder. around 1100 tribal families are residing in this region migrated from Jharkhand for last 15 years. Sangathan has expanded its work into this year from this year. The basic survey of land and locations of villages has been completed for 9 villages. The data is based on the land records available with the government of Bihar.

April -Sep

major campaigns done by Mazdoor Kisan Samiti in Gaya district on recognition of Forest rights

Mazdoor Kisan Samiti has organized a Cycle March from 6-9 September 2017 started from Mohanpur block headquarter to Barachatti Block headquarter. It was organized to celebrate victory of people's movement in the context of Patna High Court judgment on pendency of FRA and direction given to the state government to maintain the status quo till the full and proper implantation of FRA done in the state. Approx 24 KMs cycle March covered around 20 villages and organized village meetings and shivirs to spread awareness about the Court's judgment. (detailed report shared separately)

Mazdoor Kisan Samiti in Gaya district of Bihar has initiated a campaign along with other groups on long pending land rights under the land reforms initiative by the Bihar government. On the occasion of 100 years of Champaran Satyagrah Chief Minister of Bihar Shri Nitish Kumar announced that each and every dispute

over land will be settled in this year on the occasion of 100 years of historical Satyagrah initiated by Gandhi Ji. He also appealed people to record their grievances over land with the concerned departments. Mazdoor Kisan Samiti just started the process of recording the details in villages in a time bound campaign mode.

Oct

2) Campaign to implement FRA - Mazdoor Kisan Samiti, Bihar - A state-level campaign has been ongoing in Bihar. During the months of Jan-March, sangathan leaders travelled across the state to the areas Navgachhiya, Gaya, Champaran, Jamui and Banka. Conducting village meetings, meeting progressive organisations, legal experts and others - the team conducted group discussions in villages, educating them about the provisions of FRA and discussing socio-political issues in the state and the country. Along with legal advocacy, regular sessions on health, education, livelihood development and perspective building of youth members was taken up alongside. Context of the campaign - Bihar in the year 2017 witnessed one of the most dramatic political transmutation in recent history as Chief Minister Nitish Kumar dumped the grand alliance, comprising his JD(U), arch rival Lalu Prasad's RJD and the Congress, to rejoin the BJP-led NDA. While witnessing the disastrous political developments, the state was also ravaged by floods which affected 19 districts of north Bihar, rendered close to a million homeless and claimed more than 500 lives. Shortly after the installation of the new government, the Srijan scam involving fraudulent transfer of hundreds of crores from the treasury to an NGO came to light. The state government promptly ordered a CBI inquiry amid allegations from the opposition that the NGO enjoyed patronage from many top leaders of the ruling coalition. Driven by the conviction that social evils must be eradicated for the fruits of development to reach all, Kumar also launched campaigns against dowry and child marriage, claiming that these reforms would transform the society in no smaller measure than his previous radical step of prohibition had done. During all these developments on 22th of July 2017 the Patna high court passed interim order against illegalities being committed by the State government while implementing the FRA.

“It is directed that during the pendency of the matter of an individual concerned, he shall not be dispossessed and status quo shall be maintained and in case it is found that in any case dispossession has taken place before deciding the claim, this Court may consider taking action against the officer concerned.” The interim order was passed in a pending writ petition (JanmuktiSangharshVahini&Ors. vs. State of Bihar &Ors.) relating to the Forest Rights Act and its implementation in the State of Bihar. The petition was filed bringing to the notice of the Court a slew of illegalities being committed by the State government while implementing the FRA, resulting in widespread rejection of claims on multiple specious grounds. The PIL was filled on December 2014 stating the struggle for the claims of IFR and CFR from 4th of January 2008 by Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (OTFD). The Sub Division Level Committee (SDLC) and District Level Committee (DLC) rejected 531 claims of 652 claims and gave a reason that with these claims the proof of 75 years of possession of land was not submitted.

The order was oxygen for the people whose claims were pending and those who are yet to file a claim. To strengthen the processes of Forest Rights Act, 2006 a campaign was launched to explain the process to claim, in order to access their individual and/or community land rights under the FRA. They are also trained to use GPS. Use of GPS extends maximum benefits in terms of reduction in manual work, accuracy in measurement of land, maintenance of transparency and uniformity in processing claim requests, facilitation of a better reporting mechanism and proper maintenance of records. The GPS is enabling citizens with adequate details about their entitlements under the Act and assisting them in acquiring evidence based information in support of their claim to forest land under the FRA.

Year 3:

Two-day Farmers' Convention was organized by Mazdoor Kisan Samiti in Pachrukha village; Bihar on Monday 11th June 2018 strikingly saw the participation of thousands of farmers, most of whom were women. The programme was presided by Lok Sangharsh Morcha's Devkumar Singh, who is also former headman of Pachrukha Pro-land reform political initiatives.

The plight of farmers being compelled to cultivate crops at a cost lesser than the investment gone into buying raw materials –tools for farming, seeds, and fertilisers was discussed. The participant farmers came from the districts of Gaya, Banka, Madhubani, Siwan and Patna. A memorandum to government was read out which states that the state's inefficiency to manage resources has compelled about half of the rural workforce in Bihar to migrate. If Bihar succeeds in managing and utilising its land and water resource efficiently, about one crore population could be employed on this basis. Water resource is available in Bihar in abundance as its rivers don't dry up. The government should ensure that all the farmland in the state is irrigated within three years. The proposal also called for ensuring the security and development of farmers amidst the growing capitalism. The need to increase the wages of the farmers was stressed upon at the programme, defining "daam badhao daam bandho (a call to increase the price of agricultural output and to regulate the cost of raw material for farming)" as the way.

It was argued that Minimum Support Price should be one and a half times the cost of buying raw materials for farming and the latter should be determined according the limits decided by Swaminathan Commission.

The emphasis on the role of women in agricultural production was given telling more than half of the responsibility of cultivation in Bihar has been taken over by women farmers. If development is reached to the farmlands and women farmers are not discriminated in terms of wages and rights against their male counterparts, then only farmers' society can see liberation."

Two issues of the new farmers in Bihar, whose presence in numbers was the highlight of the programme, were elaborately discussed. The speakers expressed their concerns about the farmers working in forest areas

or the forest dwellers and emphasised that the government should prioritised giving them their land rights under Forest Rights Act, 2006. Land reform at a mass scale in Bihar is the need of the day, they said.

Preparation of 18th February Patna program: - The question of Land right is not a new phenomenon in Bihar. The history of land holding and the implementation of laws and policies related to land settlement reflects in the social, economic and political marginalization of people. The Sangathan, from its inception, has worked to secure the land rights for these marginalized people. It is noticed and felt by people that the current situation has not yet changed much though the present state Govt. had campaigned in the last election and promised to give land rights.

The present concerns around the land rights aligned the various prominent people's groups such as Jan Mukti Sangharsh Vahini, Ekta Parishad, Mazdoor Kisan Samiti, Pa, Dalit Adhikar Manch, Lok Samiti, Lok Manch, Asangathit Kshetra Kaamgar Sangathan, Lok Parishad, Shahri Gareeb Vikas Sangathan, Mushar Vikas Manch, Bhoomi Satyagrah Abhiyan, Koshi Nav Nirmaan Manch and Lok Sangharsh Samiti together in Bihar and finalised mass level gathering on the issue which was held later on 18th Feb, 2019 at Gandhi Maidan in Patna. Gram sabha members were mobilized in the sangathan area. The karyakartas played active role in the process by organizing cycle and motorcycle march in the blocs of Mohanpur, Barachatti, Dobhi, Fatehpur, Tenkupa in Gaya Districts. The vigorous mobilization started from 4th of February until the day people reached Patna. Around 24000 people were mobilized for this mass event in Patna. This mobilization process was extended to other neighbouring districts such as Nawada, Jamui and Banka as well.

Coordination with existing groups of those districts were done and around 750 people from Adivasi, Mazdoor Kisan Mukti Vahini Banka and around 30 people from Jamui were mobilised to attend the program. The preparation and mobilization was done by organizing meetings, distributing poster, parchas and banners.

Patna Mahajutaan (Mass Gathering) at Gandhi Maidan on 18th February 2019

18th February the day set apart for the mass gathering on the question of land, forest rights and local governance at Gandhi Maidan Patna. This event saw the presence of thousands of men, women and youth. These people were united under the banner of Jan Mukti Sangharsh Vahini, Ekta Parishad, Mazdoor Kisan Samiti, Dalit Adhikar Manch, Lok Samiti, Lok Manch, Asangathit Kshetra Kaamgar Sangathan, Lok Parishad, Shahri Gareeb Vikas Sangathan, Mushar Vikas Manch, Bhoomi Satyagrah Abhiyan, Koshi Nav Nirmaan Manch and Lok Sangharsh Samiti from districts of Bihar. The solidarity from people's group of different states such as state of Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh also were seen as their representatives spoke in the stage. Satyam from SRUTI team had attended this program.

It was for the first time that the several Sangathans shown unity, taking the issues of land, forest and Governance. Speeches were delivered highlighting the failure of state intervention which has resulted into more vulnerability and marginalization of landless people. Thousands of people are homeless in the cities as the process of urbanization is increasing. Around 236632 households were displaced last year in Koshi river flood and only 60000 houses were built by the state Govt. There is a high level of corruption in the World Bank funds. The right to housing is the fundamental rights but people are being alienated. There is no proper

mechanism and political will to implement the legal provision of land reforms, forest right and local governance to people.

Currently around 30,000 families have no access to right to homestead land. The real issues are not raised at the national level politics. State machinery has favoured only the big corporates and failed to bring the people's issues in the priority.

Thus the whole range of issues faced by rural population was raised and demanded for right to homestead land, pension and loan waver. To implement the recommendation of Swaminadan Committee was one among other major demands by people.

In Bihar, there needed to be special attention paid to legal and on-ground campaign for the implementation of fra. AS the forest areas and adivasis do not constitute any major political vote-bank, they are largely ignored by political parties. These are areas where SRUTI fellows have been working, and with the support of state-level networks taken ahead the issues of forest-dwellers in 6-7 districts. Mr. Manoj Sahay, a lawyer and sangathan member was supported to take ahead legal trainings on fra and follow up the case in the high court and for other documentation work whenever needed. Several updates have been received by us regarding the work progress which we share below.

In the month of April there were been 2 meetings in Banka and 1 meeting in Gaya. The meetings in Banka mainly focused on building capacity and perspective on fra. This further helped them to identify their issues regarding Forest land and the conflict with forest department. Major issues were coined that they have been cultivating the land for years and now the forest department is claiming them as the land of Govt. and trench are being made. the requirement at this stage is that the people prepare the solid documents which must prove that the land belongs to them. The process of Land mapping through GPS was identified as one way which would be helpful for people to claim their forest right. The peoples' land papers were examined by Manoj ji during these meetings to find out the land issues. They also have decided to appear to Banka Civil Court for claiming the rights under fra.

The meeting at Barachati Gaya was to tackle the various tricks used to grab the land from people. Around 12 people were notified under Bihar Public Land Acquisition Law. People were asked to sign on the paper without revealing them the matter by a Forest Guard of the area. Few people were accused of false case of cultivating opium. These were the concern to address and plan out towards solution because people have been under so much in presser and problems to lead their normal life.

From 26th to 28th May 2018 three meetings on fra was held at Birniya, Bhaljor and Sanga villages of Bausi Block in Banka, Bihar where the people were all ready to file the application for community Forest right. The supporting documents were collected while filling up the applications. This is one step ahead towards getting Forest rights under fra.

By June, people had started to fill the fra Claim applications and the processes have already begun in Banka. On 15th to 17th June there were meetings at various places of Chandan Block of Banka. Around 40 fra claim applications of Scheduled tribes and few OTFD were filled together in the area.

The fra campaign this year has brought to broader network connecting different districts of Bihar namely, Nawada, Jamui, Sasaram and West Champaran along with Gaya and Banka and it was resulted into a

daylong state level consultation. The consultation on the implementation of fra in Bihar was organized on 14th September at Dalit Vikas Samiti Rukanpur Patna. Concerned people comprising of 50, from Gaya, Nawada, Jamui, Banka, Sasaram and West Champaran had attended the program. The program was facilitated by Manoj Kumar Sahay with cooperation of members of Madoor Kisan Samiti, Adivasi Kisan Mazdoor Mukti Vahini and Priyadarshi ji from Janmukti Sangharsh Vahini. The detail discussions were done on the present status of fra and the various hindrance of not being able to be implemented in the state. The core committee was formed representing different districts of Bihar to further the campaign. This fra campaign and legal advocacy has been an instrument to be aware, mobilized, united and be confident to assert their rights over land and forest. the people are strengthened now with knowledge and hope to fight the legal fight.

A campaign has started by Senior Karyakartas of Visthapit Mukti Vahini in coloboration with other like minded groups on 3 major issues i.e. New act on land acquisition, New domicile and reservation policies and operation on the name of Patthalgarhi. A citizen campaign also initiated by the same forum on building strategies to counter incidents of mob lynching.

BIHAR a) Following up on the campaign to implement the Forest Rights Act, on 6th October, 2018, the Mazdoor Kisan Samiti office, Katorba Road in Bodhgaya witnessed the 1st core committee meeting with 15 members. It was decided to organise a national level programme in February 2019. The core committee decided to conduct its next meeting in November/ December in Banka and the members were intimated about the same.

On 2nd December 2018, in Ghobarna village of Bounsi block, Banka district, the core committee met in which 52 members were present. They were from Banka, Jamui, Nawada and many neighbouring villages from Jharkand like Dumka were present. The guests who came were Srinivas and Kanak (Ranchi), Priyadarshi (Patna) and Madan Mohan (Jamshedpur). The strategies to be adopted to increase the participation in the coming programme were discussed. It was decided to organise a program in Munda Area on 26-27 December and also to extent the work to Aurangabad and Jahanabad District under the supervision of Jagath Bhushan.

On 26th – 27th December, 2018 a programme was organised on fra at Nunfar of Sirdala which saw participation of Munda adivasis from 9 villages with over 300 other people were present for the program. These people migrated from Khunti, Chatra distrcict of Jharkand during the years 1998-2002 to Nawada district. However, they never received ration cards or caste certificate till the date.

b) fra (Forest Rights Act) Campaign and legal advocacy (January-2019)

A meeting was organized in Somiya village of Barahchatti block (Dist. Gaya) as the follow-up of the previously held meeting of 31st December-2018. The aim of this meeting was to prepare a preliminary village development plan for the village. To achieve this goal, a format was developed by SRUTI team which has 2 sections; the first section is to collect the data for resource mapping of the village and the second section is of planning which would be prepared as per the data collected from the first section.

The data collection was commenced during the meeting of 31st December and the planning section was done in the meeting of 25th January 2019. It was observed in the meeting that initially people were hesitant to

share their views and opinions with regards to a village development plan, but later when Sangathan karyakartas intervened, people opened up and shared their views openly. A preliminary plan was formed after this exercise.

If we talk about challenges in this process, there are some significant issues. Firstly the intense and ingrained caste based community structure. In Bihar normally a revenue village is a cluster of multiple Tolas (Hamlets) which are established on the basis of caste. For example, Somiya village has four tolas in which three are Dalit tolas and one is a Yadav (an obc community) tola. Such caste based hamlet construction of a village creates a challenging situation for all caste-based hamlets to agree upon a common plan. Another major challenge is Sangathan's approach towards the issue. Historically in the late '70s, Sangathan was involved in the Bodh Gaya movement, fighting for the land rights of Dalit communities of the region. Its a major shift for the Sangathan to focus their energy in strengthening the gram sabhas as per the bureaucratic terms. The second line of Sangathan's leadership is another challenge as there are very few young karyakartas in the Sangathan. As a conclusion, it can be stated that Sangathan is putting its energy and resources to overcome these challenges and it is heading towards strengthening the gram sabhas in its own way.

c) Visit of 8 villages of Mohanpur, Barahchatti & Tenkuppa Blocks from 22nd to 25th Feb-2019 - SRUTI members visited 8 villages of Mohanpur, Barahchatti & Tenkuppa Blocks for resource mapping of these villages. 3 team were formed with the Sangathan karyakartas, where other than Siddharth and Mahipal, Manoj Kumar Sahay were in these 3 teams.

During the data collection for the resource mapping of these villages, hamlet meetings were organized and the process of resource mapping was commenced with the data provided by villagers. After the three days of this exercise, resource mapping of 6 villages was completed. It was observed that the non-Dalit tolas were not very supportive in this exercise but the situation was exactly opposite in the Dalit tolas.

This exercise was helpful for karyakartas to understand the process of resource mapping and for SRUTI team members it provided an opportunity to understand the social fabric of the region. During various hamlet meetings, it was not just the village resources which were discussed but also the issues which villages are facing such as education, caste-based discrimination, health facilities and irrigation the most talked about issue.

d) A public meeting was organized in Gauripur of Chandan Block (Dist.- Banka) on 8th January. The issue of forest rights and planning on mass demonstration of 18th February in Patna was discussed in this meeting. Other than Chandan block, people from Katoriya, Belhar, and Baunsi block participated in the meeting. The participation in the Patnas mass demonstration for forest rights and land rights was decided in the meeting and it was decided that fra awareness programs will be organized on other places as well.

e) In the Majholiya village of Gaya district, big success was achieved as a new hamlet of Jay Prabha Nagar was established. On 15 January a public meeting was organized for the inauguration of Jay Prabha Nagar, where Sangathan karyakartas addressed around 500 people in the meeting. Jay Prabha Nagar is situated on 3.5 acres of Bihar government's land where 66 Dalit families (of Chamar and Bhuiyan castes) from nearby villages Ramnachak, Bankat, and Majholiya villages are settling down. Some part of this hamlet's land used to be a Kachahri of Shankaracharya Math, which was demolished during Bodh Gaya movement (In the late

1970s). Later some people from the local dominant caste claimed this land illegally, but the Sangathan's long struggle paid off and now landless people from various Dalit groups are settling here.

- f) A meeting was organized in Katoriya block of Banka district on 27th January. People from Chandan, Baunsi, Katoriya, Belhar, and Fullidumar blocks participated in the meeting. The core issue discussed in the meeting was the maximum participation in the mass demonstration of Patna. To ensure this, it was decided that the cycle march will be organized in the Banka district before the demonstration of Patna. A meeting in Jhajha on 2nd February and one in Hadkhaar on 10th February were also announced in this meeting.
- g) A public meeting was organized in Azad Gram (a new hamlet established by Sangathan in Danipur village) of Fatehpur block on 1st February, 80 people participated in this meeting. Earlier the participation of the villagers of Azadpur was reduced to none and later nearby dominant caste groups started harassing the people of this newly established Dalit hamlet. This meeting was organized to reconnect and re-establish people's participation in the Sangathan again, where villagers shared their problems with the Sangathan Karyakartas. The participation in Patna demonstration was also discussed in the meeting. The meeting was organized to reconnect and re-establish people's participation in the Sangathan again, where villagers shared their problems with the Sangathan Karyakartas. The participation in Patna demonstration was also discussed in the meeting.
- h) A public meeting was organized in Dobhi block on 2nd February, 250 people participated in this meeting. A Sangathan karyakarta 'Saroj Devi' from Dobhi passed away in a road accident on 18th January, she was traveling to Patna for a Sangathan's program. People expressed their condolences for Saroj Devi in the meeting.
- i) After this meeting, another meeting was organized in Baghlatti village of Mohanpur block on the same day which carried forward to the next day i.e. 3rd February. Maximum participation in the mass demonstration of Patna was discussed in the meeting, as well as the cycle march and pedestrian march in the region before the Patna demonstration were discussed. 400 people from more than 25 nearby villages took part in this public meeting.
- j) On 14th February the preparations of 18th February's mass demonstration on land and forest rights were started. Including Janmukti sangharsh vahini (JaSaVa) and Mazdur Kisan Samiti, more than ten other prominent Sangathans took part in the Patna demonstration. Around 11'o clock in the morning the paidal march arrived in the Gandhi Maidan of Patna. Around ten thousand farmers and labors of Bihar, who came from more than one thousand villages welcomed the paidal march which arrived from Champaran. Other than Bihar, people from Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Delhi, and many other states participated in the Patna demonstration. The main issues which were highlighted in the mass demonstration were land rights to landless farmers, forest rights, right to housing, Dalit, tribal and minority issues, agrarian issues, negligence of panchayats and rural areas and various other civic issues. Strategically it was decided in the demonstration that no support will be provided to those political parties which will not give priority to these issues in their respective manifesto in upcoming Lok Sabha Election of 2019.

Forest Rights Core Committee Meeting in Patna

Forest rights core committee meeting was organized in Patna on 10th March 2019. Other than JaSaVa various other Sangathans from Bihar as Ekta Parishad, Adiwasi Mazdur Kisan Mukti Vahini, and Mazdur Kisan Samiti, etc. participated in the meeting.

The Supreme court’s judgments of 13th and 28th February with regards to the eviction of more than 1 million forest-dwelling people was the core issue of this meeting. People from various areas expressed that there is an atmosphere of fear after this judgment in the various tribal areas and nearby nontribal groups are adding more to it. Sangathan explained its strategy in the context of the legal proceeding, the Supreme court’s judgments were also explained in detail during the meeting. It was decided in the meeting this will be raised as a primary issue in the upcoming Lok Sabha election of 2019.

Outcome 4: Developed state level alliances/ coalitions with CSOs to build pressure groups, policy advocacy and collective campaign at state and national levels on state specific issues/ concerns gazed and analysed during the individual and community level processes in the 4 states towards devolution of powers as provided under the 73rd Amendment.

Year 2

Mazdoor Kisan Samiti in collaboration with Janmukti Sangharsh Vahini organized a two days long Seminar on 5th June to observe Sampoorana Kranti Day. Ms Manimala (former chairperson, Gandhi Smriti Darshan Samiti, New Delhi) was the chief speaker at the Seminar. The legacy of JP movement discussed and focused on the marginalized sections especially rural sector which is one of the most prominent ideas of socialist leader Shri Jay Prakash Narayan.

Mazdoor Kisan Samiti along Bihar Nav Nirman Morcha and Jan Sangharsh Vahini has organized a state level campaign on negligence of forest rights act and forgotten issue of land reforms in the state. In the occasion of 100 years of Champaran Satyagrah the issues came into highlight and state government formed a committee to initiate the proper mechanism to lead land reforms in state.

Year 3

SRUTI fellow group from Bihar and sangathan members from Mazdoor Kisan Samiti, Gaya organised village meetings outside the main working villages to mobilise support for VDP preparation and enable discussion on ongoing issues in the village.

Below is the context of these meetings organised by Mazdoor Kisan Samiti, Gaya

(i) Village: Bela, Darsnati, Paaki, Raksi; Panchayat: Uttari Lodhve; Block: Fatehpur

Inconsistency in the distribution of ration and other essential supply by two PDS (Public Distribution System) dealers was noticed. With the sangathan’s initiation license of those two dealers were cancelled.

(ii) Village: Bhalvahe; Panchayat: Khardeeh, Block: Mohanpur

70 decimal of land was donated by village people for sangathan's office. A memorial of Jagdish Chaudhary will also be built here. He was a sangathan leader who took his last breath in Serghati Jail in 2014. This land was under possession of 'Shankaracharya Math' and used to serve as a Kachahri (local court parallel to government justice system) during that time.

(iii) Village: Doaat; Panchayat: Jaygir; Block: Barahchatti

Ten families of 'Munda community' settled in this village, which were originally from Ranchi (Jharkhand). Few of these families are also involved in farming. Some goons of 'Yadav Caste' were threatening these families to evacuate the village, which caused fear among these families.

In this context, sangathan organized a people's meeting on 25-oct-18 in Munda tola of this village and mobilized approx 500 men & women from 25 nearby villages. This meeting helped with lifting-up the moral of these Munda families and no displacement occurred in spite of the threat of the goons. On the same lines, this meeting also helped people from other tribal and dalit villages/tolas in the region, which are facing similar threats.

A public meeting was organized in Gauripur of Chandan Block (Dist.- Banka) on 8th January. The issue of forest rights and planning on mass demonstration of 18th February in Patna was discussed in this meeting. Other than Chandan block, people from Katoriya, Belhar, and Baunsi block participated in the meeting. The participation in the Patnas mass demonstration for forest rights and land rights was decided in the meeting and it was decided that fra awareness programs will be organized on other places as well.

Outcome 5: (i) Research and documentation on policies related to decentralised democracy and create

knowledge centre to multiply effects (ii) Reflection, learning and change.

Purchased some books on relevant issues from Sarva Seva Sangh Prakashan for the resource centres established at SRUTI and some books/ documents related to FRA and Panchayati Raj have sent to Mazdoor Kisan Samiti's area for the centre developed by the Sangathan.