

ANNUAL REPORT



2019-20

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ABOUT SRUTI

SOCIETY FOR RURAL, URBAN AND TRIBAL INITIATIVE

SRUTI – Society for Rural, Urban and Tribal Initiative was founded in 1983, on the belief that individuals are powerful instruments of social transformation. Originally conceived by social sector leaders Tara Ali Baig, Bunker Roy, Ela Bhatt, Lotika Sarkar, Poonam Muttreja, Samir Chaudhuri and Dr Ramalingaswami, the SRUTI Fellowship Programme supports individual and community action towards securing justice, rights, dignity and opportunity for some of India's most marginalised groups.

In the 37 years of its existence, the organisation has worked to raise resources from inside the country to support 145 fellows and several volunteers from the community who work together to sustain the process of change through community involvement.

SRUTI aims to harness the power of individuals working at the grassroots to attain its vision of a society that is based on the core values of justice, equity, compassion, respect and dignity for all. The importance of collective social action and local leadership at the grass root is the crux of the SRUTI Fellowship.

SRUTI and its Fellows believe that social change and sustainable economic development can be achieved by empowering oppressed and vulnerable communities to access justice, equality and opportunity and be true stakeholders in a vibrant democracy.

SRUTI's core mission, therefore, is to identify and invest in individuals armed with zeal and a vision to work towards the ideals of a more equitable society within a democratic framework; individuals with idealism, staying power and the ability to mobilize communities at the grassroots to seek solutions to address their most pressing issues through the idea of the 'Sangathan', a peoples' group that facilitates community social action.

Some key issues dealt with by the SRUTI Fellows and the sangathans are- Access to, and Ownership of Natural Resources - Jal, Jangal, Zameen; Land and Forest Conservation; Small Holder and Sustainable Agriculture; Right to Food; In situ Livelihood; Panchayati Raj Institution and Governance; Rights to the City; Education; Right to Information; Caste and Gender, among others.

SRUTI extends a mix of financial support and intermediary inputs to an individual Fellow/a group of Fellows through the Fellowship Programme that has evolved substantially over the decades. The Fellowship Programme is financed by resources mobilized, to the extent possible, from within the country, through support partnerships and a range of fundraising efforts. The Fellowship Programme, its related Advocacy and Outreach efforts, and the Resource Mobilization program, form the key pillars of SRUTI.

For more information, please visit www.sruti.org.in

LOOKING BACK AT THE YEAR 2019-20:

The action for civil rights in India traversed a monumental journey in 2019-2020. While a hugely popular government at the union level saw re-election with a landslide win for the incumbent government, the national elections also allowed for progressive groups and individuals to raise significant matters through deliberations, dialogue, and outreach.

As issues of unemployment, the safety of women, the condition of farmers, rapidly changing laws governing agriculture and industry, relaxation of pollution norms, environmental clearances all became issues in debates, the rhetoric around communalism and nationalism came at the forefront during the elections. The Supreme Court's order on February 13th, 2019, directing the state governments to evict "encroachers" or the "illegal" forest dwellers wherever the rejection of claims under the Forest Rights Act has taken place, sent an unsettling message to close to 2 million forest dwellers facing imminent eviction from areas that were only their home since ages. Meanwhile the proposed amendments to the Indian Forest Act, 1927 giving more powers to the forest authorities while at the same time increasing the chances of injustice being done to forest dwellers, generated unease and resentment among communities.

As new challenges emerged in the form of repressive laws and people faced arbitrariness, SRUTI facilitated various meetings, conferences, seminars, workshops to share, discuss and build upon the core issues of land, forest and governance. Through the year, we organized an exhaustive series of consultations in 9 states, and at the national level – to give recommendations to the 15th Finance Commission; which has set in motion a rigorous method of analysis and inquiry – one which would help sangathans sharpen their understanding on financial devolution.

Our efforts at the ground and advocacy were recognised through the nomination of team member Satyam in two expert committees constituted by Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA). The mandate of these committees are – i) to examine and recommend CFR guideline and ii) improvement of the recognition and vesting process of community rights with special focus on (a) Habitat Rights of PVTGs and (b) Seasonal Resource access to Nomadic and Pastoralist communities under Forest Rights Act, 2006. This association has allowed us to represent and directly consult experts from the ground who suggest action on many urgent needs in policy and implementation.

SRUTI's focus continues to be in solidarity with oppressed communities and highlight their needs before policymakers and government agencies. On the ground, our fellows have addressed multiple issues – social, economic, and political - through regular meetings and awareness camps. They have also organized training, seminars, conferences, public meetings, and taken deliberations to the local administration. The facilitation of youth leadership under the 'School for Social Change' has brought over 300 leaders from within the grassroots organizations under the Fellowship Programme.

Under the given contexts, it is imperative for us to take forward the spirit of constitutional rights – and bring like-minded groups together for collective change. We aim to do this through working with all people, young and old, to not only address in-fighting but also to sharpen the workings of the local democratic institutions – to usher in a new era of relevant development, create local leaderships, and bring forward the goals of decentralization.

We have learned tremendously in the past year, although by end of the year the emergence of a global 'pandemic' has considerably shifted our goalposts. Fighting an unknown disease and a health emergency, India has considerable ground to cover in addressing severe healthcare concerns and loss of livelihoods. A humanitarian approach on part of the government and common citizens will have to pave the way forward in addressing such implications. We are strongly resolved to build ourselves in dealing with challenges and improving the lives of all in the times to come.

With best regards to all our friends and supporters,

Shweta, Satyam and all members of SRUTI Team.

SRUTI FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME AT A GLANCE

The uniqueness of SRUTI's Fellowship Program is that its outreach is widespread yet deep-rooted. We support individuals and communities involved in social directly at the grassroots, making the process of change organic and relevant to the ground.

A consistent endeavour of SRUTI has been to raise independent funds to supplement resources mobilized by the sangathans. All the funds dedicated for the fellowship is raised through Indian funds, and finds resonance in activities at SRUTI – in the Scrap Collection Programme, organising clothes sale, and reaching out through donation drives.

SRUTI's focus is on constitutional rights and community driven interventions, and facilitates the efforts at the grassroots through the intermediary processes of advocacy, engagement, association, capacity building and solidarity.

Since its inception, SRUTI has supported the work of 145 fellows at the grassroots across India. We currently support 33 Fellows, 143 karyakartas (volunteers/activists) in 14 states: Uttarakhand, Jammu & Kashmir, Delhi, Rajasthan, Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and Himachal Pradesh.

The current outreach of SRUTI Fellows is over 7361 villages and 250 urban clusters covering around 6.8 lakh families and 34 lakh people.

ANDHRA PRADESH

1. K. Victoria – Navjeevan, Nellore dt.

BIHAR

2. Kailash Bharati – Mazdoor Kisan Samiti, Gaya dt.
3. Santosh Marandi – Bahishkrit Hitkari Sangathan, Khagaria dt.
4. Sohini – Jan Jagran Shakti Sangathan, Arariya dt.

CHHATTISGARH

5. Alok Shukla – Jan Abhi Vyakti, Korba and Sarguja dt.
6. Jang Sai – Gaon Ganrajya Sangathan, Sarguja and Ambikapur dt.
7. Rajim Ketwas - Dalit Adivasi Manch, Baloda Bazar and Mahasamund dt.

DELHI

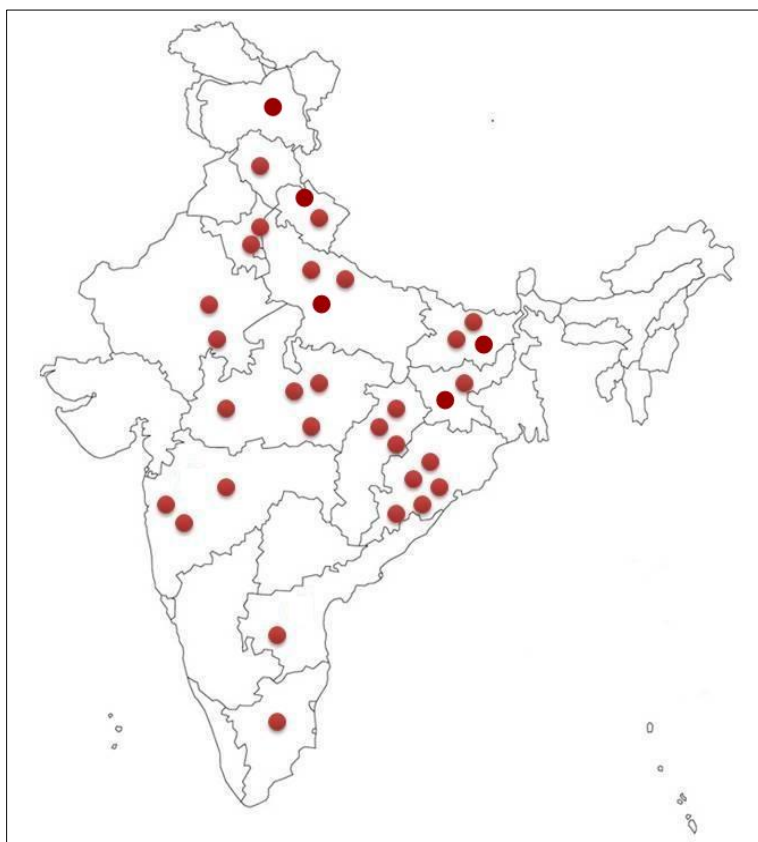
8. Sadre Alam – People's Foundation, North-west, South-west & South Delhi districts
9. Thaneshwar Dayal, Delhi Nirman Mazdoor Sangathan

HIMACHAL PRADESH

10. Akshay Jasrotia – Kisan Sabha Mandi dt.

JHARKHAND

11. Arvind Anjum – Visthapit Mukti Vahini, Singhbhum dt.
12. Jerome Kujur – Jan Sangharsh Samiti, Latehar dt.



JAMMU & KASHMIR

13. Dr Sheikh Ghulam Rasool – J&K RTI Movement, School for Rural Development and Environment

MADHYA PRADESH

- 14. Jayashree – Adharshila Learning Centre, Barwani dt.
- 15. Veerendra Kumar – Bundelkhand Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan, Damoh dt.
- 16. Aradhana Bhargav – Kisan Sangharsh Samiti, Chhindwara dt.
- 17. Abhay and Swapnil – Zenith Legal Aid Clinic, Shivpuri dt.

MAHARASHTRA

- 18. Dashrath Jadhav – Shramjeevi Sangathan, Latur dt.
- 19. Ulka Mahajan – Sarvahara Jan Andolan, Raigad dt.
- 20. Vilas Bhongade – Kashtkari Jan Andolan, Nagpur, Bhandara, Wardha and Gondia dt.

ODISHA

- 21. A K Pany – Adivasi Kranti Sangathan, Dhenkanal dt.
- 22. Amulya Nayak - Adivasi Chetna Sangathan, Dhenkanal and Angul dt.
- 23. Pradeep Dash – Lok Chetna Sangathan, Rayagada dt.
- 24. Prafulla Mishra– Adim Adivasi Mukti Manch, Nayagarh dt.
- 25. Trilochan Punji – Zindabad Sangathan, Balangir dt.
- 26. Sarojini Malick – Mati Maa MahilaMorcha, Nayagarh dt.

RAJASTHAN

- 27. Devendra and Sudhi – Hum Kisan, Manthan Shikshan Kendra, Jhalawar dt.
- 28. Suman – Khetihar Khan Mazdoor Sangathan, Chittorgarh dt.

TAMIL NADU

- 29. MS Selvaraj - Vyavasayigal Tozhilalargal Munnetra Sangham (VTMS), Nilgiris dt.

UTTARAKHAND

- 30. Basanti & Beena - Maati Sangathan, Pithoragarh dt.
- 31. Gopal Lodhiyal, Uttarakhand Van Panchayat Sangharsh Morcha, Nainital dt.

UTTAR PRADESH

- 32. Afaq Ullah - Awadh Peoples Forum, Faizabad dt.
- 33. Rajnish Gambhir – Tharu Adivasi Mahila Mazdoor Kisan Sangh, Lakhimpur Khiri dt
- 34. Lal Prakash Rahi – Disha Sanstha, Jaunpur dt.

NEW FELLOWSHIPS

1. Akshay Jasrotia, Himachal Pradesh



Akshay has been working for the past decade on the intricacies of legal and social relationships among land relationships. His extensive work with the administration to ensure the recognition of rights of forest-dwelling communities in the state has made him well recognized among many groups and networks. He works in close coordination with civil society groups and other progressive networks across the country.

FELLOWSHIP EXITS

- 1- Anjali Bhardwaj, Delhi
- 2- Puran Chand, Himachal Pradesh

ACTIVITY REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2019-20

The year 2019-20 started in the context of uncertainties for millions of Adivasis and forest dwelling communities following the Supreme Court's order to evict so-called 'encroachers' on forest land. However, as there were many cases of wrongful rejection of claims under FRA, such an order would have created unprecedented crisis across the country. The order was soon stayed by the Supreme Court itself and State governments were given time to submit affidavits regarding claims under FRA. There were several challenges which emerged from non-consultative legislations and executive orders which further jeopardized access and rights of communities over natural resources – including those related to conservation, ownership, use and management of jal, jangal, zameen.

Across the year, SRUTI Fellows were instrumental in getting individual and community rights duly recognized, and collectively raising issues around administrative inaction and excesses. SRUTI has been involved in organizing legal trainings, awareness campaigns, and perspective building sessions with community volunteers and capacitating young members to address problems in their respective areas.

SRUTI also undertook a comprehensive process of consultation across 9 regions covering 14 states - to prepare and give suggestions to the 15th Finance Commission to address the gaps between policy and realities at the ground.

An energetic and learning exchange took place at the Yuva Mahotsav – which was organized as a year-long culmination of all School for Social Change (SSC) initiatives running in four different languages (Hindi, Odia, Marathi & Tamil).

Campaigns and interventions on issues of gender justice and equity, communalism, social security and rights of workers, education and leadership building, and for improving livelihood opportunities emerged as part of consistent work among

communities. To facilitate mutual learning among fellows from all 14 states, we also organised our annual meeting of fellows in the year 2019-20.

SAATHI MILAN

The annual fellows meet was organized at Chittorgarh on 26th – 28th February 2020. The region has been the working area of veteran activist Khemraj Bhai, who passed away last year after his long struggle with cancer. To pay visits to the family and associates of Khetihar Khan Mazdoor Sangathan, SRUTI fellows assembled at Delhi and travelled together to reach Chittorgarh to visit Adharshila school run now by Suman Ji and other Sangathan members and contribute to the process of collective learning.

During the first days, field visits to the Sangathan's working villages were undertaken, followed by condolence meetings in the school premises to remember everyone's beloved Khemraj Bhai. A cultural performance by the students from the school won everyone over.

On the second day, we introduced new members of the SRUTI family to the existing network and shared pointers from the field visit – of the history of caste-based oppression, the prevalent conditions of Bhil Adivasis, and their long struggle for the recognition of livelihoods.

On the final day, a vibrant discussion took place about the timeline of events, rules, policies, laws which the fellows engage with, leading to presentations made on pressing issues in the country.



Top left: Senior fellow Kailash Bharti, performs a folk song from Bihar in theatre form

Top middle: The final picture before leaving back!

Middle: Girl students at Adharshila School in Chittorgarh perform at a commemorative ceremony in memory of senior activist Khemraj

Top right: State-level presentations on updates of work and challenges- fellows from Maharashtra - Madhya Pradesh speak of displacement and education

Discussions on emerging issues around land rights and communalism

Bottom: Common discussion sharing updates from the field

YOUTH FESTIVAL 2019-20

Beginning of the Cultural Confluence

10th June 2019, marked an unusual excitement in Yashwant Rao Chavan Maharashtra Open University, Nasik. The Yuva Mahotsav (Youth Festival) commenced with a sprightly rally making the campus thunder with the echoes of *Hum Sab Ek Hain*.

The Yuva Mahotsav, organized as a year-long culmination of all School for Social Change (SSC) initiatives running in four different languages (Hindi, Odia, Marathi & Tamil), was a beautiful depiction and celebration of the diversity of India. With great energy and fervour, 250 participants from different corners of the country came to partake in the 4 days of hustle-bustle and festivities that lay ahead. It started with all schools carrying a 'Peeda' marked as a symbol of flaws which exist in society that they were asked to prepare before the rallies began. In this ritual practiced in central and North India, villagers collect things of no use, tie those on bamboo and take it outside the village boundary while singing their traditional songs with a belief that with the 'Peeda', all the troubles will also leave the village. The campus echoed with the slogan of **Naya Zamana Kaun Laayega? Hum Laayenge, hum Laayenge!**



Amit Bhai, a mentor leading SSC from the front, formally inaugurated Yuva Mahotsav by throwing light on its vision: the collective resistance and struggle we need to set out on, to spell out what is wrong and should be removed and what is the society we envision and would like to fight for.

Drawing a parallel between the YCMOU (Mukt Vidyapeeth) and the School for Social Change initiative as both envisioning of bringing education to the masses in creative ways to develop scientific temperament, and rationality among youth, Ulka Tai thanked the Vice-Chancellor of YCMOU and energized the audience by celebrating the glorious history of Nasik, a fertile ground for many Jan Andolans and the birthplace of art forms. Speaking about the YCMOU's main objective of educating people of all strata of the society, the Vice-Chancellor emphasized the importance of youth festivals like this and with that positive welcome note, he formally opened the Yuva Mahotsav for all. A formal presentation was given by participants from different schools who shared their enriching experiences of SSC camps, each School making the hall roar in unison to – AMU AKHA EK CHHE (*अमू आखा एक छे*).

A screening of the documentary film *Vivek/Reason*, directed by **Anand Patwardhan** was also organized. The participants grouped themselves according to their interests for the 6 sessions/workshops for activities of poster making, song-making, social media, film making, theatre, and superstitions & science.

The two days of group work of different workshops saw people bustling around the campus, working hard to give in their best. The Make a Song group facilitated by Rahul Ram from the Indian Ocean band, rigorously practised their music, while the theatre group under the skilful hands of Vinod Kumar from IPTA rehearsed their skit. Participants in the social media under the guidance of Abhijeet Gosavi and participants of filmmaking with the supervision of Mohan Bhai, Prem bhai and Siddharth covered every part of the campus trying to record bytes on the various themes they were documenting.



Felicitating Ceremony

Participants of the workshop on Superstitions and Black Magic conducted by Dr. Gorane and Shahji Bhosale from Andhshradha Nirmoolan were trying to learn and demonstrate all the tricks the resource persons showed. The poster making participants unleashed their artistic side as they made posters on the different themes allotted, under the facilitation of Sandeep, Sachin and Yogesh. Moderated and facilitated by Abeer Kapoor, a parallel session of Election game was organized for SRUTI fellows and karyakartas. A session was taken by Andhshradha Nirmoolan who wanted to bring to light the science behind the various superstitious practices of religious gurus performed to relieve their followers of ailments and troubles.

The four days long Yuva Mahotsav left no moment untouched of coming together for a collective celebration and cultural reminiscence. Each of the days ended with all the participants joining for a night full of dancing, singing and sloganeering. Cultural performances created the perfect ambience for each night of rejoicing the comradeship and unison.

Convocation Ceremony

The culmination of the Yuva Mahotsav saw the campus immersed in beautiful colours with a display of posters, banners, and flexes of sangathans, slogans, and issues. The colour-coordinated t-shirts of the different schools added the final touch to the beauty of the entire event.

All the participants were facilitated with Participation certificates and jholas by Resource Persons. The schools with their previously prepared peedas rallied together zealously to the amphitheatre of the campus, shouting slogans and filling the air with joy. The open space of the amphitheatre served as the perfect setting for a night full of dance, music, theatre, and collective rejoicing. As the cultural performances commenced, the stage was illuminated by performances from Awadh Peoples Forum, DYAF, Tamil group, Barwani group, Marathi group, Odia group, Andhra Pradesh group.

Resource Persons shared their experiences of the Mahotsav and were felicitated followed by the display of skills and teamwork of the participants grouped in the different workshops. A thought-provoking skit on the problems of banking, corruption, and school functioning in the rural areas, as well as gender issues, was performed by the theatre group. The Song group sang its composition- *poore desh se aaye hain hum*, with participants singing different stanzas in their languages. The evening concluded with the screening of short films on issues like water crisis; climate change and agriculture; gender issues made by the participants of film making workshops.

With one last round of sloganeering together, the Yuva Mahotsav was successfully closed, with everyone taking back home a bagful of memories of enriching experiences, new learning's and celebrations of amalgamation of different cultures and ideologies, and with a hope that *Naya Zamana Zaroor Aayega*.



WORK UNDERTAKEN BY FELLOWS: THEMATIC AREAS

More specifically, the work undertaken by the Fellows during the period under report may be grouped into the following thematic areas:

☐ *Forest Rights and Conservation*

☐ *Land Rights and Development*

☐ *Panchayati Raj Institutions and Governance*

☐ *Agriculture and Livelihood*

☐ *Education and Leadership building*

☐ *Caste, Gender and Communalism*

☐ *Social Security and Labour Rights*

FOREST RIGHTS AND CONSERVATION

The Government of India enacted the 'Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006' — the 'FRA, 2006' — to address the historical injustice done to forest-dependent Scheduled Tribes (STs) and other traditional forest dwellers. The Act was supposed to recognise Individual Forest Rights (IFR) and Community Forest Rights (CFR) and provide titles for the same. Post-rights recognition measures were to give powers to Gram Sabhas and recognise traditional knowledge of communities living in forests. A variety of rights traditionally practised by communities were also to be recognised before any activity for forest conservation or protection.

Forest Rights and Conservation - Outcomes

State-level legal trainings were organised in Bihar and Chhattisgarh by SRUTI with the team of Legal Resource Center (LRC) for sangathans members across the state. It allowed for effective problem-solving, addressing the multitude of issues in a rural-tribal community, and built effective strategy amid a situation of crisis across the country.

Madhya Pradesh - 500 families living in the Nauradehi wildlife Sanctuary area are under threat of being displaced. Working intensively on implementation of FRA has prevented the displacement of people so far. Around 70 revenue villages were given displacement notice in the first phase and only 12 villages are displaced as of now. 3000 families who have IFR, have been facilitated to obtain bank loan for Seed and Fertilizer and benefited crop compensation. There are 45 OTFD villages where around 3898 claims have been prepared with the help of sangathan leaders. There are 15 villages around 635 families who have received individual rights and they were facilitated to get Kisan Credit cards. Now they are encouraged to apply for crop insurance.

Sangathans in Odisha, MP, Chhattisgarh, AP has filed 1678 new individual claims and 280 community claims in this year.

Andhra Pradesh - The focus of the Sangathan was to claim the Individual forest right. This year 190 IFR claims were settled in Dakkili, Vegitagiri, KVB puram Mandals of Nellore and Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh. Sangathan has organized 6 awareness meetings from 9th September to 25th October 2019 at Dakkili, Venkatagiri, Balayapalli, Bangarupet, Sangavaram, Althurupadu of Nellore district.

Under FRA, individuals and the Gram Sabha could lay claims to the legal title on any forestland. Claimable forestland means land of any description falling within any forest area and includes unclassified forests, un-demarcated forests, existing or deemed forests, protected forests, reserved forests, sanctuaries and National Parks. A title to the forest land can have multiple changes for families – including recognition for social security and sometimes access to electricity and water supply. However, the reality at the ground has seen an abysmal response of the administration in implementing the FRA in its letter and spirit, even where communities are themselves taking ahead of the process of settlement of rights. For the past 14 years since the enactment of the Forest Rights Act, many in the administration have seen the law only as another scheme for land distribution and failed to recognise its transformative potential. Meanwhile the proposed amendments to the Indian Forest Act, 1927 giving more powers to the forest authorities while at the same time increasing the chances of injustice being done to forest dwellers, generated unease and resentment among communities.

Most of the SRUTI Fellows have been active instruments for the passing of the law, framing of rules and working closely with the government to help them implement the FRA. Several training, workshops, meetings and public processions have been part of the process in mobilising communities to address their demands and seek implementation of the Forest Rights Act.

The ground processes through the period involve follow-ups after the Supreme Court order on February 13th, 2019. The Supreme Court, hearing a petition filed by wildlife conservationists and former forest department officials, directed State Governments to evict “encroachers” or the “illegal” forest dwellers wherever the rejection of claims under the Forest Rights Act has taken place. The verdict

had an unsettling message to close to 2 million forest dwellers facing imminent eviction from areas that were only their home since ages. After a widespread public pressure post the Supreme Court order, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA), the nodal agency to implement FRA stepped in with a review petition. The apex court stayed its own order. MoTA asked for time to submit

affidavits from State Governments. This involved engagements, deliberations and dialogues with state administration where the pressure to identify ‘encroachers’ and further eviction of such ‘encroachers’ lies. While engaging with effective implementation of FRA on the ground, the SRUTI Fellows made deliberations and effective engagements at regional and state administration in the rightful recognition of forest rights so as to avoid any further injustice to such legal forest dwellers. We share here some updates/stories of how things evolved in the working area of our fellows.

Consultation with Fellows on SC Order on FRA

In the backdrop of the Supreme Courts’ order of 13th February, a day-long meeting was organized by SRUTI with fellows and concerned representatives of network organizations on 21st May 2019 at New Delhi for planning out pathways to be taken ahead. The draft amendment of the Indian Forest Act, 1927 was also a serious concern to look at, at that hour. Around 35 People participated in the meeting. Advocate Shumona Khanna and Radhika from CFR - LA (Community Forest Rights – Learning and Advocacy) were the key persons to explain the participants about the historical developments regarding forest rights and the SC order.

The aim of the meeting was to also enhance legal understanding about the issue, its impact, and to develop strategies for the grassroots. The necessity of people being aware of the facts of SC’s following order staying the previous one was discussed as well, as there had been some incidents of the forest department trying to evacuate people based on the first order. The primary and immediate focus was to work on the documentation for the upcoming legal aspect of the struggle. The SC order posed an existential threat to the forest-dwelling communities, therefore along with required deliberations with the administration and State Governments, proper documentation was essential for the legal approach.

The participants of the meeting were provided with available documents such as a copy of the SC order, informative flyer, and parchas in different languages, explaining legal steps to arrest the possible situation of evacuation. A Gram Sabha resolution document prepared by CFR - LA was also shared after the meeting to build momentum by asserting the powers of Gram Sabhas. Further, the impact of the meeting was reflected on the ground, as SRUTI fellows mobilized people and expressed their discontent through public meetings, discussions, and public processions.

In addition, the Fellows also joined the national march by forest dwelling communities called under the banner of Bhumi Adhikar Andolan to show discontent towards the SC order calling for evictions of these communities.

Creating an aware citizenry in Himachal Pradesh

The need for implementation of the Forest Rights Act was not in popular demand for the people of Himachal Pradesh. It was the duty of the State Government to actively make aware and orient stakeholders about FRA. However, the discourse of forest rights in the state was diluted by the state machinery and the bureaucracy for the longest time.

In Mandi district, in 2016, Forest Rights Committees under the influence of the misinformation of the state through Gram Sabhas passed resolutions that Schedule Tribes and OTFDs do not have any claim on the forest lands. This was a dubious strategy on part of the administration to easily acquire the land of forest dwellers without facing much resistance and leave them landless. This resolution passed by FRCs has helped the government to smoothly implement various projects like four-lane roads, dams and other anti-people initiatives without any consultation and consent of people. FRA was interpreted as an act only for the scheduled tribe areas. Later it was rumoured that whoever files a claim with details of the land in their possession are going to be evicted as they have encroached it illegally. People were also terrified with another false statement that if a family is found to have encroached forest land, then all the government employees of that particular family will be terminated from their services.

In this scenario, the sangathans started a campaign to aware and orient people about FRA, especially in Mandi district. The Sangathan organised a meeting of the pressure groups in the block level and then made clusters of nearby villages and in the next step trained at least two people from each FRCs on filing the claims.

On 12th and 13th of October 2019, two meetings in Padhar and Hangloi were conducted as a part of an ongoing campaign where the participants showed affirmative signs to take the cause of forest rights forward.

Implementation of the Forest Right Act takes New Turn in Tamil Nadu

The Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve in Tamil Nadu is one of the richest marine biodiversity. The biosphere reserve comprises 21 islands including a marine component with algal communities, seagrasses, coral reefs, salt marshes and mangroves. Historically, local people led their lives without hurting the sensitive ecosystem. Local people primarily depended on fisheries for livelihood.

There are about 47 villages along the coastal part of the biosphere reserve where the forest department is controlling and managing the forest resources by denying access to the forest dwellers for decades. This has caused anger and resentment among local communities. The involvement of people's movement groups like VTMS contributed to the process of building support for the local communities. The situation was difficult, but there was a determination among the leadership and people. The only democratic way in which local people can have their control on ancestral land is claiming it under FRA.

With awareness campaigns and regular meetings, people got convinced and moved towards the process of claiming the land which resulted in the formation of the FRA committee in Dhanushkodi and Mandapam.

Official records for the status of community claims points to only 86 rejections by the Gram Sabha and SDLC out of a total of 1040 individual claims. The DLC has recommended distribution of 490 claims out of the 579 claims it has received and distributed 417 CFR titles so far. In Nilgiri district, official data shows the distribution of 80 community claims out of 90 claims submitted.

There is growing violation against the aboriginals residing in the tiger reserves by the forest department. Ending this exploitation requires the engagement of communities while also facilitating discussions, dialogues with the forest department. Taking up the issue, **state-level campaigns have been organized demanding, leading to the formation of alliances for FRA implementation in the Tiger Reserve area in Tamil Nadu.**

The assertion of rights over Forest Resource in Odisha

In Odisha, many villages had claimed for community forest rights but the further process was not taken up by the administration. Sangathan in Odisha is mostly working among adivasis and forest regions. On hearing about the eviction order, they immediately spread awareness on the facts of SC order and the case which could lead to their potential eviction. Sangathans mobilized Gram Sabhas and organised yatras where village meetings were conducted and wall paintings and writings were done to spread awareness. Gram Sabhas sent the resolutions to the Supreme Court, PM Office and State Government opposing the order. Sangathans also organised public meetings at the block and district level to demand speedy disposition of community claims.

In the past 6 months around 1240 IFR and 6 CFR applications have been submitted. There were some political issues related to the claiming process. In Rayagada district, the forms were not getting accepted by the government. With this regard, a meeting and public procession were organized on 10th December, on the occasion of International Human Rights Day. Around 500 people participated in the gathering and submitted a memorandum to the district collector.

Struggles in MP over technocratic decisions in recognition of rights

The Supreme Court order of 13th February turned things upside down in the state. Impleadment applications on behalf of the various tribal organizations from 8 states apprised the court of the wrongful conduct and illegal actions. The court directed the

State Governments to file affidavits seeking information about the non-implementation of the Act. Soon, the tribal department took charge to satisfy the people that their rights will not be ignored. The launch of the VanMitra App in Madhya Pradesh has further burdened Adivasis and OTFDs to prove their claim. The complex procedure laid thereafter has brought in a state of dissatisfaction.

Under a broader platform working on the forest issues in the state, SRUTI Fellows organised training, village meetings, capacity building sessions and public meetings to reach out to a larger population to raise the relevant issues, challenge the new methods to dispose of claims while following up on the claims submitted. New state-level alliances have emerged to take on the challenges together. Sahariya Tribe which comes under PVTGs and resides in the forested area of Shivpuri District are constantly under threat of losing their farming land and livelihood. The leaders of the SRUTI Fellow group and also young lawyers Abhay and Swapnil have taken an active role to look into the issues, assisting them to understand legal provisions and its processes. It has greatly helped these tribes to get administrative support for securing rights over forest land and make sure no one is evicted using provisions of the FRA.

Campaigns to protect the precious forest areas in Chhattisgarh

The state has seen dynamic progress in the implementation for forest rights and has seen the emergence of various cross-linking solidarities on issues of post-rights recognition and conservation. Sangathans organised training to understand clearances given to mining projects notified in coal blocks in the state. A sustained effort is being made by villagers of Korba and Sarguja region to oppose in-principal clearances to mining projects under the Parsa coal block; when the entire region was demarcated as no-go areas for coal mining and is a region rich in biodiversity. The elephant menace across the region would have severe and deep irreversible damage on the environment. However, the actions by the MoEFCC has violated pollution norms and tried to illegally acquire land bypassing the FRA for mining companies. The entire issue has become a focal point for the struggle against illegal land acquisition and coal mining – and has put forward the debate for a sustainable environmental regime.

A state-level delegation met the Chief Minister Shri Bhupesh Baghel on June 17th and apprised him of the situation faced by communities and action needed from the State Government in resolving the issues. A day-long public meeting was organised on 22nd July to demand faster action and again met the Chief Minister for their intervention.

Sustained campaigns by Jan Abhivaykti, Gaon Ganrajya Sangathan and Dalit Adivasi Manch also led to great strides in the recognition of community forest resource rights and recognition of rights of Gram Sabhas in Schedule V areas. Panchayat elections in the month of February saw more than 20 members elected as Sarpanchs and ward members, adding great value in their appeal for committed members at the local level. Regular meetings have been organised by sangathans with mukhiyas, sarpanchs, members of forest rights committees and officers at the district and state level. They have also made legal interventions to address the issue of illegal tree-felling, encroachments on forest land, and tried to bring transparency in clearances given to companies to extract resources in violation of existing laws. Special resolutions have been adopted collectively to ensure the rights of women are also recognised in any title or right recognised by the administration.

Changing the life of Yanadi Tribes in Andhra Pradesh

Yanadis are one of the major scheduled tribes in the Nellore district. As per the 2011 census, their population in the state is 5.33 lakhs. They live along the upland areas, and forest and coastal regions of Nellore district. Their source of livelihood varies according to their geographical area, and mainly subsist on farming, agricultural labour, traditional fishing, and minor forest produce.

The conditions of the tribes worsened only with time. Prolonged droughts pushed many agriculture-dependent families into towns to find a living. This has led to 50 per cent of youth migrating for livelihood, leaving behind their families in villages. Yanadis also generate income from the collection of minor forest products such as honey, medicinal herbs, bamboo etc. The restrictions imposed by the forest department has alienated them from the forest land. Lack of fish in inland water sources also forced them to work at plantations and construction sites. Women are working as domestic workers to meet ends. Addressing these issues,

Navjeevan used FRA as a tool in upland and forest regions. The Sangathan has been working to implement the FRA in Dakkili, Venkatagiri and Balayapalli talukas of Nellore district. Since 2008, 245 individual claims over 325 acres of forest land has been recognised.

Each family received only 30 decimals to 3 acres of forest land, where many are now cultivating black gram in 230 acres. 6-7 quintals of black gram (yield with a market price for 40-42 thousand rupees) is now growing in one acre of land. Alongside, they are now cultivating vegetables, kidney beans, chilly etc. The harvest is used for domestic consumption, and they are able to preserve seeds for the next season even after the sale in the market.

The change in agricultural yield has provided a degree of food security to the Yanadi families along the upland and forest regions, and Sangathan has been striving to build similar initiatives along those living in the coastal regions.

LAND RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT

In 2019-20, Sangathans worked rigorously on consolidating people's rights over their lands and livelihood opportunities by adopting multi-levelled approaches.

Land Rights and Development- Outcomes

At the village level, as many as **275 meetings** (including public meetings, and awareness campaigns) were organized. **76 socio-legal trainings were organised at the village level, along with 34 meetings and training at the district level. 29 regional shivirs/sammelan, 12 state level meetings/conferences and 1 national level meeting** allowed for building solidarity and advocacy on the issue.

351 meetings/ training were carried out in **8 states-** Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

Claiming Rights over Land:

Maharashtra: **460 landless families** got patta on Gairan (grazing) land.

Madhya Pradesh: In Damoh district, there are **563 families** of farmers who are cultivating on orange land, where the revenue department has ordered them to pay fine. The Sangathans organised these farmers and helped them to produce proper documents to regularise their claims on these lands.

Andhra Pradesh: **84 acres of wasteland** has been identified for Dalit families.

Odisha: **44 homestead land pattas** have been issued.

Tamil Nadu: **69 families** from Chera Nagar, TN, now have access to clean drinking water, proper housing, street light, roads and electricity connection etc. which have earlier been denied by authorities.

Tamil Nadu: Sangathan has been extending support and actively participating in recovering the land (panchami land) that was allotted to Dalits but has been encroached by the private parties. Around **600 acres** of land has been recovered, occupied and cultivation has started in many parts.

Sangathans from Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, have been relentlessly working to avail entitled benefits for the settled population.

Mobilization of people and initiating dialogues, meetings and campaigns with the Government were actively taken up to ensure a quick and efficient approach that the Government should adopt for the realization of peoples' rights. Focused efforts were taken up by the organisations to promote organic farming practices and multi-cropping systems. Training and workshops were organized for the communities to learn hands-on about organic farming methods.

Field areas also noted the setting up and further expansion of the cooperatives, SHGs with a special focus on generating economic opportunities for women of the communities. Instances of pressure building by locals and Sangathans ensured communities getting employment under MGNREGS scheme to some extent.

The Sangathans through their deliberations and dialogues with the Government ensured to fulfil upon its promises of rehabilitation plans that the government had drafted for under its policies, without the proper implementation of which local communities including tribals, Dalits

and other marginalized communities were displaced and evicted in areas wherever new development projects were sanctioned.

Countering propaganda in Tamil Nadu

Sangathans in the State realised the need to address the false narrative/propaganda that is being spread through the media on how local people are responsible for forest destruction consequently leading to floods in the region.

In the name of development, the government has been constructing roads and buildings over streams, rivers and marshy lands after flattening and filling up the water bed, thereby destroying the water sources. By Government sanctions, the land grabbers and real estate businesses have taken over large tracts of land. Resultantly the rainwater that earlier flowed naturally according to the land contours now has no ways of flowing, due to encroachment and diversions resulting therefore in floods, landslides and related destruction, loss of property and lives.

However, these facts have been repeatedly overlooked and kept hidden by fabricating a single line verdict- that people are responsible for the destruction of the forest. In one breath, such a verdict actually condemns the victims as the accused by which the perpetrators of the ecological destruction are conveniently protected. This, in addition, puts the blame on the victims themselves for their loss of lives and property. This fake picture is created and continuously promoted in the media so that it becomes a popular narrative and belief. In addition, eviction of these victims becomes an agenda of the state, and the courts are misled into acquiescence. While countering the false narratives that they are the perpetrators of the disaster, they need to be indeed recognized as the victims. To counter this, the Sangathans organised several press meets, and invited journalists to the area to report the reality, as opposed to what the mainstream media is providing. News has appeared both in local and national newspapers on the need to critically look at these unsustainable models of development and lay emphasis on the need for participation of local people in such development.

Acquisition and Harmful development projects in Maharashtra

The bullet train project requires the acquisition of around 1,400 hectares of land in Gujarat and Maharashtra. The land acquisition is to be done by the respective State Governments. Of the total land to be acquired for the project, around 1,120 hectares is privately owned. These lands mostly consist of forest and agricultural lands. The State Governments are consistently trying to get the consent of the landowners without conducting a social impact assessment. The impact of bullet trains will be irreversible for the Indian economy as well as the environment.

Sangathans and progressive networks in Maharashtra were at the forefront of the struggle to take forward the issues of farmers and tribal communities. Public meetings and consultations, including with the State Government to not acquire any land without fulfilling all provisions and taking consent from the villagers were organised. The issue of the creation of land banks has also been raised before the State Government. Several cases have emerged from the villages where forced or forged signatures were found to be used to sanction acquisition.

The Sangathans also had meetings with officials from the forest department for updating the claims of land titles. The issue found representation in the media, while the mainstream development discourse has raised the issue of rehabilitation when there does not exist sufficient justifications to proceed with such mega development projects.

Forced displacement again? The struggle of Dam displaced people in Jharkhand

The acquisition of land is being done on a fast-track basis as the proprietorship right has not been given yet to displaced people from Chandil Dam. Due to this, the displaced are unable to produce proper documents. It is thus impossible for them to get a community certificate, income certificate and residential certificate. Due to this, a number of issues are arising in the process of educating their children and availing social security schemes. In the context where the government suddenly started taking stock of who is a citizen through the NRC, landless communities were left worried as they had no such proof of land or ownership. This vulnerable situation of people has led them to take several steps like collectivizing themselves for public gatherings, jal satyagraha and active dialogue with the State Government. The demand for cancellation of Icha Dam which was proposed not

very far from Chandil Dam was brought about in most of the public demands. The cancellation is crucial because the same Adivasis would lose several acres of land and livelihood.

The new State Government has called off the proposal for building Iccha Dam. This was possible due to continuous pressures created by local Adivasi communities and civil society groups in the State.

PRI AND GOVERNANCE

The observations of fellows on the utilization of untied funds provided to the Gram Sabhas from 14th finance commission turned

PRI & Governance - Outcomes

In 2019-20, a **total of 122 meetings/trainings** were organized by SRUTI Fellows on PRI and Governance. At the village level **114 meetings** were organized. **8 perspective building trainings** both at regional and district levels was organised with selected leaders from the CBO's in Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Odisha and Uttar Pradesh on themes like VDP, Gender sensitive budget, inclusive development.

9 state level consultation and **a national consultation** on 14th finance commission was organized by SRUTI. **3 state level meetings** in Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh were organized on GPDP and devolution with accountability.

Throughout, the idea has been to strengthen Gram Sabhas through regular meetings, capacity building and training of elected PRI representatives, community members, sangathan leaders in **8 states**- Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. This has increased people's participation in their Gram Sabha both in PESA and Non-PESA areas.

Mobilization of people for Panchayat elections by VTMS: After a three-year delay, the rural local body **Panchayat election was held on 27 and 30 December 2019 in Tamil Nadu**. VTMS had made a list of issues that the Panchayats should deal with in each of the villages and campaigned for them. 16 candidates from VTMS contested in the elections to the Gram Panchayat on behalf of VTMS and 12 of them won the elections in Nilgiri District

Legal trainings by young Fellows in Shivpuri (M.P.): Zenith, Madhya Pradesh have set up a legal aid desk at the weekly Jan Sunwaais with an objective to help people understand the complex procedure of application submission. They help in drafting applications on people's behalf by substantiating their applications with concrete legal provisions. This initiative has turned out to be successful as more than **5000 people** have been benefited during 2019-20. This initiative by the Fellows has opened a learning opportunity for the law students to understand different issues and challenges emerging at the ground.

into the centre stage of planning around PRI and governance for the year 2019-20. To build further on their observation from the ground, a comprehensive plan was prepared for passing on the recommendations to the upcoming 15th finance commission for the fund disbursement and utilization. The crucial role of Gram Sabhas in 360-degree development approach and citizenry participation was another high point this year in the work of fellows active in schedule-V areas to strengthen the Gaon Ganrajya

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 has been on enabling effective local governance focussing the idea of village republic, highlighting the political aspect of the decentralization process and building the voices of the people in deepening democracy.

Through the period, SRUTI's work under the theme PRI and Governance involve engagement with Fellow's work, ensuring deliberations and presentations from within the local communities to the newly formed fifteenth finance commission while facilitating effective implementation of government schemes and programmes on the ground.

Strengthening Local Governance in Odisha

The densely forested Baisipalli Wildlife Sanctuary in Nayagarh district is mostly Kondh adivasis living in the forest. Due to the backwardness of the region, roads, drinking water, health facilities and other infrastructures are in a very bad shape. Even after the governments' initiative for housing such as PM Awas Yojna, many families are still living in mud houses.

With the help of sangathans in Odisha, mass awareness generation on different social security schemes and mobilization was made to demand road construction in the villages of Baisipalli wildlife sanctuary. After many demands, kaccha road was constructed to most of the villages. But the quality of the roads is bad to an extent that at some places these are washed away by rainwater. Considering all these issues, sangathans organized block and district level public procession to pressurise the local government and present a list of demands to block and district administration. They promised to act on the issues on a priority basis.

Rayagada is considered as one of the draughts affected districts in Odisha. Hilly tracts of the region make the life of people even more difficult. In the time of the monsoon people usually get some agricultural work but the rest of the time there are not many job opportunities. MGNREGS scheme is still at work for generating livelihood opportunities, but the ineffective government machinery because of corruption, makes it difficult. In many villages' gram rozgar sahayak didn't even visit the villages, creating severe unemployment crisis in the Sangathan areas. To counter this issue Sangathan continuously monitored the welfare schemes. From the making of new job cards to planning, different works related to these schemes have been closely monitored by the monitoring committee and formed grievance redressal committees in each village.

The District Mineral Fund was meant for the development of the people, village and area affected by mining operations directly and indirectly. In Angul district, about 11 coal mines were being operated in Talcher which indirectly impacted Pallahara block which came under the same district. Due to the mining activity, the water level of the nearby area had gone down. Therefore, Sangathan consistently demanded the district committee to utilize some funds for the installation of a water supply system in some water scarcity villages. As a result, pipe water supply systems have been installed in 13 tribal villages in Pallahara block.

Parity and Participation: Voices from the ground ask Finance Commission to intervene

The first Finance Commission came into being in 1951, but it was the Fourteenth Finance Commission which brought major changes in sharing of tax proceeds between the Centre and States. It also ensured an undisturbed fund flow to the sub-state levels, by awarding a sizable grant of over Rs. 2 lakh crores over 5 years directly to the Gram Panchayats and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs). The FFC, on one hand, terms the grant as unconditional and in contradiction to that puts the condition of using the grants for improving the status of basic civic services (only) thereby severely limiting the scope of spending at Gram Panchayat level.

The ground observations of fellows on the utilization of FFC funds (usually called Mukhiya funds), showed discrepancies on many levels. So where the money is transferred for the panchayats and Gram Sabhas as 'untied funds' being utilised? If local governance is only going to remain a tool for union and State Governments, where will real democracy be exercised? Are the relationships of power and functions in local governance at par with what the laws say? What can we do about it in a manner which can represent voices from the ground? Is making roads the only way to bring development?

These were some of the questions which paved a way for us to work on an extensive study aiming to provide recommendations to the 15th Finance commission.

Our research in 13 states points to an abysmally high percentage of funds only dedicated to the cause of road building and sanitation under the government's flagship campaign 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan'. The research study used secondary data through a government website- www.planningonline.com - for 13 states with particular districts and blocks covering 236 panchayats. A comprehensive data analysis was done based on guidelines from the Centre and each State for FFC.

To share the results of the study and develop common strategies, a National Convention on 15th Finance Commission and Panchayati Raj was organised at New Delhi. Member of Fifteenth Finance commission Dr Ashok Lahidi, former Minister of Panchayati Raj Mr Manishankar Alyar, representatives of civil society organisations, members of grassroots organisations, expert academicians and SRUTI fellows were part of the stakeholder convention. Following this, 9 regional level consultations covering 14 states were organised, which reached out to around 260 people on behalf of grassroots sangathans, non-profit organisations, Panchayat members, former members of state Rural Development and Panchayati Raj departments, and members of the State Finance Commissions.

The consolidated recommendations from these consultations have attempted to include all issues that emerged during these conversations and factually analysed and presented data supplied by the government. The process has seen widespread participation and collaboration of various civil society organisations, sangathans, researchers and like-minded people who have come together to address the perils of centralised and non-transparent decision making in the exercise of democratic governance. The consolidated recommendations were submitted to the Fifteenth Finance Commission. The report prepared involving widespread consultations and research is planned to be published for wider circulation. People working at the grassroots level to strengthen the assertion of local self-governing institutions will especially find this document useful in addressing the gaps they encounter between policy prescriptions and realities at the ground.



[In pictures (Above)–National Convention on 15th Finance Commission and Panchayati Raj, Members of grassroots sangathans, finance commission and SRUTI fellows attend the stakeholder convention. (Below) Regional consultations for giving recommendations to 15th Finance Commission (clockwise from top) UP, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha]



Young People's Conference at Barwani: Achievements and Challenges of Gram Sabhas in Adivasi Areas



A Youth Sammelan on the achievements and challenges of Gram Sabhas in Adivasi areas was organized on 23rd December 2019 at Palsud Mandi in Rajpur Tehsil of Barwani district.

A special day as the culmination of youth perspective building shivirs, the day marked the coming together of many young people in Barwani, along with senior karyakartas of Adivasi Mukti Sangathan (AMS), Ekta Parishad and young leaders of the Adivasi Chhatra Sangathan and Jay Adivasi Yuva Shakti (JAYS).

Those who were involved with learnings from the shivirs – like rights and powers of Gram Sabhas in Schedule V areas, the problems of education, migration, lack of health services,

corruption in the delivery of social security schemes, employment and price rise etc.; all came together to collectively share their experiences, and showcase songs, theatre and speeches they had prepared on the issues. The Sammelan was collectively planned and executed by the young leaders who have gone through Yuva Chetna Shivirs and was anchored by Jayashree and Amit from Adharshila Shikshan Kendra.

A special exhibition marked with findings from the migration survey, along with inspirational posters and banners. In the sharing of experiences by these young leaders, many asserted the pivotal role these shivirs have played in shaping their world-views and

given them the confidence to address local or national issues.

They said they feel more aware and strong because of a strong network of committed workers, who are inspired to take up social change with their respective areas of work.



The youth composed a song highlighting their hardship and addressing the issues of unemployment, migration, high inflation and meagre wages, rising prices of seeds and fertilizers, water crisis and the apathy of governance systems in solving any of their issues. The song can be accessed at <https://youtu.be/ZRjLa1pAcp8>. A 35-minute long play to create awareness on how Gram Sabhas are usually conducted without information or planned agenda was prepared by Naatak India Company. In the imagination of development, it is vital that people realize and use the powers of PESA regions

in imagining a future which builds on the lives and dignity of people. The play has been performed in many panchayats of Rajpur Tehsil and played a significant role in mobilizing people to meaningfully attend meetings of Gram Sabhas.

A booklet on the positive experiences of Gram Sabhas was collated and distributed at the conference. The book compiles stories where people have taken positive action, addressed challenges including illegalities and taken action to undertake development work and get the Gram Sabhas directly involved in addressing challenges and administrative difficulties.

Attentively listening during the 4-hour program were leaders of the Adivasi Mukti Sangathan and other senior leaders from the region who were requested to share their learnings after the young people had spoken. When it was their turn to speak, they called upon the next generation of leaders in the region, to be more diligent and responsible in their planning and execution. The imagination and impact of PESA were shared upon, and various experiences of adivasis in their struggle against the diktats of the forest department and feudal relationships as shared. In a way, a collective exchange allowed for vibrant learning for all those who attended.

Along with renewed strength and assertion from the communities, we today see an acceptance of **critical learning methodologies**



along with mutual sharing and building of bonds between various spectrums of social-political thought. This might not have been possible to build in the absence of sustained learning methodologies. The focus on building a young, informed, tech-savvy young population driven by scientific values and modernity has been the focus of work in the region. We believe it will be taken ahead by young people in the region who will address decades of exploitation with the active support of all people.

In the coming time, processes to strengthen democratic and decentralized decision making would be taken ahead by young people – and the learnings in this period of building youth collectives have provided them with the much-needed support and exposure to build a robust and sustainable environment for such initiatives.

AGRICULTURE AND LIVELIHOOD

Agriculture and Livelihood - Outcomes

130 meetings and trainings were organized at village, regional and district level. Sangathans from 7 states - Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand made substantial efforts to establish sustainable agricultural practices in their working areas.

45 capacity and perspective building trainings were organized in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and Tamil Nadu. On reviving traditional water bodies, preservation of local seeds and value of organic farming. More than **1500 potential** and practicing farmers were motivated to initiate organic farming practices.

7 Vocational trainings engaging more than **300 women** were organized in Andhra Pradesh and Uttarakhand to facilitate life-skill building activities like stitching, hand embroidery, knitting, etc.

Farmer Producer Company in Andhra Pradesh campaigns for social security for marginal farmers:

Navjeevan Agri & Horticulture Producer Company Ltd (FPO) has been working with more than **5000 farmers**. Sangathans along with the FPO have organized **14 trainings** for farmers with more than **250 farmers** from Nellore district on market and financial linkages. In 2019-20, the FPO registered new seed collection centers in 3 mandals, helping farmers procure seeds at lower rates.

Promoting livelihood opportunities among women:

Maati Tana Bana, an SHG formed in Uttarakhand to promote women's participation in economic activities like animal husbandry, sale of beans and handicrafts generated revenue of **Rs. 8 lakhs**.

The inherent relationship of land and livelihood opportunities including agriculture has been significant. While efforts were made by sangathans across Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Odisha, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh to regularise land held by marginalized communities, including 'grazing land' and 'wastelands', making the land usable and keeping people motivated to take up farming/associated activities has also been undertaken with great difficulty. The increasing cost of farming and risks associated due to climate-change has further burdened the families. Many families are forced to send their young members to other regions for work, and sangathans have tried to build some opportunities for local livelihood development. Cooperatives have emerged as a successful model to initiate and build collectives – undertaking fishing, weaving or growth of traditional farming methods.

Adarsh Handloom Cooperative secures livelihoods in Rajasthan

The handloom cooperative is an economic activity that gives an alternative means of earning to the many who are unable to make their ends meet with agriculture alone. Cooperative

marked the new path by registering the brand name 'Aha Vastra' and securing an export license which will enable the

cooperative to launch an online forum which will provide more opportunities for weavers to directly market their produce to the customers.

The Cooperative is receiving stable orders from across the country. It has even received some orders all the way from the western countries. With a turnover of twenty-five lakhs, the Cooperative has provided 60 families with an opportunity to lead better lives while the customers are benefitting from the quality products made by the skilful weavers. This year, weavers of Adarsh Handloom Cooperative received the third prize in the State Award for weaving handloom varieties with best designs and quality.

Peasant Distress leads to widespread mobilization in Maharashtra

Maharashtra continues to top the list of states with the highest number of farmer suicides in India. Despite the farm loan waiver announced by the State Government, a large number of farmer suicides were reported. The agrarian distress is caused by the anti-farmer and anti-agriculture policies by both state and union governments. The farmer is worried at several fronts— from increasing costs to non-settlement of insurance claims. There has been a severe drought for the past 3 years, and the entire

discourse on agriculture has focussed only on MSPs and loan waivers while there are several issues of land distribution, illegal eviction and acquisition which need urgent action from the government.

Agriculture and Livelihood - Outcomes

Seed preservation — Sangathans in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu organised workshops for preserving and using traditional seeds focussing on the use of organic farming methods to ensure low cost of cultivation and increase soil fertility.

Promoting organic farming in Tamil Nadu – VTMS intensified its campaign to raise awareness about the dangerous impact of agro toxics. As a result, small tea growers associated with VTMS, started embracing organic farming as a way of life. The campaign also helped in widespread recognition and acceptance of polyculture as hectares of agriculture land has been dominated by cultivation of tea and coffee, perpetuating food crisis and obliteration of biodiversity.

To present a comprehensive set of demands, peoples' movements in Maharashtra mobilized the farmers, Adivasis, peasants and other pro-people sangathans for a Kisan Long March. Sangathans in Maharashtra extended their solidarity to the march organised by All Indian Kisan Coordination Committee which started from Nasik and covered a distance of 180 kms to reach Mumbai.

The march was planned keeping in mind the demands of complete farm loan waiver and implementation of recommendation of the Swaminathan Committee. Proper implementation of FRA 2006, PESA 1996, provision of irrigation facilities, land titles for the toiling masses, implementation of social security schemes for the rural poor and homeless, prohibiting the acquisition of land belonging to Adivasis in the name of development were also included in the demands.

Reviving wastelands in Andhra Pradesh

Koneru Ranga Rao commission Report, 2007 estimates that over one lakh persons of the SC communities lost land in one year in Andhra Pradesh. Between 1961 and 1991, within the category of Scheduled Castes, cultivators decreased from 23 per cent to 12 per cent and the proportion of agricultural labourers increased from 57 per cent to 72 per cent. Landlessness has actually increased among the Scheduled Castes.

To address landlessness, the State Government of Andhra Pradesh undertook a land redistribution campaign. The distributed patches of land were not deemed cultivable as it is difficult to carry out activities like clearing bushes. Even after assurances, the government did not support the farmers who wanted to use the land for agriculture.

On identifying this issue, the Sangathan stepped up to create awareness among the communities about MGNREGA, emphasising that its scopes extend beyond employment-generation, to also create durable assets in the community. Later, the Sangathan members' mobilised communities to clear off bushes, level their land, revive and restore water bodies and construct water tanks under MGNREGA. The local communities have successfully converted dry wastelands to cultivable lands in this manner. As many as 2850 families got access to employment under MGNREGA for an average of 72 days of employment.

Most of the poor farmers who own 1- 2 acres of land could cultivate only one crop, that too in the rainy season. With the rise in water conservation initiatives, farmers have been able to return to full-time farming including multi-crop farming. Hundreds of families have managed to earn a fair income while reviving natural resources.

EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP BUILDING

Engaging with youth to solve the problems faced by weavers in Uttar Pradesh

At Tanda in Uttar Pradesh, Awadh Peoples Forum took an initiative to mobilise youth who are working in the power loom industry. In various discussions, it has emerged that the indicators to demonstrate socio-economic conditions of weavers are very poor; and that they live in abject conditions, unable to fulfil even basic requirements. Many weavers live in a joint family system consisting of 8-10 members, making it more difficult for them to survive on such low wages. Due to low education status,

middlemen and contractors take undue advantage of their life and labour, leading to further harassment. Women weavers hesitate to ask contractors for a raise or to discuss favourable terms. There are almost no social security systems in place, leading to uncertainties among people.

Education and Leadership Building – Outcomes

230 meetings (including 166 village-level meetings) were organized across 10 states- **Bihar, Delhi, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, M.P., Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, U.P. and Uttarakhand** saw more active interventions.

64 trainings focused on working with the youth to build their perspective and skills. The changing socio-economic and political scenario of the country needs comprehensive engagements, including learnings about democracy, constitution and analysis of laws, and skills such as documentation and follow up with authorities to deal with issues at village level.

More than **2000** youth participated in training sessions for activities such as preparing memorandums and reports, designing posters, filing RTI and processing information, creating photo and video documentation, preparing news bulletins, performing theatre and preparing songs.

53 trainings in resettlement colonies of Delhi focussed on perspective building to develop understanding on increasing wealth disparity and the need of inclusive development.

Delhi Young Artist Forum (DYAF) and Lokadhikar run informal learning centres in colonies where families are mostly engaged as waste pickers. To help children continue with school education, **54 identified students were supported with scholarships (as educational fellowship)** and given kits containing books, reading material and school bags.

During a conference organised at Tanda on 20th January 2020, discussions were organised among youth on how they can help the situation. Most of these participants were postgraduates from Awadh University and were willing to work on improving the lives of weavers. In the absence of any regulation for procurement prices of thread and cloth, weavers had to suffer losses as prices for the finished product did not increase with time. They also had to bear high costs of electricity. There was a strong demand from the group to bring these workers in the informal economy under the protection of labour welfare boards and handloom cooperatives.

As young people got involved, it led to brainstorming and linkages developed of power loom workers with handloom workers from Mau and Lucknow districts in Uttar Pradesh. A series of public mobilizations and awareness campaigns allowed many weavers to negotiate for better prices of their manufactured cloth, as they started selling their produce in Delhi (and through online forums) by building ties with social enterprises based out of Delhi. Although

some of these young volunteers had to migrate for work, leaving the campaigns in hope for new leadership.

“We made significant progress in a short time, and weavers started understanding the factors behind their backwardness, and learnt how to negotiate without jeopardising their work. There is a lot left to do here, and the circumstances among weavers

remain precarious. With our earlier experience, we are hopeful that young people will mobilise again and take more of such initiatives”, added Afaq, who has been working with the Awadh Peoples Forum for the past 15 years.

Perspective building training through various celebrations

Sangathans across the spectrum have been active in mobilising communities around the core issues of human rights. Important days such as World Environment Day, International Women’s Day, International Human Rights Day, International Labour Day, Ambedkar Jayanti, and Gandhi Jayanti were celebrated at the local and regional level to collectively understand the role of important personalities or events and its relevance in local-regional struggles.

While sangathans in Odisha emphasized on periodic training on understanding Panchayati raj and other social security schemes, local groups in Chhattisgarh organised constitutional training from 10th – 20th January in 26 villages to create awareness on the changes being brought in citizenship laws.

Education and Leadership Building – Outcomes

Sangathan run schools – Adharshila Learning Centre at Barwani (Madhya Pradesh) and Chittorgarh (Rajasthan) and Manthan School in Jhalawar (Rajasthan) together had more than 400 students enrolled for this year, with 65 children passing out class 10th with more than 75 percent marks. Trainings were organised at Barwani for students and teachers to understand the impact of climate change and address the scarcity of water in their area.

70 school teachers and community mobilizers from among local organisations such as Teacher Resource Co-creation Centre, Talim Ghar, After School Learning Centre, Language Development Initiative and Jodo Gyan were involved through 5 workshops, developing mutual strategy. These initiatives helped develop learning abilities of students.

Sangathans celebrated the lives of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar, the architect of the Indian constitution, Mahatma Gandhi, Bhagat Singh, Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh (who was the prominent leader of the Chhuhad uprising that took place from 1763 to 1833 against the collection of land revenue by the East India Company), Shaheed Birsu Munda (Adivasi revolutionary leader in Chota Nagpur region who struggled against atrocities of the British government). Organising of commemoration events like Ulgulaan, Hul Diwas and Joyada Martyrs Day also allowed for people to come together to remember the significance and history of struggles against discrimination and atrocities.

For young people in sangathans areas, these celebrations emerged as platforms to learn of the strong legacy of historical struggles and develop a strong and progressive value system, which would enable them to take up leadership. It also acted as a focal point for engagements and representations for demands. While organising programs, young people also learnt about the contribution of tribal leaders and heroes who sacrificed their lives for

protecting their land and forests – which led young people to develop stronger resolve and spirit for undertaking challenges in their own areas.

Young people come together to clean polluted lake and swear to protect water sources

To rejuvenate and restore the natural heritage at the Jadhav Sagar Lake in Shivpuri, Madhya Pradesh, a group of 10-12 students and lawyers launched the Shivpuri Jalashay Sanrakshan Abhiyan (Shivpuri Waterbodies Conservation Campaign). Aimed at conserving the Jadhav Sagar Lake and the endangered Mugger Crocodile species, the campaign for cleanliness work went on for 3 months. Volunteers were roped in from among school students, following meetings with over 12 schools. Students and staff members actively participated in cleanliness drives and plantation activities and committed to protecting the largest source of fresh water in the town. Schools have now included this as a regular activity every Sunday. Some of the school students took over these roles as ‘environment police’. It was also great to see law students taking an active part in the initiative, allowing resolve to be built among the future lawyers over environmental issues. Sanitation workers working with the municipal corporation were given training on waste segregation, harmful effects of polythene. In their own work setting, they were not

aware of the health impact of handling hazardous waste. In these interactions, the campaign tried to ensure safety equipment for their work and empowered them to learn about safety and nutrition.

The campaign picked up the pace with over 2000 people have involved themselves in the cleanliness work. Throughout the campaign, volunteers reminded the authorities about their responsibility to provide a safe and healthy environment. The participation from the municipal council was also remarkable – and it contributed by providing human resources and supported the herculean task of manual cleaning of the solid waste from water. The forest department was also involved throughout the whole process. They even offered to construct a fenced bridge so that solid waste does not enter the cleaner waters, and forest guards joined the cleanliness drive as well. Soon after, they constructed a fence demarcating the forest land. The municipal council has promised to construct 2-3 fenced bridges to stop the influx of solid waste into the drinking water.

GENDER, CASTE AND COMMUNALISM

Campaigns in Uttar Pradesh against gender discrimination in educational institutions and promoting scientific temperament

Awadh Peoples Forum in Faizabad, Uttar Pradesh conducted a Campaign against gender-based discrimination in educational institutes. Inequality in education is a persistent problem in Indian society, especially for girls from rural areas and lower socio-economic backgrounds. During the past several decades, India has achieved success in moving toward universal school

enrolment and in enacting policies to address educational inequalities such as those based on gender. However, education gaps still exist. During the campaign, Awadh People Forum was able to involve more than 1500 youths in the discussion on gender issues and the growing disturbance in communal harmony in and around Faizabad. The campaign also reached out to the school and colleges of Tanda, Ambedkar Nagar. The Campaign started on 25th November and continued till 10th December 2019.

Gender, Caste & Communalism - Outcomes

Total **180 programs** in **9 states** namely Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh Were organized. 136 of these programs were organized at village level, 29 at district level, 7 both at regional level and state level and 1 at national level.

In **Faizabad, Uttar Pradesh** a **16-day campaign** against **gender discrimination** was organized by Awadh Peoples Forum to educate youths about sexism, sexual harassment, gender equality and how to respond to misbehaviour. During this campaign **1500 youth participated** from **25 schools** and colleges. Most of these youth have volunteered to organize gender sensitivity sessions among their peers and families.

A campaign to promote awareness on communal harmony was launched in Jaunpur, Uttar Pradesh. The campaign picked up pace and over **544 students** from **7 schools** participated in it.

6 women were assisted to lodge FIR under Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2015 in **Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh**. **90 cases** of **caste-based** atrocities were reported in **Chhattisgarh**. Sangathan has intervened in all the cases and they are following up with legal processes.

Dialogue in Solidarity Harmony and Action (DISHA), organized a workshop on Constitutional Democracy and Gender on 12th and 13th of January 2020 at Jaunpur, Uttar Pradesh.

On the first day of the workshop, the main topic of discussion was the principles of fundamental rights with emphasis on “right to equality”. Values of democracy such as freedom, equality and fraternity were also discussed during the day. On the second day, understanding of gender and how gender roles are imposed on us knowingly and unknowingly were discussed. Participants also discussed the role of patriarchy in suppressing the idea of gender equality. This workshop was the follow up of the workshop organized in July 2019 on Scientific Temper, Secularism and Education with 39 young school teachers. The processes of workshops and engagements with the young leaderships further led to a broader

campaign in the district of Jaunpur involving over 544 students from 7 schools.

Addressing gender-based violence in Chhattisgarh

On the occasion of International Women's Day, a state-level convention was organised at Raipur, Chhattisgarh with the participation of 1450 women. It was followed by a week-long campaign from 11th – 18th March in 8 panchayats with a total participation of 2850 women.

The sangathans have been active in spreading information about trafficking and the problems of women migrant workers. Many women face sexual violence and, in such cases, fact findings across the state are carried out. Cases of violence against women in conflict areas were also highlighted by the sangathans.

At a women's rights conference in Raipur on 20th October 2019, representatives of women's movement groups came together to prepare a charter of demands and issues to work – recognising the labour of women farmers, raising support for inter-caste and inter-faith couples, rights of single women and social security schemes for such families, provision for women in the Van Dhan Yojana and seeking interventions in cases where rights of women title holders on forest land was rejected. A campaign has been launched across the state to address the demands of all women, and include transgender communities in all social leadership positions.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND LABOUR RIGHTS

The situation of migrant workers causes of concern in Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu is witnessing the unparalleled flow of migrant workers from different parts of the country. According to the survey conducted by the Tamil Nadu government, there are 10.6 million migrant workers in the state. The biggest employer for this group is the manufacturing sector (27%) followed by textile (14%) and construction (11.4%), fairly large section hailing from small farmer, Dalit, and Adivasi households from the states of Bengal, UP and north-east region. The condition of migrants in

Social Security and Labour Rights - Outcomes

4017 villagers were facilitated from Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, M.P., Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and U.P. in availing the government scheme.

Total **116 families** received the **ration** in the new list from Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra.

246 families were provided with **access to clean drinking water** in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Bihar.

992 homeless families from Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and Maharashtra benefitted from the housing scheme.

676 new application forms were submitted under **MGNREGA** in Rajasthan.

Identified **60 dropout children** from the poor families and **enrolled all of the 60 children** back to school in Andhra Pradesh.

Facilitated 76 **farmers** to avail the **agriculture subsidies** in Andhra Pradesh.

In Uttar Pradesh, sangathan facilitated **40 daily wage labourers** to **enrol** in the register of labour board who were later issued **labour cards**.

Tamil Nadu is no different from the other part of the country. For the majority of these labours, there is no fixed place of work, no fixed working hours, no regular wages and no social security. Also due to the cultural differences, migrant labours face social discrimination added to the economic exploitation.

The socio-economic condition and the requirements of the migrant labourers to live a dignified life needs to be studied and efforts are required to unionise them as well. With this understanding, SRUTI Fellow group VTMS in Tamil Nadu conducted a study in the year 2018 to understand the status of the social security schemes coverage in Coimbatore and Nilgiri. In the following year 2019, the Sangathan organised around 30 meetings with migrant labourers working in the construction sector in Coimbatore, Erode and Thirupur. The focus of the meetings was to identify the challenges for effective social integration. Efforts have been made by the Sangathan to unionise them though the situation is not in their favour as migrant labourers keep moving from one place to another in a short span of time.

Protecting the rights of migrant workers in Odisha

The migrant issue is one of the major issues in Odisha, especially for the brick kiln workers. A large number of people from Odisha migrate to Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Karnataka to work in brick kilns. Since this sector is totally unorganized, atrocities and oppression have become a constant juggle in the lives of these workers. Focussing on the issues, Zindabad Sangathan in Odisha has been organizing the workers while trying to streamline labour recruitment in Western Odisha from the source to destination. Sangathan has also initiated dialogue with the labour department and block administration to ensure social security for these migrant labourers.

With the objective of unionizing brick kiln workers and other construction workers, International Labour Day was celebrated in Turekela and Belpara blocks of Balangir district with the participation of around 200 people. Different provisions for the workers of unorganised sectors, their rights, working conditions were discussed. After the meeting, a memorandum was given to the District Collector.

A series of special awareness programs on safe migration was organized by Sangathan in collaboration with the labour department and block the administration in distress migration gram panchayats from 6th to 20th September 2019. The objective was spreading awareness and to check illegal migrations. 20-gram panchayats of Khaprakhol and Belpada blocks of Balangir districts were covered in the program.

A regional level convention was organized at Kantabanji on 19th September 2019 with other networking groups to highlight the issues of migrant workers. The meeting was attended by around 300 people including network groups & migrant labourers. Labour commissioners, SP, BDO, Tehsildar and rural labour commissioners also took part in the convention. Discussing all the issues pertaining to brick kiln workers of western Odisha, a demand charter was prepared and submitted to the District collector and CM through SDM. There have been many cases of workers casualty in the brick kilns, but the dependent families had not received any compensation. A review petition was also filed for death compensation for 35 families.

Campaigns for a dignified life for migrant workers in Delhi

Delhi being the capital of India generates enormous job opportunities for skilled and unskilled workers. It makes Delhi an attractive employment hub for the people from various regions of the country, aspiring for better life, growth and job opportunities.

The city accommodates this influx in its territory but also exploits their labour. Jhuggi Jhopri (JJ) colony is one of the Delhi slums, which accommodates a large number of urban poor. Neither the upper class nor the industries, nor can the government institutions manage the city without the engagement of these city-makers. They are usually paid low-wages for their hard labour. They contribute as peons, drivers, domestic help, construction workers, guards, delivery boys, sweepers, rag pickers, hawkers and vendors, industrial and commercial workers and the list goes on. Many of them have been settled in these clusters of slums since generations; they initially come as labourers from nearby construction sites and these slums are the only accommodation provided or available to them. These colonies are mostly neglected in terms of providing the basic amenities like sanitation & drinking water, housing, health, education and connectivity. There are numerous cases of gender and communal violence that barely get reported. This makes the community residing in these areas more vulnerable to atrocities and exploitation.

During last few years while working with young adolescent girls, Delhi Young Artist Forum (DYAF) felt that mobilization of mothers as labours should be prioritised so that the issues surrounding the exploitation of the rights of workers can be raised and a collective effort could be put in to deal with the issues. DYAF formed the “Asangathit Mazdoor Sangharsh Morcha” to work for the rights of labourers in the unorganized sector in Delhi. At their first convention, they discussed the various aspects of their work in detail ranging from piece-rate work to rag-picking to working as domestic help. In its efforts to raise the issues, DYAF has mainly focused on mobilizing workers from the unorganized sector, organising girl’s convention, regular youth perspective building workshops and the educational fellowship program.

NETWORKING AND ADVOCACY

Through documentation, studies, and coordination; SRUTI works to build solidarity amongst pro-people groups to advocate for the universal implementation of pro-poor legislation on land, forests, displacement and public policy in the view of constitutionally recognised people's rights and universal human rights.

Events organised by SRUTI

National Consultation – 15th Finance Commission and Panchayati Raj Institutions | 20th May 2019 (detailed in the earlier section) | New Delhi

Youth Festival | 10th-13th June 2019 | Nashik, Maharashtra

Regional level consultations on giving recommendations to 15th Finance Commission | July 2019

Campaigns

Campaigns with state and national networks like Campaign for Survival and Dignity, Bhumi Adhikaar Andolan (A national-level alliance of farmer unions, forest workers, and other pro-people groups with social movements), advocating for Land Rights, Agrarian Reforms and Land Use Policy.

Advocacy

Advocacy with Parliamentarians and Ministries of Tribal Affairs (MoTA), Rural Development & Environment and Forests; National Commission for Scheduled Tribes, National Commission for Scheduled Castes, etc.

Networking with people's organizations and movements such as AIUFWP (All India Union of Forest Working People), NAPM (National Alliance of People's Movements), INSAF (Indian Social Action Forum), Chhattisgarh Bachao Andolan (CBA), Samajwadi Jan Parishad, Campaign for Survival and Dignity, Delhi Solidarity Group, etc. in various states of India

DISASTER RELIEF

VTMS Raised Hope among Nilgiri Flood Victims

Nilgiri district, which usually gets 900 mm rain over three months, received the same amount of rainfall in just three days. Heavy downpour accompanied by landslides in various parts of the district left six people dead and forced 5,250 residents to move to temporary shelters (Tol).

The district is part of the Nilgiris Biosphere, has diverse forest types with their distinct life forms and wildlife. This is the home of six indigenous (Adivasi) communities. Later the Malayalis, Kannadigas, Dalits from Tamil Nadu, Tamil repatriates from Sri Lanka and many others made the district their home. These marginalised communities have been forcibly pushed to occupy ecologically fragile and dangerous areas in the region due to the development activities and these are the most affected in the flood.

The critical situation demanded joint actions from the government and people's organisations. VTMS has played a vital role in the relief work from rescuing stranded people to mobilising local resources to meet the needs of home returned people. VTMS extended support to 902 families- Adivasi, Dalit and plantation workers of 11 villages in Nilgiri district. Though People are also back to their normal life, the impacts of this crisis on the livelihood of its people will be significant and long-lasting.

SRUTI WELFARE AND SOLIDARITY FUND (SWSF)

The SWSF was constituted with the idea of providing financial assistance to individuals and communities for medical emergencies, higher education, house construction, welfare and relief during natural and other calamities. The assistance is extended to SRUTI Fellows; staff members; associates in SRUTI's solidarity network, and communities supported through SRUTI's Fellowship programme. A total of 12 individuals and grassroots groups benefited from the Fund during the year.

STRUCTURE OF THE SRUTI TEAM (2019-20)

<i>Slab of monthly salary (Rs) plus benefits paid to staff</i>	<i>No. of male staff</i>	<i>No. of female staff</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>10,001-25,000</i>	0	1	1
<i>25,001-50,000</i>	8	2	10
<i>50,001-100,000</i>	2	1	3
<i>Total</i>	9	4	13

PEOPLE

SRUTI General Body

1. Ms Enakshi Ganguly Thukral
2. Mr Prabhu Mohapatra
3. Mr Apoorvanand
4. Ms Amita Joseph
5. Ms Rajeswari S. Raina
6. Mr Ravi Rebbapragada
7. Mr Jamal Kidwai
8. Ms Kanika Satyanand
9. Mr Sanjit (Bunker) Roy
10. Ms Abha Singhal Joshi
11. Ms Uma Chakarvarti
12. Ms Shibani Chaudhary
13. Mr G.B. Panda
14. Ms Rita Sarin
15. Mr Avinash Kumar
16. Mr Nitin Sethi

For the year 2019-20, one meeting of the SRUTI General Body was organized.

SRUTI Executive Board

1. Ms Enakshi Ganguly Thukral, President
2. Mr Prabhu Mohapatra, Vice President
3. Mr Apoorvanand, Treasurer
4. Ms Amita Joseph, Member

5. Ms Rajeswari S. Raina, Member
6. Mr Ravi Rebbapragada, Member
7. Mr Jamal Kidwai, Member

For the year 2019-20, three meetings of the SRUTI Executive Board were organized.

SRUTI Team

1. Asha Raveendran, Asst. Programme Executive
2. Baldev Thakur, Finance Officer
3. Elin A. Lakra, Asst. Programme Executive
4. Emlon Tirkey, Asst. Programme Executive
5. Jojoy Mathew, Asst. Officer-Finance & Admin.
6. Juheb Jhony Choudhury, Asst. Programme Executive
7. Mahipal Singh, Fellowship Assistant
8. Rakesh Sharma, Asst. Manager- Resource Mobilisation
9. Sanjay Kumar Verma, Asst. Manager- Resource Mobilisation
10. Satyam Shrivastava, Director
11. Saurabh Sinha. Sr. Programme Executive
12. Shweta Tripathi, Director
13. Siddharth Bhatt, Programme Executive
14. Tejasvita Malhotra, Program Trainee

*in alphabetic order

Internal Complaints Committee Members

NAME	ROLE	ASSOCIATED WITH
Elin Archana Lakra	Presiding officer (Chairperson)	SRUTI
Asha Raveendran	Member	SRUTI
Jojoy Mathew	Member	SRUTI
Purwa Bhardwaj	Member	Trainer and subject Expert
Seema Mishra	Member	Delhi Based Lawyer
Arvind Anjum	Member	SRUTI Fellow
Jayashree	Member	SRUTI Fellow

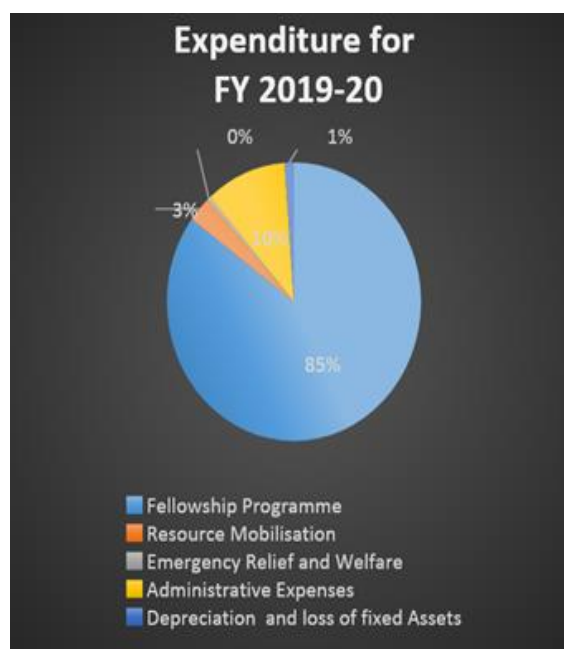
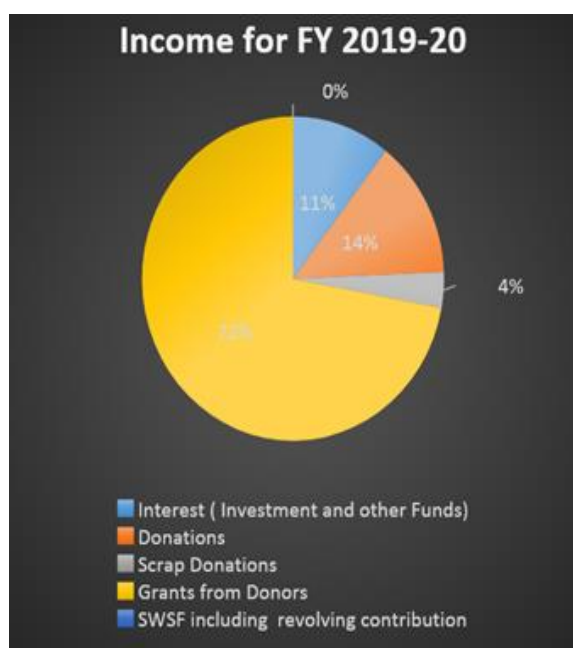
FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

SRUTI Income for the financial year 2019-2020

S.No.	Details	Amount (Rs.)
1	Interest (Investment and other funds)	4,011,649
2	Donations from Individuals	5,254,390
3	Scrap Donation	1,358,041
4	Grants from Donors (inc. previous year's)	27,463,069
5	SWSF including revolving contribution	414
	Total Income	380,87,563

SRUTI Expenditure for the financial year 2019-20

S.No.	Details	Amount (Rs.)
1	Fellowship Programme	28,407,597
2	Resource Mobilisation	992,965
3	Emergency relief and welfare	150,463
4	Administrative Expenditure	3,429,485
5	Depreciation and loss of fixed assets	395,838
	Total expenditure	333,76,348



CONTRIBUTORS

We thank our institutional, individual and scrap donors for their continued support

