COMMUNITY CORRESPONDENTS AS CHANGE NARRATORS AND CATALYSTS

Community video correspondents and community media are emerging as effective strategies for highlighting discrimination and denial of entitlements in some of the poorest communities. With the availability of affordable technology, skills and distribution channels, Community Correspondents are playing a pioneering role of amplifying campaigns. Be it an issue of caste-based discrimination or accountability in government programmes, with held cameras and basic edits there stories are creating impact.

Young women and men from excluded communities see themselves as campaigners and storytellers who themselves are part of these narrative. This emerging genre of media or news is set to further the voice and issues of the other India.

Primarily, these narratives are ground up as the correspondents pitch it in a way that it is directly linked to addressing an issue and seeking action. To harness this opportunity to drive campaigns or create impact, while building a carder of change narrators or change whisperers, Poorest Areas Civil Society (PACS) programme and Video Volunteers have come together to create the Community Correspondents Network.

The expectation is that 50 odd correspondents from the network, armed with a flip camera and training on social issues, will generate content and stories for a number of campaigns that directly benefit the community. These correspondents have been hand picked from organisations and movements in some of the poorest districts in Bihar, and all of them come from socially excluded groups.

An important impact that this initiative will create is of building capacity and voice on issues of social inclusion and push the wider reality that escapes the mainstream and corporatized media.
The Poorest Areas Civil Society (PACS) Programme and Video Volunteers have come together to create the Community Correspondents Network. This initiative is envisioned within the larger 'breaking margins' and 'voices to end discrimination' by PACS and under India Unheard campaign by Video Volunteers.

The video content generated through the project and by the network will be available for campaigns and the larger development communication/news distribution networks.

Numerous campaigns, online petitions and impact have been fuelled by strong community correspondent video reports. The ability to showcase issues existing campaign energies are significantly strengthened by the presence of the change narrators from the community itself. These correspondents are drawn from socially excluded groups and work towards highlighting issues of discrimination and lack of access to entitlements in the community they come from.

We are very excited about this journey and the tremendous capacity it has for developing strong campaign and advocacy narrative.

Over the period of next six months about 50 correspondents will generate and screen 400 videos at the community level.

www.pacsindia.org,
www.videovolunteers.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/PACSProgramme

“I would like to highlight challenges faced by pregnant women in my community as Janani express (a service to take pregnant women from village to hospitals) is unable to reach to remote places. There is also rampant malnutrition and lack of safe drinking water. These are some of the stories I will making videos on in the coming day,”

says Anita
WHY ARE WE DOING IT

Using videos and visual content for developing a change narrative and tapping into emerging media, including social media, is increasingly recognized as a potent strategy for a range of engagements related to impact and mobilization. For PACS the initiative fulfills the mandate for building capacity for civil society organisations or partners to harness communication and advocacy tools that allow them to connect with wider audiences to generate support and build pressure. With this capacity and professional support on capturing videos for screening during campaigns and building call to action, the community organisations.

HOW WILL THEY BE USED

These correspondents are being envisioned as chroniclers of change and struggle, supporting campaigns and advocacy efforts at state, regional and national levels. Over the period of next six months, about 50 correspondents from the excluded communities will generate 400 videos that will included impact video where they will directly champion issues ranging from a dysfunctional school to non implementation of pensions for the elderly in the community. The other videos will feed the long-term campaigns by PACS partners from livelihood entitlements to access to health.
Ramsakhi Ahirwar

Ramsakhi, 32, is part of a community correspondents network initiated and by Poorest Areas Civil Society (PACS) and Video Volunteers to highlight and report on issues of discrimination, denial of entitlements and change stories. She is a video campaigner from Khamaria Village, Jaisinagar Block, Sagar District, Madhya Pradesh.

Premlata Malviya

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Anita Dhurve

Anita, 28, is shy at first. But her enthusiasm engulfs you as she talks about all that is missing from basic entitlements that her community yearns for. She is a daily wage earner at a construction site and makes 3000 Rs a month, taking care of her family of four. She has experienced domestic violence personally and now advocates women on gender issues and domestic violence. She belongs to the Gond tribal community and is based in Tamina block of Chhindwara district in Madhya Pradesh.
Mohan Lal Seelu

Mohan Lal, 38, works as a daily wage labourer to sustain a family of five. The daily struggle for livelihood has not dampened his passion for working on issues challenging the Ajaja tribal community that he comes from. Mohan is now voicing threats of marginalisation of tribal communities in Betul District of Madhya Pradesh. As a community correspondent, he feels the mainstream media has missed voicing the issues of indigenous communities.

Raju Parteti

Raju, 25, comes from a family that has drawn sustenance from agriculture. Without irrigation and money for inputs, it is not a viable option and he manages with whatever odd job comes his way. He like most community correspondents is associated with groups that work on access to entitlements for the socially excluded groups. In his new role, Raju wants to target each of the schemes that do not work in the community.

Anupma Patre

Anupa, 34, is an organic leader in her community. She has been rallying the Gondh tribal community in Mandala district’s Saup Village on various schemes that eludes them. During her training as community correspondent, she was impressed by the opportunity the videos offer on amplifying local issues by taking them to a wider audience.
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