



ANNUAL REPORT
ACTIONAID ASSOCIATION
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ABOUT ACTIONAID ASSOCIATION

Since 1972, ActionAid is continuously working with the poor and the excluded who are at the centre of our discourse and actions in India. In 2006, we were registered as an Indian organization called ActionAid Association. We are governed by an independent General Assembly and a Governing Board.

Our Values

We reiterate our values and stress on translating ideas into action 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 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.

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

Our Theory of Change

We believe that an end to poverty and injustice can be achieved through purposeful individual and collective action, led by the active agency of people living in poverty and supported by solidarity, credible rights-based alternatives and campaigns that address the structural causes and consequences of poverty.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAY –Antyodaya Anna Yojana
APL - Above Poverty Line
BDO – Block Development Officer
BPL -Below poverty line
CBO -Community based organization
CHC Community Health Centre
CSO -Civil Society Organization
CSP -Country Strategy Paper
FRA – Forest Rights Act for Individual and Community claims to forest land
FCRA -Foreign Contribution Regulation Act
ICDS -Integrated Child Development Services
LRP- Local Rights Programme
MDM – Mid- day Meal scheme
NGO- Non Government Organization
MGNREGA – Mahatma Gandhi National Rural employment Guarantee Act
PESA- Panchayat extension to scheduled areas (of 5th schedule)
PRI -Panchayati Raj Institutions
RTE -Right to Education
RTI - Right to Information
SMC- School Management Committee

The year that was – reflections 2013-14

The year 2013 has been particularly remarkable for the emergence of the people led agenda in India, starting with the global outpour of anger against the gruesome murder and rape of a young girl in Delhi and ending with the emergence of a new political party in the Indian electoral democracy. What these portend for the most marginalised of the Indian people, the Dalits, Adivasis, and Minorities, and women cutting across all classes, was of utmost concern to us at ActionAid India. We wanted to know if what had been dubbed as the “Indian Arab Spring”, would meet the groundswell of the poorest people’s search for a share of development halfway.

As we struggled with this question we also felt that maybe we too could answer some of it by making our alliances wider and our networks more inclusive, by driving home the point of interconnectedness of all the struggles of the deprived and demonstrate the closing of the ranks by the elite. By making use of the historic stirring of the middle classes to help them understand that their well being cannot be constructed on the ruthless exploitation of natural resources, undermining the local communities, and keeping such large sections of people under oppressive regimes.

Perhaps what signified most the sign of this change was the response to our campaign “Beti Zindabad” to address the alarming decline of child sex ratio (between years 0-6) in the country. The campaign building on the energies of popular emotions, buoyed by the strongly affirmative report of the Justice Verma Commission, touched the willing hearts of the youth to challenge the myriad forms of violence against women head on, throughout the country.

Alliance building, campaigning and collective demands of change were also seen in some of the big ticket changes that marked this year, whether it was the campaign for rights of Street Vendors or the co-construction of the informal worker’s charter, or the articulation of the entitlement of universal pensions. We were able to build alliances of greater solidarity on the south-south global axis, on the issues of land, water, trade, and agrarian crisis.

Struggle for land as the basis of dignity, establishing the food security of the poor, and food sovereignty for the country, still remains one of our largest concerns, as would be clear from the following pages, and we keenly watch our impact in the number of marginalised getting access to land and its ownership. Our keen interest and expertise was utilised in building state-wise advisories on how to remove hurdles in the way of giving land to the land less. We continue to work on making land an asset that contributes to a better life through sustainable agricultural practices, and collectives of women farmers. ActionAid’s belief in the priority of women’s right to land was vindicated when the Dalit movements single-mindedly resolved to fight for land in the name of Dalit landless women.

The labour phenomenon that continues in the modernising economy of India draws clear attention to the fact that capitalism today, is sans all liberal values that once justified it for some. Long and hard spadework and cross –region coordination has enabled us to rescue men, women and children from bondage and as it got highlighted further, sparked popular anger against the cruelty meted out to them and resulted in a campaign against bonded labour launched in the state of Odisha, one of the largest catchment areas of workers in bondage.

As we compiled this year's Annual Report, we tried to capture the persistent and perseverant chipping away at poverty, patriarchy and prejudice, at each of the micro sites of change that our Local Rights Programmes, our shorter partnerships, and our long standing campaigns, represent. In the pages below you will find some of these voices of change, trying to tell a big story through their individual lives. In each of the priority areas we also give you some such figures that we meticulously collect indicating important facts of definite change that came about by close and strongly interwoven partnerships. Each of these figures in actuality represents scores of such stories of individual lives. Most of these stories remain confined to statistics – such as number of *pattas* obtained this year by women farmers, or increase in number of girls going to school this year in areas of our work, small additions every year that will end up in the large victory we envision, in fulfilment of our commitments.

We also take a moment to celebrate the firm finance structure behind the programmes we deliver, that take care of downward accountabilities to the partner communities and upwards to the donors who repose faith in us. This year has also seen a stable base of Indian donors emerging with the efforts of our Indian Fund Raising efforts, which we need to consolidate. The sponsorship and the communication units have outdone themselves in on time management of upwards of thousands of supporter relationships, and finding newer innovative ways to connect. Our Institutional Partnership unit is being especially celebrated this year, for not only working round the clock to meet with the urgent demands of several natural catastrophes this year, but also to find allies who believe in our goals and cement the relationship. The Directorate of Organisational Effectiveness has taken the plunge to reinvigorate and redefine ourselves in constant support of colleagues as we raise our standards of accountability to the communities even higher.

OUR OUTREACH IN 2013

2013 provided opportunities to expand our community outreach and also simultaneously firm up on our comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework. Here is our overall geographical and population coverage:

Number of regional offices	12
Number of Field Offices	2
No of States	24
No of UT	1 UT
No of villages	14,704
No of Urban Pockets/Slums	1,013
No of Cities	41 including 4 metros
No of Districts	279 (Direct)
No of Backward Districts	131
No of Households	16,02,353
Total Women	40,91,424
Total Men	40,48,475
Total Children	2,77,316
Total Population	84,17,216
Short term initiatives during 2013	420
Long-term initiatives during 2013	83
No of partner organizations	275

Strategic Priority One – Peoples’ control over resources like land, water, forest, coast, marine resources, minerals, commons and livelihoods

In 2013 we made significant contribution towards the national land use policy and the Right to Food Act. Land remains one of the most significant issues that we work on. Ownership of land connotes empowerment and dignity to the disempowered communities we work with. However, this is also an issue that is fraught with challenges especially for women. We promoted food security and sovereignty through climate resilient sustainable agriculture. Apart from this we also initiated a campaign on the working people’s charter (informal sector labour) which was shared with political parties to be added as an agenda into their election manifesto for Lok Sabha elections in 2014. Some of our achievements are as follows:

Sahariya get Land Pattas after long struggle

Sai Jyoti, our long term partner in lucknow region acts as a catalyst and uses strategies that mainly focus on socially and politically empowering the poor and vulnerable groups by making them understand (and thus, confront) the power structures that hamper their realization of rights.

“It was immense pleasure moment for us when we received papers of our patta land in the month January 2013. After that measurement of our land was done and finally we got possession of our patta land. Our dream to cultivate in our own land is fulfilled ” these are the words of Kala wife of Khuman Sahariya.

Kala lives in Saipura village of district Lalitpur. In this village, there are around 50 families from Sahariya community. All were landless and working as an agriculture labour in others filed. These families



were hand to mouth and ownership of agriculture land was just dream for them. Kusuma (2nd from LHS) and Kala (3rd from LHS)

Kusum (resident of same village, Saipura) is saying, “Two years ago no body aware about land rights and did not know how to get our land rights. Sai Jyoti came in the village and organised community meetings. They talked about our landrights, livelihood rights, our rights over natural resources and forest rights etc. With their guidance and motivation we formed “Sahariya Jan Adhikar Manch” (CBO) . Sai Jyoti organised training of land rights for us. After that we had started raising our voices in front of government officials, politicians and district magistrate. However that time nobody took issue seriously. But we got support from Sai Jyoti. They said that we should raise our voices collectively. In the year 2012 the members of Sahariya Jan Adhikar Manch organised an awareness walk in the 50 Sahariya Villages. After that we had given a memorandum to the rural development minister Mr Pradeep Jain. In that event around 3000 Sahariya’s were present. In this way we compelled government to listen our voices.

After these entire efforts and struggle, 23 families of my village received Patta of 1 acre agriculture land. Last year I lost my husband. It was very difficult for me to go for labour work alone. Now this land is primary source of my livelihood. I can work and earn with dignity from this my own land. I am grateful to Sai Jyoti and ActionAid for their support. This success has increased the confidence of community. Our struggles are still continue for other landless Sahariya families.”

Campaign on effective implementation of MGNREGA:

To bring consciousness among people on MGNREGA, campaigns were organized in 12 tea gardens in our operational area of GNESEP, long term partner in Kolkata region. The campaign on MGNREGA has been very effective in building awareness and knowledge among the workers. The campaign helped them to assert their right to employment

under MGNREGA, make PRI accountable in absence of employment opportunity from garden authority. In most of the sick tea garden management utilizes MGNREG for tea garden work like plucking tea leaf, spraying chemicals etc. and is mainly done by the permanent workers during seasons and off seasons. Temporary workers don't get opportunity to work.

The campaign workers collectively decided to take initiative and raise their voice in demand of MGNREGA work. They spoke to panchayat for work. Now MGNREGA is seen as right to work due to campaign. In Dalmore Tea Garden area, 500 workers applied for work to local gram panchayat (G.P) office. The G.P office provided work to 500 workers very next day as it is a closed tea garden. People have got 80 days of work in 2013.

I am happy to work in my own land

Ram Lal Prasad is 35 years old from Sakardinahi Village, block-Nichlaul, dist-Maharajganj. Ram Lal is an active member of Musahar Manch, CBO facilitated by musahar sewa Sansthan (long term partner in Lucknow region). He is a key and regular participant in public meetings, trainings programmes and is actively involved in liaising with officials from block to district level.

Till one year ago I had neither land nor any auxiliary support for my livelihood. I was a daily wage agricultural labour without any technical knowledge or skill. My family suffered seasonally with lack of food. Ram Lal said-"those people who have no land are bound to live an undignified and insane living." I have been ignorant about the importance of land but I learnt it from ActionAid and MSS. "Now I can think

of better living condition for my family."



Ram Lal and other landless people demanded collectively to Panchayat, Tehsil and district administration for 5 acres agricultural land. Like Ram Lal 5 persons got agricultural land and 7 persons got homestead land. 477 landless people have now demanded 5 acres land per family.

Ram Lal participates in panchayat meetings and discusses with panchayat samiti like village land management committee about village development. Ram Lal along with others collectively built the pressure on administration for land through demands, interface camp and jansunwai in other villages.

RESCUE & REHABILITATION OF BONDED LABOUR

The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act 1976 made debt bondage illegal in India, yet this practice continues. A rough estimation says that nearly 2.5 lakh people are caught in the trap of bonded labour. Many families (including women and children) have been bound to labour without pay for powerful, rich, dominating caste families for generations, for small sums borrowed by their forefathers at extremely high interest rates.

Rescue:

With the support of our partner organizations, we were able to rescue 856 bonded labourers from brick kilns in 2013. The rescued labourers were released and paid relief fund under the existing laws. The brick kiln owners paid the compensation to all the released labourers.

Livelihood regeneration:

- Livelihood support was provided such as land development work under MGNREGA to 22 Paharia families of Nuapada district, Odisha who were rescued from bondage from a brick kiln of Karimnagar (Andhra Pradesh). Further, 8 families of Malkangiri district, 2 families of Bolangir district of Odisha were also rescued and supported.
- Our partners working with migrant brick kiln workers in 4 districts-Rangareddy, Medak, Mahabubnagar and Nellore of Andhra Pradesh identified 1,826 bonded labourers and 7 training were held at source and destination areas to collectivise the labourers. With this the brick kiln workers called for a mass meeting. Print and electronic media advocacy resulted in the hike in minimum wages from INR 100 to 265 per day.
- One of our partners, Action for Social Justice (ASJ) has been networking with Dalit and farmer's organisations from across the state to identify and liberate bonded labourers mostly found in the brick kilns in the state of Karnataka.

Some of our policy level interventions in 2013:

- **Bonded labour law amendment process:** ActionAid in collaboration with partners NGOs and other CSOs conceptualized draft rules and presented it to the National Human Rights Commission and the Ministry for Labour and Employment for further action. Both the agencies have fully acknowledged the need for having a totally new set of rules in place of the existing ones. Principally they have accepted the draft and are likely to notify the same soon.
- Tamil Nadu State Legal Service Authority with support from ActionAid and other CSOs launched a special plan of action where the Judicial body was roped in to deal with the issues of bonded labour
- ActionAid India has entered into an institutional partnership with National Rural Livelihood Mission, Ministry of Rural Development for initiating a pilot project for rehabilitation of bonded labour.
- The office of Director General Labour Welfare (DGLW) wrote to all the principal secretaries of state governments regarding implementation of BLSA Act. This was sent out after several consultations and follow-ups by ActionAid India and partners with the Minister of State (Labour).

Bonded labourers rescued	856
Bonded labourers rehabilitated	166
Bonded labourers that received released certificate	326
Land titles received by released labourers	46

The Life of a bonded labourer is like a prisoner's

Pureti Molakamma, 45, lives with her husband in Pidurpalem village of Manubolu Mandal. "We have five children. My husband and I were under bondage a year back to repay the loan amount of Rs. 20000, which we had taken from a landlord five years ago," shared Molakamma.



ActionAid India's partner ARD intervened and rescued 42 families from bondage in her village.

"Under the rehabilitation process the Government gave us 35.80 acres of land to 42 families, sanctioned 42 houses and also 42 AAY cards. ARD and ActionAid India have formed a group with 40 women, of which I am a member. This group was supported with INR 10,000 as a matching grant amount by ActionAid. We purchased seeds (with 50% subsidy on seeds from the government) and also invested some amount on agriculture. I am supporting all the families in ensuring their rights. Recently the District Collector appreciated the change in me and encouraged my enthusiasm. I feel very proud and responsible now," shared Molakamma.

WORK WITH URBAN POOR

To guide ActionAid India's work with the urban poor further; to initiate a process of connecting with a larger constituency and building its own understanding on Urban issues and knowledge formations, Citizens Rights Collective (CiRiC) was initiated by ActionAid India. CiRiC is playing the role of both policy advocacy and internal program support. A website (<http://www.ciric.in/>) was also launched to provide information and analysis on various urban policies, issues to the civil society organizations and activists working on urban poverty.

People's vision of a city:

Not only are the metropolises expanding outwards, small towns and taluka centres are growing too. Centres of growth are taking over the resources and giving very little back, in terms of livelihoods, safety, services, etc. Cities are built mainly through construction, infrastructure projects, tourism, but the main mode of livelihood continues to be self-employment.

Based on the work of ActionAid with a diverse set of partners, in different regions, the major issues that have emerged are: Housing & shelter, Livelihoods, participation in planning and development, Women's access and safety in the urban space. While these are specific and critical areas, the suggestion is to hone in on the specific issues and design an overarching concept and paper on "**Peoples Vision of the city**". A series of national and regional meetings were held to re-imagine the plan of the city by its citizens.

Towards “Working Peoples Charter”-India 2014

A draft working peoples charter was formulated through a diverse process of discussions and deliberations in gatherings of different networks and conferences and further to the meetings held in Hyderabad (October 2013) and in Chennai (December 2013). This draft has been sent to unions, alliances, mass organisations, other civil society organisations of the working people for maximum participation and engagement. This charter reflects the aspirations of more than 500 million working people, primarily in the informal sector, across the length and breadth of India. The campaign will continue even after the elections, for implementation of the demands represented in the charter.

Rights of Homeless:

We continued to work closely with the Supreme Court Advisors on Homeless across **6 states** and submitted alternate reports on homeless shelters in respective states. With our partner’s advocacy efforts, **19 new homeless shelters** were started in **Chennai** and **Hyderabad**. The inmates were also linked to various state linked entitlements for food security and livelihood purposes.

Under the stars with homeless

In an attempt to shatter the stigma attached to the homeless, ActionAid (along with Aman Biradri, Give India) supported ‘India under the Stars’ campaign which was organised by close to 200 voluntary organisations in several cities. People who have a house were asked to come and spend the night with the homeless. Thousands of volunteers from middle class especially the young spent the eve of Gandhi Jayanti in the open, in parks and pavements, bus stations and railway platforms, where homeless men, women and children routinely sleep. This was not a night of charity, but one of respectful solidarity with our homeless neighbours, to try to understand a little of the injustices and difficult circumstances of their lives, treat the homeless with respect and without judgment and to demand for them their rights to a life of basic human dignity.



JIMMC students interacting with homeless in Lucknow

Right of Women in Urban Communities:

Urban Informal workers

With consistent efforts of our partner Vigyan Foundation in Lucknow more than 50 Labour unions have come together under the banner of “Asangathit Kamgaar Adhikar Manch” and organized Mazdoor Haqdari Sammelan. With the slogan of “Roti Kapda Aur Makaan, Apni ho Poori Pehchan” domestic workers, rickshaw pullers, hawkers and daily wage labourers handed over a memorandum to the State Cabinet Minister. The demands included a legislation for domestic

In Andhra Pradesh 4,945 unorganized construction workers (1855 women, 1810 men) were enrolled into construction workers welfare board and got access to all schemes, entitlements under the board. 2897 were enrolled under Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) and 790 got RSBY smart cards so far.

workers, recognizing and regularizing all labour posts (addas), fixing minimum wage or living wage at INR 400 per day, implementation of Unorganized Workers' Social Security Act. Labour Commissioner of Kanpur in Uttar Pradesh issued a letter to his staff to ensure the registration of workers under Building and Other Construction Workers Act which would ensure the workers access to various social security schemes.

A proud registered worker

Rajesh Rawat, 32, of Lucknow lives with seven members of his family. "I work as a daily wage Labourer. Often I do not get any work in a month. At times, I find it difficult to manage my house. I also get low wages. One day, on the advice of my neighbour, I participated in a meeting of Dihari Mazdoor Sangathan (a community based



organization of construction workers). ActionAid and Vigyan Foundation have been working for the rights of the unorganized sector labourers, especially construction workers since last 4 years. A year back it was very difficult to get registered as a construction worker as this had the pre-requisite of having one's identity proof as well as a proof of working as a construction worker for at least 90 days. Mostly the construction workers here come daily to the informal labour post and go to work without any formal agreement. So they have no proof to show that they have actually worked," shared Rajesh. Vigyan Foundation with support from ActionAid worked in close linkage with government officials to ensure

that this pre-requisite was done away with. We then organized awareness campaigns and provided information about Building and Construction Worker's Act and its provisions.

"This legislation provides for regulation of the employment and conditions of the service, such as their safety, health and welfare. I too got registered under this Act and also motivated 54 others to get registered," shared Rajesh.

"The registration means a lot for us as this is the sole proof of our work and sometimes even of our existence as we have no local papers here. We have also opened our bank accounts through this registration card. Recently, 111 of us got a bicycle under the welfare scheme for construction workers," adds Rajesh with pride.

"I am so happy to get this bicycle as my work has become easier with the help of this. My work place is often far and I usually used auto to travel which cost time as well as money. Now with my new bicycle, I am my own master. Like me, 1600 construction workers got registered under the building construction worker's act this year through our organization's efforts," shared Rajesh.

Strategic Priority 2: Democratization of society, Economy and Polity at all levels

In 2013, we continued with our efforts to strengthen the communities we work with, build their consciousness around participatory governance and democracy. We conducted leadership building trainings for young women and men on issues of social exclusion, rights and entitlements. The process of bottom-up planning in the form of village development plans and ward plans in urban areas continued to establish the power of people's planning and decision-making.

Strengthening Governance through Community Leadership

ActionAid India has initiated leadership programmes across many projects, with the objective of intensive training on various political and social issues, tracking the contemporary changes in the social and environmental discourse and also inculcating a spirit of camaraderie and solidarity towards social justice. It also aims at securing more space for women in leadership positions in community based organizations and facilitates internalization of knowledge on specific themes through field exposures and interactions with people facing socio-political challenges and listening to their stories of struggles. One such leadership school was organized at Tikamgarh for dalit leaders for five days with 26 participants including 8 women. Similarly Garima Abhiyan had organized the leadership schools to liberate women and men from manual scavenging practice. Leadership schools were organized in 8 districts of Madhya Pradesh in which 256 women and 129 men participated from different locations.



Youth Leadership assures transparency in public services:

Saramuli Gram Panchayat is one of the remotest gram panchayats of Daringbadi block. It is 48 km away from the block headquarters, Daringbadi and 158 KM from district headquarters, Phulbani. This GP is a tribal dominated GP with 681 families and 3156 population, out of which tribal shares 1932. The GP is an underdeveloped GP with 550 (81%) BPL families. There were more than 60 families, who are really very poor but left out from BPL list. Government decided to include those families with a separate category call POOR LEFT OUT families. In this process 50 families were identified. All those 50 cards were handed over to the Sarpanch. But Sarpanch and his husband did not disclose about this 50 poor left out cards neither to the ward members nor to the beneficiaries. But they received 12.5 quintal rice in favor of these card holders and were selling it out for their own benefit.

By the time Antaranga youth club was formed under Antaranga Programme, supported by ActionAid in Pakalmaha village with 27 youths. Antaranga club youths came across the illegal activities done by Sarpanch and her husband. They decided to expose it. A mini truck was used to transport the rice to sale it out side. The club members kept

watching it. On 12th November, the loaded truck left rice, meant for the card holders. Club members along with Achlik Unnayan Parisad members, seized the truck near Gudrigam and informed the police. Immediately police enquired the matter and seized the truck along with the 50 cards from Panchayat office. The case was registered and investigation went on and Police was bribed. But club members followed it up in a planned way. So Sarpanch was found guilty and sent to jail. All those seized cards were distributed to the beneficiaries along with their due rice.

The poor people of the GP were very happy with Antaranga youth club. Amir Mallick, a poor tribal man of Pakalmaha shares, “we the poor families of the GP were cheated by officers anby our Sarpanch. We could get our entitlement only because of support of Antaranga youth club. Now they are the savior for us. This type of club should be organized in every village so that people like us will get justice.

Link Worker Scheme supported by Odisha State AIDS control Society

A Link Worker is the heart of this scheme that functions as the catalyst to fight HIV and AIDS in the communities of rural Odisha. Linking the marginalized people to the public health services for Sexually Transmitted Infection-STI treatment, Integrated Counseling and Testing Centre-ICTC, Anti Retroviral Therapy-ART and then their follow-up back to communities is one of the key areas that is being addressed by the Link Worker. The project has been implemented in 6 districts- Khurda, Ganjam, Nuapada, Sundergarh, Cuttack and Puri. The project covered 27 blocks, 243 Panchayats and 1211 villages. Some of the qualitative changes that has been brought by the project:

- ICTC & FICTC have become functional due to advocacy through LWS project
- Free transportation for persons living with HIV to ART centres has been ensured.
- High Risk Groups have been counselled and convinced for testing. Those who were detected positive have been linked with ART and other services.
- Institutional delivery of positive women have been ensured

Strategic priority Three – Women and girls’ rights are asserted as Human Rights

As we see newer forms of patriarchy emerging in the market or older forms finding a new lease of life, we see its manifestation across various community groups. This year, we paid more attention to the inter-section of gender with class, caste and religion and engaged with different institutions of patriarchy – family, religion, and the state that reinforce patriarchy. While the nation’s attention remained on ‘Nirbhaya’, it brought the focus on the larger issue of violence against women. It also brought the Justice Verma Commission into being, giving one of the progressive policy on sexual violence against women. At ActionAid we added our voice at various fora and through media to raise the issues of violence on tribal and dalit, disabled and mentally ill women and girls.

In 2013, we saw a surge in our Beti Zindabad campaign aimed at protecting the girl child, participation in the One Billion Rising Campaign to abolish all forms of violence against women, fight against child marriage and witch-hunting and setting up of “sharia adalats” or religious courts by women to ensure social security for Muslim women. Time and again, we have operationalized the necessity of working with men to demolish patriarchy and 2013 saw this idea taking a step further.

Group of girl children interacted with Delhi Police for their safety and security

My name is Saynoor. I am 15 years old girl studying in class 9th in Sarvodaya Kanya Vidyalaya, New Seema Puri. I am associated with Khushi group formed by Pardarshita, ActionAid's long term partner in Delhi. There are four groups in which around 60 adolescent girls are associated. We do our group meetings at Pardarshita community resource centre weekly to discuss issues which we face in community as well as in other places. We talk about our rights and duties in meetings. Many girls from these



groups are studying the same school where I am studying. During our meetings it was discussed that we are facing a common problem in our school which is concerned with our safety and security. My school is running in two shifts. The morning shift is for girls while boys get education in afternoon shift. At the time when our shift starts and ends there are many unsocial boys gathered and they do eve teasing with girls of this school. Sometimes they also use abusive language and pass unusual remarks. We found ourselves helpless and kept distance from this fact. In our group meetings when we discussed this issue with Pardarshita team, they listened patiently and guided us very well. As per guidance we decided to do a meeting with our area Station House Officer (SHO). We discussed this issue in all four groups. Thereafter, we wrote a letter addressed to SHO and formed a delegation. I was also a member of that delegation. We met the SHO at Seemapuri Police Station along with our written submission. At the police station it was not easy to meet with SHO police officials as public desk stopped us and said SHO is busy in meeting. We argued that without meeting we would not go back and our safety and security cannot be taken lightly by Delhi Police. After waiting for half an hour SHO called us and received our submission and listened to the grievance. It was surprising for us when he told a police man is already deputed outside the school. He also called that police man in his cabin but none of us had seen him before. We told the SHO that we have never seen this police man before. Thereafter SHO promised that from the next day he would depute two police personnel outside our school at the start and end of school time shifts. From the next day onwards, we found that the situation is different outside our school. Two police personnel are there outside our school and they are doing their duty responsibly. Not a single boy loiters around the usual places for a single minute. Now police vigilance is regular and we feel more safe and secure. We keep monitoring the situation and if we find irregularity we will call the SHO as he has also provided us his personal mobile number. The whole process has built my confidence to such a level that I now feel if we take collective action things improve significantly. This kind of grounding work has happened with continued support and guidance from Pardarshita.

Photo: Saynoor (third from left) with her group members coming from school freely.

Anti Child Marriage Campaign:

12 campaigns organized in different garden to create awareness on negativity of child marriage. There were 15 Tea Garden covered under this campaign. The community leaders from garden, women leaders from different women groups, PRI members and local administration were also involved in the campaign. The local administration promised to work together to prevent child marriage in future. Few child marriage cases have come to the notice of G-NESEP and it was stopped with adequate intervention and support from community leaders.

Young Urban Women Initiative

We initiated a multi-country initiative called the “Young Urban Women Project” that aims to influence decision-makers both at a local and national level in **India, South Africa** and **Ghana** as well as decision-makers at the **international level**. The programme targets women's Economic Participation and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). It is an innovative attempt to bring together these two key areas of ActionAid's women's rights work that are frequently dealt with separately in development interventions despite the strong linkages between these two issues in women's lives. The work has been initiated with 2,800 women across Chennai, Hyderabad and Mumbai.

Enhancing Feminist Perspective

As part of enhancing feminist perspective within the organisation, workshops were organised to discuss, debate and understand issues around masculinity and sexuality. The trainings were an outcome of the need that emerged from ActionAid India's Women's Forum discussions the previous year. The process was carried out at four zonal levels covering all programme and non-programme colleagues in all regions.

Monitoring committees to combat Violence against women:

Women's Monitoring Committees have been formed in 40 areas to address issues related to violence against women in Chennai. Two trainings for 80 members of Women's Monitoring Committees on counselling skills were imparted so that the leaders could support other women in distress. 103 cases were resolved within 3 months of formation of the WMC. It implies that the process is faster and women are able to get justice within a short period of time.



Strategic Priority 4 – Children are recognized as political and equal citizens

Children remain one of our key constituencies and we worked intensively on realizing the education, nutrition, health and protection rights of the most marginalized children. We were able to complete the study on Right to Education across 1700 schools and shared our recommendations on improving education for the most marginalized groups of children.

Our partnership with organizations in the north-eastern part of India has brought forth some very interesting models of school education transformation. Once such model is the “social intervention for quality education”, which works on an alternative curriculum, teacher’s capacity development and parent’s involvement. We also focused on promoting a holistic approach towards child development, nutrition and health. Our efforts to ensure community monitoring and participation in Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) centres ensured 54 new centres were opened where they were due and 260 centres were made fully functional and accessible to the communities. We also contributed towards the national policy on children.

Creating spaces in the Government schools

The biggest achievement has been creating spaces in the municipal schools and interacting with over 3500 students from 4 schools in H east ward, Mumbai. The entire program was jointly organized by Maulana Azad Vichar Manch and Committee for the Right to Housing, long term partner of ActionAid Association. We interacted with an objective to -

1. To give them an experiences of experiential learning to children.
2. To help them know social leaders who's work and its relevance has become obsolete for them.
3. To give opportunities of fun learning that they lack in the resource scarce environment.

With these objectives we designed a 2 month long program starting 16th November to 15th January culminating in a mela like event on the 9th of February. The grand finale of the program was a Bal Mela where we tried to bring in learning with fun. Many friends and organizations were invited to help make a bal mela a success. We were joined by PRATHAM, a pioneer Child Rights organization to take up sessions on Child Rights emphasizing on Right to Education and awareness on Sexual Abuse of Children. During our interactions we made a number of observations in each school both at the level of their infrastructure and quality of education. Both parents and teachers were also part of the programme.

INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON EDUCATION FOR ALL (EFA) REVIEW

The Child Rights hub of ActionAid Association along with UNESCO co-hosted the International workshop on Education for All (EFA) 2015 Review Strategies in the South Asian countries. Government diplomats, civil society members and academicians from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives and Srilanka contributed to the discussions. This workshop enabled us to advocate for opening up the National EFA review process for a larger civil society engagement after persistent advocacy with the Ministry of Human Resource Development.



People's Education Assembly in Ranchi:



The fourth week of March saw People's Education Assembly taking place in Ranchi. This two-day assembly was organized jointly by the *Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti*, and the Child Rights Hub and Patna Regional Office of ActionAid India on March 22-23. Over 2000 people representing 53 civil society organizations participated in the inaugural session. The assembly

critically reviewed the four years of implementation of Right to Education, the impact of higher education policies in neo-liberal context, the present status of pre-schooling, the prevailing situation of literacy and continuing education, the basic challenges related to gender, social exclusion of marginalized and deprived communities and the strategies to overcome those. The event concluded with the adoption of a declaration which resolved to strive towards building a broad-based network for conducting sustained activities on all issues related to education and rights of children.

Intervention on Right to Education

ActionAid India's hub on child rights has started a new intervention in collaboration with eight regional offices – Bihar, West Bengal, Assam, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh – to promote the agenda of *Right to Education* by making government schools functional besides giving scholarship support to meritorious students from vulnerable communities

Strategic Priority Five – A just, secular, violence free and peaceful society and state

The vast majority among the minority groups in the country continue to be excluded from the socio-economic and political arena of the country and deprived of their rights and basic necessities. Our focus remained on the largest of this minority group, the Muslims and we worked towards collectivizing them. We also worked with the women within this community, empowering them to challenge the patriarchal structures within and outside their own community. We also witnessed the youth absorbing peace and secularism as their core values. With a team of fellows and youth leaders, we tried to maximise our outreach to make the much needed attitudinal change. With the completion of the national study on the socio-economic status of Muslims, we are now gearing up for further advocacy for providing them with equal socio-economic opportunities. We also invested our time and resources on increasing awareness and outreach around the Prime Minister's 15 point program for the welfare of minorities.

Promoting secularism in community through youth clubs:

Antaranga clubs are the foundation of the programme. 330 clubs have been organized in Kandhamal district of Odisha, out of which, 293 are male and 37 are female clubs. There are 11152 members in these clubs, out of which, 8577 are male and 2575 are female. These clubs organise different meetings, sharing, deliberations and exchange of ideas are important process for any development. Antaranga uses its platform for sharing development messages read and discuss on current topics and promotes secularism in the community.

Campaign to promote awareness on the PM's new 15 point program

A campaign to promote awareness on the Prime Minister's new 15 point program for welfare of minorities was conducted in 2013. Hoardings on various government schemes for minorities were put up in West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh. Booklets detailing these schemes were printed in Bengali, Urdu, Hindi and Kannada. This was thought to be necessary after the completion of the National Study as most people interviewed during the study said they were not aware of the various schemes and entitlements that existed.



Minority Scholarship Campaign:

Through this campaign, we reached out to around 1,00,000 students across 5 states (UP, AP, Gujarat, Odisha and Uttarakhand) and facilitated nearly 20,000 students in e-filing for scholarship schemes provided by the government. The campaign also helped open

Sensitizing Jamat leaders to promote a common Nikah Nama and centralized marriage registration systems

A State level workshop to sensitize the Jamat leaders from 4 districts was conducted on 30th December 2013 in Chennai in which 75 persons participated. The workshop resolved to formulate an Executive Committee comprising of 5 Jamat leaders to further lobby with all the Jamats in Sivagangai district to design and promote a common Nikah Nama and centralized marriage registration system within the district.

around 8000 “No Frill” (zero balance) bank accounts for poor students. We have been successful in lobbying with the government for barring of Income Certificate of parents, which was a mandatory requirement to apply for scholarships, as most children came from families where parents were daily wage labourers and did not have any way of acquiring a income certificate. The campaign was successful in extending the last date for e-filing of application twice in 2013, allowing more children to get the scholarship amount.

Convention on Issues and Challenges of Minorities in Gujarat

Beti Zindabad Campaign

Indian families' perceive daughters as a liability since they believe that have to take care of her needs despite the fact that she will move into another family upon marriage, pay dowry for her marriage, guard her due to fear of violence against them and the stigma attached to it. Gender biased sex selection they feel, is thus the best option. Thus, an end to sex selection can begin when fundamental perceptions about having daughters are changed, and when gender equality becomes a lived reality. That sex selection arises due to bias against girls also necessitates work on other forms of violence against women which might lead to or are a consequence of sex selection, e.g. child and/or forced marriages, physical, mental, economic violence etc. Efforts towards implementation of laws meant for protection of women and girls like PWDVA, PCMA and Criminal Amendment Act besides PCPNDT are therefore important.

PCPNDT makes sex determination illegal, has clear guidelines for ultrasound clinics, sets up monitoring mechanisms and recommends severe punishment for violations. However, its half-hearted implementation necessitates engagement with law enforcement authorities and medical fraternity, and also general public and families. The campaign aims to address these issues.

The campaigners of Beti Zindabad brought together varied voices from the ground, in the form of a petition that is addressed to the Honorable President of India. The petition calls upon the President to urge the Central and State



governments to be accountable to this national crisis, strengthen the local district monitoring committees and act upon all the powerful lobbies that are involved in the practice of sex-selection, thereby making the climate unfavorable for any form of gender discrimination.

The petition is run online on the campaign website [www.betizindabad.org] and also offline, in the form of post cards. A group of campaigners will be delivering these petitions to the Honorable President, in person at the Rashtrapati Bhawan New Delhi.

To sign the Petition: <http://www.betizindabad.org/#!/petition/ca72>

Emergencies:

Uttarakhand Floods

ActionAid India commenced its relief and rehabilitation work in the immediate aftermath of the catastrophic floods in Uttarakhand. After mapping the needs of the affected population, ActionAid along with local partners worked in 120 villages of worst affected districts namely Rudraprayag, Chamoli, Pithoragarh and Tehri Garhwal and provided immediate support to 3500 households with food packages, temporary shelter kits (blankets, tarpaulin sheets), non food items, medicines, chlorine tablets and restoration of water sources. ActionAid India has longer term work in these districts and has remained committed to long term engagement on rebuilding lives of the most vulnerable families in next few years focusing primarily on women. Currently, ActionAid



is working on the rebuilding of livelihoods, water restoration, psycho-social support, education and advocacy issues of rehabilitation of the worst affected families in these four districts.



We also supported a public hearing to determine the response of the policy makers and to create a public opinion. It was organized by Uttarakhand Jan Caravn Manch, a platform of social workers, activists and

NGOs. Around 150 survivors from Pithoragarh, Chamoli, Rudraprayag, Tehri and Uttarkashi regions raised their issues and concern.

As an outcome the compensation for land went up to INR 5000 per Nali (which is roughly 81 sq.ft.) from INR 250 per Nali. Agricultural loans were also waived off which also extended relief to the disaster victims. Further, notices were sent to 16 concerned departments on the basis of 16 testimonies submitted to the State Human Rights Commission. Also, the report of the public hearing and a charter of demands were

submitted to the Additional Secretary, Disaster Management, Government of Uttarakhand.

Phailin Response

The very severe cyclonic storm Phailin caused severe damage in the coastal districts of Odisha and Andhra Pradesh in October 2013 and resulted in floods in some surrounding districts of Bihar. Incessant rains and flood with high wind also caused serious damage to other non-coastal districts of Odisha.

Responding to the situation ActionAid along with its partner organizations initiated rapid response and restoration of livelihood in the most affected areas such as Ganjam, Puri, Balasore and Mayurbhanj districts of Odisha. Relief was provided in the form of dry ration, non-food

item kits, livelihood support by restoring farms, livestock, revival of kitchen garden, repair of damaged houses, and cash for work to more than 6000 households. Advocacy on emerging issues of survivors was also carried with the support of Odisha Phailin Response forum and Inter Agency Group. The relief projects were supported by DFID and ECHO.



Muzzafarnagar Riots

The communal violence in the last part of 2013 in Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh rendered 60,000-70,000 men, women and children homeless. They continue to stay in refugee camps fearing to return to their homes. ActionAid provided relief support to 2000 households in 2



phases in the form of food kits, warm clothes to 1152 children, quilts and mattresses to 800 families, Woollen Shawls to 400 women groundsheets to 600 families. Some of the relief efforts are still on.

Capacity Building workshops for camp workers has been one of the main stay of our support and similar support on education and child friendly rehabilitation work for 26 volunteers from 12 camps had also been organized.

In all the disaster response projects we have ensured the following:

- Women leadership is well represented with at least 50% participation by women in all the village committees, which represent the issues of the people in the villages that are still recovering from the trauma of the riots.
- Accountability to the people is ensured through regular display of information of relief material and resources made available by the government and NGOs and social audits conducted by the village committees
- Training of partners and community to access government entitlements beyond the relief work
- Building a long term recovery and change programme rather than a limited relief engagement
- Regular coordination with other actors including partners, funding agencies, government and sphere and Inter Agency Group.

Emergency response in Assam:2013

We continued the humanitarian response work initiated in Assam in 2012 which witnessed devastation by three waves of floods in the same year. The floods had killed 195 people, displaced 2.1 million people in 27 districts, rendering thousands homeless. The floods washed away food stocks of thousands of families and affected 250,000 hectares of agricultural land, destroying standing crops. In response to the flood ActionAid led an ECHO supported consortium project entitled **“Humanitarian assistance to vulnerable population affected by flood in Assam”**. It was implemented by a consortium formed by Oxfam, ChristianAid and ActionAid with support from local partners.

The intervention covered **1, 56,732** affected and vulnerable persons in **183** villages in **6** districts of Assam. Under cash transfer and livelihood support components of the project, the intervention supported 4,493 households. Under shelter support component, 783 households were supported either to build new shelters or repair damaged shelters with Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) aspects in consideration. The



intervention also reached WASH components to the affected included installation of new hand pumps, repairing and rehabilitated of hand pumps, provisioning hygiene infrastructures (toilets and bathing cubical), and disinfection of hand pumps through chlorination, drives for safe water, sanitation and hygiene practices.