

**ACTIONAID ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18**



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About ActionAid Association

ActionAid Association is an anti-poverty agency that has been working with the poor people to end poverty and injustice in India. The Association has been working to ensure that the poorest and marginalized have access to food and livelihood, shelter, education, healthcare, dignity and a voice in decisions. It partners with several voluntary organizations, institutions, government ministries and its various commissions at the state and central levels to achieve this. ActionAid Association is working in 25 states and one union territory with more than 250 partners and allied organisations.

Our Values

In our effort to deepen our commitment to transforming our organizational culture we stress on 'praxis' in our work. Solidarity, camaraderie and sisterhood with the poor, the powerless and excluded women, girls, boys and men are at the core of our efforts against poverty and injustice.

- 'Personal is political': without contradiction in the practice in private and public spheres.
- 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 opportunities to every person, irrespective of caste, class, race, age, gender, sexual orientation, colour, ethnicity, disability, location or religion.
- Humility and modesty in our conduct and behaviour.
- Transparency and accountability.
- Independence and neutrality from any religious or party-political affiliations.

Our Vision

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

Our Mission

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

Overall Goal

A just social order brought about by the dispossessed claiming their right to dignity and identity through enhanced democratic participation and structural transformation. We strongly believe that an end to poverty can be achieved through purposeful individual and collective action led by the active agency of the people living in poverty and supported by solidarity, credible alternatives that address the structural causes and consequences of poverty.

Our Reach

AAI's work is spread across 25 states and one union territory of India. Our interventions in 317 districts (including 134 most backward districts of India) have helped improve the lives of more than 1,18,500 families from the most deprived communities.

Strategic Priority I

Land and livelihoods

Across eight states, we have nurtured farmer collectives with a focus on women farmer collectives, extensively promoted sustainable agriculture

142 **Mushahar** families in Maharajgunj district got back their agricultural land, including possession and pattas for ancestral land. 32 Mushahar families got homestead land. In another effort by Sahariya Jan Adhikar Manch in Lalitpur district, 200 acres of grazing land, was accessed with the help of the local administration and support from our ally Sai Jyoti Sansthan. A total 98 **Sahariya** tribal families got homestead land

ActionAid and our partner CBOs have joined the initiatives for the recognition of women as farmers. We conducted this initiatives across all working states and sensitized local communities as well as the authorities on women's role and contributions in agriculture. Women farmers demanded amendments to the existing legal frameworks to recognize women as farmers and allow them access to government schemes available for farmers.

- 3779 families got homestead land
- 1732 families got 1345 acres of agriculture land under various legal provisions.
- 266 Farmer collectives have been formed/nurtured with 4831 members
- 9297 families across 381 villages have been practicing Sustainable agriculture
- 4604 farmers were provided training on Sustainable Agriculture
- 1425 families started Kitchen gardens for Nutritional security of women, children
- 44 Seed banks across 5 states have been established which are completely managed by communities
- 53 Grain banks across 8 states have been established (managed by communities)

Promoting climate resilient sustainable agriculture (CSRA):

ActionAid continued promoting CRSA practices, promoted millet cultivation, mixed crop cultivation, cultivation of less-water-intensive crops and traditional crops, as well as promoting local seed conservation, and the use of organic manures and fertilizers and organic pesticides.

In 2017-18, CRSA has been promoted in 10 states. A total of 9297 families from 381 villages from the 10 states of Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Odisha, Bihar, Jharkhand, Assam, Mizoram, Karnataka benefitted.

64 women in 16 villages of Pithoragarh district have adopted bio-composting techniques and prepared a total of 25 quintals of manure. In Assam and Manipur, 150 farmers have started the cultivation of leguminous crops, zero tillage practices, and seed replacement methods, to improve natural soil fertility. 200 women have taken up duck, poultry, and goat rearing as part of their livelihood activities.

Promoting vegetable farming and kitchen gardens for nutritional security

To improve nutritional security among children and women from excluded communities, ActionAid along with its allies promoted kitchen gardens extensively across many LRPs. The number of malnourished children and anaemic women is high in excluded and vulnerable communities especially like Sahariya, Mushahar and Yanadi tribes and different Dalit communities. A total of 1329 kitchen gardens have been formed by Sahariya families in Lalitpur district, 53 households have started kitchen gardens in Hamirpur, and 43 gardens have been formed by the Dalit women in Pithoragarh district. Four Akshaya models and 26 Machans have been formed for vegetable farming. An average of 30 Kg of brinjal, 5 kg of chilli and 33 Kg of tomato have been grown in one season from one kitchen garden in Lalitpur district. Most of the farmers used the vegetables for their own consumption.

Grain Banks: In 2017-18, ActionAid has established 44 grain banks across five states (Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Assam, Mizoram), which are catering to the needs of vulnerable families across 44 villages. These grain banks are completely managed by the community and they collect the grains from our farmers who are practicing CRSA.

Trainings: In 2017-18, training on various aspects of CRSA was provided to 2614 farmers in AP and Telangana, 740 farmers in Assam, 90 farmers in Bihar, 350 farmers in Madhya Pradesh, 490 farmers in Karnataka, and to 320 farmers in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. The training covered preparation of organic manure, NADEP Compost, and organic pesticides; preservation of seeds; development of MACHAN and AKSHAY models for multi-vegetable cropping on a small piece of land; various mixed cropping patterns; and SRI methods. Hands-on training was conducted consistently on the farms, directly involving several women and men farmers at village-level, to build confidence in them and to change their mindsets.

After this training, many farmers have come forward to use compost manure and diversify crops to reduce costs and cope with drought conditions. In Lalitpur district, 10 Sahariya farmers (five male and five female) emerged as community resource persons (CRP), who took the lead in developing vegetable nurseries across 34 districts and distributed the vegetable plants to 1329 families for their kitchen gardens. In Assam, five Community Resource Centres were created in Nalbari under LOTUS. In these resource centres, there are 15 men and 10 women agro-activists who help with training community members.

Seed Banks: The LRP partners have established 53 seed banks across 8 states which are completely managed by the community (2 seed banks covering 8 villages in Bihar; 12 seed banks in Madhya Pradesh; 10 seed banks in Assam and Manipur covering 10 villages; 9 seed banks in AP and Telangana covering 12 villages; 12 seed banks in Lalitpur district, UP; 8 seed banks covering 8 villages in Pithoragarh). The community collected seeds of different indigenous varieties of rice, wheat, pulses and millets, which are drought-resilient and can grow easily in these areas.

Accessing government programmes for promotion of CSRA:

In Andhra Pradesh, the state government has initiated a very large-scale programme to promote natural farming, named 'Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF)'. Under this programme, thousands of families are provided essential support and training to take up natural farming. Two of our LRPs, SEWAA and ARD, are utilising this opportunity and successfully linking farmers with the programme so that they will take natural farming ahead after the withdrawal. These organisations were also successful in mobilising funds from various sources such as the ITDA, Department of Agriculture and Horticulture.

Through participation in Kisan Mela, our farmers became aware about the various schemes of the agriculture department. A total of 297 farmers from Hamirpur, Mahoba district registered with the agriculture department for availing different schemes; 50 farmers got pulse seeds free of cost; and another 380 Sahariya farmers registered with the agriculture department and have got the benefits of various schemes. 72 farmers from Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand have benefitted under the ATMA project.

Using NREGS to develop land:

NREGS has been used to develop the land of poor farmers. In Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh, through Nisarga, silt application for 427 acres, bunding and harvesting methods in 485 acres, and tree plantation in 496 acres were carried out. In Nellore district, NREGS was mobilised for clearance of bushes, land levelling, and creation of rainwater-harvesting pits and farm ponds. To increase the groundwater level in Lalitpur district and for rainwater harvesting, Sahariya tribal families, along with government officials, utilised NREGS and constructed 5 new checkdams, repaired 3 check dams and completed 1600 metres of 'Medhbandi' bunding. 502 acres in Odisha and 90 acres in Bihar and Jharkhand have been developed through NREGs.

Work with Urban Poor

Work with Domestic Workers

ActionAid India continued to engage with domesticworkers and, in collaboration with different networks, asked for the inclusion of domestic work in the list of scheduled employment in the Minimum Wages Act and the setting of a just living wage for domestic workers. In West Bengal, ActionAid facilitated a national-level meeting with domestic workers groups and organisations working with domestic workers for functioning welfare boards and social security.

Urban Action School

UAS is a mid-career school for mid- to senior-level urban practitioners, grassroots workers, action researchers, academics, lawyers, journalists, and others working on this issue. A long-term course was organised on the topic '**Urbanisation and the Planet**', with 18 participants from different states of India.

A **Round Table on Labour** was held in March 2018 in New Delhi. Some of the leading voices of workers' efforts and civil society representatives, academicians, lawyers, journalists and students, along with representatives from formal and informal sectors exchanged experiences and ideas.

Sustainable city vis-à-vis the new urban agenda

CiRiC-ActionAid India convened a meeting on 'Cities for People – Engaging with the New Urban Agenda in India' in Delhi, attended by civil society members, social activists, academicians and urban planners.

Regional Work

Impact in Numbers: Informal workers

- There are 784 collectives (437 women collectives) across our operational areas with a membership of more than 41939 informal workers (Men: 19615, Women:

22324)

- 29,335 informal workers are now getting social security benefits under different government schemes
- 5497 (Men: 983, Women: 4514) unskilled workers have been provided with skill development and life skill training. 266 of these got employment and 2378 became self-employed.

The Tamil Nadu Domestic Workers group inaugurated the 'Decent Work Day Initiative'. A workshop was conducted in Perumbakkam to discuss on issues of decent work and ~~minimum wages~~.

479 domestic workers were registered with the welfare board in Tamil Nadu through with the Slum Clearance Board and Department of Labour, Kanchipuram district.

Capacity-building training, awareness meetings and skills trainings have been organised for domestic workers in a number of states.

State-level consultation on rehabilitation of bonded labourers

ActionAid and its partners were involved in the release and rehabilitation of bonded labourers all over the country. Without proper rehabilitation services, however, many families are forced to migrate again or send their family members to the same destinations. ActionAid organised a consultation on this in Patna.

In the aftermath, the labour department constituted a drafting team for the formulation of a scheme for the rehabilitation of bonded labours. ActionAid is a member of this drafting team and has provided inputs.

Engaging with state agencies for unorganised sector workers

Workers collectives have been engaging with state agencies like the labour department and municipal corporations for securing labour provisions for unorganised sector workers. These include the registration of unorganised workers under various state government welfare schemes to avail social security benefits.

Work with the bidi workers

ActionAid facilitated the formation of Bidi Mazdoor Samuh in Rahatgarh, MP to help bidi workers get their entitlements, such as scholarships for children, pensions and post-death benefits for families. Around 1400 women bidi workers received identity cards. A hospital for bidi workers has also been opened in Rahatgarh, providing care to over 4000 workers and their families. Many workers received death compensation and treatment for severe diseases.

Skill building of unorganised sector workers

Around 5497 unskilled workers (983 men; 4514 women) have been provided with skill development and life skill training across several regions. Among these, 266 got employment and 2378 became self-employed.

A district-level initiative on housing for women fish workers was convened at Chinnoor south, Cuddalore district, Tamil Nadu. More than 350 women fish workers from 12 villages participated. 53 women obtained houses under the Green House scheme in Sivagangai.

Odisha: The Anasangathit Sramik Manch (ASM), with support from CCWD and ActionAid, organised a state-level assembly of informal workers to discuss and find solutions to issues related to unorganised workers.

Social security initiative in Odisha

5 regional-level consultations were organised, covering all 26 districts, and around 30,000 leaflets on social securities were developed in local languages and distributed. ASM organised a state level Sramik Samabesh in Bhubaneswar.

Sensitising unorganised workers: ActionAid organised a workers' awareness initiative and another initiative on social security schemes.

The **Mazdoor Jagrookta** initiative was organised in Lucknow and Kanpur to generate awareness and increase the registration and renewal of informal workers under the Building and other Construction Workers (BOCW) Act. As a result of this, registration camps were organised at labour posts across all 75 districts of the state; the duration of the renewal under the BOCW board was extended from one year to three; more than 1500 construction workers got registration under the BOCW in Lucknow and Kanpur in one month; and more than 45,000 labourers have been registered under the BOCW across the state.

ActionAid initiated an effort **for the regularisation of labour posts (addas)** and the registration of informal labourers at labour posts. The state government has now recognised 31 labour addas/posts in Lucknow city and agreed to provide basic facilities as a first step.

ActionAid, along with the Dihari Mazdoor Sangathan and Vigyan Foundation, launched an initiative seeking **functional shelter homes for informal workers**. Discussions and meetings were held to motivate homeless people to reside in permanent shelters.

Street vendor initiative

Delhi: ActionAid's Delhi team, in association with ally Janpahal, organised a meeting with street vendors.

Andhra Pradesh: The ActionAid Hyderabad Regional Office, with support from

ally Mahila Action, organised a programme in Visakhapatnam to orient street vendors on the Street Vending Act and hold an interface between them and local officials. 54 street vendors (19 women and 35 men) attended. 155 applications were collected for identity cards. 45 street vendors who applied for Mudra loans have received their loans.

ActionAid, along with Odisha ally Centre for Children and Women's Development (CCWD), carried out a **survey of homeless people** in Bhubaneswar. 6,313 homeless people were counted – nearly six times more than the 1,245 mentioned in the 2011 census. There are currently seven shelter homes operational in Bhubaneswar, which can accommodate about 100 people. There is no separate shelter for women and children, and the locations are not proper. More than 82% of the people surveyed said they would not shift to a shelter home. The complete report will soon be released.

An initiative to make shelter homes functional was organised by the Dihari Mazdoor Sangathan Vigyan Foundation, ActionAid and various other workers' organisations. This motivated more than 150 homeless workers residing on the roadside to go to a permanent shelter, and two permanent shelter homes were made functional.

ActionAid's regional office in Patna has visited various shelters for homeless people in Patna. During the visit several shortcomings were found in the functioning of the shelter homes. Post discussions with the various stakeholders a decision was made to handover the functioning of the management of a few shelters to NGOs for creating a model. ActionAid will be providing technical inputs for the running of the shelter.

Strategic Priority II

DEMOCRATISATION OF SOCIETY AND ECONOMY

Raising issues of nomadic communities and de-notified tribes

Denotified tribes continue to face stigma and discrimination despite the withdrawal of the Criminal Tribes Act and the de-notification of 'criminal tribes'. We drew on our work in the last 18 years with denotified and nomadic tribes (DNT) in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Bihar and apprised the National Commission for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes of a range of possible measures to be taken on key sectors of housing, education, health and livelihood for the denotified tribes. The commission appreciated the work done, and the recommendations made by ActionAid.

State Level work

People with disabilities in Bihar

With the Viklang Manch, a platform for the disabled, we have been steadfast in our support of the efforts of the disabled community in Bihar. After sustained work, the Government of Bihar has agreed to extend support for marriages of persons with disabilities. Accordingly, nine couples decided to tie the knot. All the couples were provided with free gas connections and battery-operated tricycles, and free digital literacy was promised to all the sangathan members. There was also a declaration that soft loans will be provided to disabled entrepreneurs for linking them with livelihood opportunities.

Engaging with people living with the human immunodeficiency virus in Karnataka

An HIV/AIDS Forum meeting was organized in Bengaluru. During the meeting community representatives from Milana, a family support network in Bengaluru for people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV), brought up the issue of lack of doctors in Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) centres and stressed that in a few ART centres the doctors were not treating patients properly. It was decided that these issues will be followed up with various authorities.

Community radio helps raise voices of the unheard

A National Level Consultation on 'Community Radio and Development of Marginalized Communities' was held in Bhubaneswar in August 2017 by Young India and ActionAid India, with OdishaLIVE. The consultation was aimed at discussing the potential of Community Radio in bringing social change by capturing and disseminating best practices from across the country.

Research

Action Study on the most excluded communities in Uttar Pradesh

The most marginal scheduled caste communities in Uttar Pradesh are engaged in hunting birds, farm labour, weaving baskets, music, snake catching, collecting firewood, manufacturing bamboo furniture and stone cutting, etc. They are few, and sparsely distributed, resulting in an absence of strong voice, organic intellectuals, community leaders and a lack of education.

We conducted a study to highlight issues of marginalisation and dispossession of these communities. The study focused on exploring the socio-economic and political conditions and various facets of exclusion of these communities in Uttar Pradesh.

Survey on homeless people in Bhubaneswar

We carried out a survey of homeless people in Bhubaneswar. 6313 homeless people were counted. Over 1200 were interviewed. It was found that only 1% of them were using government night shelters. The majority (66%) said they were spending their nights under the open sky in unhygienic conditions, while 32% were sleeping on verandas of shops or other public places, facing difficulties due to bad weather and from police and local strongmen. There are currently seven shelter homes operational in Bhubaneswar, which can accommodate about 100 people. There is no separate shelter for women and children, and the location is not proper. More than 82% of those surveyed said they would not move to a shelter home.

Status of Malnutrition in Karnataka

With Milana, we did a study in Karnataka on the status of malnutrition and presented it to Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Children. The state Right to Food Campaign had organised an interaction with department officials and sought the provision of eggs for children as a part of ICDS following a Supreme Court order. The Commissioner agreed to send these recommendations to the concerned department and also assured that KSCPCR will persuade the state to implement it.

National Initiative

#TalkingShit: Raising the issue of manual scavenging

Despite a ban, the practice of manual scavenging persists in India. Recent deaths of sanitation workers in and around Delhi testify to the persistence of the practice in our cities. In October 2017 ActionAid India started an initiative to raise this issue. We organised a debate amongst college students in collaboration with the Delhi School of Social Work. Social Activist and Magsaysay Award winner Bezwada Wilson, also founder of Safai Karamchari Andolan, was a judge and guest speaker.

Ground Level Interventions

Impact in Numbers: Democratisation of society

- Village Development Plans made – 412
- Facilitated participation of women in 382 Gram Sabhas facilitated
- Persons whose access to social security schemes was facilitated – 6465
- Schools where appointment of cooks from marginalized communities was facilitated – 17
- Leadership Building of 2944 community youth.

State level forum for nomadic communities and denotified tribes in Rajasthan

We helped form a state level forum for nomadic communities (ghumantu jatis) and denotified tribes in Rajasthan. Seven districts of Rajasthan are represented. Activists and leaders from the Dalit Adhikar Network (DAN) were involved in setting up the forum. An increase in the number of committee members has been decided on, to ensure representation of all DNT/NT/SNT communities. In the meeting the Core Committee prepared an actionplan for the coming months.

Getting semi-nomadic tribal children into school in Odisha

About 30 children belonging to one of the most deprived tribal communities were enrolled into a school set up under the National Child Labour Project (NCLP) in Tatijore village in Odisha's Sundargarh district. In addition to being deprived of education, these semi nomadic tribal children were also severely malnourished. We engaged with local authorities to ensure the children get schooling support including mid-day-meals and books.

ActionAid in Bihar celebrated Vimukti Diwas with DNT communities

The denotified communities of Samastipur, Bihar came together to celebrate Vimukti Diwas. Representatives of various communities participated. They shared that their main concern is identity: as they keep moving around in search of livelihood, often the police and local administration view them with suspicion. Many of them still do not possess a voter card and so do not benefit from government schemes. In the last year, 10 families received voter cards and Indira Awas. The community vowed to get their children educated.

Leadership building

In total, around 2944 (1161 men and 1782 women) CBO members from among the villages were trained, with a focus on facilitation of village development plans, leadership qualities and related issues. Regular interactions took place between the community and Panchayat and also with the Information Centres. At least 150 Leadership Schools were conducted.

Village Development Plans

Overall, around 2900 people (1250 men and 1650 women) participated in VDPs prepared in 412 villages through a participatory process involving PRI representatives and block officials. Priorities of action regarding water, roads, children and women's issues were taken up through the 221 VDPs that were prepared.

In VDPs in **Uttar Pradesh**, various issues of villagers were covered, such as construction of roads, linking roads, construction of ponds, housing schemes (Indira Awas Schemes), toilet, MGNREGS works, job cards under MNREGA, construction of boundary wall of primary and upper primary schools, installation of hand pumps for drinking water facilities, electrification in the villages, levelling of agricultural field under MGNREGA, etc. The VDPs were placed before the Gram Sabha of 38

Gram Panchayats and were approved by all the 38 Gram Panchayats.

15 Village Development Plans were initiated **in Manipur** and approved by gram sabhas. This initiative has helped the community to understand the benefits of a bottom-up approach for genuine development. Trainings were provided to Village Council leaders and some of the CBOs in Manipur are now involved in social audit.

Supporting communities to access entitlements

ActionAid in Uttar Pradesh organized a series of consultations with communities and other stakeholders on participatory planning and monitoring for improving the delivery of government services, especially on food security, social security and housing related schemes. Issues faced by vulnerable communities were discussed and improvements were recommended. Nearly 1,300 members of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI) were made aware of government schemes. An outcome of these efforts was that more than 6,000 households were able to secure social security benefits and 14,000 families across the areas we work in were able to access Public Distribution Services (PDS) in the past year.

Establishing Information Resource Centre (IRC) at Panchayat level

To generate awareness and increase access to government schemes and entitlements we worked with our allies in five states and established Information Resource Centers (IRC) in 38 Gram Panchayats. In the IRC, IEC materials pertaining to each government scheme and entitlement have been kept. IRCs have proved good for spreading awareness and filling applications for various government schemes. Throughout the year, in the districts of Pratapgarh and Barabanki in Uttar Pradesh, about 8227 people, of which 4460 were women, visited the IRCs seeking information about government schemes and entitlements. Two IRC centres in UP have been linked with the government's Common Resource Centres.

Youth engagement

Action Aid has formed various groups of young boys and girls across regions through trainings, workshops and perspective building programmes. The groups of adolescent boys and girls focused on developing their orientation on gender equality, harmony and diversity. The various programmes emphasised youth leadership building and engaging young people to support interventions on social change and entitlements across the country.

In Mewat, Haryana 30 youth leaders were trained on government schemes and entitlements and leadership.

In Jharkhand a five-day residential training for 50 youth leaders was organised in Deogarh district by Ambedkar Social Institute and Samvad, with ActionAid.. 300 young people have been trained on issues of leadership and harmony.

Empowering youth champions to combat child marriage in Odisha

In Bhubaneswar, with the support of UNICEF, we held leadership training of 45 Youth Champions who had said 'No' to child marriage or had themselves rejected marriage proposals. Besides leadership training, the youth champions were also trained on the issues of children and the mechanisms of contacting the local police and/or NGOs if and when they come across child marriage or any other children-related issues. After the training they formed a forum called 'Odisha Child Marriage Resistance Forum' to persuade parents and their local community leaders to stop underage marriage and help girls achieve their goals.

Understanding issues of bodily integrity among young urban women

About 50 young women from various slum localities in Bhubaneswar were provided leadership training to build their understanding of bodily integrity and gender responsive social services. In Rajasthan, trainings, debates and discussions were organised for 645 young women and men on discrimination against girls, physical and sexual violence including the POCSO Act, Domestic Violence Act etc.

We have been able to reach out to thousands of youth through our national campaign **Beti Zindabad** through various programmes, workshops, cultural events, street plays and film screenings, and engage them on the issues of declining sex ratio and gender inequality.

We engaged with **college students** through democracy dialogues on the issue of democratisation and workshops on various social issues such as the RTI Act, the constitution and caste discrimination.

The annual **Youth Festival** celebrated its 10th year with around 700 representatives of groups at Kandhmal. Through this intervention, around 11,547 youth have been encouraged, and are now actively participating in implementation of Forest Rights Act, the provisions to combat child marriage and other issues.

Through its Volunteer Engagement Programme, ActionAid organised a number of **social media campaigns, or 'Tweetathons'**, mobilising hundreds of voluntary participants. #HomelessMatter, #HelpThemGrow, #PropertyForHer and #TalkingShit focusing on the issues of homeless people, women, children, manual scavengers etc that collectively reached out to over 8.85 crore people, which was made possible by the active participation of our volunteers from all across India.

Our volunteers also performed **street plays** at multiple locations around the capital like Kholon Aankhein, Dekho Bhi.

Strategic Priority III

WOMEN AND GIRLS' RIGHTS

Through our initiatives at the ground level, we have been continuously addressing all the forms of discrimination that women from excluded communities face. The last year of the CSP saw major gains being made at the state levels while addressing issues of violence faced by women. We focussed simultaneously on economic empowerment of women. One of our major focuses while working with women has been engaging with single women and addressing their vulnerabilities.

Initiatives at the state level

Prohibiting witch branding

One of the biggest elements of the violence that tribal women face is witch hunting. Along with Khedut Chetna Majdoor Sanghathan in Madhya Pradesh, ActionAid has been raising the issue of witch branding. ActionAid has been in touch with various government departments to address this issue.

In 2017, a draft law was proposed on prohibiting the practice. AA took the issue of witch branding to the MP Women's Commission and the commission has agreed to formulate an act to prohibit witch branding.

Breakthrough in Mizo marriage laws

The Mizo Marriage, Divorce and Inheritance of Property Act, 2014 allows divorced Mizo women to inherit the property of their former husbands. We have been working to support its implementation. This law will ensure protection to the women on being divorced. We also now have women members in Village Councils in Mizoram, with a new 30% reservation for women.

Work with Bachhda Bedia community

AA in Madhya Pradesh conducted a quick survey to understand the situation of the women and girls in the Bachhda and Bedia Tribes, and the socioeconomic condition of those of them who are forced into sex work. Based on data analysis, a set of issues was shared with the State Women's Commission. These include doing a detailed study on the situation of Bachhada and Bedia women and a review of the state's Jabali scheme; opening *ashram shalas* for girls; and starting skill development programs for the youth.

Research work on women and unpaid work

Our economy runs on women's unpaid work. Women spend two to 10 times more time doing unpaid work than men, according to an ActionAid India report titled *Invisible Work, Invisible Workers - The Sub-Economies of Unpaid Work and Paid Work*. Unpaid work is often in addition to paid activities, and doubles the burden of labour for women, encroaching upon their health, and on their ability to acquire education, skills, a paid job and an independent income as well as a voice and social status.

This report emerged from action research on the issue of women's unpaid labour across rural and urban contexts in four districts of three states of India – Maharashtra, Telangana and Uttarakhand. It comprises a survey of 1560 women and a desk review of schemes and policies aimed at reducing and redistributing women's unpaid work in those states.

Workshops on the issue of unpaid work were conducted in New Delhi, Maharashtra, Uttarakhand and Telegana where government officials were present.

Engagement on issues of single women

In Madhya Pradesh. Regular meetings were conducted with the State Women Commission to update them about the condition and concerns of single women and

we contributed to the draft policy on single women.

In Uttarakhand, ActionAid, in collaboration with the State Women Commission, conducted an action study on the socio-economic status of single women and worked for a comprehensive policy for single women in Uttarakhand. The 2011 census shows that there is a significant number of single women in 13 districts of Uttarakhand.

The main objective of the study was to create an environment in the state for the formulation of a policy for single women. The data collection has been completed in all 13 districts with the help of the ICDS department and local CBOs and NGOs working in 13 districts. Besides this, we have also identified and mapped key areas in the state for focused intervention for single women. We will be conducting a state level interaction on this soon.

An initiative against witch branding and the Nata system in Rajasthan was taken up in Rajasmand district. A district-level convention was held demanding implementation of the Act. A **regional network** is also expected to reach out in 5 districts against witch branding and Nata.

Initiative against child marriage

Through our efforts forming adolescent watch groups, intervening in schools, and raising community awareness about the ill effects of child marriage, we have been able to address 326 cases of child marriage (primarily of girl children).

In Odisha, this was conducted state wide and mass pledges were taken by the youth in the state to stop child marriage. In one district alone (Subarnapur), around 11985 students from 39 junior colleges took a pledge to say 'no' to child marriage. At a district-level meeting in the Biju Pattnaik Women's College, the District collector told the students that child marriage is against the law and that it hinders the progress of the child. Dalit Adhikar Sanghathan facilitated a mass pledging among the students in a Nigamananda Mahavidyalaya, which about 350 students joined.

Through Antaranga, we continued our work on child marriage, counselling the parents of early child marriage cases, which resulted in five marriages successfully being cancelled. Block-level committees have been formed in 9 blocks and the members organised camps with the support of the ICDS to raise awareness of the consequences of child marriage. Many of the girls who have said 'no' to early marriage are now studying in schools and colleges. So far, 37 girl clubs have been formed by school and college students who are emphasising the negative impacts of early child marriage to their peers.

Shaheen, working in Telangana, partnered with aanganwaadi centres, and the initiative was carried out throughout the year along with staff from aanganwadi centres across 20 slums and with the participation of ICDS teachers.

In Madhya Pradesh, in Khedut Mazdoor Chetna Sanghathan's operational area, KMCS has directly intervened and prevented child marriages. This has saved more than 100 children, especially adolescent girls, from getting married. The communities and panchayats in the area have also decided to reduce the amount of 'bride price' to not more than INR 10,000. The total spending in one marriage ceremony has thus come down to about INR 50,000. This has reduced economic burden of loans, mortgages and migration on families. The District Collector of Alirajpur and Jhabua district has supported this decision.

In West Bengal, one of five states where child marriage is most prevalent, initiatives were also taken up to address child marriage. 480 peer clubs for adolescent girls and boys were formed in South 24 paraganas. The formation and strengthening of Kanyashree clubs within schools was the major programme within the initiative, in which 14 schools were covered, reaching out to 420 adolescents, who gained knowledge on future prospects and possibilities. Life skill sessions were also conducted to build their understanding of gender roles, discrimination, gender equality, bodily integrity, and to develop their own decision-making capacity to resist child marriage and trafficking. In schools, four awareness-promotion camps were conducted to disseminate information on the

existing child protection mechanism of the State, online safety and about existing services for adolescents, such as Kanyashree Prakalpa, Sabuj Sathi, and Shikhshashree.

At the village level, participatory exercises were conducted to ensure that vulnerable families were identified. It also enabled the community to understand their responsibility to set up a child protection mechanism as well as to better understand their social positioning and existing resources. An effort was made to create a space between parents and adolescents through the mechanism of 'intergenerational dialogue'.

A total of 284 religious leaders and influential community members have participated in anti-child-marriage consultations and have taken initiatives to stop child marriage in the vicinity. In masjids, anti-child-marriage messages were disseminated .

Through our initiatives, a total of 295 child marriages were stopped in many of our operational areas.

Initiative to stop trafficking

The issues of child marriage and trafficking are linked. AA allies are of the important understanding that trafficking often takes place in the name of child marriage or employment provision. This is rampant in vulnerable pockets where AA and its allies work.

An initiative was carried out in Betul district of Madhya Pradesh to address the increasing incidence of the trafficking of women and girls. The aim was to sensitise adolescent girls and boys along with community groups, teachers and school management committees, and work for the effective implementation of laws pertaining to trafficking and child sexual abuse. A street play on child sexual abuse was prepared and performed in public places to raise awareness. Several cases of trafficking were identified and action plans were later prepared for each. The finding report was also shared with the district administration for action. The

district police have invited ActionAid and its local partner to run similar initiatives in other parts of the district, in collaboration with local police. The Nagaland Alliance for Children and Women Rights (NACWR) was formed and regular meetings are now held to track cases of VAW and trafficking, with the facilitation of our partner Sisterhood Network.

Through our combined initiatives with our allies, a total of 430 girls and women were rescued.

Addressing violence against women (VAW)

At the ground level, we have been building the capacity of women to challenge the patriarchy and the violence that they face. We also engage with men to encourage them to challenge the patriarchy and ensure better lives for women. We are also running one stop crisis centres (OSCCs) across many states in partnership with the government to address the violence that the women face.

Involving Gram Sabhas to address violence against women

In MP, on the occasion of Ambedkar Jayanti and as part of the Beti Zindabad campaign, we engaged with the gram panchayats to organize special sabhas (meetings) to sensitise people on atrocities and violence against women and girls from marginalized communities. LRP allies MPANM, MSJP and Parivartan Campaign ran this programme in across seven districts. Detailed resolutions were prepared to help gram sabhas deal with a range of issues including domestic violence, child marriage, trafficking, sexual assault and harassment, girl's safety and security, sexual harassment at the work place, poor enrolment and high dropout rates of girls in schools, and malnutrition among children. The community was successful in getting the resolutions passed in 45 gram panchayats which they forwarded to the relevant tiers of the local governance for final approval and incorporation into district panchayat plans. The plans include the formation of Shaurya Dals at the Panchayat level by involving community leaders and

representatives to stop violence against women, and pressing for the opening of one stop crisis centres at the district level.

Running One Stop Crisis Centres and women alliances to address violence against women (VAW)

Our ground-level interventions revealed the importance of setting up a range of services under one roof for women facing violence. 22 One Stop Crisis Centres were therefore set up during 2017. These centres are operating in the four states of Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Manipur and Uttar Pradesh. In MP and UP, the centres were set up in very close collaboration with the respective state governments, while the technical know-how was provided by AA. In MP, OSCC received 39,000 calls on its helpline number. Of these, approximately 11,000 calls were made by women survivors. In the other cases, AA linked the survivors to relevant state services. In UP, it is expected that OSCCs will now be spread across all 75 districts, with support from AA. 214 women were linked with the police for support and 49 cases resulted in an FIR against the accused. 94 women and minor children (male and female) were given support. Short-stay shelter was provided to 108 women survivors; among these, 12 were pregnant minor girls. 13 minor girls have been linked with education and 33 women with skill development training. OSCC helped women survivors to access the State Victim compensation scheme.

In Uttar Pradesh, we supported Aapki Sakhi Asha Jyoti Kendras. 1386 VAW cases were registered. 171 women and 18 children were rescued during the year and 100 women were provided shelter home support while 249 cases were filled in the court

A number of women's forums were formed, such as Sanmilita Nari Adhikar Mancha (SNASM) in Sadhya, Assam; Women Collectives in Nagaland; Adivasi Women's Association (AAWAA), a women's forum among tea tribes; and the All Tribal Women's Organisation (ATWO) in Manipur.

A feminist resource centre has been established in Sadhya and a rural OSCC was also established in Ambikapur in Assam. The Women Societies are linked with the OSCC facilitated by ATWO in Manipur. A forum has also been created in Nagaland,

initiated by Sisterhood Network, which is closely coordinating with the government OSCC.

In Rajasthan, AA and its allies worked towards facilitating the formation of Mahila Samajik Nyay Manch, who help address issues of domestic violence and sexual abuse of women.

Shaheen has collaborated with District Legal Services Aid (DLSA) to organise training programmes for community women and staff. Awareness programmes have been held about free aid for the community. DLSA has further extended its support to organise free training for community women, who will then be supporting the community women free.

We are also working on the issue of sexual harassment faced by women in the workplace. In West Bengal, through our initiative with domestic workers, facilitated by SRISTY and SPAN, we have facilitated the formation of grievance redressal committees in two districts. These have been linked with the district local complaint committees.

Working with men and boys

Through the agency of women, we have been able to use community-level mechanisms in all LRPs to address the harmful traditional practices faced by women and girls, chiefly child marriage, witch branding and the practice of dowry, among others.

In this effort, we have been engaged in the formation of women's groups and adolescent groups. We also realised, however, that engagement with boys and men is important in bringing lasting change. Women watch groups have been formed in all LRPs. The men and boys also undergo orientation on feminist perspectives, which aids the efforts of the community to challenge harmful practices. In many instances, the adolescent boys' groups have been instrumental in making parents understand the need to prevent child marriage, and they have also reported cases of child marriage. A total of 2442 men and boys have undergone sensitisation on

women and girl's issues.

Women's economic empowerment

Another important axis of our work with women has been ensuring economic empowerment. Towards this goal, we have focused on building women's capacity and identity as farmers, as well as on the situation of single women.

Women's access to and control over natural and land resources

In Andhra Pradesh, through the efforts of NISARGA , Chittoor district, 584 Dalit women got possession over 587 acres of land.

Women's collectives

ActionAid has formed and nurtured farmer collectives across eight states. This year, 101 farmer collectives with 2540 farmers have been formed in AP and Telangana, 72 women farmer collectives with 816 women in Bihar and Jharkhand, 30 farmers collectives with 450 farmers (370 women) in Assam and Nagaland, 2 farmer collectives with 120 farmers in Karnataka, and 42 farmer collectives in Madhya Pradesh.

In West Bengal, a Farmers' Producer Company was promoted among Pramila Bahini members, facilitated by GBS in Cooch Behar. Around 500 women have formed a FPO and applied for registration.

CSRA, working with the Santhal community, has been able to form women's groups called the Gaga. 60 such women's groups are involved in collective farming across 20 villages

CCC formed a Women Farmers' Cooperative named Nelamma Mahila Raithula Sahakara Sangham, with 168 women as its members.

In Madhya Pradesh, four fishers' collectives have been formed in Alirajpur and

registered with the district fishery development department.

Through the intervention of DISHA in West Bengal, a state-level meet of women fish workers from seven districts drew up a state-level charter of demands and formed a women fish workers' state body to take the issues forward. This body had an interface with the state Minister of Fisheries and presented him with the demands; positive responses and assurances were received. This has been first ever women fish workers' state-level initiative in West Bengal. The Fisheries Department has started allotting bicycles and cold boxes for fish vendor members of women fish worker collectives in South 24 Parganas. A cooperative has also been facilitated.

Following their first ever interface with the Tiger Widow collective, the Department of Fisheries in West Bengal has issued directions to promote the livelihood and rehabilitation of tiger widows. Through sustained persuasion, tiger widows have been able to successfully get insurance coverage money in three cases and in one case the tiger widow has received forest compensation.

Through SRED, in Vellore, Tamil Nadu, 40 women are now engaged in farming and several varieties of crops have been cultivated. Their efforts have yielded them with 28 sacks of paddy, each containing 50 kg. Each of the women took 20 kg of paddy and some green leaves for household purposes, and the rest have been stored for the purpose of sowing during the next season.

In the intervention area of SRISTY-SPAN in West Bengal, around 8000 domestic workers came together to form the Paschim Banga Griha Paricharika Samiti. SRISTY has also facilitated the formation of grievance redressal committees in two districts, which have enabled the domestic workers to address issues of sexual harassment at in the workplace.

Building the skills of women bidi workers

In the past year, the focus has been on providing skill training to women bidi workers, primarily as basic sewing operators, in order to offer a change in livelihood, considering the educational and socioeconomic constraints in Rahatgarh town. 120 local women have now been trained. Some of these women have begun independent work and have improved their daily wages. A total of 3553 women underwent skill building through our collaborative efforts with allies.

Women's access to entitlements

We have been focussing on ensuring that women, and particularly single women, have access to various government schemes and entitlements.

In Nisarga, Chittoor district, AP, we raised the issues that single women face across various departments.

As the result of this effort, the district collector has issued circulars to eight Thasildars & MDOs to verify the list of single women and also provide BPL cards and housing plots, dependent on eligibility. 167 house plots have been allocated to single women as a result.

In Gramya, we have been able to facilitate the formation and strengthening of single women forums in two mandals, where 535 women have been registered. The Government of Telangana has published a GO to ensure that all single women are covered by pensions. In Pilupu, 47 single women applied for pensions and 37 were covered. A total of 58 single women have applied for coverage under National Family Benefit Schemes.

Ekal Mahila Parishad, facilitated by Paryay in Maharashtra, was organised at the district headquarters in Osmanabad. More than 700 women participated, demanding their right to a house, right to property and right to work. Sakhi Mahila Manch (SMM) is a collective of single women. The parishad was organised by SMM to bring out the issues single women are facing. Due to continuous engagement on the issues of single women, the district administration has taken note of the issues.

Our work with single women in Gujarat has reached out to five districts, covering 58 villages with a membership of 656 single women, under the banner of Ekal Nari Shakti Manch. Achievements include ensuring government entitlements, including land, are in the name of the single women.

Women auto drivers

The rehabilitation of women survivors of violence is an important part of OSCC intervention in Bhopal. In this process, OSCC has always tried to break gender stereotypes and challenge the patriarchal mindset. Young women survivors of violence have been encouraged to enhance their skills in their areas of interest. A total of 20 young women from 20 to 30 years old opted for auto driving. These 20 young women were trained by Piaggio motor driving school for a month, and are now plying their autos across the city of Bhopal. This effort has been appreciated by many groups, including the government.

Skill-based training on minor forest produce (MFP) and bakery

Kotwali tribes under the PvTG category mostly depend on forest produce for their livelihood, like any other PvTG. In Navsari district, Gujarat, the Kotwali community depend on bamboo; they produce bamboo products and sell them in the local market or at local festivals. Since they have been making their products in the traditional way, they had not been getting the right price for their products. In order to enhance their skills and improve their economic condition, a two-month-long training programme was organised jointly by Cohesion, Gujarat Mati Kalakari and Rural Technology Institute, Gandhinagar. Participants learned new designs and improved their knowledge to add value to their existing product. They are now getting a better price in the market.

Similarly, 20 women from two villages received bakery training to produce different products from ragi, the local variety of millet. They are now producing papad, papdi, biscuits and Khakhra. These products were displayed at Satvik Mela, an exhibition

held in Ahmedabad. Women farmers' forum Ujaas Mahila Khedut Sangh also participated in this Satvik Mela for three days, where they exhibited and sold traditional food product 'Ubadiyu' and made a profit of Rs. 30,000. This exposure has helped bring entrepreneurial skills and knowledge to the tribal women in the project area.

Working with young urban women (YUW)

ActionAid intensified and expanded its work with young urban women across New Delhi, Bhubaneswar and Kolkata, and continued its work in the three cities of Mumbai, Hyderabad and Chennai. Our interventions in collaboration with our allies engaged approximately 900 young urban women across six cities on the issues of bodily integrity and economic justice. Across these cities, the young women have been able to successfully implement initiatives around ensuring gender-responsive public services. These issues range from the provision of safe public toilets and of subsidised/free sanitary napkins to safe public transport. On the work front, YUW have been seeking an easier process for accessing Social Security Schemes for YUWs in domestic work and informal sector job.

Beti Zindabad!

In 2017, the *Beti Zindabad!* campaign made significant progress in terms of reaching out to more people, building new allyships and its collaborative efforts to fight for women and children's issues and gender equality. A new campaign initiative, #SchoolWithoutFear was launched to bring about the improvement of safety standards and mechanisms in schools and also to address the issue of child sexual abuse, corporal punishment and discrimination. This, along with the convergence of Child Rights Week and 16 days of activism on violence against women, gave the *Beti Zindabad!* campaign much-needed momentum for 2018, with a lot of potential, promises and expectations.

Property for Her

Earlier in 2017, ActionAid India entered into a collaboration with four other organisations for an initiative called *Property for Her*, to raise issue of property ownership for women in India. *Property For Her* overlapped in many ways with *Beti Zindabad!*'s demand for gender equality. *Beti Zindabad!* complements *Property for Her* as it helps create the conditions for enabling the discourse on property for women at an early age through our engagements with and access to schools, villages and local governments, such as district-level offices and panchayats.

AAI initiated a social campaign on Twitter with the hashtag #PropertyForHer, in collaboration with partner organisations. This received significant support from all over country. As a result, it trended on Twitter for a significant amount of time and received widespread attention.

16 days of Activism/Fortnight against VAW

ActionAid India and its allies ran an impassioned and spirited campaign during the 16 days of activism, or VAW campaign, highlighting the core issues of *Beti Zindabad!* regarding VAW, including but not limited to female foeticide, child marriage, adverse sex ratio, girl education and child sexual abuse. Our regional offices and allies covered various themes, along with the 2017's theme 'Leave No one Behind'. In addition to gender sensitisation workshops, street plays, consultations and processions on VAW, the themes also include issues of single women, unpaid care work, sexual reproductive health and transgenders.

In Patna, a scooty yatra was held to help end sexual abuse and harassment, dowry, child marriage, witch hunt and domestic violence. In Jaipur, multiple stakeholders took part in the campaign including high level government officials, UN agencies, women networks, civil society organisations, students and reach out to more than 30,000 people. In addition, 2000 youth ambassadors were trained and sensitised on VAW. In Dimapur, the Sisterhood Network met with state government officials and organised various programmes to highlight issues such as kidnapping and

trafficking, rape and domestic violence. In Hyderabad, the *School Without Fear* drive reached out to more than 3000 students during the fortnight campaign making them aware of the *Beti Zindabad!* campaign and the issues covered under it. In Odisha, girl students held powerful marches in villages spreading awareness of the consequences of child marriages. They also took a pledge not to marry before the age of 18.

Strategic Priority IV

CHILDREN ARE RECOGNISED AS EQUAL CITIZENS

ActionAid Association has been extensively working on strengthening public education, participation and protection of the he most marginalised children, as they are among our key constituencies. We continued to focus upon empowering community groups, and school management committees for making schools functional and accessible to the children of the marginalised communities. Children's groups were strengthened to ensure their right to participation and protection. Work was also done on the issue of school closure in 2017.

Initiatives:

Consultation meeting

In Tamil Nadu, a state level consultation meeting to evolve a model child protection policy was conducted. This meeting was organised jointly by Tamil Nadu Child rights Protection Network and UNICEF.

State level conclave on SMC

ActionAid India and UNICEF jointly organised a two-day state level conclave on School Management Committee (SMC)-panchayat collaboration to improve attendance and the school environment in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. The conclave aimed at bringing partners and project stakeholders together and sharing their experiences about the Muskaan project; 120 persons participated in the conclave. A public hearing was organised in five districts with the objective of redressing the grievances in elementary education. 80 testimonies (from 50 blocks) pertained to the gaps and constraints in the functioning of elementary education, which were shared with the various government departments in the district.

Submitting memorandum of demands to the state

ActionAid's partner Musahar Manch, a CBO in Uttar Pradesh, held a series of meetings and submitted a memorandum of demands focusing on children's issues to local authorities.

Research and related efforts

School Without Fear campaign

ActionAid Association launched a nationwide campaign initiative under *Beti Zindabad!* called *School Without Fear*. The initiative was essentially a survey to identify gaps in the implementation of school safety guidelines laid out by the Ministry of Human Resources and Development (MHRD), Government of India. *School Without Fear* strives to make schools safer and for the proper implementation of MHRD guidelines; reduce cases of child sexual abuse and harassment in and around schools; eliminate corporal punishment and discrimination of all kinds; and demand a secure, protected, and inclusive learning environment in schools. In less than two months, along with tremendous support from our allies, ActionAid conducted a survey of 2043 students and 756 teachers in more than 350 schools. The campaign was implemented in all the 12 regional offices

spread across 57 districts in 16 states.

Enrolment campaign

ActionAid's allies in Uttar Pradesh launched enrolment drives to ensure 100% enrolment, attendance, transition and retention of children. The District Elementary Education Department, our local grass-root partners, volunteers, members of SMCs and local communities participated in enrolment drives. The campaign covered 800 NPRCs (Nyaya Panchayat Resource Centres) in 65 blocks in eight districts. The enrolment drives generated awareness among parents and the communities and, more importantly, members of Panchayats and CBOs actively participated to ensure the enrolment of children in schools. A total of 23,891 out-of-school children were enrolled, with an increased attendance of 35%. Apart from this, the drive also addressed various social issues such as caste and religious discrimination, early child marriage, health-related problems of adolescent girls and other issues faced by children.

ActionAid's LRP Sai Jyoti organised enrolment drives in 34 villages of Birdha, Lalitpur district, UP and tracked the data of children outside of schools.

ActionAid and partners in Uttar Pradesh organised the *School Chalo Abhiyan* in 44 village panchayats in Kalakankar block in Uttar Pradesh in collaboration with government school teachers, government frontline workers, CBO leaders, community members and school children. During the campaign 870 children were enrolled in Balliya district and 54 girls were admitted to the Kasturba Gandhi Valika Vidliya (KGVV) in Maharajgang, UP.

ActionAid's Tamil Nadu Region partner WIND Trust conducted back to school campaigns involving children, parents and elders of the community. Through these campaigns, issues of child labour, early marriage and school drop-out were discussed.

ActionAid's partner NISARGA conducted a 45-day door-to-door enrolment campaign in 106 villages in Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh to ensure 100% enrolment. Bhubaneswar RO partner AESS organised enrolment campaigns in 9 functional panchayats of Koraput district, ensuring maximum re-enrolment of children in schools.

During the year, ActionAid's LRP partner Antaranga in Kandhmal district has taken steps to ensure 100% enrolment of girls in local schools. An extensive survey was done and in 42 Gram Panchayats a total of 107 girls who had dropped out were enrolled.

Initiatives at the ground level Celebrating child rights week

ActionAid and its allies observed Child Rights Week (14 – 20 November) throughout the country. During the period, our allies raised several child related issues while engaging stakeholders ranging from governments, institutions, communities and schools to other national and international organisations. In Rajasthan, 'Ek Kadam Bachpan ki Ore' was the theme used and this saw the involvement of the the RSCPCR chief and high level govt representatives along with several other leading organisations such as UNICEF, ActionAid, Save the Children etc.

In Madhya Pradesh, several initiatives were initiated against child trafficking and Child Sexual Abuse. In Delhi, a Bal Mela was held where 350 children sponsored by ActionAid took part in recreational activities and displayed their creative skills. Other regional offices also conducted safety walks and safety audits and organised awareness sessions on child issues as part of the #SchoolWithoutFear campaign drive. In BBSR, about 8000 to 10,000 children were reached out to during the Child Rights Week.

With the support of our allies, we were able to reach out to 55 Schools in 8 Districts, covering government and government-aided primary/upper primary and high schools in rural, semi-urban and urban areas of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. A total of 208 children and 92 teachers were interviewed. 16 focused group discussions

and 16 safety walks and mapping were organised and conducted by 16 schools to identify the high risk and low risk areas inside and outside their schools. The outcomes of the discussions and safety mappings are revealing and certainly alarming with regard to the safety and protection of children.

Similar celebrations were reported from West Bengal and Tamil Nadu, where boys participated actively.

Child Friendly Space Village Committees (CFSVC)

ActionAid with the support of UNICEF formed 40 CFSVCs (Child Friendly Space Village Committees) consisting of local community heads, other community members, local teachers, gram sevaks, religious preachers, ICDS workers, health workers and youth in Srinagar, Budgam, Pulwama, Anantnag & Shopian districts of Jammu and Kashmir. These centres aim at ensuring community-based protection and participation of conflict-affected children of Kashmir, in their own community and family settings. The children participate in various activities, including sports, craft, drawing and painting, peer socialisation, and peer sharing. This safe space is also used as a platform to address the deeper issues of child protection: psychosocial issues, school drop-outs, physical challenge, adolescent health, and so on. Till now a total of 3581 children have been enrolled in these 40 CFSVCs.

Scholarship support

ActionAid supported 200 young people from poor and excluded communities to access higher education through the Devi Charan Chatterjee and Rajyalaxmi Chatterjee Scholarships and on the other hand helped further strengthen government schools in order to ensure quality and universal education for children from excluded and marginalised communities.

This project, which began in 2014 and continued in the reporting period, is operational in 8 states, 373 villages, 146 Gram Panchayats, 17 Blocks and 30

slums, in 514 Schools.

Spreading awareness on child issues

Sisterhood Network (SN) organised awareness programmes for three villages in Dimapur district, Nagaland in collaboration with the Nagaland Alliance for Women & Child Rights (NAW&CR) to discuss issues of children. Children were taught about the RTE, child abuse, and were given the opportunity to manage the children's clubs and learn about their traditions.

LRP AESS in Bhubaneswar oriented SMC members on the RTE in 74 villages to make them aware of their role and responsibility.

Education being important and a disturbing concern, ActionAid conducted community consultative meetings on improving access to different levels of education for students in six tea gardens in Assam. 208 community members participated. The Adivasi Mahasabha has taken up the issue of education for Adivasi children and its habitations as the most important issue in 2017.

Joyful learning centres and remedial classes

ActionAid and an LRP partner in the North East initiated the idea of Joyful Learning Centres (JLCs): indigenous interactive learning centres at the primary level, so that children are guided by the principle of knowing and having skills, indigenous knowledge, traditions, etc. Due to this effort a total of about 1156 children regularly come to the remedial classes (JLC) run by PAD LRP amongst the tea garden children. They have re-enrolled and about 164 school dropouts have started going to regular school after joining the remedial classes.

LRP partner EFRAH in Haryana established 20 Ambedkar Multi Learning Centres to provide space to children to enjoy themselves and enhance their learning level in creative ways. These centres helped children to gain awareness of their rights and engaged the community too.

Muskaan Project

Under the Muskaan project, an extensive campaign to increase the enrolment of girl children and children from excluded communities was organised by Sarva Siksha Abhiyan and Actionaid Association in all the elementary schools in six districts of UP. Apart from the enrolment and attendance drives, the initiative also focused on various issues such as gender inequality, caste- and religion-based discrimination, child marriage, menstrual health management, etc. Approximately 266 villages were covered in these awareness sessions and a total of 28,649 people participated. The participants were members of SMCs, PRIs, teachers, government officials and the local community. Subsequently, seeing the improved quality of government schools, 3007 children moved from private schools to government schools, which is one of our major achievements from 2017.

The Muskaan team in its respective districts helped to form social audit teams at the block level and trained other SMC members. The social audit teams were provided requisite trainings before the process and a total of 1800 people were trained on the social audit process. The project in UP covered social audit processes in 1618 schools of 75 districts of the state (a total of 11,326 members participated in conducting social audits, of which 6500 were men and 4826 were women.)

The project has successfully facilitated the development of a School Development Plan (SDP) in 523 elementary schools at the block level in six districts of UP. The project has also been successful in incorporating the SDP in GPDP (Gram Panchayat Development Plan) with the support of the local community.

Establishing community-based grievance redressal mechanisms

To ensure effective implementation of the RTE Act, 2009, a joint collaboration of UNICEF and ActionAid launched a project entitled 'establishing community-based grievance redressal mechanism (CBGRM)' in Maharajganj and Ballia districts of

UP. The intervention mainly focused on addressing and redressing the grievances relating to functionality of schools at Panchayat level. The intervention covered 523 elementary schools, including Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya. Under CBGRM, 1867 cases were registered at the panchayat level, out of which 90% were solved. Similarly, out of 53 applications registered for appointment of teachers, 36 teachers were appointed.

Workshop on children's protection issues

A two-day workshop was organised by People's Action for People in Need (PAPN) with ActionAid's support in the Nahan district of Himachal Pradesh. The workshop was attended by bal panchayat leaders, District Child Protection Unit Project Officers, District Child Welfare Committee members, School Management Committee members, teachers at the elementary and secondary levels, childline team coordinators (Nahan), anti-human trafficking unit officials and representatives of three NGOs (Aravalli Organisation, Himachal Gyan Vigyan Samiti and Himachal Awakening Society).

The workshop focused on the relevance of giving a separate and unique identity to the children, thereby ensuring their protection. There was also a discussion on the effectiveness of the steps taken by the police, juvenile homes and child protection centres.

ActionAid and its partners in Kashmir, with the support of UNICEF, organised two two-day trainings on child development and child protection for their staff. These trainings were given by a mix of resource persons from different backgrounds: academicians and researchers, development practitioners, covering aspects of child rights, child protection, JKICPS, and the JK Juvenile Justice Act.

The trainers displayed documentaries regarding child protection and had in-depth discussions on ICPS and its guidelines. In order to capacitate staff, discussions were also held around other children related public policies and programs such as ICDS,

SSA, MDM and RAMSA.

Awareness training on POCSO Act

Awareness training on the Protection of Children from Sexual Offence (POCSO Act), the Nirbhaya Act and the role of the 'SHE' Team was organised for 40 members of the Shaheen Mahila Mazdoor Sangam (SMMS) in Hyderabad. SHE Teams have been set up by the police in Telangana to provide safety and security to women in the state. Also, thanks to the continuous efforts of Shaheen, 3518 CCTV cameras were installed in old city Hyderabad by Telangana Police, ensuring the safety of the children of the area.

Creative and educational exhibition and exposure visits

The district-level Meena Manch exhibition was a major activity organised by ActionAid India Uttar Pradesh & Uttarakhand Regional Office in three districts (Budaun, Shrawasti and Balrampur) in Uttar Pradesh, in which 488 Meena Manch members from 30 blocks participated. The exhibition displayed works on early marriages, the dowry system and the importance of education for every child.

A children's exposure trip was organised to Sundarvan and the Indian Space Research Organisation of Ahmedabad by Janvikas with the support of ActionAid India, in which 63 children from Dalit, Muslim and Christian communities from the Gomtipur area took part. The objective of the trip was to bring children from diverse communities together and develop friendships among them.

Strengthening village-level child clubs

AAI partner Association for the Rural Development (ARD) in Andhra Pradesh organised 16 children's club meetings in 16 villages with 201 children. They discussed child education, child nutrition, the 1098 help line, enrolment,

mainstreaming drop-outs, child marriages, parents' awareness of education and admission into schools, school management committees, seasonal diseases, health and hygiene, food, nutrition in ICDS centres & mid-day meals, and ANM & Health services.

In order to motivate and encourage children, Shaheen, a partner of ActionAid in Hyderabad, facilitated weekly child clubs with our sponsor and non-sponsor children, covering 20 slums in the LRP area.

Our LRP Gramonnati in Lucknow organised a child club activity in the villages Basaura & Lohari. The objective was to increase the presence of children in school. The campaign was organised by 248 children in both the villages. 60 children (24 girls) participated in the general knowledge and painting activities. The Children's Club also organised a cultural programme. Guardians and parents and members of the SMCs actively participated in this programme.

Jagruti in Karnataka, one of our LRPs, arranged a visit for 130 children from children's clubs to be exposed to scientific experiments.

Sisterhood Network and AAA Guwahati RO formed 5 Children's Clubs by the name 'MERA KI', which means a house of learning. In these clubs, children learn their culture, values, and more about their community.

Community-based nutrition rehabilitation centre and kitchen garden

Tribal children suffer more from malnutrition in MP. ActionAid and partner organisations have been working on malnutrition in 8 badly afflicted districts. On one side, efforts have been geared towards strengthening the public distribution system and government systems for enhancing the quality of ICDS centres in both urban and rural areas and improving health services and vaccination facilities in primary health centres and district hospitals.

On the other side attempts were made to reinforce traditional food practices and habits among tribal communities.

Health Support

AAA's partner in Madhya Pradesh (Poshan Abhiyan) conducted discussions on health and nutrition with adolescent girls. The girls were informed about nutritional intake, personal health and hygiene. They were encouraged to participate in the activities conducted for adolescents in the aanganwadi on anaemia and the menstrual cycle. Besides this, aanganwadi workers were also sensitised on child health and nutrition.

ActionAid's LRP in Mizoram and Nagaland organised 2 health camps benefitting 479 children in the area. In Assam, the PAD LRP team conducted consultation programmes in tea gardens and village habitations where approximately 300 girls and adolescents participated and engaged in discussions around issues related to menstruation, puberty and safety.

Strategic Priority V

A socially just, secular and peaceful society

National Level

Justice against Triple Talaq

On 22 August 2017, the Supreme Court of India, headed by the Chief Justice of India, set aside talaq-e-biddah, or 'instant talaq', the practice of Muslim men divorcing their wives by uttering 'talaq' thrice consecutively. This was hailed by many as an historic step that will help bring change in the lives of Muslim women.

ActionAid India is proud to be part of this efforts togetherwith Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan.

National consultation following the SC judgment on triple talaq

Following the Supreme Court's judgment setting aside triple talaq and calling for legislation, the Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan (BMMA), with the support of ActionAid, organised a national consultation with Muslim women to discuss the way forward.

Kaarwan centres

This year, the Centre for Peace Studies (CPS) carried forward ground-level work for citizenship entitlements through Kaarwan centres and women leaders. It actively collaborated with civil society groups.

The Kaarwan centres operate in Mumbai, Hyderabad, Cuttack, Bhopal, Kolkata, Dindigul, and Hospet. The regular activities of skill-training continued in all 7 centres supported by AA. Another two centres were supported by the community.

Other Initiatives

A half-day seminar was organised in Delhi by Studio Adda to make young people aware about gender equality and peace and harmony. Over 100 students from different colleges participated in this seminar.

State-level activitiesCapacity building

- **Literacy Training:** training has been conducted in three districts of Gujarat – namely Anand, Ahmadabad and Banaskantha – on the Sachar committee recommendation and the PM's 15 points, PWDVA 2005, POCSO, DVAct and

filing of RTI for ensuring access to government entitlement and schemes. A total of 160 people participated.

- **Youth leadership training:** a youth leadership training programme for around 60 youth members of Antaranga group in Kandhamal was organised at two places (Jagruti in Daringibadi block and Pradata in G. Udayagiri block). The training programmes aimed at increasing the youth's understanding about the development process and building their capacity to work with the community. It also helped build the confidence of volunteers and youth.
- **Art for peace campaign:** CCC co-organised the Art for Peace campaign in Hyderabad along with other civil society organisations .. Students and artists participated in this programme and did drawings and paintings showcasing peace and harmony between communities.

Strategic Priority VI

Solidarity with efforts and progressive actions beyond local boundaries

The South Solidarity Initiative released a **publication** on BRICS titled '**Reclaiming Relevance: BRICS and the New Multipolarity**', which was jointly commissioned by ActionAid India, ActionAid Brazil and ActionAid South Africa.

This publication comes at a time of profound change in the international system where geopolitics has witnessed an ascendancy of multiple poles of regional powers. This has led to greater multilateralism in the form of global agreements such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, negotiations on plurilateral trade deals and the resurgence of several regional forums.

Bandung Declaration: Towards new democratic multilateralism

The South Solidarity Initiative Hub (SSI) of ActionAid India, the Council for Social Development and the India International Centre (IIC) organised a symposium titled, “Towards a New Democratic Multilateralism” to mark Bandung Day. The objective of the event was to recall the Bandung Declaration of Ten Principles adopted by the Asian and African countries in 1955 and to reaffirm values of the freedom efforts of the Asian, African and Latin American countries.

Fisheries and fishworkers

The South Solidarity Initiative, National Platform for Small-Scale Fishworkers (Inland), and National Fishworkers Forum (NFF) co-organised a workshop on the **impact of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) on fisheries in Hyderabad** on 25 July 2017. Participants reflected on free trade negotiations in the WTO and in regional agreements such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and their implications pertaining to the fisheries sector.

Participants also discussed the urgent and severe challenges facing small-scale traditional fishworkers, who are dependent on fishing for their sustenance.

Emergency Response

ActionAid, in partnership with Young India, organised a two-day national consultation on community radio at Prasar Bharati Training Institute, Bhubaneswar. Many participants engaged with community radios across the country and deliberated on the role of community radio in disaster-preparedness of the communities.

Duskal Mukti Initiative (Bundelkhand drought response programme):

Bundelkhand has been constantly affected by natural disasters such as drought, hailstorm floods etc. In order to address the issue, *Dushkal Mukti initiative* was organised in all the seven districts of Bundelkhand in June 2017. The victims and sufferers of the drought and floods organised meetings to highlight the gruesome and tragic effects of drought. The campaign covered more than 1145 villages across 7 districts of Bundelkhand, Uttar Pradesh. As result of the campaign, 14 ponds in 6 villages were cleaned up with the support of the community in Jalone district. 115 hand pumps were repaired, 21 hand pumps werere-bored, and farm bunding of 40 acres of land was done. The campaign submitted the demands to the State, Divisional and District administration.

Taking the issue further, a **Regional Consultation on Agrarian Crisis and Drought in Bundelkhand** was organised in Jhansi in December. Sustainable solutions for drought and agrarian crises were emphasized in the consultation, such as water conservation, drought-resistant crops and new techniques of agriculture. The community sought: immediate announcement of drought and initiation of relief measures, ensuring of food security and safe drinking water and 150 days of MGNREGA work in villages to repair and construct the water structures on priority, immediate provision of crop-loss compensation to small and marginal farmers, identification and marking of common water structures (wells, ponds and rivers), removal of encroachments and rejuvenation of all water structures in the village, and preparation of a drought mitigation plan through special Gram Sabhas.

In Uttar Pradesh, 525 families from 31 villages were supported in emergencies. Two water bodies were restored.

Flood Response

The floods in 2017 were unprecedented not only in their magnitude but also in the extent of their reach – wreaking havoc in several states, including Assam, Mizoram, Rajasthan, Gujarat, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Responding to the emergencies, ActionAid carried out relief interventions in these states, reaching out to around 18,000 families with various types of support, including food, hygiene kits and tarpaulin sheets, etc. As a result of our efforts 4,200 people got relief support from the administration in Gujarat and Rajasthan.

Dry food rations were distributed to over 1000 families in Bihar, including 550 lactating and pregnant women. 1,010 households in Gujarat were provided with dry rations, 419 families in Mizoram (including 5 women-headed households), and 1601 families in Rajasthan. In Uttar Pradesh, 750 families were given food grains, with 520 food kits given to the most vulnerable families. A cumulative 1,000 families in West Bengal were reached, of which 260 were most deprived, including single women and people with disabilities.

Non-food items, including clothes, torches and footwear, were provided to 500 families in Rajasthan. 150 families in Gujarat received blankets. 2,316 families in Bihar were given relief kits consisting of 2 mosquito nets, a solar lamp and a water purifier.

Hygiene kits were given to 500 families in Gujarat. In Bihar, upwards of 1,200 families were distributed hygiene kits. In badly affected states, water purification tablets as well as bleaching powder, among other disinfectants, were distributed to ensure availability of drinking water and clean water sources. Spraying of lime and bleaching powder to purify water bodies was done in Bihar, along with disinfection of 200 handpumps and restoration of 85. Additionally, temporary safe bathing spaces were also created for women in a few districts. Chlorination tablets were provided in Uttar Pradesh and around a thousand families were given water purifying tablets in West Bengal.

Tarpaulin sheets for temporary shelter were distributed to over 600 families in

Rajasthan. 150 families received tarpaulin sheets in Gujarat, more than 400 households (including 32 women headed households) received shelter support in Mizoram, and 60 families in UP and 2574 families in Bihar received tarpaulin sheets.

Impact in Numbers: Flood Response

Activity	Men	Women	Children	Total number of people reached
Dry food rations	6362	7601	17537	31500
WASH	2415	3300	6285	12000
NFIs (hygiene kits, mosquito nets, solar lamps, etc)	4970	5696	14164	24830
Shelter material	4884	4214	14202	23120
Total	18631	20811	52188	91450

Work was executed in Gujarat, Rajasthan, UP and Mizoram, which included consultation with Village Councils, Relief Commissioners and other officials.

Work was carried out with over 2,000 families in Gujarat, and over 2,200 families in Rajasthan, leading to an increase in the number of families covered by our relief efforts. Our efforts in UP resulted in the procurement of government relief aid for the 9 worst-affected villages.

ActionAid also carried out additional activities dependent on the needs of affected communities. Health camps were organised in some states to cater to the medical needs of the victims. Two community kitchens were set up in 9 of the worst affected villages in Uttar Pradesh.

Health and hygiene kits were provided to 500 flood-hit families in Araria District, Bihar with support from the PwC India Foundation.

Health & hygiene kits (hair oil, comb, bathing soap, detergent soap, bucket with lid,

mug, antiseptic lotion, bandage, sanitary napkin, cotton) and dry rations (5 kg rice, 1 kg pulses, 1 kg sattu, 0.5 l mustard oil, 4 packets of biscuits, 1 kg salt) were provided to 504 flood-hit families in Runnisaidpur Block, Sitamarhi district, Bihar, with support from the Cipla Foundation. 50 tarpaulins were also distributed under this project. To ensure safe drinking water, about 200 hand pumps were disinfected. Through community involvement, 85 hand pumps were repaired. 10 temporary bathing spaces for women were constructed. In the month of December, woolen clothes were distributed for 600 children from the Musahar community in Musahari Block, Muzaffarpur.

In Assam, 937 packed meals were received from the Times Foundation. The families that benefited numbered 1735. Here, not only packed meals were distributed but also water bottles and medical kits with Dettol, pain-relief spray, cotton balls, diapers, baby wipes, sanitary napkins, band-aid and gauze.

Disaster preparedness workshop

A one-day workshop on disaster preparedness was held in Rajur in Maharashtra. Youth, members of vanpanchayats, women SHGs, Jivhala Gats, village level social activists and members of Gram Panchayats were oriented on various aspects of emergencies and preparedness and risk reduction.

A booklet in the local language was prepared on disaster risk reduction and resilience building to create awareness among the women with disabilities on the measures to be followed during the times of emergencies. The book comprises contextualised disaster risk reduction from the perspective of empowering women. The rescue process during emergencies is explained in a simple context with illustrations designed for easy understanding by women with disabilities. 1000 copies have been printed and are in the process of distribution in Tamil Nadu.

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