

# Annual Report 2015-16

## India



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## ABOUT ACTIONAID ASSOCIATION

ActionAid Association is an anti-poverty agency, working with the poor people to end poverty and injustice together.

ActionAid Association has been working to ensure the access of poorest and marginalized to the fruits of development and constitutional rights to food and livelihood, shelter, education, healthcare, dignity and a voice in decisions. ActionAid Association partners with several voluntary organizations, institutions and government bodies, ministries, and its various commissions at state and centre to achieve the above. We are working in 25 states and one union territory in India, with more than 250 community based organisation in India, at present.

### OUR VALUES

We reiterate our values and stress on ‘praxis’ in our work, in our effort to deepen our commitment to transform our organisational culture. Solidarity, camaraderie and sisterhood with the poor, the powerless and excluded women, girls, boys and men will be at the core of our struggle against poverty and injustice.

- **‘Personal is political’**: without contradiction in the practice in private and public sphere.
- **Courage of conviction**, requiring us to be creative and progressive, bold and innovative – without fear of failure.
- **Equality, justice and diversity**, requiring us to work to ensure equal opportunity to every person, irrespective of caste, class, race, age, gender, sexual orientation, colour, class, ethnicity, disability, location, and religion.
- **Humility and modesty** in our conduct and behaviour.
- **Transparency and accountability.**
- **Independence and neutrality** from any religious or party-political affiliation

### OUR VISION

A world without poverty, patriarchy and injustice in which every person enjoys the right to life with dignity

### OUR MISSION

To work in solidarity with the poor and participate in their struggle to eradicate poverty, patriarchy and injustice

### OUR REACH

ActionAid India’s work is spread across 25 states and 1 union territory of India. Our interventions in 317 districts (including 134 most backward districts of India) helped improve the lives of more than 1,32,000 families from the most deprived communities.

All our interventions in 2015 were made possible by 252 alliance organisations, who are our grass roots partners in delivering our promises of change. 22% of these organisations are headed by women and 16% of them are headed by members from Dalit, Tribal, Minority and Most Backward Communities.

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

AAA	ActionAid Association
AAI	ActionAid India
ASSOCHAM	The Associated Chambers of Commerce of India
BRGF	Backward Region Grant Fund
CSP	Country Strategy paper
CSR	Corporate social responsibility
DPEP	District Primary Education Programme
FRA	Forest Rights Act
GHMC	Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation
ILO	International Labour Organisation
KKEI	Khiltee Kaliyan Education Initiative
LRP	Local rights programme
MDM	Mid day meal
MPEDA	Marine Products Export Development Authority
NFDB	National Fisheries Development Board
OBR	One Billion Rising
PRI	Panchayat Raj Institutions
RTI	Right to Information
VAW	Violence Against Women

## **STRATEGIC PRIORITY I -LAND AND LIVELIHOOD:**

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Our efforts to facilitate people's access and claim over land and natural resources, in order to ensure a life of dignity and self-sufficiency, continued in the year 2015-2016 as well.

The focus was on facilitating access and claim to individual, joint and collective land rights for the excluded communities, including vulnerable groups within the communities such as single women, tribal and Dalits in order to promote their land ownership. The land ownership was either over homestead land, agricultural land or forest land under the various existing legal provisions by the state or the central government.

The year was marked with initiatives to create sustainable livelihood models for communities and efforts were made to facilitate knowledge sharing on this front, between various organisations from the several states that we work in.

In the urban front, we embarked on the work on water and also on commons. This year, we have focused on shelter, housing and right to dignified work of the urban poor in many of urban projects. We also embarked on an ambitious project on skill building of urban poor and this emerged in the form of Working people's charter and the People's vision of the City.

### **A. ENGAGING THE GOVERNMENT AND FACILITATING ACCESS TO LAND**

In 2015-2016, through the efforts of community, 300 Dalit women who live in 19 villages in operational area of our partner Nisarga in Andhra Pradesh could access 520 acres of land in Chittoor District. After getting possession, women are keen to cultivate the land for food crops. In UP, in Sai Jyoti LRP in district Lalitpur, women collectives have accessed 4 pattas including ponds and have started fisheries project. Also, 124 Yanadi tribal women became rightful owners of 274 acres of forest lands, through community by our partner ARD in Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh.

In Assam more than 6250 families have submitted applications to the Land Revenue Department for land titles and settlement of land disputes. In Guwahati 254 families could receive land title document during the year. In Bhubaneswar, 672 households including 356 women headed got the *pattas* over homestead land whereas 1039 households including 1001 women headed received the titles over agricultural land. Initiatives have been taken to ensure possession over the allocated land.

Special initiative called Dakhal Dahani was conducted by the Government of Bihar with active support of ActionAid's partners, such as Prayas and Dalit Network to ensure the actual control and ownership of land by Dalit landless families. Through our initiative we were able to ensure joint ownership of women and men.

Through LRRC initiative in Madhya Pradesh state, around 3465 community members accessed land (homestead, forest, agriculture and land under Bhopal Declaration) of which around 50% were in the name of women (jointly or in women's name alone).

*Bhoomi Yatra* an initiative on land issues was organized in two districts Lakhimpur and Maharajganj of Uttar Pradesh state, by the CBOs called Musahar Manch, Mushar Seva Sansthan and Rozi Roti Sangathan. The initiative covered 45 villages and identified 780 landless families, out of which 169 families did not have possession of land despite having

patta and 289 families were without homestead land. District Magistrate ordered the respective authorities to respond to the issues raised by the communities and submit the report to his office, keeping the organisation in the loop.

<b>IMPACT IN NUMBERS</b>	
Total number of applications filed for land ownerships across all operational Areas	40640
Total number of land titles received	10117
Total number of land titles received in the name of women	6623
Number of women Intensively trained on accessing land, forests and other natural resources	20550
Total number of farmers trained on sustainable agricultural practices.	8232
Total number of farmers in our network practising sustainable agricultural farming methods	2220
Number of acres of land developed through NREGA and brought into Cultivation	1587
Number of fisher women linked with local markets	374
Number of individual applications filed under Right of First Refusal (RoFR)	7991
Number of individual Forest Rights Act applications recognized by government	3225
Number of community applications filed under RoFR	3458
Number of acres of land recognized under community forest areas	197
Number of informal workers collectives formed	578
	<i>*206 are exclusively women collectives</i>
Number of Informal workers members into collectives	27987
Number of informal workers registered in welfare boards	5322
	<i>*2303 women</i>
Number of informal workers got access to social security schemes	12850
	<i>*6388 women</i>
Number of informal workers (between 18-35 age group) received skill building training	2708
	<i>*2182 women</i>
Number of bonded labourers rescued and rehabilitated	950
Number of homeless shelters made functional	185

At the end of the initiative a meeting was organized where more than **400 villagers participated**. The meeting was chaired by the District Magistrate of District Lakhimpur. In addition, SDM of Block Mitauli and few other government officials were present there. 238 applications were filed by the landless families for 5 acre of agricultural land each. In addition 82 families who have received legal patta from the government demanded support for actual possession of land.

Gramya, our LRP partner has initiated a study in Telangana in four villages, four blocks and four districts to understand the status of land holding of women. This builds on our earlier work on strengthening access of Dalit women to land rights. It has initiated discussion with Swaminathan Foundation to introduce a National Legislation for women farmers along with Chair Person of National Commission for Women. Pilupu, another partner in Telangana conducted survey in 14 villages and identified 102 tenant farmers and applied for Loan Eligibility Cards for 80 farmers, out of 60 have received the loan eligibility cards.

In Bhubaneswar, a total of 4459 landless people including 614 women have applied for homestead land. In addition, 951 household including 47 headed by women submitted applications for agricultural land.

Progress of the implementation of pro people legislation and schemes still depend upon the individual interest of the officials. Continuous sharing with the government officials and pushing the agenda of the poor is very important. More and more interface meetings with community have led to clear communication between government officials and community. This has led to greater interaction from the officials.

Highlighting the issue related to habitats at state level, a state level workshop was organized where 62 community leaders from PVTGs of 10 districts in Odisha were made aware of the issues. This effort created a platform for the tribal leaders for sharing of issues and concerns of the PVTGs with the authority and to make the state accountable to further the process in the PVTG areas.

ActionAid India with other likeminded organisation facilitated the discussions on proposed amendments in The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 201 and shared our suggestion and recommendation with Government India.

## **B. WOMEN AND LAND**

ActionAid India with its partner organisations have contributed to various discussions and process with Government related to women's Land. Women are getting joint homestead, agriculture and forest land *pattas* from the Government.

In 2015-2016, we were instrumental in filing 40640 numbers of Joint land pattas in name of both men and women and 6623 land pattas were received in the name of women only. Though the follow up for possession is still on, we also sought pattas in name of woman.

The focus on ensuring land for single women continued and in Ganjam district, Odisha 204 received land pattas in their name. Intensive efforts were facilitated in remote areas on land and on the process of accessing the same. Interface meetings were organised at all levels (local and state) for reclaiming land for the most marginalized. Land mapping were facilitated with the help of resource person and GPS machine with greater involvement of community.

The process of identification of land, dialogue with officials, *gram sabha* proved to be very empowering process for the community specially women members. Through our partners, we have ensured that the landless apply (both for individual and community) for homestead, agriculture and forest land as per the state level schemes.

### **Forming Women's Collectives**

ActionAid India and its partners were instrumental in organising 1540 new women collectives for various purposes. Some of the key women collectives were formed for claiming access over land and natural resources. Some of the collectives are formed for economic entitlements for diversified livelihood. Some of the collectives were engaged to attain food security by better crop yield through sustainable agriculture, value addition, processing, creating value chains and helping its members to get better price for their produce.

A total of 40 women collectives in Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal are involved in fisheries. Social conscientisation process was adopted to organize women collectives where they understood the process of marginalization. Regular meetings and trainings were

facilitated to keep them informed about their entitlements in order to access their rights and entitlements.

In Tamil Nadu, where we engage with the fisher women community, FLLRC network along with various partners have developed Policy notes on fishing with a focus on women which has been presented to state level planning commission.

ActionAid Bhubaneswar regional office developed a paper which looked into the theoretical aspects of land of women. A brief field work was facilitated to do situation analysis of the status of the single women including their experiences of violence and violation of their rights, their participation in decision making bodies (state institutions or community led institutions) and their claim over means of production - to identify different categories under which single women can be defined.

Findings of the field study were shared with other civil society organisations, academia, activists, state women's commission, legal experts and Government of Odisha. This helped to develop an appropriate and relevant definition of single women in the context of land.

We are actively using the Odisha experience as a template and pursuing the same in 2 more states of Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh.

**Mahila Kisaan Manch:** Regional colleagues and other LRP partners also actively engaged to make in making Mahila Kisaan Manch (MAKAM), a national level platform for women farmers vibrant from local to national level.

Our LRP partners Gramya with Anandi, and GWLO have been playing crucial role to make it wider and effective. Efforts are also on to think through the possibility of bringing in a new initiative to support women farmer rights. This is at an initial stage and discussions are ongoing. It will try to incorporate demands related to farming, forest rights, Rights of Pastoralists and fisher rights. The National Commission for Women has also shown interest in the issue.

We continue making efforts to recognize women as farmers. National level platform for women farmers MAKAM is facilitated by our partners along with other civil society organisations to strengthen this process to enable women across social groups to get ownership to livelihood resources and access to government support and services.

### **C. PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS**

**Survey and compensation for crop loss in Bundelkhand, Uttar Pradesh :** as per government estimates, farmers lost entire crop in 89.4 lakhs hectares of land, amounting to around Rs. 41.73 lakhs due to unseasonal rains and hailstorm in Uttar Pradesh in early 2016. ActionAid and its partners raised the issue of irregularities in the survey conducted and compensation provided to the affected families by the local administration. As a result, another survey was commissioned and compensation was provided as per the norms decided by the government in many places especially in our LRP areas in Bundelkhand. So far, 70% families in our LRP areas in Bundelkhand have received compensation for crop failure and rest of the families are in the process of receiving.

### **Sustainable Agriculture**

In 2015-2016, we continued our efforts for regular capacity building on entitlements related to agriculture (soil test, subsidy seeds, vermi compost pits, etc) and training on organic practices in our operational villages. More and more women farmers are encouraged and motivated to come for training and practice the same. We also facilitated refresher courses

and farmer to farmer interaction in 2015-2016 for more motivation in practicing CRSA and spreading the message. In Andhra Pradesh and Telangana 237 farmers practiced sustainable agriculture in 332 acres of land. 4599 kilograms of traditional seed were distributed to 511 farmers in 21 villages for khareef season by ActionAid partners. 5000 litres jeevamrutam (indigenous fertiliser) was prepared for next season cultivation.

Smt Gugulothu Kamamma received “Best Farmer Award-2015-2016” from the State Government. Motivated by the trainings and handholding support by ActionAid partner Pilupu she had adopted SRI method in cultivating rice and got good yield for the past 3 years.

In addition to capacitating and building knowledge, we continued work with women and men farmers to form associations/collectives/groups with an objective of uniting them to register cooperatives to avail schemes jointly and assertion of rightful identity of farmer by women. Kisan Mela is regularly organised by our partners to promote Sustainable Agriculture, organic fertilizers and pesticides, use of traditional seeds, promote fishery and aquaculture, strengthening of Kisan Sansadhan Kendra and reduce the dependency of farmers on the market. The Mela are spearheaded by senior farmers. In Bihar, 181 farmers from 22 villages of 6 panchayat organised the mela in which 77 were women farmers.

With the objectives of increasing nutritional intake among women and children a special initiative was conducted in 23 villages of Sundargarh district. First of all the interested women were identified and oriented on the idea of collective farming. Then they identified common land and took that on lease to start farming in a group. Thus 23 Groups of Women formed their collectives. They have planned on what types of crops of corns and vegetables to grow and how to share the labour as well as agricultural produce. They have been trained on various methods of organic farming.

It has been recorded that there is an increase in both quantum of production as well as productivity per acre of land through organic farming. There is also an increase in the consumption of organically produced corns and vegetable by the members of the collectives.

In some collectives the women have got financial benefit after selling their surplus vegetables. 673 women farmers in 1750 acres of land in 21 villages produce food grains millets & lentils through sustainable agriculture practices in Nisarga LRP, Andhra Pradesh. A total of 100 acres of land converted to organic by 100 farmers (24 women and 76men) in 10 villages in ASDS LRP.

In 2015-2016, we partnered with 48 NGOs, social movements and platforms on the issue of agrarian crisis and moving towards alternative as CRSA. Our contribution was valued at many platforms of small holder farmers. We continued our efforts in bringing women farmer’s contribution in all our programmes and processes. We continued our efforts in bringing technical organisation like CSA to train and support smaller organisations in promoting CRSA.

A Comparative Assessment of South and East Asia Public Provisioning for Smallholder Farmers and Food Security was jointly done by AA Vietnam and Jawaharlal Nehru University of Delhi. In India, the study was conducted among 275 families in 29 villages of 4 states, i.e. Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha and Jharkhand. Policy briefs for each of the countries and a detailed report for both countries are complete.

### **Addressing Farmer’s suicide**

In Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh, we have been witnessing farmers committing suicide due to drought, volatile market conditions and the ever increasing input prices in agriculture which have led to high levels of indebtedness among farmers. This has led men to mortgage

their assets and committing suicide leaving women without any access to resources, assets and entitlements. Several partner organisations which included Apeksha, Kisan Mitra and the CBO Ekal Mahila Kisan Sanghthana, were able to secure an increase in the amount of monthly pension of widows up to Rs. 1000/- and a formal GR was issued in process. The chief Minister gave the assurance to give the priority to farm widows in Govt. recruitment.

In order to address the issue, a two days State Level Policy Workshop was organised in Sambalpur, Odisha. This was a brain storming workshop-“Krushak Manas Manthan” program of the leaders of Western Odisha Farmers Coordination Committee, Sambalpur and Krushak VikashManch, Padampur. The workshop was attended by more than 75 farmers from 14 districts.

In Lucknow, the issue was raised at local level and State level by organizing press conferences, meeting with government officials, public meeting and social engagement at various levels. As a result of this, government accepted the cases of suicide and deaths due to crop failure in the State and announced compensation of Rs 700000 to each deceased family. Another issue addressed related to farmer’s suicide was insurance coverage of crop failure. This issue was raised in meeting with Government officials. As a result of this, Government issued instructions to all the banks and insurance companies to make payment to the affected farmers at the earliest. We regularly followed up with the insurance companies and state government. As a result of this, Rs 398.15 crores were distributed to 6.36 lakhs farmers across the state.

In Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, 95 farmer suicide families got an ex-gratia of Rs.150000/- by each (under G.O.421). 39 students from farmer suicide families got support from other sources.

#### **Conversion of forest habitation to revenue village**

A data base of forest habitations within our project area in Odisha has been developed and shared with the officer on special duty of the ST Development Department in charge of Forest Rights Act.

The department has agreed to have a joint meeting to develop common plan of action to initiate the process of conversion of these forest habitations to revenue village as per the provision under FRA.

### **D. INTERVENTIONS TO PROMOTE PEOPLE’S ACCESS TO NATURAL RESOURCES, COMMONS**

#### **Accessing community rights over forest**

In the year 2015-2016 partner organizations in Bargarh, Ganjam, Kandhamal, Koraput, Nuapada, Rayagada, Sambalpur and Sundargarh districts facilitated 6868 STs and OTFDs households in claiming individual land under Forest Rights Act out of which 409 are women headed. 3150 individual claims also got recognized out of which 212 are by women

For facilitating the claims number of capacity building programmes for the forest rights committee members were organized.

## **Tribal access lands**

Aranya Moola Budakattugala Okkuta, the forest dwelling indigenous communities' federation is working for the effective implementation of Forest Right Act.

The Tattakere women's group which is an active part of the federation decided to raise awareness regarding the Nagarhole forest with the local administration. The Additional Chief Secretary in the Forest, Ecology and Environment department and the local DC soon visited the area and ordered for a survey of the forests after which 2 acres each were provided to 75 tribal families in 2015-2016. Motivated by their success, members of other tribal communities in neighbouring areas have started similar process. Under Tribal Sub Plan, people's plans from 3 hamlets were submitted to the IPDP and 1.5 crores have been sanctioned for these approved plans.

Through continuous efforts in Maharashtra, we have got approval for community claims over forest land. In one village alone Hiramambai, community claim of 197.7 hectares was sanctioned.

**Regenerating Lakes by community members from our LRP operational areas** through interventions by the people's efforts led to a judgement by the Karnataka High Court to remove encroachments of the 85 acre Sarakki Lake in South

Bangalore. ActionAid India is an active member of coalition for right to water. One-third of the lake was encroached upon. Sustained follow up led to the first of its kind clearance of common property resources all across the city of Bangalore. A special legislative committee has been set up to look into the issue of encroachment of lakes and other common property resource all across the state.

Women groups and collectives were instrumental in spreading the information on land and natural resources in adjacent villages. Women were organised to protect and access the commons like ponds, grazing land (pastures), forests, other water bodies etc. Village development plans were made by active participation of women for protecting and accessing village commons.

One of the most important factors discussed at these trainings is the changing climatic conditions and its effect. So based on community's concern, a study was facilitated by natural resource hub on climate change and captured in a document -" Community Concerns on Climate Change which reflects community views on climate change and its impact on them.

## **E. INFORMAL SECTOR WORKERS – Working People's Process**

ActionAid has been working with people in the informal economy (PIE) for over two decades in both rural and urban areas. The focus of our work has been not only on securing minimum wages, better living and working conditions, medical insurance to cover the occupational health hazards, but also on housing, insurance, pension, healthcare, maternity entitlements and education for children.

ActionAid has played crucial role in setting up a Secretariat for coordinating the efforts of various CSOs, organisations working on developing 'Working Peoples' Charter (WPC)' which is an attempt at national level to look into the issues of informal workers from different segments including homebased workers related to decent wages, social security, decent working conditions. ActionAid India is in the process of building labour solidarity forum- to create a unique group of academia, researchers, lawyers, worker organisations, groups and individuals practicing workers' issues, to strengthen wider solidarity.

The forum supported in advancing and contributing to the engagement of informal sector workers through knowledge creation, publishing stories and actively participating in ongoing interventions. A delegation from AA along with Labour solidarity group met the National

Union Cabinet Minister for Labour & Employment and submitted the recommendations on draft labour code developed by the government and also submitted the working people's charter inputs to the Minister, Labour department higher officials and peoples representatives.

The charter process has been successful in contributing and building initiatives focusing on the thematic area.-Domestic workers and Universal Social Security for workers in the informal Sector which was chosen by the wider group. The efforts of the charter group has rejuvenated the existing work and has initiated a national initiative- Social Security Initiative, which demands minimum universal social security and a national policy for the domestic workers.

Citizens' Rights Collective (CiRiC) has undertaken a study to set the evidentiary foundation for Labour Law Changes Programme, an initiative aimed at mapping a way forward for strengthening labour protections. The study analyses the evolving labour protection environment in India with regard to legislative reforms, workers' needs and social demands. The research methodology was designed through a participative procedure which consisted of various consultations with different communication personnel, worker organisations, lawyers etc. Our work on the issue provided us with an opportunity to organise a panel discussion at the "57<sup>th</sup> Indian Society for Labour Economics-ISLE", Srinagar, one of the prestigious academic conferences of the country.

At the ground level, workers charter process strengthened through **13 central and local level workers' charter meetings** in eight major cities where all most all the central level worker organisations joined to make efforts for the implementation of social security act.

For Instance the Lucknow regional office and Vigyan Foundation have been leading initiative on the issues of unorganized sector workers for the past few years, through Asangathit Kaamgar Manch and its partner/support organizations, community groups and individuals. We organized a similar initiative this year too.

While working on issues women informal sector worker, the issue of unpaid work emerged strongly. **Understanding unpaid labour of women** in a country which has the highest rates of underemployment and the context of forced, caste based and bonded labour has been one of the key learnings of 2015-2016 within ActionAid India's programmatic and policy engagements. The increasing in-formalisation of workers and withdrawal of state from social infrastructure has increased the burden of work on women and girls. At the same time the process of recognition of this work in larger discourse is encouraging and Actionaid has been recognised as one of the key stake holders in it.

The deepened engagement with the informal urban community revealed that the community members were looking for options that will enhance their skills which in turn will help them enhance their opportunities for income and a better livelihood. Hence in 2015-2016, we planned and executed modules for vocational training for people in informal economy in 15 states.

## **F. PEOPLE'S VISION OF THE CITY (PVoC)**

PVoC is a programme initiated by ActionAid, along with programmatic support from Citizen's Rights Collective (CiRiC), ActionAid India's Knowledge Hub on Urban Poverty, that involves consensus- building around a holistic vision of the city, by constructing a multi-level dialogue among the broadest cross- section of citizens, bringing out different perspectives- social, economic, and environmental, and of the often conflicting imaginations of different sections of the citizenry.

The effort was initiated as a pilot-programme in Bhubaneswar and Bolpur towns. City level team has been formed in these 2 cities, and regular meetings with various stakeholders such as – representatives from various occupational groups, senior citizens forum, transgender communities, banking sector, private builders etc. have been held.

There is a general consensus building in the 2 cities sustainable and equitable city plans need to be built through majority participation. The teams in the cities are planning for next steps of formulating the draft plan.

Work on the entitlements of the urban poor have found strong connect between local-national and international in 2015-2016. This year, we have focused on shelter, housing and right to dignified work of the urban poor in many of urban LRPs. This emerged in the form of the Working People's Charter mentioned and the People's vision of the City which is being implemented in 7 cities as an alternative visioning process. AA India has been invited to be part of UN Habitat III processes and is a lead partner of the World Urban Campaign

## **G. URBAN ACTION SCHOOL**

Urban Action School (UAS) is an effort to bring together academia, bureaucracy and activists to understand the urban discourse and commenced in 2015-2016. This year the urban action school conducted a 3 week long advanced course (from 15<sup>th</sup> Nov to 5<sup>th</sup> Dec 2015) for urban policy practitioners along with a seminar on Sustainable Cities and a short course on undertaking a baseline survey to understand the current scenario of labour and their needs for skill development.

The flagship course was organised by the Citizen's Rights Collective (CiRiC) the urban poverty knowledge activist hub of ActionAid India, in collaboration with the Institute of Public Enterprise (IPE) and the South Institute for Public Policy and Action (SIPPA), at the IPE campus in Osmania University, Hyderabad, and Telangana. With 32 participants in the year 2015-2016, from diverse backgrounds such as lawyers, journalists, activists, urban planners and designers, researchers, individuals working in the development sector NGO's and government officials the Urban Action School saw an eclectic mix of participants particularly with a zeal and enthusiasm to transform the society for the better. International and national experts (in person or on skype) were the resource panel for the course. The theme of this year's course was 'Urbanization and Informal Sector related to alternative models of development, Public Finance, on Public Services such as Health, Education along with Housing; Gender and Feminism, Caste, Class, and Social Justice; Methodology adopted for the course included classroom lectures in person as well as via skype, group discussions, field visits to relevant areas in the city of Hyderabad, visit to shelters for the homeless.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY II: DEMOCRATIZATION OF SOCIETY AND ECONOMY AT ALL LEVELS

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We continued our efforts to strengthen the communities we work with, build their consciousness around participatory governance and democracy. We realise that it is important to expand socially innovative strategies for inclusion of vulnerable communities in decision making. The process of bottom-up planning in the form of village development plans continued to establish the power of people’s planning and decision-making. We conducted leadership trainings for young women and men to build their knowledge on issues of social exclusion and entitlements. The idea has been to promote people’s alliances for asserting their democratic space towards a just society and economy.

We continued our trainings programmes with community leaders and PRI members from marginalized communities.. Glimpses of the work is presented below.

IMPACT IN NUMBERS	
Total number of villages where micro-level planning were facilitated	5499
Total number of micro-level plans approved by Gram Sabhas	1603
Total number of social audits facilitated at local institutions	112
Total number of people’s watch groups supported to monitor services offered by the government	757
Total number of PRI members trained on aspects of governance	859

**Village Development Plans** ActionAid and partner organisations were involved in strengthening the community groups and their participation in the village assemblies and local governance structure through community leadership and building capacities of the members of Panchayat Raj (local governance) Institutions, with the objective of intensive training on various political and social issues.

The process of formulation of Village Development Plans was facilitated in 334 villages in 6 states across the country. Efforts were made to sensitize and capacitate the local government officials to support community planning process for preparing village development plan. Community mobilization and awareness was initiated to improve the implementation of schemes like Public distribution system, mid-day meal, ICDS, NREGA, etc. in project areas which has resulted in higher number of people accessing these schemes.

We have also facilitated **social audits** in 52 panchayat to improve panchayat’s services and to make them accountable for delivery of public services. The budget analysis was conducted in various villages by the community groups. ActionAid representative from the Land & Livelihoods Hub who is a member of the State Resource Group for the pilot social audit in Jharkhand was given the responsibility of state observer to

oversee the process of social audit and provide hand-holding support to the team. A total of 5 Gram Panchayats was covered under this pilot social audit.

ActionAid also supported the West Bengal Audit Society in identifying local partners for Social Audit processes and helped them in designing the tools for carrying out social audit in the state. Our partners are now members of district level social audit committees. We have also facilitated community led social audits in 5 places in West Bengal.

We have also encouraged community monitoring of the implementation of various schemes at the grassroots level with the help of leaders of the CBOs. The Information Resource Centres have been set up in 96 Panchayats across states that provide information of schemes and entitlements to the communities and support in increasing the access to the same. In Madhya Pradesh, village development plans were developed in 140 villages which were all approved by the local authority.

The tribal alliance 'BAG' and women alliance 'GAGA' in Birbhum, West Bengal set examples in realising people's participation in local governance. In CSRA operational villages, the tribal alliance facilitated preparations of village plans before the Gram Sansad Planning schedule and submitted those plans in 95 Gram Sansads.

**Working on Nomadic Tribes (NT) and De-notified Tribes (DNT)** Our work with DNT and NT issues started with a meeting of social workers, academicians and community was held in Ajmer, Rajasthan in collaboration with our Democratization Hub to delineate an agenda for taking up issues faced by the de-notified tribes (DNTs) and communities settled in the rural as well as urban areas of Rajasthan. State Minister for Department of Women and Child Development, Government of Rajasthan was also present at the meeting.

In Amravati in Maharashtra about 2000 people raised the issue for housing, livelihood and education. As a result the District Collector of Amravati passed an order to provide benefits to Pardhi pockets under the housing scheme. 120 households were sanctioned houses subsequently.

**Community Leadership Development:** We continued to focus on building community leadership across our regions for young women and men on values, orienting them on various pro-poor legislations and public welfare schemes and entitlements so that they could ensure smooth functioning in their respective areas.

ActionAid initiated a community leadership development programme on a pilot basis to institutionalize our efforts of strengthening community leadership at grass roots level. In 2015-2016, 70 youth belonging to 6 regions were trained on diverse issues including issues related to their livelihoods, women's rights, socio-economic aspects etc. This pilot programme was organized jointly with School for Democracy in Rajasthan.

In Orissa, three-phase community leadership programme was organized on resource governance, and labour issues. About 95 community leaders participated in this programme.

In Madhya Pradesh, we have organised two leadership programmes.

In the NE region in 6 of our LRPs are functional, the LRP partners have trained more than 615 village leaders from 226 villages through awareness programmes and have reached to more than 10000 persons in the project villages.

## Impact of Trainings

In Andhra Pradesh, RTI was used as an effective tool to expose a big scam. While State government was paying compensation to those whose land was acquired, payments of nearly a crore were made in fake names. A case was filed against government officials. People have demanded a proper enquiry in this scam.

We have also encouraged community monitoring of the implementation of various schemes at the grassroots level with the help of leaders of the CBOs. Information Resource Centres have been set up in 96 Panchayats across five states that provide information of schemes and entitlements to the communities and support in increasing their access.

**Facilitating Panchayat Extension to Schedule Areas (PESA) :** in continuation to our efforts across many states, we have focused on capacity building of the panchayat members and community leaders for effective implementation of PESA and regular gram sabhas. This has in turn resulted into a better implementation of employment guarantee and social security schemes in these areas. In some cases, these efforts have taken a further step and proceeded with micro-planning at village level.

In Andhra Pradesh, 1123 Yanadi Development Community meetings were organised in 102 villages of Nellore district on issues of MGNREGA, PDS, housing, education, child marriages, etc. Efforts were also taken to organise Yanadi tribes and make demands for their inclusion in Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG), which will help them access tribal sub-plans, special grants, loans and many other entitlements including land.

**Democratisation of both customary and modern governance:** In North-east, we work towards democratisation of both customary and modern institutions in their structure as well as in processes. In Chandel district of Manipur, 5 women become members of village level traditional governance bodies in our LRP villages and one woman became member of the Kuki Inpi, the apex body of Kuki community. In our operational villages of CPD in Mammit district of Mizoram, 54 women contested for the Village Council, of which 20 women were chosen.

In this region most of our partner organisations have become members of government committees, and are being able to voice the concerns of the poor and influence the decisions of the district-level decision making bodies.

**Participation in Governance:** In Sadiya district of Assam, the Office of the Block Development Officer entrusted our partner 'NEADS' to prepare the *Intensive Participatory Planning Exercise-II* of villages of Sadiya block under the Panchayat & Rural Development Department, Assam. The organization has also been instrumental in preparation of the Sadiya Sub-Divisional Disaster Management Plan.

In Maharashtra, we have tried to make Gram Sabhas effective and regular with increased participation of women. As a result, exclusive meetings of women are organised a day before the gram sabha and issues are then presented in Gram Sabha. The gram panchayats have also passed resolution on how to use 10% to 15% funds of Gram panchayat on women's issues as per new norms.

In Madhya Pradesh, our initiative has helped in increasing participation of women in

panchayats. At the village level, the number of panchayat representatives is 1142 and of which 479 are women. Likewise, 95 sarpanches chosen out of total 214 are women.

**Challenging Untouchability:** Our efforts in Madhya Pradesh have led to 85 villages becoming free from untouchability practices. Moreover, 90 schools have been declared discrimination-free.

In Andhra Pradesh, an initiative was organized in 51 tribal habitations to raise awareness about the state government's order which mandated 150 days of workers in drought prone areas. Delays in payments under MGNREGA have been a serious issue in these areas. Moved by the efforts the government released more than 38 lakhs of Rupees. Similar initiatives have also led to release of 1.28 Lakhs of rupees in other places of Andhra Pradesh.

**Accessing disability funds:** In continuation to our efforts for effective utilization of 3% disability budget, ActionAid supported community leader through her continuous follow-up with the district administration in Tumkur, Karanataka was able to ensure that the government re-allocated 2.76 crores of rupees for 2015-2016 out of the total unspent money during earlier two years for the welfare of persons with disabilities. An amount of Rs 3.77 crores was unspent during 2013-15 by Tumkur Zilla Panchayat and City Municipality.

Many applications of persons with disabilities on income generation, aids and appliances, surgeries, education support, etc. have been received by the concerned district officials and are to be sanctioned before the close of financial year. About 2500 persons with disabilities are likely to benefit from this amount. Additionally, Rs. 1.18 crores from 9 town municipalities have already been utilised for the benefit of persons with disability.

### **Helping Build Infrastructure in Villages**

In many villages village infrastructure got improved through our efforts at improving local governance. Paudi Bhuyan Samaj mobilised Rs 12.00 lakhs for construction of school building in Ekpadi village, Orissa. Around 230 families linked with 'Mo Badi' project under Paudi Bhuiyan Development Authority were supported to develop kitchen gardens. About 25 Solar based water pumps were established in 25 villages to meet drinking water needs of 600 families. 164 households were provided with water supply facility in Orissa.

Through consistent efforts and engagement with administration in Madhya Pradesh, 651 institutions including PDS schools, schools, Anganwadi centres and Health centres were made functional. In Maharashtra because of the Gram Sabhas and increased women participation, two bore wells were fixed, 67 people benefited from Gharkul scheme and have now a good house to live in; one community hall was built and 5 roads have been built.

### **Working for implementation of Scheduled Caste sub Plan (SCSP), Tribal Sub Plan (TSP)**

Sub Plan is allocation of certain percentage of state budget exclusively for Dalits and tribals as per their population percentage for their overall empowerment. In 6 states (Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and Karnataka) AA partners have analysed, the sub plan allocation by state and the expenditure and disseminate simple fact sheets in order to build, engage with civil society support for sub plans.

In Andhra Pradesh and Telangana states there is already a legislation in place for the same and crores of rupees were allocated but its implementation at grassroots was not satisfactory. Around 100 community leaders were trained on the objectives, programmes, schemes, plans and budget allocations, strategies, activities in the Act and also about gaps and challenges in implementation. A state level meeting was organised with communication representatives in

Hyderabad to highlight various gaps in the implementation and issues of violations of the SCSP/TSP Act.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY III –WOMEN’S ANDGIRLS’ RIGHTS

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In 2015-2016, as we continued to deepen our engagement with women from the marginalized communities with a clear understanding that women within these communities are far more vulnerable.

There were several initiatives promoting women’s collectives that provide economic, social and political independence to women. Efforts to build awareness about Sexual Health and Reproductive Health issues among adolescents and young women continued, while we also initiated steps to include men and boys in all our interventions to further women’s rights.

This year saw us moving into engaging with the issues of single women and girl children. We further moved towards better understanding on women’s access to decent workand particularly on better understanding of unpaid work. We continue to scale up our work on the issues of engagement of our work with various state governments on the setting up on One stop Crisis Centres to address the issues of violence against women (VAW).

Strengthening women alliance, establishing identities of women as worker, farmer and collectivize women through economic activities are some of highlights of this year’s work.

There was support, facilitation and promotion of different initiatives i.e. violence against women, One Billion Rising, single women, women’s access over land , declining sex ratio under theumbrella of Beti Zindabad.

IMPACT IN NUMBERS	
Number of men and boys sensitised on women’s issues	3763
Number of girls trained on Sexual Health	1338
Number of women and girls rescued from trafficking	1478
Number of survivors of violence counselled at resource centres supported by ActionAid	28924
Number of women provided skills training (craft, weaving, zardosi work, driving)	1499

### Addressing Violence Against Women

ActionAid India recognizes the importance of addressing VAW and to ensure that the survivors have access to justice within the legal framework of the country. It further pursues with the government to ensure that the survivors have easy access to institutions which penalize the perpetrators.

AA spread awareness of the need for One Stop Crisis Centres (OSCC) in 4 states of Uttar Pradesh (called Asha Jyoti Kendra ), Uttarakhand, Bihar and WB. In 2015-2016, 2 OSCCs were started in UP in December 2015-2016 and rest became functional on

International Women's Day 2016. In Uttarakhand state, through collaboration with other CSOs we sought operationalisation of 4 OSCCs in 4 districts.

In Bihar, 1 OSCC was started with local government support so that a template of a local Crisis Centre across all Panchayats rather than one per district is demonstrated. Mahila Salah Evam Suraksha Kendra- Established in Wajitpur Saidat panchayat in Biddupur Block of Vaishali district.

In UP and Uttarakhand states, AA built the capacities of around 300 government personnel who deal cases of violence against women like Police, Health, ICDS, WCD officials, through series of trainings. AA was part of finalizing Standard Operating Procedures in running OSCCs.

Our flagship OSCC in Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh state running since 2014 continued to be accessed by women from across the state. A total of 2475 cases were registered and 9917 persons called the helpline out of which 111 cases were received from our partners areas referred to by our CBO partners. A total of 2990 women were provided counselling and 40 women were provided psychiatric help.

In 12 cases exemplary judgements were given by the Judges in favour of the women survivors. 1298 women were provided legal aid, short term shelter support to 33 women survivors and long term/permanent shelter support was provided to 13 women survivors. 85 women survivors were linked to various NGOs for Livelihood support and 257 women survivors were linked with government women empowerment scheme. 21 women survivors are continuing their education upon our encouragement and another 47 are learning various vocational skills.

In UP, 126 cases were registered in 2015-2016. 2400 women were provided counselling, 592 women survivors were provided continuous counselling, 40 women were provided psychiatric help. 163 cases were registered with Police of which 59 cases reached proceedings stage in fast track courts now.

### **Pro-Women Policy Action**

In Uttarakhand state, from our Girl Child draft Policy, the government has adopted some of the recommendations submitted by AA and its partners in 'Women Empowerment Policy', released recently. In Telangana and Andhra Pradesh states AA has developed a draft Girl Child Policy and submitted to bureaucrats and peoples representatives for consideration.

In Bihar state also many of the AA's and partners' recommendations were considered and included in the Mahila Swasakthikaran (Women Empowerment) Policy by the government.

### **Working with Single women**

AA realises that women are constantly marginalised and the state of single women is even worse.. This was reiterated by the CSO, researchers and analysts in a "National Workshop on Developing Policies for Ensuring Rights of Single Women", a programme organised by ActionAid in Bhubaneswar. This was attended by civil society organisations, government representatives and the single women.

In Gujarat, AA through partners and networks identified 600 single women across 9 districts,

who do not have a house. District collectors in these districts have started taking action by verifying and prioritizing these women for benefiting under housing. In Gujarat, the single women have also challenged their being excluded from attending marriages and wearing colourful clothes.

In Ganjam district of Odisha alone, 29 single women collectives have been promoted. The members of the collectives meet once in a month and discuss various issues and concerns. This also created a space for the single women to share the issues and experience of their personal life and get support of the members. Besides that woman members have been engaging with tehsil administration to secure land for the single women by facilitating physical possession land and further linkage with social security schemes. With 209 homestead land titles to single women in Chikiti Tehsils in 2015, ActionAid in close collaboration with district administration in Ganjam so far has facilitated homestead land titles to 2388 single women and out of that 2250 women have got housing support from government.

In Maharashtra, Ekal Mahila Kisan Sanghatan is working to resolve the issues of farm widows and single women from village to national level. Resolution for gender equality and zero tolerance to violence against women were adopted in 15 gram panchayats on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2015.

Ekal Mahila Adhikar Parishad (Conclave on of single women) was organized by Stree Gavki, in collaboration with Disha Kendra, Maharashtra on the occasion of the death anniversary of eminent rights activist and social worker, Mahatma Jyotiba Phule. More than 1500 women from Karjat block came together to present their issues related to health, ration, employment, pension and domestic violence at the Sabha Graha in Karjat city. People's representatives attended the conclave and issues were raised. These included need for increase in pension under Sanjay Gandhi Niradhar Yojana from Rs.600 to Rs.2500 per month, free education for children of single women and access to various entitlements. Similarly, altogether 1458 single women have organized in Nellore, Chittoor and Nalgonda district in Telangana state.

### **Workshop on witch branding:**

A two day National Level workshop on witch branding organized with the support of UNFPA at Bhubaneswar on 23<sup>rd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> Nov. The objective behind this workshop were manifold and included -highlighting the severity of issues related to witch branding in terms of sharing casestudies, identifying vulnerable districts, analysing the source its manifestation and discussing on the various provision cited in The Odisha Prevention of Witch Hunting Act. The primary expectation was to engage further with Government for developing appropriate schemes based on the provision given in the Act. A book containing an analysis of the situation with recommendations and 24 case studies covering different parts of Odisha was released during this occasion.

### **Engagement with women related laws**

In Bihar state also many of the AA's and partners' recommendations were considered and included in the Mahila Swasakthikaran Policy by the government. The Girl Child Policy is being pursued with the relevant ministry in Uttar Pradesh . An important outcome has been that the government is referring to the policy for framing schemes meant for women and girls. In Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, AA has developed a draft Girl Child Policy and submitted

the same to the bureaucrats and peoples representatives.

### **Women's access over land and natural resources**

A national-level process on collectivizing women farmers to spread awareness about necessary policy changes has been initiated by women's groups in the name of MAKAAAM (Mahila Kisan Manch). ActionAid, along with partners, joined this to strengthen the process to enable women across different social groups to get ownership to livelihood resources and access to government support and services.

As a part of the Network, Gramya our LRP partner has initiated the study in Telangana in four villages, four blocks and four districts to understand the status of land holding of women. This builds on our earlier work on strengthening access of women to land. It has initiated discussion with Swaminathan Foundation to introduce pro-women farmer National Legislation along with initial meeting with NCW Chair Person. Pilupu, our partner organisation conducted survey in 14 villages and identified 102 tenant farmers and applied for Loan Eligibility Cards for 80 farmers, out of 60 have received the loan eligibility cards.

### **Women Collectivization**

Women farmers from different communities are coming forward to form collectives to negotiate larger agenda of space, share, income etc. Collective farming in some of the LRP areas has set example of manifold benefits for the community there by shifting power and deconstructing myths. Women are not considered to be farmer inspite of doing more than 50% of the farming work. Women contribute significantly to agricultural production in India. Yet, they are not formally recognized as farmers which deprives them of access to credits, compensation and relief benefits offered by the government.

Important learning from collective process of farming is that poorer women and the landless women even can get benefit through this. As per the terms and conditions even the landless women can get equal share. It is also observed that the very producers of vegetables keep aside certain portions for consumption at their respective household lives, and then they go for selling the surplus in the market to get some additional income. Thus it is, observed that the nutrition status as well as the income status have been increased among the members of the collectives.

### **Strengthening Fisher's collectives**

Bringing together the learning of all fisher-folk work, the decision to take forward leadership schools has been implemented. 35 women from Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and Odisha (5 states) participated and it is 1<sup>st</sup> phase of 3 phase training programme for 7days. All these women who attended were grass root and strong leaders from the community. In this phase they were oriented on building their understanding on issues and how to address them.

### **Study on post industrialization and impact on women**

A study was carried out and report was released on the socio, economic and political status of women postindustrial intervention in 15 villages of district Jharsuguda of Odisha. The study

highlighted on increasing violence on women, decreasing space for income generation including shrinking access to forest and land resources. A follow up intervention plan has been developed for the study area.

### **Sensitizing communication personnel for eliminating gender discrimination**



All India Communication Educators Conference (AIMEC) was organized<sup>th</sup> at Jaipur on 4 April 2015. With continued involvement with the conference organizers, ActionAid Jaipur Regional office could create various opportunities to talk of breaking the stereotypical image of women portrayed in society. In the plenary supported by ActionAid it was emphasized that the issues related to women and the image of women

portrayed in society needs to undergo a positive change and must move beyond commodification and also from portraying sexualised image of women. Communication should be used to bring a positive change in the society's perception of women. The Beti Zindabad working towards a discrimination and violence free space for women and ensuring equal opportunities was also shared. Two of the best papers were awarded with Beti Zindabad Trophy in the plenary session on Role of Communication – Elimination of Gender based discrimination.

### **Initiative against opening of liquor outlets in Karnataka**

ActionAid's partner SWARAJ has been continuously engaged with Karnataka State Women's Commission, Women and Child Welfare Department and Excise Department to take necessary action to ban the sale of liquor in the state. Despite of their earlier statements of Excise Minister and Chief Minister against opening the liquor shops, they announced of opening 349 new liquor outlets across the state. SWARAJ and other women's group raised serious objections against this move and wrote to all people's representatives, discussed this issue with District Collector, a fax was sent to CM and the Excise Minister. SWARAJ continuously worked against the opening liquor outlets and raised their objection through a letter and individually interacted with 25 people's representatives. They assured of not supporting the state on such a move. In future, with the support of other women's movement SWARAJ is planning to launch a initiative on banning liquor sale.

### **Public meeting on the issues of Sex Workers**

With the support of ActionAid's partner, Janasahayog, a public meeting was organized by Sadana Mahila Sangha - sex workers collective in Bangalore along with Swati Mahila Sangha and Jyothi Mahila Sangha in Bangalore, to share their issues with the public and also among notable persons who would escalate the issue to the judiciary and raise voice against the harassment of sex workers. The State Women's Commission chairperson, the head of a recent committee set up to look into the status of sex workers in Karnataka, a senior advocate who

recommended that children of sex workers be given “backwards class” status attended the public meeting

5 women shared testimonies of their lives and the recent instances of violations against them. Manjunath Adde, senior journalist asked that the Women’s Commission take steps to sensitize police personnel. He also said that he would prepare a report of the meeting, which could then be used as a document to appeal to higher authorities.

### **Initiating dialogue on child marriage**

Partnering with UNICEF the process of initiating dialogue on the issue of child marriage culminated in a state report on analysis of secondary data, corroborated with findings of four regional consultations covering all the thirty districts and the findings of working group meetings was presented. UNICEF is expected to publish both the documents. The consultation was attended by members of Child Welfare Committees, District Child Protection Officers, Civil Society representatives, INGOs, Communication Persons, film Producers, PRI representatives etc.

In West Bengal, we continued with our efforts of making our operational villages child marriage free. Women Vigilance groups were formed in areas prone to trafficking linked to child marriages.

### **Public Meeting on women issue in district Maharajganj**

ActionAid and Musahar Seva Sansthan organized a Public meeting on women’s issues and exclusion of Musahar community in government schemes on 21st May 2015 at Maharajganj district. This event was first of its kind organized by Musahar community collectively to raise their issues before state and district government functionaries. Member and Chairperson of State Women’s Commission, Uttar Pradesh, chaired the Public Hearing.

### **Sexual and Reproductive health issues**

In the work with the Young Urban Women (YUW) across 3 Indian cities, we took up training of about 3000 girls on Sexual and Reproductive Health rights. These activity-based participatory trainings helped bust many myths and misconceptions. All young women expressed their interest to learn more about issues they rarely talked about openly about issues related to sexual and reproductive issues. This opened the platform for YUWs to actively seek information on what is normal, when to seek help and also get their doubts/myths cleared especially around menstruation. The mid-term review of this initiative revealed that about 23% of the women are now confident in discussing about SRHR issues with their partners and family members, while 64% now prefer to talk about it with their friends.

An innovative approach of expressing their thoughts on supposedly taboo topics of SRHR, 30 Young women have undergone training on “Grassroots comics” reflecting their issues as single page graphic posters which are being published and used for spreading awareness.

A national workshop on 'Who Cares' was organized for a better understanding of women's contribution in paid, unpaid and care work and on how to recognize, reduce redistribute the care work. Work was carried out at the grass root level to sensitize the community on the

unpaid care work done by women.

The midterm review of this in 3 cities revealed that, SRHR being a taboo topic that no one discussed, 83% of the young women now are recognizing and acknowledging the need for SRHR information and services and 67% of the women and girls are now accessing services (information, counselling) from resource centres/ health centres over the last one All young and adolescent girls after training program took oath on not to get married till they cross 18 years of age.

### **Gender Stereotyping in text books**

A Research study was carried out on 'gender discrimination & gender stereotyping in government text books' was carried out and the report revealed that more than 79% pictures used in text books depict gender stereotypes which reinforces the patriarchal values and attitudes in young children. An effort initiated in Karnataka state to revising the text books and remove the gender discriminated portions from the text books and also to include Gender studies as a subject in curriculum has been extremely successful in getting its demands met.

### **BETI ZINDABAD**

The initiative continued this year with stronger grounded action and better mainstreaming of girls and women's rights in each of our LRPs and project areas. Several actions across the country happened both spontaneously and in planned coordinated fashion, at community and state levels.

In all our 83 LRPs and also in 3 metro cities, young women, adolescent girls and young men were placed into groups. They were all oriented and sensitized on various patriarchal issues especially in 2015-2016, we focussed on women unpaid work and their contribution to the GDP and dialogues have been initiated at community level in recognizing and redistributing care work. These groups have counselled thousands of parents and prevented more than 800 child marriages.

Special women Gram Sabhas were demanded in several project villages and many were successful in having these separate women Gram Sabha to discuss and address issues of violence against women, child marriages, declining girl child ratio, domestic violence, girl child trafficking, witch branding etc.

### **Strengthening PCPNDT**

In 2015-2016, also AA India continued addressing the issue of sex selective abortions, by monitoring scanning centres and implementation of PCPNDT act. Many of our partners and staff are part of the Inspection committees set up by the government to inspect scanning centres.

Challenging the patriarchal institutions that legitimize discrimination and elimination of girl children, the Bale initiative hosted by ActionAid partner SWARAJ focuses on the effective implementation of PCPNDT Act of 1994. The initiative has resulted in formation of state supervisory board of PCPNDT in Karnataka. Swaraj is now working to make the board more representative by including civil society members in it. The initiative was also successful in the formation of district level supervisory boards in three districts.

### **Beti Zindabad Campaign organised across the states**

Various programmes and events were organised across the states as a part of Beti Zindabad campaign.

In Kolkata region the campaign covered 10 Districts from 14<sup>th</sup> November to 16<sup>th</sup> December 2015 and involved local administration, communication persons, CSO members, men, women and girls from the community. It focused upon on the issues of early marriage, trafficking and violence issues.

In Uttar Pradesh, the sports events was organized in the sports stadium, in Bareilly with the adolescent girls of the 8 villages of kishori groups.

**Awareness meetings were organised with adolescent girls** in the upper primary schools of eight villages in Bareilly district, UP. The discussions were held on gender discrimination, work distribution among boys and girls in the family, child marriages, right to education for girls and their participation in the decisions.

Programmes under Beti Zindabad Campaign were organised in **Assam, Manipur, Nagaland and Mizoram**. The campaign could reach to more than 3 lakhs peoples in LRP, NFs areas and beyond. The campaign was organised during Children Book Festival at Guwahati, Rass Festival at Nalbari, Hornbill Festival at Kohima and the 12<sup>th</sup> Adivasi Mahasabha at Kokrajhar. The campaign was promoted through Radio and TV Talk shows.

In Gujarat the 16 days campaign was launched at Laldarwaja, Ahmedabad on 25<sup>th</sup> November on the occasion of International Day for Elimination of Violence against Women. More than 200 women from four districts of Gujarat- Sabarkantha, Patan, Kutch and Ahmedabad participated. Various programmes including conventions, street plays, cultural events, games etc. were organised in various districts.

**Self-defense trainings conducted for adolescent girls living in the slum** Around 70 girls of slum area of Jankipuram, Lucknow in the age group of 10-20 years, are learning Taekwondo. The training sessions spread across 5 months, are being conducted by ActionAid partner Vigyan foundation as a part of Beti Zindabad campaign to empower girls. Sessions on the issue of gender equality, patriarchy, adolescent health, laws and act related to women and girls etc. are in process.

### **Mahila Sammelan Hamirpur district**



Under the Beti Zindabad campaign, 'Mahila Sammelan' was held in district Hamirpur Uttar Pradesh by ActionAid partner Samarth Foundation organized this event in Hamirpur. More than 700 women from 35 villages participated in the event. The women from various villages presented their issues and problems.

### **Engaging in 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' campaign**

Bhubaneswar regional office has been engaged with Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) programme along with district administration of Nayagarh. There were interventions in many schools and villages of the district to increase the understanding on adverse sex ratio. Anganwadi and ASHA were orientated with an objective to monitor pregnancy. As a part of regular collaboration and coordination with district administration helped in creating linkages with different government schemes for women. Panchayati raj institutions were involved in most of the villages. They were informed about the campaign of Beti Zindabad and Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP). Initiatives have been taken to make PRI institutions responsible

for the issue of violence against women which results in adverse sex ratio.

### **Gender Sensitization of Police**

ActionAid partnered with Uttar Pradesh Police (Mahila Samman Prakosht) for awareness generation and sensitization of youth, police and general population on the issue of violence against women and girls, and to provide support to survivors of violence in Uttar Pradesh. Sensitization programmes and self-defence workshops have been organized for adolescent girls living in slum areas of Lucknow and our project areas.

Sensitization programmes for police officers are being organized at zonal level so that they can respond positively to address the issue of violence against women and girls.

## **STRATEGIC PRIORITY IV -CHILDREN ARE RECOGNISED AS EQUAL CITIZENS:**

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We worked intensively on realizing education, nutrition, health, participation and protection of the most marginalized children, as they are among our key constituencies. We engaged in the discourse on key issues affecting the rights of children in India by engaging in a series of initiatives, ranging from influencing key policies such as on child labour inputting into externally commissioned research, as well as conducting small studies. We held policy workshops on Education Social Audits, and consultations with various civil society actors, academics, researchers, government bodies and ministries. We continued to focus upon empowering community groups, school management committees for making the schools functional and accessible to the children of the marginalized communities.

Children's groups were strengthened to ensure their right to participation and protection.

Total number of children enrolled in schools	11362
Number of schools monitored for basic amenities and quality of education	1222
Number of children suffering from malnutrition and later on linked to Nutritional Rehabilitation Centres and ICDS	535
Number of ICDS and Anganwadi v centres monitored for quality of service	801
Number of children's groups formed by our grassroots organisations	886
Number of children rescued from child labour and reconnected to schools	631

## **MACRO LEVEL INTERVENTIONS**

**Roundtable Consultation on Child Labour Prohibition Legislation** was organized on June 11, 2015 where a number of civil society groups, people's representatives, worker, and child leaders participated a day before the *World Day Against Child Labour*. They collectively urged the government to remove the provision to legitimize children working as child labour in family enterprises during out-of-school hours and during vacation, which is to be included in the proposed amendment to the *Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act (CLPRA)* approved by the Cabinet. There was a participation of about 78 persons from various civil society groups at the consultation. There were many people's representatives.

### **A Review Report on the Child Marriage situation in India**

A Review Report on the Child Marriage situation was carried out in collaboration with the Centre for Regional Studies of the Jawaharlal Nehru University. The main objective of this exercise was to assess the progress achieved, prospects and future challenges in the elimination of child marriages from India. Child Marriage has a two way relationship with education; on the one hand girl children can be protected by retaining in the school for a longer period, on the other hand girls pick up the confidence to fight child marriage and gender injustice as they get educated. Evidence suggests that while the age of marriage is generally on the rise, early marriage – marriage of children and adolescents below the age of 18 – is still widely practiced. Child marriages are the most vicious manifestations of the unequal power relations between females and males. Therefore, elimination of child marriages has been given a priority under Goal -5 targets of the recently adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Hub is in the process of publishing the review research and along with real life stories.

### **ActionAid invited to NHRC's core group on mental health**

ActionAid India was invited by NHRC to join its core group on mental health. ActionAid Association Executive Director Mr. Sandeep Chachra participated in the first meeting of the core group on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2015. The initiatives taken by NHRC in the area of mental health care were discussed and the group deliberated upon the future course of action required in regard to the petition filed by NHRC in the Supreme Court on the issue of mental health care in the country and came up with recommendations.

### **Good Practice Documentation**

The documentation of best practices in community management of Child Malnutrition was conducted FHF LRP in Shivpuri district. The objective was to conduct a situational analysis of child malnutrition in the field areas where the Community Nutrition Centres were running and also to document the key successes and challenges of the activities and finally come up with a community-based approach for the overall project. The report states that the nutritional programme, has been able to create nutrition leaders within the community groups, who been able to bring about a holistic approach especially focussing on food and social security aspect

### **National Stock taking convention on RTE implementation**

The RTE Forum organised the National Stock taking convention on RTE implementation on 21st March 2016. ActionAid was one of the organizing committee supported the process to

set the agenda as well organisation of the stock taking convention. It also facilitated the participation of partner organization in the convention. ActionAid contributed in the stock taking report and argued that while majority of children are still catered by government run schools, but there is an increasing trend in spread of private school at faster rate which is perpetuating already existing inequality within the society. They also highlighted subtle role played by various state government in enhancing privatisation of education through school closure, merger and introducing PPP mode etc.

The National stock taking report on RTE implementation was released by Mohammad Hamid Ansari, Vice President of India, who presided the meeting as chief guest. He raised some critical issues and explained the way forward for making RTE a reality. The convention concluded where the members of the forum resolved to work jointly to spread awareness for the need of higher allocation for elementary education, to protect the RTE Act from getting diluted and to prevent privatisation of education.

### **Right to Education on the ground**

9 core rights have been accepted in the Right to Education Act of India, but the implementation remains a big challenge especially in schools catering to the most marginalised. We have been working upon these in more than 700 schools in our operational areas. Capacity building programmes for School Monitoring Committees were conducted across the LRPs so that they could effectively monitor the school functioning, focussing upon children's access to schools, quality learning and education, adequate number of teachers and their regularity, safe and secure infrastructure and transparency in the schools.

Regular meetings and capacity building programmes were organised with children's group to strengthen their understanding on child issues focussing upon right to development, protection and participation. The children's group regular conducted their meetings and relinked the dropout children with the schools. The children's groups raised the issues of quality learning, infrastructure, punishing children, which were then raised by the community groups with the school administration. Due to the intervention of children's group and community groups the infrastructure of the schools has decidedly improved, including construction of new school buildings, school boundaries, kitchen shed, provision of water and sanitation facilities, etc. in several villages. The community groups formed by our LRPs monitored more than 800 schools, facilitated enrolment of children, dropouts, addressed the issues of discrimination, quality learning, lack of teachers, infrastructure, etc. in the schools.

**A national convention of members of SMCs** was organized by the *National RTE Forum* on November 31-December 1. The Child Rights Hub, ActionAid supported the process, both in terms of developing the concept and design of the workshop and by partly providing financial support along with other development agencies. The Child Rights hub in coordination with regional offices also facilitated the participation of SMC members belonging to operational areas of AAs partners from Assam, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Telangana in the convention. They shared how their efforts have helped in activating and improving the quality of education in schools. At the convention, a consensus evolved among the participating SMC members across states for working towards the formation of a national federation of SMCs. A common charter of demands was prepared and presented towards the end of the convention.

## **State level initiatives**

### **Solidarity with the Shiksha ka Sawal effort**

In Rajasthan, ActionAid supported work on education called *Shiksha Ka Sawal* (Raising issue of education) initiative with children, parents in every government school across the state of Rajasthan to file RTI applications in the schools. In several places the state administration has responded to the gaps in the provision of school education.

**Collaboration with DCPCR: ActionAid**, in association with the Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights (DCPCR), came out with a document, 'Missing Children: A Compendium'. It is a compilation of the various instructions/orders/guidelines/Standard Operating Procedures of the Delhi Police, advisories on the subject issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs and also of other organizations, including the NHRC, on missing children's issue. Being the first such document on the issue, it is expected to be used as a reference manual by various institutions of the State as well as the civil society such as the police, judiciary, Juvenile Justice Boards, Child Welfare Committees, NGOs and community-based organizations.

Due to our efforts the 40 children were rescued from bondage in Madhya Pradesh. The issue was also raised by journalists after 40 children were rescued in Bhopal. The state also recognized for the first time the existence of child bonded labour. Release certificates were provided to the children making them entitled rehab entitlements.

### **Issue of school closure**

A letter was sent to the office of Odisha State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (OSCPCR) on the government decision on closing down 165 primary schoolshaving less than five children. Responding to the letter the Chairperson, OSCPCR asked for a compliance report to the School and Mass Education department. Recently the department has submitted the report and the office of OSCPCR have shared the same with us. We are in the process of submitting a reply on the basis of the compliance report shared by the department. Apart from this, the members of Paudi Bhuyan samaj took up the issue of denial of admission of the paudi bhyan children with the OSCPCR (Odisha State Commission for Protection of Child Rights) and ensured admission of 15 girl children in residential school.

### **State level capacity building on malnutrition**

A state level capacity building program was conducted with 50 identified leaders on malnutrition in Bhopal. The objective of the program was to enhance understanding of leaders on child malnutrition. The deliberations were made on the present critical situation of malnutrition among children and women and also about inadequate responses about government to address malnutrition till now

### **Engaging with the administration to introduce eggs in the ICDS and MDM**

ActionAid partners organized events in Bangalore in order to introduce eggs in the ICDS and MDMs in wake of the rising malnourishment among children in the state. A mass \_\_\_\_\_

gathering of children, teachers and parents at Bangalore demanded the Government of Karnataka to supply 'an egg a day' to all children covered under Anganawadi and school children under the mid-day meal scheme.

Subsequently memorandum was submitted to the Minister for food and Civil Supplies in this regard.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF MICRO-LEVEL INTERVENTIONS

As a result of the continuous engagement with the tribal communities the Gadaba and Kondha of Koraput, Juanga of Keonjhar and Paudi Bhunya of Sundargarh have resolved in their traditional community meetings not to marry their daughter and son below the age of 18 and 21 respectively. Celebrating and highlighting this attempt we organised a State level Interface among the Tribal Communities on 19th Nov, 2015 at IMAGE, Bhubaneswar.

### Promoting tribal culture through mother tongue based education:

6 tribal language schools have been functioning for kuie and soura languages at Rayagada and Gajapati districts for enhancing tribal cultural history, folks and tradition. In each school 30-40 children, youth and adult person practising their own script, language, history, folk traditions.

Apart from that the traditional tribal history of Kandha, Paraja, and Gadava has been collected through the villagers in a participatory process to be published soon by the partner organisation at Koraput.

Nos of children received health referral support.	91
Nos of total children enrolled in schools with our support	1399
Nos of total girl child enrolled in schools with our support	623
Nos of SMCs having regular meetings.	121
Nos of ICDS centres got functional.	107
Nos of schools made discriminations free.	14
Nos of MLE schools	6
Nos of children joining MLE schools	170

### Children's participation in governance

On 14<sup>th</sup> November 2015 at Ambedkar Community Hall in Rajendra Nagar, *maarga* in association with 8 schools and 3 civil society organizations conducted the Ward-Level Children's Sabha in Adugodi ward (ward no. 147). 200 participants, including ones enrolled in the Parikrama Centre for learning, Greenland Public School, Sunshine Primary and High School, Koramangala Government Kannada and Tamil Primary school, Urdu Government School, M.A.R.P Lane Government School, Adarsha Makkala Mantappa Centres and the Centre for Social Action.

Smt. Manjula Sampathkumar (Corporator), Dr. Kshithij Urs (Regional Manager, ActionAid), sister Anice (Centre for Social Action) and Mr. Anant (artist) were the chief guests.

The Ward-Level Children's Sabha gave children an excellent opportunity to express their views and exercise their right to be heard. 2 representatives (a girl and a boy) from each of the 8 schools present spoke about significant issues and proposed the resolutions to be voted on. The resolutions that were passed by the children were submitted to the Corporator. The official congratulated all the children for bringing up the issues and promised to attend to them soon.

### **“Expressions of Denial “[ A children’s art exhibition depicting impact of slum demolition ] 12<sup>th</sup>December 2015-2016**

“Expressions of Denial' - Children's art experiencing deprivation. Around 150 paintings were displayed by the children of evicted and under the threat of slum demolition in Vinobha Nagar, Gulbarga Slum, Kamakya Layout, Ullalupa Nagar and Pailayout. It was an innovative way of these deprived children depicting through art deprivations; particularly children's issues were highlighted through the paintings.

#### **Children back in schools**

In Gawdal Mandal, Andhra Pradesh, a total number of 1335 children started attending schools i.e. 418 enrolments (new and more than one year absentee children) and 917 re-enrolments (tracked and followed up children) as a result of the various mobilization activities carried out by the staff of MV foundation. They have regularly been in touch with schools, teachers, children and the community members. They regularly track children every month on a regular basis and take follow up actions.

Each piece that was put on display had been created by children from extremely exploitative backgrounds. This was to give a glimpse to understand what a child's real world is.

A study was done on Children Voices on Community Child Protection Mechanism which was endorsed by the Minister Women and Child Development, Government of West Bengal and acknowledged by the Chairperson, SCPCR.

The efforts have been given to expand the efforts more outward by building linkages with the State Government, Academic Institutions, Activists and likeminded platforms. As a result ActionAid was given the responsibility as nodal agency for rolling out Child Protection Committees and Child Inspector Process in two districts. The child tracking mechanism has been one of the major attentions this year for the region.

### **Ensuring Right to participation**

In 27 schools of Gaisilate, Paikmal and Padampur blocks of Bargarh district school cabinets have been formed and monitored properly. Qualitative changes have been seen in teaching, MDM, school environment of these schools due to the effort of the children. Meena or

students affairs minister have been meeting the parents of the absentees and inquiring about causes of absence of children from schools.

700 children asked the Sarpanch to take initiative to provide additional infrastructure and equipment in their respective schools in Sundargarh district. They put their hand print on a banner to bring this to the notice of the local authority. 102 participants including children, parents and the members of SMC took part in the public hearing on RTE organised at Lahunipada and shared their issues.

### **Engagement with Schools**

We engaged with the government schools to make them functional across the LRPs. Enrolment efforts were organized in order to bring out of school children in the schools. Meetings were conducted with community, teachers, SMC members, Panchayat Members during the enrolment initiatives to sensitize them and involve all the stakeholders in making education accessible to the children.

### **Capacity building of SMCs**

School Management Committee members were trained on children's issues and their roles and responsibilities under RTE in managing the schools across the LRPs. The trainings helped the SMC members to engage on the issues of children, improving the quality of learning, preparing School Development Plans. The SMC of government school of village Gawandi, Karjat Block, Raigad District, Maharashtra took the initiative to form a child committee. They have begun keeping a check on regular attendance of teachers. SMC in Mulgaon is following up with the construction of the school in the village.

### **Seasonal hostels started on the demand of SMCs in Maharashtra**

#### **School Development Plans**

In Assam, in about 20 villages, the community with the participation of children have prepared School Level plans named "**we and our school**" where a proper situational analysis and planning in the context of school history, problems and future planning have been carried out. Here they have prioritised the issues and carried out the specific issue wise action plans.

Subsequent to the SMCs demanding for seasonal hostels for migrant children, 30 seasonal hostels have been opened in Ashti Block, Beed District. In Kasewadi village in Beed district, the opening of a seasonal hostel curbed the migration of 65 children of sugarcane cutters. Government allocated a budget of Rs. 3, 12,000 for their education for 4 months. Due to the efforts of our partners MPSSM and Sarth with the block administration a state transport bus was started for girl students of two villages of Beed district, Maharashtra.

### **Strengthening children's groups**

Through creative programmes, workshops, regular meetings the children's groups were strengthened. Children were made aware about provisions for protection under various laws such as POCSO and other laws related to children. These processes enhanced the confidence of the children and also provided spaces for their participation in decision making.

### **Efforts towards the creation of children's agencies towards bringing change**

Almost every project village in Sai jyoti has a Creative Club for children- where all the children from the village of age group 6 to 11 i.e. (Class 1st to 5th) are enrolled as members to take part in the activities for learning and overall development. Volunteers of Sai jyoti facilitates these club meetings once in a week and these meetings take place at a place where parents could easily see what their children are doing in the club meetings. There is a sequence of activities that has been drafted for the club by keeping in mind the necessary needs of children for education and enhancing their skills towards being participative and also for boosting their overall confidence level. Children are very motivated and regularly visit the place with lots of enthusiasm. This space will provide space for nurturing leadership and awareness of children.

### ***Right To Education in (AP & Telangana ).***

- The RTE Act is used as a tool to negotiate with the mandal and district administration to provide toilets for both boys & girls separately in the school premises. During the year, 112 toilets are constructed
- Parents committees are strengthened in 68 schools to monitor the school functioning (teachers' timings), Mid-Day Meals, Anganwadi centers. During the year, 15 mid day meal mal functioning in schools exposed and rectified.
- 100% children in 100 villages of project area are going to the schools and Anganwadi centers.
- Survey conducted on government school hostel facilities – sanitation, water, bedding, food, electricity and so on. Gaps in 7 hostels are highlighted and followed up with the administration
- Children are engaged and inculcated to environmental issues by forming green clubs in 30 villages, collection of wild seeds and sowing in the common lands in rainy times.
- Most needy children's emergency support is extended.
- Stopped government decision to close the 28 primary schools and also succeeded to negotiate to provide necessary transport facilities for 12 schools which are merged to neighboring villages.
- Parents committees are formed in every village to monitor the school functioning, mid day meal scheme and drinking water facilities.

## **STRATEGIC PRIORITY V – A JUST, SECULAR AND PEACEFUL SOCIETY:**

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In 2015-2016 we furthered our work towards our objectives of upholding peace, justice, harmony and citizenship. We continued to work for secularism, diversity and pluralism in partnership with our LRPs and various civil society groups.

### **National consultation on diversity, pluralism and equality**

A national consultation was organized on 14-15th December in Bangalore to review, reflect and explore ways towards upholding diversity, pluralism and equality for all citizens irrespective of religion, caste and gender in the current context. It was an extremely enriching, passionate and thought provoking interaction between academics, writers and concerned citizens.

The women leaders continue to work for upholding citizenship of women. Different state chapters of BMMA organized programs on International Women's Day around various themes such as violence, personal laws, diversity, security, social harmony, concerning women.

### **Consultation on Peace and Harmony in Lucknow**

Consultations were organized on Peace, Harmony and Democracy in Lucknow. People from various faiths, including the religious leaders participated in the consultation and emphasized on the need of peace and harmony.

### **Developing peace volunteers**

Various workshops and conventions the perspective building process on constitutional values, secularism, equality, dignity, diversity and pluralism were organized across various LRPs. Through cultural forms, films screenings the peace volunteers reached out to youths in their areas.

## **STRATEGIC PRIORITY VI- SOLIDARITY WITH STRUGGLES AND PROGRESSIVE ACTIONS BEYOND LOCAL BOUNDARIES:**

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In 2015-2016, the South- South Initiative played an active role in advancing the idea of south-south solidarity by working with a range of actors both within India. We initiated important meetings, published two reports that were widely circulated, wrote several articles and helped draft several statements and press releases and played a key role in building awareness around challenges on the trade front, especially the revival of the WTO negotiations.

### **Supporting the fisher-folk initiative and RTF**

The SSI released a short film on Alternatives in Agriculture, Energy and Rural Nonfarm that was co-produced with the All India Peoples Science Network (AIPSN) and Centre of Science and Technology for Rural Development.

### **Engaging in Internet Neutrality**

SSI attended a national strategy meeting on net neutrality organised by Knowledge commons and IT for Change. The SSI-AA India is also part of the International Coordination Committee for the first ever Internet Social Forum which is likely to be held in India in mid-2016.

### **Engaging in health issues**

ActionAid co-organised a panel discussion for the launch of the Global Health Watch on 7 June– an alternative world health report from the Peoples Health Watch The SSI worked with the Policy Unit on this collaboration.

### **Organising South South dialogue**

The SSI organised three talks as part of our south-south dialogue series. The first was an interaction with Prof. Vivek Chibber of New York University, USA on the Global Economic crisis and the response of the Left. The second talk was on current trends in Indian Foreign Policy by Prof. Vijay Prashad of Trinity College, USA which we co-organised with the Centre for Policy Analysis. Prof Prashad spoke on two broad areas; on the implications of the just concluded BRICS Summit in Ufa and the launch of the New Development Bank. The other dialogue series focused discussion on the state of air quality in Indian cities and policy changes by Dr. Sarath Guttikunda of IIT Mumbai and Director of Urban Emissions. Dr. Guttikunda spoke about the drivers of air pollution in Delhi and pointed at alternate pathways for cities such as Delhi.

### **Organising workshops**

The SSI was invited as a resource group for a 3 day workshop in Kohima, Nagaland on Understanding Developmental challenges in the North East of India. We were actively involved in evolving the structure of the meeting and took two sessions at the workshop on WTO, FTA and Investment issues and on the implications of the BRICS New Development

Bank and Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank. Researchers and members of NGOs from all North Eastern states were present.

The SSI was one of the lead organisers of a 3 day National Conference on WTO, FTAs and Investment Treaties – implications for development policy space organised at the Institute for Studies in Industrial Development (ISID). More than 80 representatives from workers organisations, farmers groups, social movements and civil society networks from across the country participated in the conference. The SSI contributed a paper on the impacts of services liberalisation and privatisation to the conference. All conference papers and a declaration are in the process of being finalized and will soon be published as a book.

The SSI co-organised a National level seminar on New Development from the South-for people for profit. Over 50 participants attended the two day seminar in New Delhi to understand the implications of the BRICS New Development Bank (NDB) and Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the role, funding and impact of IFIs (International Financial Institutions) in India. Participants included community activists, academics, researchers, students, NGO workers, and people's representatives. They came from across India, including Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Delhi, Manipur and Assam. In the context of the upcoming BRICS summit to be hosted by India in early 2016, conference participants agreed to conduct a series of regional meetings on development finance, publish regular updates and booklets and engage with parliamentarians regarding the BRICS agenda on the New Development Banks.

### **Release of Asian Floor Wage**

SSI and the Asia Floor Wage Alliance launched their report – 'Towards an Asia Floor Wage – a global south labour initiative for garment workers' with a full day seminar. The first panel addressed the issue of 'Make in India, Industrialisation and Global Value Chains, the second on Asia Floor Wage and International Trade and the third was an very intensive dialogue between labour organisations, student groups, women's associations on forging a social alliance for garment workers in the National Capital Region (NCR) of Delhi.

## **EMERGENCY RESPONSE:**

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**Learning a strong lesson from last year, where we faced five disasters in a row, the organisation has decided to augment its internal capacity and that of its partners across the country. A week long workshop brought together ActionAid's learning on the subject and has resulted in a compendium of guidelines, do's and don't's and preparedness plans.**

**All the regions would have received one round of training by the end of this year. We have already developed a template of women led contingency plan at local level and would be doing it gradually for all regions.**

Heavy rainfall that started on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2015 in Saurashtra and South Gujarat resulted in severe damage to life and property. Amreli and Bhavnagar districts of Saurashtra were the worst-affected. Due to lack of information and preparedness, losses were higher than usual. As per government sources, 70 people died in the floods. ActionAid along with the local partner conducted rapid needs assessment of the worst affected areas in Amreli district and identified worst affected families particularly from Dalit, Valmiki, Devipujak and Bharwad communities. Tarpaulin has been provided for temporary shelter to 200 families in 6 villages

of Amreli district. They are also being provided with ration and hygiene kits. The affected families will also be assisted in receiving relief entitlements from the State.

ActionAid was invited by Government of Bihar for support in designing the DRR (Disaster Risk Reduction) policy of the state and building the roadmap.

In West Bengal the relief interventions were carried out in 6 districts affected with heavy rain floods and water logging areas of Birbhum, South & North 24 Pargana, East Medinapur, Hooghly and in 9 Urban Slum Pockets. Community kitchen and health camps were supported in urban slum pockets, where 562 families are were supported with tarpaulin.

### **Accessing Entitlements & Schemes**

Telangana, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh had suffered due to heat wave. ActionAid India reached out to 1157 families. 21 village level disaster management committees have also been formed. 65 women and 61 men are part of these committees. 21 grain banks have been set up. A grain bank purchase committee has also been set up. 492 individuals have so far applied for jobs under the rural employment guarantee scheme of the government.

In 2015-2016 emergency response and relief was extended in 9 states(Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Assam, West Bengal, Gujrat, Tamilnadu, Telangana, Odisha) across India. On the basis of the type of emergency support has been extended to the most vulnerable and marginalised communities. The communities were given support of Food, Dry Ration, Non Food Products, shelter support, medicine support, care products etc. these were in both flood situation as well as in states which were affected by heat wave.

### **Emergency response in Tamil Nadu**

ActionAid along with its partners has been engaged in relief interventions in flood affected areas of various districts in Tamil Nadu. In Cuddalore, Thiruvallur, Tuticorin our teams on the ground have reached out to the fishing communities, the daily wage workers from Dalit communities, the salt pan workers and members of the much marginalized Irula tribal community, all of whom ActionAid India has been working with for several years. In Chennai City, we are engaged with the urban poor, comprising of the homeless, the slum inhabitants, daily wage labourers and more. We are also engaged with the government in supporting their reach out to the marginalized communities in our project areas. We received very generous support from corporate partners in Chennai and we hope to build long term relationships for creating preparedness.

### **Preparing better for Disasters and emergencies**

In our emergency interventions we have found that the women play an active and decisive role in disaster response- before, during and after. Through our local level interventions we have been able to sensitise and emphasise the Government to ensure involvement of women in all steps of disaster response.

In Odisha in cyclone prone area women have played a lead role in developing Community Contingency Plans (CCP) which have been approved in the Palli and the Gram Sabha. These plans led by women have identified ways to prevent and respond to disaster with a focus on reducing impact of disaster on vulnerable groups such as women, children, PWDs, Dalits, Tribal and Single women. The District administration has accepted the CCPs as disaster

preparedness plan of concerned villages and assured to provide support for capacity building of the task forces. Based on this Bhubaneswar RO has developed a tool kit on Women led Community Contingency Plan and planning to institutionalise the in the disaster prone LRPs which have been shared with the govt. depts. to support the implementation.

Along with the ensuring awareness building on DRR, effort has been to ensure that the community has information to access entitlements and address VAW. Women leaders are interacting with administration, Panchayat Raj Institutions and opinion makers on various issues.. Community members including women have been trained on search and rescue operation. State relief commissioner has released of subsidy to fisher folks for purchase of boat that was declared as part of compensation package after disaster. In Odisha 352 families have been linked to housing scheme they will construct house with DRR component. Among them 192 are women.

Osmanabad, Jalana, Solapur and Beed districts of Maharashtra have faced drought situations for the last couple of years. Given that this has impacted the farmers badly, Mumbai Regional office along with partners have initiated drought mitigation efforts like Agriculture restoration, ground water recharge, strengthening existing water sources, continuous contour trench, trainings on dry land farming techniques, fodder creation, farming, water utilization, horticulture, strengthening community drinking water sources through recharging of existing structure and development of dove models.

Training of Trainers of staff and partners on Disaster response was held in April 2015. This also included connecting with government agencies and working in close coordination with them. As part of this this, ActionAid has also identified riots and the need for preparedness for the same. Through our LRP partners, we are planning to be better prepared in sensitive areas. In our existing initiatives of supporting the riot affected, in Astitva and Afkar foundation we have been able to link 1800 affected families to public distribution system and pension schemes in UP.

### **Engagement with administration**

In Assam, Manipur, Kashmir and Andhra Pradesh the disaster affected communities are demanding for the due entitlements from the state govts. for a resilient and sustainable livelihood support. Through the intervention they have received entitlements and infrastructural support from the govt.

The Government of UP has issued an order for the rehabilitation of the river-displaced families in Lakhimpur district. It was after the of continuous efforts at local level by our LRP partner AIM, and state level engagement by ActionAid Lucknow for the rehabilitation of Internally Displaced families in Lakhimpur district. Government has allocated Rs 1,15,548,129/- for purchasing of homestead land and compensation for crop loss to 3300 internally displaced families in Lakhimpur district. ActionAid Lucknow RO is monitoring the implementation of the order at the field level.

In Uttar Pradesh, our local partners and other civil society organizations have come together demanded that seven districts of Bundelkhand region be declared as drought-hit. Under the banner of "People's Forum", they held a press conference to apprise the general public about the conditions of the farmers who have lost their crops again this time. The NGOs had jointly conducted a rapid assessment recently in all districts, of Bundelkhand known for drought and farmer suicides. The findings have been presented to the government and we are advocating for immediate relief measures.

A mapping of disaster prone LRPs has been done in 2015-2016. We hope to institutionalise the women led CCPs in the disaster prone LRPs. To combat the drought situation along with the drought mitigation efforts mentioned above, we have also initiated an eco-friendly water impounding structure created in a stream by deepening and widening of stream whose water carrying capacity had reduced and in most of the places. Revival of streams by deepening and widening would also make construction of water harvesting structures feasible. It will also help to overcome problem of water logging during heavy rainfall.

We worked with 290 women leaders from Dalit and Tribal communities, 30 women representatives in PRI and total 2680 women with the objective to reduce the impact of disaster on women and other vulnerable groups by building women leadership so as to respond to any future disaster with better preparedness and resilience. The area of work was spread in 63 villages across 3 blocks of Ganjam District in the state of Odisha.

**FINANCIAL NARRATIVE  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED  
31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH, 2016**

ActionAid Association  
Balance sheet as at 31 March 2016  
(All amounts are in Indian Rupees, unless otherwise stated)

Schedule	As at 31st March 2016		Total	As at 31 March 2015		Total
	FC	NFC		FC	NFC	
<b>Funds employed</b>						
Unrestricted funds						
General fund	(9,488,312)	(6,055,214)	(15,543,526)	(61,232,869)	212,648	(61,020,221)
Restricted funds						
Specific projects fund	22,914,987	16,454,766	39,369,753	96,693,881	7,053,181	103,747,062
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,426,675</b>	<b>10,399,552</b>	<b>23,826,227</b>	<b>35,461,012</b>	<b>7,265,829</b>	<b>42,726,841</b>
<b>Application of funds</b>						
Fixed assets						
Gross block	12,806,267	263,596	13,069,863	8,320,010	263,596	8,583,606
Less: Accumulated depreciation	6,140,341	202,671	6,343,012	2,846,766	191,837	3,038,603
Net block	6,665,926	60,925	6,726,851	5,473,244	71,759	5,545,003
Current assets, loans and advances						
Cash and bank balances	21,246,459	11,207,040	32,448,499	32,619,751	7,262,477	39,882,228
Loans and advances	26,562,585	352,997	26,915,582	17,755,396	320,528	18,075,924
Less: Current liabilities and provisions	47,809,044	11,555,037	59,364,081	50,375,147	7,583,003	57,958,152
Current liabilities and provisions	41,048,295	1,216,410	42,264,705	20,387,379	388,935	20,776,314
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,760,749</b>	<b>10,338,627</b>	<b>17,099,376</b>	<b>29,987,768</b>	<b>7,194,070</b>	<b>37,181,838</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,426,675</b>	<b>10,399,552</b>	<b>23,826,227</b>	<b>35,461,012</b>	<b>7,265,829</b>	<b>42,726,841</b>

Significant accounting policies and notes to the accounts 11

The accompanying schedules form an integral part of the financial statements.  
As per our report of even date attached

For BSR & Associates LLP  
Chartered Accountants  
Firm Registration No.: 116231W-100024

*Sandeep Batra*  
Sandeep Batra  
Partner

Membership No.: 093320  
Place: Gurgaon

Date: 13 October 2016

For and on behalf of Actionaid Association

*Sandeep Chachra*  
Sandeep Chachra  
Secretary

Place: New Delhi

Date: 13 October 2016



**ActionAid Association**  
**Statement of Income and Expenditure for the year ending 31 March 2016**  
*(All amounts are in Indian Rupees, unless otherwise stated)*

Schedule	For the year ended a 31 March 2016			For the year ended a 31 March 2015		
	FC	NFC	Total	FC	NFC	Total
<b>Income</b>						
Grants received from ActionAid International and its affiliates						
- General donation	595,451,971	-	595,451,971	555,760,845	-	555,760,845
- Grants received (from sponsorship fund)	2,924,180	2,388,349	5,312,529	3,011,064	3,011,064	3,217,076
- Amount transferred from restricted funds to the extent of expenditure incurred	-	8,872,001	8,872,001	-	8,939,901	8,939,901
- restricted funds						
- sponsorship fund	224,485,213	9,480,498	233,965,711	216,791,286	22,291,820	239,083,106
- Other income:						
- Interest income	2,608,050	412,432	3,020,482	2,896,016	541,897	3,437,913
- Miscellaneous income	42,003	20,968	62,971	13,228	-	13,228
	<b>825,511,417</b>	<b>41,875,585</b>	<b>867,387,002</b>	<b>775,667,386</b>	<b>57,855,632</b>	<b>833,523,019</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>						
Grants disbursed						
- restricted funds	112,947,715	6,178,779	119,126,494	157,394,219	13,981,500	171,375,819
- sponsorship fund	-	20,701,337	20,701,337	-	23,070,950	23,070,950
- others	280,244,870	17,241,391	297,486,261	328,443,752	23,001,897	350,445,649
Internal programme expenses						
- restricted funds	77,463,565	3,301,719	80,765,284	59,396,967	8,310,320	67,707,287
- others	36,288,660	108,184	36,396,844	43,029,284	479,225	43,508,509
Fundraising expenses	34,133,934	-	34,133,934	2,298,327	-	2,298,327
Depreciation	3,334,550	10,835	3,345,385	2,389,161	13,006	2,402,167
Employee benefits expense	152,982,682	6,312	152,988,994	162,753,296	42,233	162,795,529
Administrative and other expenses	79,091,408	594,890	79,686,298	87,881,866	623,630	88,505,496
	<b>776,427,384</b>	<b>48,143,447</b>	<b>824,570,831</b>	<b>844,486,972</b>	<b>68,522,761</b>	<b>913,009,733</b>
<b>Excess of income over expenditure transferred to general fund</b>	<b>49,084,033</b>	<b># (6,267,862)</b>	<b>42,816,171</b>	<b>(68,819,586)</b>	<b>(10,667,129)</b>	<b>(79,486,715)</b>

Significant accounting policies and notes to the accounts  
 The accompanying schedules form an integral part of the financial statements.  
 As per our report of even date attached

For BSR & Associates LLP  
 Chartered Accountants  
 Firm Registration No.: 116231W/W-100024

*(Signature)*  
 Sandeep Batra  
 Partner  
 Membership No.: 093320  
 Place Gurgaon

Date 13 October 2016

For and on behalf of ActionAid Association

*(Signature)*  
 Sandeep Chachra  
 Secretary



Place New Delhi  
 Date 13 October 2016

**ActionAid Association**  
Schedules to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2016  
*(All amounts are in Indian Rupees, unless otherwise stated)*

	As at 31 Mar 2016		As at 31 Mar 2015	
	FC	NFC	FC	NFC
	Total		Total	
<b>Schedule 1: Capital reserve</b>				
Opening balance	-	-	(101,000)	77,836
Less: Transfer to general fund	-	-	101,000	77,836
	-	-	-	-
<b>Schedule 2: General fund</b>				
Opening balance	(61,232,869)	212,648	7,485,717	10,801,941
Add: Transferred from restricted fund	2,660,534	-	101,000	77,836
Add: Transferred from statement of income and expenditure	49,084,031	(6,267,862)	(68,819,586)	(10,667,129)
	9,488,312	(6,055,214)	(61,232,869)	212,648
	(15,433,526)	-	-	(61,020,221)
<b>Schedule 3: Restricted funds - Specific projects fund</b>				
<b>a) From various donors except mentioned in b) below</b>				
Opening balance	70,896,748	7,033,181	77,949,929	1,329,942
Add: Funds received during the year	44,479,541	18,882,083	63,361,624	26,013,058
Less: Grants disbursed during the year	(115,376,289)	25,935,264	141,311,553	29,345,001
Less: Expenditure on project	49,937,031	6,178,779	56,115,810	11,981,590
	42,324,221	3,301,719	45,825,990	8,310,320
<b>Total (a)</b>	22,914,987	16,454,766	39,369,753	7,063,181
<b>b) From Action Aid International and its affiliates</b>				
Opening balance	25,797,133	-	27,142,525	-
Add: Funds received during the year	100,138,436	-	167,450,038	-
Less: Transferred to general fund	2,660,534	-	-	-
Less: Fundraising expenses	123,275,045	-	194,592,563	-
Less: Grants disbursed during the year	34,133,934	-	122,854,575	-
Less: Expenditure on project	34,879,284	-	45,940,855	-
Add: Funds receivable to the extent of excess expenditure	(8,748,867)	-	25,797,133	-
	8,748,867	-	8,748,867	-
<b>Total (b)</b>	25,797,133	-	25,797,133	-
<b>Total (a) + (b)</b>	48,712,120	16,454,766	65,126,886	7,063,181
<b>Schedule 4: Sponsorship fund</b>				
Opening balance	-	-	-	2,211,181
Add: Funds received during the year	-	29,575,338	29,575,338	29,799,670
Less: Transferred to Statement of Income and Expenditure	-	8,872,001	8,872,001	8,939,901
Less: Grants disbursed during the year	-	20,701,337	20,701,337	23,070,950
	-	20,701,337	20,701,337	33,070,950

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ActionAid Association

Schedules to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2016  
(All amounts are in Indian Rupees, unless otherwise stated)

Schedule 5 : Fixed assets

**NON FOREIGN CONTRIBUTION (NFC)**

Particulars	Gross block			Accumulated depreciation		Net block	
	As at 1 April 2015	Additions during the year	Deletions/ adjustments during the year	As at 31 Mar 2016	For the year On deletion/ adjustments	As at 31 Mar 2016	As at 31 Mar 2015
<b>Tangible assets</b>							
Computers	89,609	-	-	89,609	195	89,479	130
Office equipment	149,500	-	-	149,500	8,009	104,115	45,385
Vehicle	21,000	-	-	21,000	2,477	6,966	14,034
Furniture and fixtures	3,487	-	-	3,487	1,958	2,111	1,529
<b>Current year</b>	<b>263,596</b>	-	-	<b>263,596</b>	<b>10,834</b>	<b>202,671</b>	<b>60,925</b>
Previous year	263,596	-	-	263,596	13,006	191,837	71,759

**FOREIGN CONTRIBUTION (FC)**

Particulars	Gross block			Accumulated depreciation		Net block	
	As at 1 April 2015	Additions during the year	Deletions/ adjustments during the year	As at 31 Mar 2016	For the year On deletion/ adjustments	As at 31 Mar 2016	As at 31 Mar 2015
<b>Tangible assets</b>							
Computers	4,477,155	2,989,073	56,910	7,409,318	2,683,110	4,826,551	2,582,767
Office equipment	1,326,360	1,432,866	-	2,759,226	350,249	514,770	2,244,456
Vehicle	2,223,594	56,688	-	2,280,282	271,285	742,999	1,537,283
Furniture and fixtures	292,901	64,540	-	357,441	29,906	56,021	301,420
<b>Current year</b>	<b>8,320,010</b>	<b>4,543,167</b>	<b>56,910</b>	<b>12,806,267</b>	<b>3,334,550</b>	<b>6,140,341</b>	<b>6,665,926</b>
Previous year	3,245,837	5,074,173	-	8,320,010	2,389,161	2,846,766	5,473,244

**TOTAL**

Particulars	Gross block			Accumulated depreciation		Net block	
	As at 1 April 2015	Additions during the year	Deletions/ adjustments during the year	As at 31 Mar 2016	For the year On deletion/ adjustments	As at 31 Mar 2016	As at 31 Mar 2015
<b>Tangible assets</b>							
Computers	4,566,764	2,989,073	56,910	7,498,927	2,683,305	4,916,030	2,582,897
Office equipment	1,475,860	1,432,866	-	2,908,726	358,258	618,885	2,289,841
Vehicle	2,244,594	56,688	-	2,301,282	273,762	749,965	1,551,317
Furniture and fixtures	296,388	64,540	-	360,928	30,058	58,132	302,796
<b>Current year</b>	<b>8,583,606</b>	<b>4,543,167</b>	<b>56,910</b>	<b>13,069,863</b>	<b>3,345,384</b>	<b>6,343,012</b>	<b>6,726,851</b>
Previous year	3,509,433	5,074,173	-	8,583,606	2,402,168	3,038,604	5,545,003



**ActionAid Association**  
**Schedules to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2016**  
*(All amounts are in Indian Rupees, unless otherwise stated)*

	As at 31 March 2016			As at 31 March 2015		
	FC	NFC	Total	FC	NFC	Total
<b>Schedule 6: Current assets, loans and advances</b>						
<b>Cash and bank balances</b>						
Cash in hand	369,601	271	369,872	293,052	2,627	295,679
Balances with scheduled banks						
- in current accounts	20,876,858	11,201,769	32,078,627	31,022,724	7,259,850	38,282,574
Funds in transit	-	-	-	1,303,975	-	1,303,975
	<u>21,246,459</u>	<u>11,202,040</u>	<u>32,448,499</u>	<u>32,619,751</u>	<u>7,262,477</u>	<u>39,882,228</u>
<b>Loans and advances</b> <i>(Unsecured, considered good)</i>						
Advances recoverable in cash or in kind or for value to be received	4,553,571	252,022	4,805,593	3,786,767	84,332	3,871,099
Advances to employees	1,765,493	475	1,765,968	1,974,435	130,196	2,104,631
Advance income tax	28,758	-	28,758	307,976	6,000	313,976
Grant receivable	8,748,867	-	8,748,867	-	-	-
Balance in gratuity fund (net of provision for gratuity of Rs. 34,423,391 (previous year Rs. 39,811,542))	5,814,101	-	5,814,101	6,044,473	-	6,044,473
Security deposits	5,651,795	100,500	5,752,295	5,641,745	100,000	5,741,745
	<u>26,562,585</u>	<u>352,997</u>	<u>26,915,582</u>	<u>17,755,396</u>	<u>320,528</u>	<u>18,075,924</u>
<b>Schedule 7: Current liabilities and provisions</b>						
Sundry creditors	17,194,184	678,240	17,872,424	12,879,499	346,339	13,225,838
Other liabilities	4,548,207	36,205	4,584,412	3,354,500	9,420	3,363,920
Employee related payables	14,891,531	501,965	15,393,496	306,360	33,176	339,536
Provision for compensated absences	4,414,373	-	4,414,373	3,847,020	-	3,847,020
	<u>41,048,295</u>	<u>1,216,410</u>	<u>42,264,705</u>	<u>20,387,379</u>	<u>388,935</u>	<u>20,776,314</u>

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[www.actionaidindia.org](http://www.actionaidindia.org)

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