

**IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE DFID-SUPPORTED  
POOREST AREAS CIVIL SOCIETY (PACS) PROGRAMME**

**FINAL REPORT**

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# IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE DFID-SUPPORTED POOREST AREAS CIVIL SOCIETY (PACS) PROGRAMME

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This assessment draws on interactions with select National Advisory Board (NAB) and Project Selection Committee (PSC) members, the State-level Programme Support Teams (PST), the State Managers (SM), the State MEAL Coordinators (SMC) and various Resource Organisations (ROs); visits to 16 project locations (64 villages) where Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Community-based Organisations (CBOs) of the poor and Gram Panchayat (GP) representatives were met; and, a range of secondary sources. The findings presented herein have been finalised incorporating feedback received on an earlier draft of the same.

### CONTEXT

The discussion on the impacts of the PACS Programme needs to recognise the:

- Challenging environment in the PACS Programme States
- Recent focus on impacts (earlier years were devoted to Programme stabilisation)
- Limitations of bilateral support which preclude support to certain formations and issues
- Emerging evidence of the limitations of SHGs in reaching the poorest

### PROGRAMME STATUS

**As on December 2005, the PACS Programme had reached over 15,300 villages across 85 districts.** Of these, better results are expected in about 7,000 villages that have witnessed intensive interventions. Many of these villages are remote and might have witnessed the first instance of a non-government development actor intervening. *The 15,300 villages reached account for about 5 percent of the total number of villages within the districts reached.*

**The PACS Programme works through 143 projects engaging 474 CSOs.** An attempt has been made to engage small and large CSOs, balance large and small projects and work through individual and network projects (latter to provide ‘spaces for small and new organisational forms to mature within the umbrellas of larger and longer-established NGOs’).

**Over 17,500 CBOs with a total membership of around 211,000 have been formed.** About 80 percent of these are self-help groups (SHGs), mainly of women. Other CBOs include men’s SHGs, mixed SHGs, village-level groups and federations/ apex bodies.

### MAJOR IMPACTS

**The poor have been organised and benefited.** This is reflected in the following:

- Project target groups are drawn mainly from the Scheduled Caste (SC), the Scheduled Tribe (ST), the Other Backward Caste (OBC), landless households, marginal and small farmer households, women and, more generally, Below Poverty Line (BPL) households.
- About 60 percent of the CBOs are women’s SHGs (indicating significant mobilisation of women). Further, ‘marginalised’ groups account for over 50 percent of the CBO membership in each of the States.

- Entitlements realised are mainly for schemes targeted at the poor and meeting crucial food, healthcare, pension, housing, etc. requirements.
- Most importantly, changes are evident with CBOs, particularly women's SHGs, interacting with GP representatives and government and bank officials and taking the initiative to attend and participate actively in Gram Sabhas (GSs), voicing grievances over issues such as BPL and voter identification and land encroachment and the working of *anganwadis*, GPs, government schemes, health centers, mid-day meals, Public Distribution System (PDS, for foodgrain), schools, etc., and venturing out of the village to present, and seek solutions to, their concerns to political leaders and government and bank officials. Further, there are instances of a local leadership emerging with some CBO members contesting, and winning, PRI elections.

**A range of credible CSOs<sup>1</sup> have been supported and they have been benefited in various ways. Smaller CSOs have been particularly benefited.** For CSOs, the PACS Programme has provided a range of opportunities- opportunities to expand and/ or deepen work in specific districts and/ or sectors; engage with a different paradigm (*about two-thirds of the PACS Programme-supported CSOs had welfare or service delivery orientations*); explore new approaches to familiar sectors; and, develop/ expand and consolidate local networks. CSOs, particularly smaller ones, estimated to be about 300 in number, have benefited in terms of reputation and inputs towards programme and financial management.

**These developments assume special significance in the specific context of the PACS Programme areas** characterised by deep social divisions, limited opportunities for the poor to interrogate the working of local governments and public service providers, concerning status of women, elite capture of local decision-making processes and high leakage from government programmes and issues of appropriation of public resources by the rural elite.

## KEY ISSUES

**Despite these encouraging developments, the overall impacts can be are mixed.** Thus:

- CBOs are still in the process of maturing into pressure groups. This recognises that (a) pressure groups are not easy to energise in the challenging environment within which the Programme operates; and, (b) even if communities are well-mobilised, entitlement realisation depends on the larger institutional environment and delivery system around the responsiveness of which issues remain in many of the PACS Programme locations.
- While network projects have benefited smaller CSOs, the overall assessment of such projects is mixed with issues around capacity building and other support provided by lead partners, opportunities for learning, coordination and project ownership.

**Part of the reason for the mixed impacts clearly lies within the larger context. However, another set of issues** relates to:

- **Project designs** with limitations of grounding and strategic clarity which could have arisen from CSOs over-reaching themselves, the project development process being rushed and the influence of Project Development ROs (PDROs) engaged to support CSOs

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<sup>1</sup> 'Credible CSOs' alludes to record of financial propriety and is not to be seen as a reflection of capacities.

- **Capacity and perspective limitations among CSOs and mixed results from (the significant) efforts in this direction** with (a) capacity building events not always relevant to project contexts; (b) MEAL, despite its benefits, being impacted by larger difficulties in developing a culture of reflection within organisations and the need for further CSO orientation and feedback loop closure; (c) felt needs of greater CSO voice and space during Peer Learning Workshops (PLWs); (d) peer exchange visits needing better preparation to avoid ‘mutual appreciation’ or ‘insensitive feedback’; and, (e) the need for greater analytical content in the documentation of experiences for lesson learning
- **Underutilisation of RO potential**
- **Limitations of a SHG-focused approach**, where SHGs while presenting an option for mobilising the poor, particularly women, in view of the quicker and more tangible benefits in terms of credit that they can offer, come with the risk of overwhelming the larger empowerment agenda given their significant operational demands
- **Limited progress on State-level engagement and policy advocacy** owing to (a) the largely demand-side orientation of the PACS Programme which has the orientation and character of the PACS Programme partners; (b) limitations of relevant experience and skills within CSOs; and, (c) the limited participation of ‘non-NGO’ CSOs in the PACS Programme (mainly due to lack of FCRA registration; a requirement of bilateral support); and, (d) the possibilities of certain types of policy advocacy efforts being considered inappropriate for bilateral support

With limited engagement at the State and policy level, and even the thinly-spread village-level projects having issues around design and CSO capacity, it is difficult to claim that the PACS Programme, despite its achievements, has led to a situation where the poor are empowered to realise their entitlements effectively and sustainably. Importantly, the absence-by design (given the demand-orientation of the PACS Programme with its focus in generating ‘demand’ for entitlements)- of any systematic engagement with the government and/ or public service providers/ institutions, could have contributed much to the current situation.

## THE WAY FORWARD

### Near-term

**Encouragingly, the MC and the PSTs are seized of many of the emergent issues** and have been considering proposals to address the same. These include:

- **Revisiting project designs in recognition of issues around the same:** This has already been undertaken in about half the projects and is proposed in others.
- **Capacity building:** Issues around this are recognised by the MC and the PSTs. This recognition needs to be followed up with CSO-level training needs assessments; emphasis on regional/ project-level capacity building events; and, addressing issues around MEAL.
- **Strengthening State level and policy advocacy:** Efforts in this direction should ideally begin with identification of issues that need to be pursued at the State-level in a forum such as the PLW, an assessment of these issues for their appropriateness for bilateral

support and the likely coalitions of civil society that would be most appropriate to take forward the agreed agenda.

- **Greater role for the NAB and PSC:** Select NAB and PSC members met have expressed the view that they need greater space (time and independent feedback) for taking a more considered view on emergent issues.

### **Beyond the PACS Programme Horizon (2008)- Suggestions**

The Programme design envisaged that ‘support under the PACS (Programme) may be replaced over time by government-to-government approaches.’ In view of this and the Impact Assessment findings, the following suggestions emerge for consideration:

- **There is a need to continue DFID engagement in the PACS Programme States,** particularly Bihar, Jharkhand and UP. The case for this emerges primarily from the high poverty in these States and DFID’s commitment to poverty reduction in India.
- **It might be appropriate to consider government-to-government approaches given the limitations of demand-side approaches.** The option of a government-to-government approaches being pursued in parallel with civil society engagement is also available though this will require a systematic assessment of DFID’s experience in Orissa.
- **Reaching the poorest may need a different approach.** The PACS Programme design did not distinguish between the poor and poorest and did not envisage separate strategies for the poorest. NAB and PSC Members have argued that engaging with the poorest may require a service delivery component that responds to their medium-term needs.
- **Thematic Areas are useful to specify but need to be supported by Position Papers to avoid ambiguity.** In the absence of Thematic Areas, there was the likelihood of efforts being dissipated in various directions. It is realised that there may be ambiguity around how, for example, social cohesion is to be interpreted and pursued in a project frame. However, Position Papers on Thematic Areas might clarify these.
- **A cap on resources intended for Self-help may be considered.** SHGs presents a situation whereby they present an option for mobilising the poor, particularly women, in view of the quicker and more tangible benefits in terms of credit that they can offer but come with the risk of overwhelming the larger empowerment agenda given their significant operational demands. It is perhaps in anticipation of this that the PACS Programme design discussed the possibility of ‘a limit on the proportion of programme devoted to it to avoid it crowding out longer term empowerment initiatives.’
- **The current institutional arrangement has several merits and may be continued.** However, the experience with the PACS Programme also suggests that for such an arrangement to achieve its potential: (a) the NAB and the PSC need greater space; and, (b) contracting issues for ROs need to be resolved.
- **A balance of village and State-level projects and network and individual projects** needs to be maintained and choices exclusively in favour of either village/ State or network/ individual projects need not be exercised.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This document presents the findings and emergent issues from an Impact Assessment of the DFIDI-supported Poorest Areas Civil Society (PACS) Programme. (A brief description of the PACS Programme is presented as Annex- I. The background and objectives of the Impact Assessment are summarised as Annex- II.) It synthesises separate State-level reports prepared for various States where the PACS Programme is operational (Bihar, Jharkhand, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh (UP)- as per the Terms of Reference (ToR), this does not include Chattisgarh). All these documents have been finalised after incorporating, where appropriate, comments and suggestions received on an earlier draft of the same.

As presented in the Inception Report (June 2006), this document draws upon:

- A range of secondary sources, including past Annual Reviews, the ongoing National and State-level Synthesis and data and documentation shared by the Management Consultant (MC), the various State-level Programme Support Teams (PST), Resource Organisations (ROs) and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)
- Interactions with select National Advisory Board (NAB) and Project Selection Committee (PSC) Members, representatives from the MC, the various PSTs and ROs, including those for Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEAL) and the State-based Communication Agencies (SBCA)
- Fieldwork in 16 districts/ project locations selected in discussion with the MC (A summary of the study projects is presented as Annex- III.<sup>2</sup>) involving group and individual interactions, as appropriate, with CSOs (including separate interactions with field-level personnel), community-based organisations (CBOs at village-level of groups that the CSO has been working with, including Self-help Groups (SHGs)) and representatives of Gram Panchayats (GPs) and other key informants

Within each State, work typically began with initial interactions with the PSTs and separate interactions with the ROs. Following these, the Study Team (comprising three-four members in each of the States with combined expertise in the areas of social development, governance and livelihood and experience in engaging with civil society organisations) undertook visits to project locations and returned for further interactions with the ROs and presented its preliminary findings to the PST. During fieldwork in project locations, the Study Team began with interactions with nodal CSO personnel, undertook visits to villages (total of 64 villages) to meet CBO members (collectively and individually), GP representatives and key informants, interacted separately with CSO field personnel and closed with a short de-brief with nodal CSO personnel.

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<sup>2</sup> The study projects were selected from amongst those in advanced stages (i.e., either completed projects or those in withdrawal or consolidation stages) of implementation. This focus on projects that have 'matured' was considered appropriate for lesson-learning and assessment of changes enabled by the PACS Programme. Further, an attempt was made to include projects with varying sizes and implementation arrangements. The number of study projects in each State was determined by the distribution of projects in advanced stages across various States and, based on discussions with DFID and the MC, those that had been covered in the recent National and State-level Synthesis were avoided.

This document is organised into six sections (including this 'Introduction') supported by the three Annexes mentioned above. Section 2 titled dwells on the challenging 'Context' within which the PACS Programme is located, Section 3 presents 'An Overview of the PACS Programme' and is followed by a discussion on the 'Impacts of the PACS Programme' (Section 4) and 'Emergent Issues' and their import (Section 5). Drawing upon the lessons from this assessment, Section 6 discusses 'The Way Forward.'

## 2. CONTEXT

The discussion on the impacts of the PACS Programme needs to recognise:

**The challenging environment in the PACS Programme States** is reflected in:

- **High poverty, constrained State finances and low infrastructure penetration** in all States, barring Maharashtra where regional differences exist despite better State-level aggregates (CII, 2002; Maharashtra HDR, 2002; Planning Commission, 2002). In 1999-2000 (when Chattisgarh was part of MP and Jharkhand part of Bihar), the proportion of the poor in Bihar (about 43 percent) and MP (about 37 percent) was exceeded only in Orissa (about 47 percent; national average: about 26 percent) and estimates of the number of the poor for 2006-07 suggest Bihar, MP, Maharashtra and UP as the four States with the largest population of the poor in the country. Further, Human Development Index (HDI) rankings (which treated Chattisgarh as part of MP and Jharkhand part of Bihar) of 15 major Indian States over 1981-2001 suggests that Bihar, MP and UP occupied the last three positions in 1981 and 1991 and three of the last four positions in 2001.
- **Concerns around the quality of the polity and governance**, especially in Bihar, Jharkhand, MP and UP (which together account for about 28 percent of the Members of Parliament in India but nearly half such Members with high penalty crime cases (PAC, 2004)). These concerns are also reflected in the particularly high corruption levels reported from Bihar and MP (which are ranked 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> respectively among 20 major Indian States- Transparency International India, 2005) and, in a reflection on delivery systems and capacities, the low infrastructure penetration in all PACS Programme States, barring Maharashtra. Together, these suggest inadequate delivery systems and processes, leakage from government programmes and linked issues of appropriation of public resources by the rural elite- which, in turn, may have implications for the realisation of entitlements for the poor.
- **Serious challenges to State authority** (left-wing extremism; law and order) in Bihar, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand and UP (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2004; CII, 2002).

Further, there are challenges around specific themes that the Programme engages with. Thus:

- Reflecting the **status of women** in the PACS Programme States are differentials in female-male literacy rates (about 20-25 percent), high incidence of domestic violence (about 20-25 percent) and restrictions on movement (where more than 50 percent of the women in Maharashtra and about 80 percent of those in other States need permission to go to the market and visit friends/ relatives) (Census of India, 2001; NFHS- II, 2000). In such circumstances, the initial act of bringing women out from their homes can itself be challenging, and, even when CBOs have been mobilised, gender roles and relations may not realistically be expected to change within the PACS Programme lifespan.

- **Social relations**, structured around caste and land, are skewed and have been (continue to be) negotiated in various ways and in varying degrees across the PACS Programme States. Thus, Jharkhand and Maharashtra have witnessed tribal and *dalit* mobilisation and popular movements around natural resources even prior to the pre-Independence era. In Maharashtra, these were led by social and religious reformers and civil society organisations- suggesting a history of active CSO engagement with issue of empowerment and emancipation. On the other hand, MP, where feudal tendencies have been strong, has a limited history of significant people's mobilisation and civil society in the State has 'emerged more slowly and gained less strength' (Manor, 2005). Bihar and UP have their own (going back to pre-Independence times) history of debates around the desirability of caste as the basis of community mobilisation and instances of Other Backward Caste (OBC) assertions, and more recently, *dalit* mobilisation (stronger in UP). These have, in time, been highly politicised making way for less constructive agendas.

Clearly, the PACS Programme States have varying histories of the mobilisation of the poor and the disadvantaged (significant in Jharkhand and Maharashtra, limited in MP and having acquired a narrower caste-driven interpretation in time in Bihar and UP).

- **Local self-governance**, in the three-tier Panchayati Raj frame envisaged, has yet to take off in Jharkhand where elections to Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) have not occurred in 28 years; is finding fresh root in Bihar where PRI elections were held in 2001 after 23 years; made some progress in UP with the transfer of select functions to PRIs (Planning Commission, 2002); witnessed major advances in the 1990s in MP; and, can be considered mature in Maharashtra (Ghosh and Kumar, 2003). Notably, even in States such as MP and Maharashtra, PRI potential remains partially realised.
- **Self-help initiatives** are in different stages across the PACS Programme State; this is reflected in the proportion of Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) SHGs rated eligible for assistance- about 30 percent in Maharashtra and less than 20 percent (ranging from 11-19 percent) in other PACS Programme States (the national average is around 27 percent and the figure for Andhra Pradesh (AP) about 60 percent) (www.indiastat.com).

**These not only underline the potential difficulties in organising communities but also suggest that even better-organised CBOs (and CSOs) may be constrained in *realising entitlements* and their own potential due to existing power relations, policy inertia, perverse institutional incentives and inadequate infrastructure and delivery systems. This may impinge on the outcomes of the PACS Programme which is demand-oriented (i.e., focused on generating demand for entitlements) and envisages, by design, limited systematic engagement with the government (at various levels) and/ or public service providers/ institutions.**

**The PACS Programme focus on impacts and outcomes is recent** and earlier years were devoted to establishing systems, vertical linkages to encourage projects and horizontal support processes. These would have had their own challenges in the backdrop of varied CSO capacities to develop and implement projects, the likelihood of distortions and 'over-reaching' given the significant funding available and concerns over corruption (DFID, 1999). One indication of the challenge in encouraging relevant projects from credible CSOs is the number of districts (23 out of the 108 originally envisaged; most of these are in Bihar and MP) where the PACS Programme had not reached till December 2005. It is understood that proposals of desired quality could not be obtained from these despite the MC's efforts.

**Bilateral support has its limitations** precluding support to certain formations, approaches and issues. Cross-country studies have pointed to challenges for DFID in engaging with CSOs with ‘some CSOs... keen to maintain their independence from the State and donors;’ and, ‘host country governments... (being)... reluctant to allow funding in sensitive areas (National Accounts Office, Government of UK, 2006).’ The PACS Programme may have been constrained in working with a larger variety of organisations, given the need to work with organisations registered under the Foreign Contributions Regulation Act- FCRA, and on certain themes, particularly those related to policy advocacy and social cohesion, given the likelihood of these being considered inappropriate for bilateral support. Notably, an effort has been made to engage organisations that do not have FCRA registration through network projects and, less commonly, through NGOs working with co-operatives and unions.

**Larger debates around donor support to civil society** have mentioned how ‘donor civil society strengthening programs, with their blueprints, technical solutions and indicators of achievement run the risk of inhibiting and ultimately destroying the most important purposes of civil society, namely the freedom to imagine that that world could be different (Manor quoting Howell and Pearce, nd)’ and depoliticising voices of change (Kamat, 2003).

**SHGs have limitations in reaching the poorest.** Studies in Orissa and MP suggest that SHGs do not always include the poorest on account of social (‘the poorest are often those who are socially marginalised because of caste affiliation and...the most sceptical of the potential benefits of collective action’) and economic reasons (‘the poorest often do not have the financial resources to contribute to the savings and pay membership fees; they are often the ones who migrate during the lean season, thus making group membership difficult’) and ‘intrinsic biases’ of implementing organisations (‘as the poorest of the poor are most difficult to reach and motivate, implementing agencies tend to leave them out, preferring to work on the next wealth category’) (Dasgupta, Marter et al, 2003). This is supported by an evaluation of the MP District Poverty Initiatives Project (MP DPIIP) which found that ‘very poor households often could not pay their mandatory contributions (to Common Interest Groups- CIGs) (Programme Evaluation Organisation (PEO), Planning Commission, 2005).’ *It is important to note in this context that the PACS Programme design did not distinguish between the poor and the poorest and envisage differing approaches to engaging with them.*

### **3. AN OVERVIEW OF THE PACS PROGRAMME** *(Further details are available as Annex IV.)*

Data from the Second National Synthesis Report (Draft- 3), February 2006, as summarised in Table (1), suggests the following:

**The PACS Programme reaches over 15,300 villages across 85 districts and 435 blocks. Of these, better reach and results are expected in about 7,000 villages that have witnessed intensive interventions<sup>3</sup>.** The 15,300 villages reached account for about 12 percent of the total number of villages in the blocks reached and about 5 percent of the total number of villages within the districts reached (assuming equal distribution of villages across

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<sup>3</sup> According to the Second National Synthesis Report (Draft- 3), February 2006, ‘not all villages where work happens have received equal intensive focus’ and ‘some experiential estimate(s) suggest that only about 40-50 percent (of the) villages are receiving intensive interventions.’ This, in turn, ‘reduces the reach of (the) PACS Programme’ as locations ‘where interventions have been minimal cannot be considered as actual reach to the poor’ and ‘better reach to (the) poor... and... better results in improving their quality of life are expected in about 7,000 villages.’

blocks). The number of villages reached is highest in Jharkhand (about 4,600), lowest in Maharashtra (about 1,900) and ranges from 2,300-3,600 in other States.

**The PACS Programme works through 143 projects engaging 474 CSOs. An attempt has been made to engage small and large CSOs and balance large and small projects. Further, projects in varying stages of implementation provide opportunities for improved performance based on experience and learning.** Thus:

- About 60 percent of the projects are smaller (Category C and D) projects<sup>4</sup>. These account for about half or more of the projects in all the States. At the other end of the scale are projects with proposed coverage exceeding a thousand villages (for example, Network of Entrepreneurship and Economic Development (NEED) in Jharkhand or Samarthan in MP) or the Rs. 50 million-plus multi-State project (MSP) being implemented by the Voluntary Health Association of India (VHAI).

<b>TABLE (1): THE PACS PROGRAMME- AN OVERVIEW</b>						
<b>Item</b>	<b>States*</b>					<b>Total</b>
	<b>BH</b>	<b>JH</b>	<b>MP</b>	<b>MH</b>	<b>UP</b>	
<b>Geographical Coverage</b>						
No. of districts to reached	21	18	17	9	20	85
Total no. of blocks in districts reached	507	140	128	118	232	1,125
No. of blocks reached	106	89	66	69	105	435
Proportion of blocks reached within districts reached	21%	64%	52%	58%	45%	39%
Total no. of villages in blocks reached ( <i>in 000s</i> )	45.1	29.4	21.9	11.0	25.7	133.1
No. of villages reached ( <i>in 000s</i> )	2.3	4.6	3.6	1.9	2.9	15.3
Proportion of villages reached within blocks reached	5%	16%	17%	17%	11%	12%
Proportion of villages reached within districts reached ( <i>assuming equal distribution of villages across blocks</i> )	1%	10%	9%	10%	5%	5%
<b>Project Profile</b>						
Total no. of projects	32	25	19	22	45	143
No. of CSOs engaged in projects	84	94	47	137	112	474

<sup>4</sup> Project Grants are for: (a) Category A Projects (with budget more than Rs. 15 million) run by regional and State-level CSOs with large networks; (b) Category B (with budget between Rs. 5-15 million) and C (with budget between Rs. 2-5 million) projects run by CSOs with district-level networks and/ or good grassroots presence; and, (c) Category D (with budget less than Rs. 2 million) projects run by small grassroots-level CSOs.

**TABLE (1): THE PACS PROGRAMME- AN OVERVIEW**

Item	States*					Total
	BH	JH	MP	MH	UP	
No. of small (Category C & D) projects	21	13	9	14	24	81
Proportion of small (Category C & D) projects	66%	52%	47%	64%	53%	57%
No. of network projects	16	17	7	8	20	68
Proportion of network projects	50%	68%	37%	36%	44%	48%
No. of projects in advanced stages of implementation	16	16	8	13	14	67
Proportion of projects in advanced stages of implementation	50%	64%	42%	59%	31%	47%
<b>CBO Profile</b>						
Total no. of CBOs ( <i>in 000s</i> )	2.4	5.0	2.8	2.9	4.4	17.5
Total no. of CBO members ( <i>in 000s</i> )	31.6	59.2	37.7	33.4	49.1	221.0
No. of SHGs (women, men and mixed; <i>in 000s</i> )	2.4	3.7	2.5	2.1	3.6	14.2
Proportion of SHGs among the total no. of CBOs	100%	74%	87%	71%	81%	81%
No. of women's SHGs	2.0	3.0	1.4	1.9	2.7	11.1
Proportion of women's SHGs among the total no. of CBOs	87%	60%	50%	65%	61%	63%
Proportion of 'village-level groups, federations/ apex bodies and others' among the total no. of CBOs	-	26%	13%	29%	19%	19%
<b>CSO Staffing</b>						
Total staff working on PACS Programme projects	374	622	459	423	818	2,696
Average no. of staff per project	12	25	24	19	18	19
No. of women staff working on PACS Programme projects	169	195	85	135	343	927
Proportion of women staff working on PACS Programme projects	45%	31%	19%	32%	42%	34%
Note: BH= Bihar; JH= Jharkhand; MP= MP (and Chattisgarh); MH= Maharashtra						
Source: Second National Synthesis Report (Draft- 3), February 2006						

- About half the projects are network projects (i.e., executed by networks of CSOs). These were envisaged to provide ‘spaces for small and new organisational forms to mature within the umbrellas of larger and longer-established NGOs (Second Annual Review, 2003).’ These also provided opportunities to support credible CSOs that might not have had FCRA registration. More than a third of the projects in each of the States are network projects and the proportion of such projects is 50 percent or more in Bihar and Jharkhand.
- About half the projects are in advanced stages of implementation<sup>5</sup>. The proportion of such projects range from about 30 percent in UP, about 40 percent in MP (and Chattisgarh), about 50 percent in Bihar and about 60 percent or more in Jharkhand and Maharashtra.

**Over 17,500 CBOs with a total membership around 211,000 have been formed. About 80 percent of these are SHGs, mainly those of women.** The CBOs formed include women’s self-help groups (SHGs), men’s SHGs, mixed SHGs, village-level groups and federations/ apex bodies. SHGs account for about 80 percent of the CBOs (more than 70 percent in all the States) and women’s SHGs account for about 63 percent of the CBOs (more than 50 percent in all States). (Data for Bihar appears incomplete for even in the study projects, there are instances of ‘non-SHG’ CBOs such as *Aapada Sahjeevan Samitis* (CBOs working on flood-related issues) *Dalit Sangharsh Morchas* CBOs of *dalits*.)

**Attempts have been made to create a climate of learning, reflection and working together.** This has been attempted through a series of knowledge and experience-sharing events (such as project and Programme-level events, Peer Learning Workshops (PLWs), national and State-level Livelihood Consultations); arrangement for RO support to CSOs; State-level campaigns and fora that have sought to bring together PACS Programme partners (e.g., the Bihar Badh Mukti Abhiyan (Flood Forum), Jharkhand Swashashan Manch (JSM; Self-governance Forum), the Maharashtra Drought Forum, Pre-election Voter Awareness Campaigns (PEVAC), National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) Week, etc.); and, the Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEAL) system.

## 4. IMPACTS OF THE PACS PROGRAMME

### 4.1 Impacts on the Poor

**A serious effort has been made to reach and organise women and the poor.** This is reflected in:

- A review of the project proposals for the 16 study projects and the target groups envisaged therein (either explicitly or implicitly) suggests that project target groups are drawn mainly from the often overlapping categories of the Scheduled Caste (SC), the Scheduled Tribe (ST), the OBC, landless households, marginal and small farmer households, women and, more generally, Below Poverty Line (BPL) households. PST and RO interactions confirm this. Importantly, this has been balanced by engagement with the larger community in all study projects. However, the degree of such engagement varies depending on whether this emanates from the CSO’s acknowledgement of the

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<sup>5</sup> Advanced stage of implementation refers to projects reported to be in the consolidation (projects ongoing for about 50-75 percent of their estimated time frame) and withdrawal stages (projects ongoing for more than 75 percent of their estimated time frame) or those that have been completed (and await or granted extension). Other stages are initiation (projects ongoing for less than 20 percent of their estimated timeframe) and establishment (projects ongoing for about 20-50 percent of their estimated time frame).

limitations of being *seen* as working with only a section of the community (for example, CSOs, in many cases, needed to engage with the larger community to allay apprehensions of women being ‘poisoned’), project requirements (for example, in projects where GSs are sought to be energised, greater engagement is envisaged with the larger community) or the CSO’s belief (as held, for example, by the Marathwada Sheti Sahayya Mandal (MSSM) in Maharashtra) that working with specific sections of the population might constrain community action.

The above should not suggest that projects focussing on specific demographic groups (other than women) such as children, the differently-abled or the elderly; formations such as co-operatives, trade unions and unions of landless labourers; and, specific occupational groups such as hawkers and vendors, do not exist<sup>6</sup>.

- The profile of CBOs and CBO membership of the PACS Programme projects, as reported in Section 3 above, suggests that special effort has been made to organise women. This mobilisation of women into SHGs in the PACS Programme States is notable given the generally concerning status of women in these States- reflected in, for example, male-female literacy differentials (about 20-25 percent), high incidence of domestic violence (about 20-25 percent) and reportage of restrictions on mobility (where more than 50 percent of the women in Maharashtra and about 80 percent of those in other States need permission to go to the market and visit friends/ relatives) (Census of India, 2001; NFHS-II, 2000). Further, data on CBO membership and/ or household reach/ coverage from 33 projects, as presented in Table (2) suggests that ‘marginalised’ groups account for a high proportion of the CBOs and CBO membership. Field visits and discussions with ROs and CSOs suggest few instances of individuals excluded from CBOs on account of their caste, faith or differently-abled status.

<b>TABLE (2): THE PACS PROGRAMME- ORGANISING THE POOR</b>				
<b>State</b>	<b>No. of CBOs (in 000s)</b>	<b>CBO Membership (in 000s)</b>	<b>Proportion of Women’s SHGs in CBOs</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
BH	2.4	31.6	87%	Data from 5 projects suggests more than 75 percent of ‘marginalised’ groups with CBO membership
JH	5.0	59.2	60%	Data from 9 projects suggests more than 50 percent of ‘marginalised’ groups with CBO membership
MH	2.9	33.4	65%	Data from 2 projects suggests more than 60 percent of ‘marginalised’ groups with CBO membership

<sup>6</sup> Such projects are fewer but not entirely absent and include projects working with children (Socio Economic Development Trust (SEDT) in Maharashtra), the differently-abled (Concerned Action Now (CAN) in MP), the elderly (HelpAge India’s MSP), co-operatives (Margdarhsak Sewa Sansthan (MSS) in MP and Vikas Sahayog Sansthan (VSS) in Maharashtra), trade unions and unions of landless labourers (Sankalp Manav Vikas Sanstha (SMVS) and Kalapandhari Magasvargiya and Adivasi Gramin Vikas Sanstha (KMAGVS), respectively, in Maharashtra) and hawkers and vendors (Nidan in Bihar).

**TABLE (2): THE PACS PROGRAMME- ORGANISING THE POOR**

State	No. of CBOs (in 000s)	CBO Membership (in 000s)	Proportion of Women's SHGs in CBOs	Remarks
MP	2.8	37.7	50%	Data from 8 projects suggests more than 95 percent of households reached from the SC, ST and OBC
UP	4.4	49.1	61%	Data from 17 projects suggests more than 50 percent of 'marginalised' groups with CBO membership
<b>Total</b>	<b>17.5</b>	<b>211.0</b>	<b>63%</b>	
Note: BH= Bihar; JH= Jharkhand; MP= MP (and Chattisgarh); MH= Maharashtra				
Source: Second National Synthesis Report (Draft- 3), February 2006; DIIS, 2006; TARU Primary Study, 2006				

- An analysis of entitlements realised from 33 projects (8 in Bihar, 5 in Jharkhand, 3 in Maharashtra, 8 in MP (and Chattisgarh) and 9 in UP) reveals that schemes accessed are mainly those for the poor and meet food, healthcare, pension, housing, maternity benefit, etc. requirements. (These are discussed in detail later in this Section.)
- The effort to reach the poor has 'taken' the PACS Programme to remote locations. Data on 650 villages from MP, for example, reveals the high proportion (between 60-80 percent) of PACS Programme villages located more than 5 km from the nearest bank, post office, public health center and *pucca* road. A similar analysis in UP reveals the high proportion (between 60-70 percent) of PACS Programme villages located 3-5 km from the nearest bank, bus stand, police station, school and *pucca* road. The situation in Jharkhand, a State marked by poor connectivity, might be similar. Field visits in Bihar and Maharashtra also confirm this. It is likely that the PACS Programme projects in many villages may have marked among the first instances of a 'non-government' development actor intervening.

**The poor have benefited in several ways.** These include:

**Formation of groups:** The high proportion of SHGs, particularly women's SHGs, among the CBOs in the PACS Programme is reflected in the study projects as well. Women's SHGs have been formed in 15 of the 16 study projects<sup>7</sup>. Further, 13 of the 16 the study projects reports other types of CBOs (besides SHGs), though as the Programme-level data suggests, these are fewer. These include village-level collectives (*Samitis, Sanghs, Sangathans, etc.*), collectives of specific groups (such as adolescent girls, *dalits* and youth) and collectives working on specific issues (such as flood). These CBOs, including SHGs, often formed amidst considerable scepticism (and sometimes, opposition), have provided the poor an opportunity to come together and discuss issues of common concern.

<sup>7</sup> The lone exception among the 16 study projects is the Institute for Youth, Women and Child (IDYWC) in MP which made a conscious decision not to work with SHGs in line with 'organisational belief' that SHGs have their limitations in realising entitlements. IDYWC chose instead to work through village-level CBOs (*Sangathans*).

**Higher confidence levels:** Sustained CSO input and presence has led to increased confidence among CBO members, particularly SHG members who stand out as more confident in each of the 16 study projects. This is evident most significantly among women who are less diffident about interacting with males within and outside the community, GP representatives and government and bank officials and, who, in some cases, have taken the initiative to attend and participate actively in GSs, intervened in instances of domestic violence, voiced grievances over issues such as BPL and voter identification and land encroachment and the working of *anganwadis*, GPs, government schemes, health centers, mid-day meals, PDS, schools, etc., and ventured out of the village to present, and seek solutions to, their concerns to political leaders and government and bank officials. This marks a departure from the general situation in the PACS Programme States where the poor have rarely had opportunities to interrogate the working of local governments and public service providers/institutions.

In October 2002, when Krishak Sahayog Sansthan (KSS) started work in Sunwaha village of Raisen district, women were 'hesitant, even afraid' to come together informally 'wondering what the men at home and the village would construe of this' and, even when they came together, most were 'too apprehensive and tongue-tied to even utter a complete sentence.' Worse, there was concern of KSS-supported meetings 'poisoning women's ears to question the authority of men.' The presence of the KSS representative and his constant 'hand holding (and) cajoling,' has, over time, allowed the group to 'find its voice' and discover, 'to their surprise, that often speaking about issues and concerns amongst themselves was... helpful.' By 2005, the women had started saving regularly but continued to be frustrated in their attempts to open a bank account and seek bank loans.

*Source:* PACS People Speak: Stories from PACS Villages in Madhya Pradesh and Chattisgarh, Volume I, 2005

A woman in Sankral village (Ausa block, Latur district, Maharashtra) was suffering abused at home by her in-laws and one day, was asked to leave the house. Four of Sahayog Nirmitee's trained women leaders decided to solve this issue. They informed the police and met the father-in-law of the victim and warned that they would pursue their police complaint if abuse continued. The victim returned home soon after and is not abused any more. The women in the group got her the job of preparing food at the *anganwadi* and she is 'now standing on her own feet.'

*Source:* Sahayog Nirmitee, 2006

Aruna is 32 years old, a mother of two, an extension worker for Purvanchal Gram Sewa Samiti (PGSS, UP) and a GP Member. As we walk with her, she is approached by several women asking for information about specific schemes. Aruna quickly responds with a list of the supporting documentation needed for applying for various schemes. Aruna goes on to narrate how she achieved a 'turnaround' in the case of Prema Pandey, a women GP Pradhan who succeeded her spouse after the seat was reserved for women. Even though Prema has been elected, Aruna observed that it was her husband who chaired the GP Meetings and took decisions. Deciding to correct this situation, Aruna continued to meet Prema separately and talk to her about her roles and powers as the Pradhan and on one occasion, when Prema's husband was away, Aruna organised a GP Meeting- enabling Prema to conduct one for the first time! Later, Prema was encouraged to attend a Jan Priya Sewa Sansthan (JPSS) training outside the village, much to her spouse's discomfort.

*Source:* TARU Primary Study, 2006

Further, there are instances of a local leadership emerging with some CBO members actively participating in, contesting, and winning, PRI elections. This assumes special significance given the widely reported concerns over the vitiated election process and elite capture of local decision-making processes in most of the PACS Programme States. While instances of CBO members contesting and winning PRI elections are evident in all the States (barring Jharkhand where elections to PRIs have not been held for nearly three decades), the

systematic effort in this direction undertaken in Bihar (through the Bihar Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyan (BPSA)<sup>8</sup> needs special mention. Information from about 400 GPs covered by 36 PACS Programme CSOs reveals that over 1,400 CBO-supported candidates won, including about 1,000 CBO-supported candidates who won unopposed. Further, polling percentages in PACS Programme areas were estimated to have increased by about 5-7 percent and nomination rejections were as low as 2 percent (compared to about 14 percent for the State).

Twenty-seven SHG members in Asmita's project villages (Maharashtra) contested elections, of whom 14 won, including a Sarpanch and an Up-Sarpanch. Sahayog Nirmitee encouraged 7 of its trained women leaders to contest, of whom four won. Mahila (women's) GSs (for which there is a separate provision in Maharashtra) are being held for the first time in many project villages. The issues reported to be commonly raised by women have been the public nuisance and domestic violence caused liquor consumption, the lack of drinking water and environmental sanitation and better beneficiary selection for government schemes.

*Source:* TARU Primary Study, 2006

Each of the CSOs implementing the 16 study projects claims (though acknowledging that these might not have happened to the desired extent and across all project villages) an improvement in GS attendance of CBO members, especially women; at least one instance of CBO members, especially women, intervening in local issues such as BPL and voter identification, domestic violence and land encroachment or the working of *anganwadis*, GPs, government schemes, health centers, mid-day meals, PDS, schools; at least one instance of CBO members, including women, venturing out of the village present, and seek solutions to, their concerns to political leaders and government and bank officials; and, instances of CBO members, including women, contesting and winning elections to PRIs.

**Increased awareness and realisation of entitlements:** Emphasis on realising entitlements, particularly government schemes and rights vis-à-vis the GP, has led to instances of the poor being more aware of their entitlements and seeking the same. Access has been enabled to a range of schemes. Coming as this does amidst reportage of high leakage from government programmes (Bihar, as mentioned earlier, has been ranked the most corrupt among 20 major Indian States) and linked issues of appropriation of public resources by the rural elite, this is especially noteworthy. Perhaps more importantly, awareness has also been created regarding rights and entitlements as citizens. The latter includes efforts towards greater awareness regarding the powers of the GS (particularly its role in identification of BPL households and beneficiaries eligible for various schemes and proposing various development works) and work undertaken as part of the voter awareness campaigns in Bihar, UP and MP.

Among the schemes to which access has been commonly enabled are those targeting the poor and vulnerable such as the:

- Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) which envisages highly subsidised foodgrain for the poorest of the poor households

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<sup>8</sup> Started in December 2005, the PACS-supported BPSA seeks to strengthen PRIs in Bihar with a view to intensify the development process in the State. It aims to achieve this through massive awareness generation (through village-level interactions, radio programmes, communication material and street plays), facilitating genuine and marginalised candidates in contesting PRI elections (through around 2,000 field-level personnel, around 100 Block Information Centers, a 24 hour help-line- when the recent elections to PRIs were held in the State) and building their capacities as PRI representatives thereafter.

- Annapurna Yojana which envisages subsidised foodgrain for senior citizens
- Balika Samridhhi Yojana (BSY) which, provides (for the first two live births) a Rs. 500 grant to the mother of a girl child born on or after August 15 1997
- Deendayal Antyodaya Upachar Yojana (DAUP) which envisages free treatment upto Rs. 20,000 for BPL households from the SC and the ST
- Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) which envisages a one-time assistance of Rs. 20,000 for BPL households for construction of homes
- National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS) which envisages a one-time assistance of Rs. 10,000 to BPL households on the death of the primary 'breadwinner'
- National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NMBS) which envisages a one-time assistance of Rs. 500 for pregnant women from BPL households for the first two live births
- National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS) which envisages a monthly pension of Rs. 125 for those more than 65 years of age with no regular means of subsistence

About 12 villages where Samajik Sewa Sansthan (ABSSS) network partner Paragi Lal Vidya Dham Samiti (PLVDS) works are separated from the mainland by a river. A bridge had been sanctioned over a decade ago and though work was initiated, it was abandoned for reasons not clear to the residents. Every year for almost 3-4 months, these 12 villages get completely cut off from the mainland. PLVDS, together with *Chingari Sangthans* observed 'mourning' on January 26 2006 (Republic Day) and later marched to the Divisional Commissioners' office at Banda seeking action in this regard. The print media was invited on the occasion and the pressure thus created led to a public hearing by the District Magistrate and funds for a road, the incomplete bridge and a new bridge was sanctioned. The incomplete bridge has since been constructed and the villagers now have access to the mainland all year round.

*Source:* TARU Primary Study, 2006

**Meeting credit needs:** Data from 25 projects (4 in Bihar, 3 in Jharkhand, 3 in Maharashtra, 10 in MP and 5 in UP) on about 4,700 with a total membership of over 67,000 suggests total funds exceeding Rs. 31 million- though fund availability per member ranges from Rs. 30 to over Rs. 3,000. These SHGs formed are in different stages of maturity. While a high proportion of these meet and save regularly and have started inter-lending to meet small credit needs, as presented in Table (3), there remain issues around the pace of bank linkages and the forward and backward linkages for income generation activities.

Discussions with SHG members reflect that SHGs have led to reduced dependence on moneylenders for petty loans (varying from Rs. 50-2,000) for illness, food, purchase of agricultural input and social functions. This reduced dependence on moneylenders has meant that asset mortgage (in Jharkhand, there are instances reported of land being mortgaged for loans of Rs. 50-100!) or exorbitant interest burdens (varying across locations from 5-10 percent per month against interest rates of 2-3 percent per month agreed within SHGs) are avoided.

**TABLE (3): THE PACS PROGEAMME SHGs IN STUDY PROJECTS**

<b>CSO</b>	<b>Reported No. of SHGs</b>	<b>Reported SHG Membership</b>	<b>Total Funds Available (Rs.; rounded)</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
AARAMBH	39	504	375,000	On December 2005; About 80 percent meet and save regularly; 14 have received bank loans; are in the process of being federated
ABSSS	314	3,497	116,000	Meetings and savings reported regular and inter-loaning satisfactory; mixed progress on bank linkages and federating
Asmita	55	667	567,000	On December 2005; yet to receive bank loans and be federated
GENVP	56	662	144,000	On July 2006, most meet but issues around regular saving
GPSVS	120	2,537	320,000	On July 2006, about two-third meet and save regularly; potential risk of benefits being cornered by a few members
JPSS	64	777	1,111,000	Meetings and savings regular; mixed progress on bank linkages and federating
LJK	253	3,107	782,724	About 80 percent meet, save and inter-loan regularly; mixed progress on bank linkages and federating
MSSM	482	5,515	8,350,000	As on February 28 2006 (end-of-project); more than 90 percent of these meet regularly; 115 have received bank loans
MVS	42	447	200,000*	Meetings and savings regular; mixed progress on bank linkages and federating
NEED	100	1301	1,837,000	More than 80 percent meet, save and inter-loan regularly; mixed progress on bank linkages and federating
Nidan	462	4,218	1,613,000	More than 80 percent meet, save and inter-loan regularly; mixed progress on bank linkages and federating

**TABLE (3): THE PACS PROGEAMME SHGs IN STUDY PROJECTS**

CSO	Reported No. of SHGs	Reported SHG Membership	Total Funds Available (Rs.; rounded)	Remarks
PL	26	364	109,535	All meet, save and inter-loan regularly; only 2-3 have received loans; process of federating initiated
SPAR	283	3,569	3,943,000	More than 90 percent meet, save and inter-loan regularly; Less than 10 percent have availed loan from banks
Sahayog Nirmitee	319	3,685	NA	Most formed prior to PACS Programme; CSO works with them on leadership training and entitlements realisation
Shramjeevi Unnayan	116	1,740	400,000	Most meet and save regularly; about 30 percent have received bank loans; federating process yet to be initiated
<i>Source:</i> Various CSOs				

## 4.2 Impacts on CSOs

**A range of generally credible CSOs have been supported and they have benefited in different ways.** (Note that the reference to credible CSOs alludes to their record of financial propriety (around which risk was anticipated by the PACS Programme during the design stage) and is not to be interpreted as a reflection of their capacities which may be varied.) Most CSOs supported by the PACS Programme either enjoy national-level profile and recognition or have an established presence at the district/ sub-regional level having worked in their respective States for more than a decade. In general, they are perceived as credible. Importantly, the CSOs supported include those who may have lacked formal proposal writing skills (MP PST, November 2005).

The PACS Programme has benefited these CSOs in various ways. These include opportunities for (including non-study projects; information on study projects is presented in Table (4)):

- Expanding their presence and/ or deepening their past work in specific districts and areas for organisations such as Bharat Gramodyog Vikas Samiti (BGVS, UP), Bharatiya Jan Sewa Ashram (BJSA, UP), Ghoghardiha Prakhand Swarajya Vikas Sangh (GPSVS, Bihar), Grameen Vikas Mandal (GVM, MP), IDYWC (MP), Jan Priya Sewa Samiti (JPSS, UP), Lok Jagriti Kendra (LJK, Jharkhand), Mahila Samiti (MP), Mahila Vikas Samiti (MVS, Bihar), MSSM (Maharashtra), Nav Bharat Jagriti Kendra (NBJK, Jharkhand), Nidan (Bihar), Samarthan (MP), Sampurna Gram Vikas Kendra (SGVK, Jharkhand), Satpura Integrated Rural Development Institution (SIRDI, MP), Society for

Participatory Action and Reflection (SPAR, Jharkhand), Society for Rural Upliftment, Betul (SRUB, MP)

- Engaging with a different paradigm (making transition from welfare and service-delivery based approaches) and/ or newer issues (such as local self-governance or ‘softer’ issues in general) and/ or newer approaches to familiar themes for organisations such as AARAMBH (MP), Asha Niketan Welfare Center (ANWC, MP), Bhartiya Dnyanpith Bahuudeshiya Gramin Vikas Sanstha (BDBGVS, Maharashtra), Center for Advanced Research and Development (CARD, MP), Cheshire Home (Jharkhand), Gramin Evam Nagar Vikas Parishad (GENVP, Bihar), Grassroots Action for Social Participation (GRASP, Maharashtra), MSS (MP), MSSM (Maharashtra), MVS (Bihar), Pragati Luyadih (PL, Jharkhand), Self Employed Women’s Association (SEWA, UP) and Shramjeevi Unnayan (Jharkhand); *it is estimated that about two-thirds of the PACS Programme-supported CSOs has not worked on rights-based approaches earlier*; in some cases, notably CSOs with activist orientations such as Jan Vikas Samajik Sanstha (JVSS) and Rural Development Center (RDC) have had the opportunity to work in a more ‘professional’ environment with structured interventions
- Developing/ expanding, consolidating and strengthening pre-existing formal and informal networks for NGOs such as Akhil Bhartiya Samajik Sewa Sansthan (ABSSS, UP), Gandhi Peace Center (GPC, Jharkhand), GVM (MP), LJK (Jharkhand), NBJ (Jharkhand), Samarthan (MP), Sahayog Nirmitee (Maharashtra), Society for Rural Industrialisation (SRI, Jharkhand) and Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action (YUVA, MP)

The above are reflected in the impacts reported at the CSO-level from the study projects, as presented in Table (4).

<b>TABLE (4): THE PACS PROGRAMME PARTNER CSOs: CSO-LEVEL IMPACTS REPORTED BY SELECT CSOS</b>	
<b>CSO</b>	<b>CSO-level Impacts Reported/ Acknowledged</b>
AARAMBH	Registered in 1992; earlier work was mainly with children in urban areas; the PACS Programme provided opportunity to engage with new themes/ paradigms, has led to increased credibility and contributed to strengthening of management systems
ABSSS	Registered in 1978; the PACS Programme provided opportunity to expand geographical coverage, strengthen its local network and reinforce/ build upon its existing work
Asmita	Registered in 1995; the PACS Programme provided opportunity to reach remote locations that the CSO itself had excluded earlier; inputs during project development and through the Maharashtra Drought Forum valued
GENVP	Registered in 1987; earlier work was welfare-oriented; the PACS Programme provided opportunity to engage with new themes/ paradigms
GPSVS	Registered in 1978; the PACS Programme provided opportunities to expand presence and deepen past work; network partners have developed organisational systems and project management capabilities
IDYWC	Registered in 1988; the PACS Programme provided opportunity to expand presence and deepen past work in specific district (Chhindwara in MP)

**TABLE (4): THE PACS PROGRAMME PARTNER CSOs:  
CSO-LEVEL IMPACTS REPORTED BY SELECT CSOS**

CSO	CSO-level Impacts Reported/ Acknowledged
JPSS	Registered in 1991; the PACS Programme provided opportunity to expand presence, deepen past work in specific district (Pratapgarh in UP) and develop local network
LJK	Registered in 1980; the PACS Programme provided opportunities to expand presence and deepen past work; network partners have developed organisational systems and project management capabilities
MSSM	Registered in 1968; earlier worked on community-based watershed development and agricultural development; the PACS Programme offered opportunity to work engage with new themes/ paradigms
MVS	Registered in 1995; the PACS Programme has helped develop organisational systems and project management capabilities and lent visibility and credibility leading to additional funding support
NEED	Registered in 1995; the PACS Programme provided opportunity to expand presence, deepen past work in specific block (Mehmudabad in Sitapur district) and lent credibility which has, in turn, led to new projects
Nidan	Registered in 1996; the PACS Programme provided opportunity to expand presence, deepen past work and strengthen network
PL	Registered in 1985; earlier work was welfare-oriented; the PACS Programme provided opportunity to engage with new themes/ paradigms
SPAR	Registered in 1991; the PACS Programme provided opportunity to expand presence, deepen past work and lent credibility which has, in turn, led to new projects; network partners have developed organisational systems and project management capabilities
Sahayog Nirmitee	Registered in 1996; the PACS Programme provided opportunity to strengthen network; network partners have strengthened organisational systems and project management capabilities
Shramjeevi Unnayan	Registered in 1984; the PACS Programme provided opportunity to expand presence and engage with new themes/ paradigms
<i>Source:</i> TARU Primary Study, 2006	

**The most significant benefits are acknowledged by smaller CSOs** (300 of the 474 CSOs supported by the PACS Programme), including those working as network partners to more established lead partners, such as ABSSS (UP), GPSVS (Bihar), JPSS (UP), LJK (Jharkhand), Nidan (Bihar), Sahayog Nirmitee (Maharashtra) and SPAR (Jharkhand). The benefits cited by the smaller CSOs (one estimate suggests that 300 of the 474 CSOs engaged with the PACS Programme are smaller CSOs), such as AARAMBH (MP), Agragati (SPAR network partner- Jharkhand), Ambava Mahila Mandal (AMM- Sahayog Nirmitee network partner, Maharashtra), Bundelkhand Sewa Sansthan (BSS- ABSSS network partner, UP), Chotanagpur Craft Development Society (CCDS- SPAR network partner, Jharkhand), GVM (MP), Integrated Development Action for Solidarity (IDAS- SPAR network partner, Jharkhand), Krishnarpit Sewa Ashram (KSA- ABSSS network partner, UP), Lokpriya Jan Seva Sasthan (LJSS- JPSS network partner, UP), Paragi Lal Vidya Dham Samiti (PLVDS-

ABSSS network partner, UP), MVS (Bihar) and Research and Action Institute for Social Empowerment (RAISE- SPAR network partner, Jharkhand) and Vihar Samaj Kalyan Sansthan (VISKASAN- SPAR network partner, Jharkhand), include increased reputation, credibility and recognition and strengthened procedures, practices and systems for programme and financial management. Table (5) presents, as an illustration, the changes reported by network partners of SPAR, Jharkhand.

<b>TABLE (5): CHANGE IN STATUS OF NETWORK PARTNERS – A CASE OF SPAR PARTNERS IN JHARKHAND</b>			
<b>Network Partner</b>	<b>Status Before PACS (March 2003)</b>	<b>Status as of Now (July 2006)</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
Aragati	Manpower: 7 people; Annual Turnover: Less than Rs. 300,000 (in Jharkhand); Working in 10 villages	Manpower: 90 people; Annual Turnover: More than Rs. 500,000 (in Jharkhand); Working in 150 villages	Other benefits mentioned include strengthening of management systems and increased credibility which has led to support from other donor agencies and recognition from the government by way of involving them as active partner to help undertake development work in the district
Chotanagpur Craft Development Society (CCDS)	Manpower: 6 people; Annual Turnover: Rs. 1.4 million	Manpower: 33 people; Annual Turnover: Over Rs. 5 million	Other benefits mentioned include strengthening of management systems and increased credibility which has led to support from other donor organisations
Integrated Development Action for Solidarity (IDAS)	Manpower: 2-3 people Annual Turnover: Rs. 100,000	Manpower: 9-10 people; Annual Turnover: Rs. 700,000	Other benefits mentioned included strengthening of management systems and increased credibility which has led to support from organisations such as Evangelische Zentralstelle für Entwicklungshilfe (EZE), Oxfam and United Nations Children's Education Fund (UNICEF)
Research and Action Institute for Social Empowerment (RAISE)	Manpower: 3-4 people informally working together	Manpower: 5 people; PACS was the first support of its kind	Other benefits mentioned include strengthening of organisational management systems and increased credibility which has helped obtaining FCRA clearance and recognition from other agencies working in the area
Vihar Samaj Kalyan Sansthan (VISKASAN)	Manpower: 10-14 people Annual Turnover: Less than Rs. 300,000	Manpower: 39 people; Annual Turnover: More than Rs. 2 million	Other benefits mentioned include strengthening of management systems and increased credibility which has led to support from other donor organisations
<i>Source: TARU Primary Study, August 2006</i>			

Though Leela Kumari registered MVS (Bihar) in 1992, the organisation obtained its first funding in 2002 (from the National Foundation of India- NFI). Support continued from NFI, increasing every year (Rs. 100,000 in 2001; Rs. 250,000 in 2002; and, Rs. 400,000 in 2003), and later support came from Pathfinder International (PFI), the Council for Promotion of Advancement of Rural Technologies (CAPART) and the State Government. While this support was useful for MVS to intensify its work, the PACS Programme support is acknowledged for the contribution it has made to strengthening organisational systems and record keeping.

*Source:* TARU Primary Study, 2006

### **4.3 Overall Assessment of Impacts**

The PACS Programme has made a serious effort to reach the poor and the mobilisation of the poor, particularly women, into CBOs has provided the project target groups opportunities to come together, discuss and raise concerns in various fora and with various stakeholders and meet small credit needs. Entitlements, by way of government schemes, are increasingly being sought and realised. More importantly, this has led to a marked increase in confidence levels and enhanced self-image among CBO members, some of whom have even gone on to contest and win local PRI elections

Further, credible CSOs have been supported and they have benefited in various ways, including opportunities to expand and/ or deepen work in specific districts and/ or sectors; engage with a different paradigm; explore new approaches to familiar sectors; and, develop/ expand and consolidate local networks. CSOs, particularly smaller ones, have benefited in terms of reputation from their association with the PACS Programme and inputs towards procedures, practices and systems for programme and financial management.

These are impressive achievements given the challenging environment in which the PACS Programme operates- often marked by deep (and politicised) social divisions, limited opportunities for the poor to interrogate the working of local governments and public service providers/ institutions, concerning status of women, elite capture of local decision-making processes and high leakage from government programmes and linked issues of appropriation of public resources by the rural elite.

Despite these encouraging developments, the overall impact is mixed. The larger situation is reflected in the realistic PST assessments (the candour and learning spirit of which needs to be appreciated) in:

- Bihar, where the PST has scored itself 3.2 overall on a scale of 10 (10 indicating desired performance levels) and where overall output analysis from 8 projects has a middling rating of 2.8 on a scale of 5 (5 indicating desired output) (Bihar PST, December 2005)
- Jharkhand, where the PST has scored itself 4.2 overall on a scale of 10 (10 indicating desired performance levels) and where overall output analysis from 8 projects has a middling rating of 2.8 on a scale of 5 (5 indicating desired output) (Jharkhand PST, December 2005)

- Maharashtra, where 5 of the 13 projects recently reviewed are recognised to have weak linkages between project objectives and implementation plans (Maharashtra PST, December 2005)
- MP, where the PST acknowledged the absence of major State-level advocacy, lack of initiative with regard to social cohesion and few and ‘eclectic’ signs of change vis-à-vis women’s empowerment and local self-governance themes and estimates that only about half the project outputs from 6 projects have ‘outstanding performance’ or outputs rated ‘done reasonably well’ (MP PST, November 2005)
- UP, where output analysis for 14 projects suggests that none of these have assessed themselves as Grade 3 (indicating status as desired) and where RO Reports have identified 8 projects (of 29 projects for which such information is available) which need immediate improvement (UP PST, December 2005)

Thus:

**While the poor have been reached and organised as CBOs, the CBOs are still in the process of maturing into effective pressure groups and there are issues around reach to the poorest.** This has been observed in the field visits and confirmed in discussions with ROs. It is further reflected in the analysis/ self-assessments of various PSTs where the PSTs such as those in Bihar and Jharkhand have rated themselves low (less than 4 on a scale of 10 with 10 indicating desired performance) on ‘inclusion of the poorest’ and have identified parameters such as ‘CBOs working as pressure groups,’ ‘increased effectiveness of GSs,’ ‘awareness building of women’ and/ or ‘women’s participation in governance’ as areas for improvement (where scores of less than 2.5 have been assigned on a scale of 5; 5 indicating desired output) (Bihar PST, December 2005; Jharkhand PST, 2005). (These issues are discussed in further detail later in this document.)

**SHGs too are in various stages of maturity.** While many SHGs meet and save regularly and have started inter-loaning to meet small credit needs, there remain issues around the pace of bank credit linkages and the forward and backward linkages for income generation activities- suggesting varying levels of maturity. In Bihar and Jharkhand, for example, output analysis for 14 projects (8 in Bihar and 6 in Jharkhand) suggests that while about 60-80 percent of the SHGs have started regular meetings, savings, inter-loaning and record-keeping and participating in community-level fora, only about 15-20 percent have credit linkages with banks and other agencies. Further, in MP, CSOs such as AARAMBH, CARD, GVM, SIRDI, SRUB and YUVA report being challenged by a mix of issues relating to ensuring regular meetings and savings and proper record keeping; enabling bank linkages; federating SHGs; and, identifying and taking forward robust income generation activities. This is also reflected in the status of SHGs in the study projects- as reported in Table (3) earlier.

**While network projects have benefited smaller CSOs, the overall assessment of network projects is mixed.** Network projects were to provide ‘spaces for small and new organisational forms to mature within the umbrellas of larger and longer-established NGOs (Second Annual Review, 2003).’ As reported above, this has partly been realised with smaller CSOs citing benefits of increased reputation, credibility and recognition and strengthened procedures, practices and systems for programme and financial management. Despite this, there are concerns, particularly in instances where networks were not ‘organic’ but formed to meet FCRA requirements, over the capacity building and other support provided by lead

partners, opportunities for experience sharing and learning, coordination levels and limited project ownership among network partners (MP PST, December 2005).

Thus, 'several of the network projects are working as loose groups of independent organisations which only consolidate reports and the original proposal... and... sharing and synergy that ought to happen inside networks is missing (Bhopal Rehabilitation, September 2004). Supporting this is an analysis of 6 network projects in Maharashtra where capacity-building efforts were considered satisfactory only in two (Maharashtra PST, December 2005). The earlier Maharashtra State-level Synthesis (July 2005) also observed that capacity-building of network partners had been an issue and that most networks promoted by the PACS Programme and are unlikely to continue afterwards.

**When referring to the maturity of various CBOs and whether these have grown into effective pressure groups, it is important to bear in mind two factors:**

**Pressure groups are not easy to energise in the challenging environment within which the PACS Programme operates.** Pressure groups at the community level need to time and sustained support. This is best reflected in the generally more active groups observed in cases where the PACS Programme opportunities were used by CSOs (such as ABSSS, UP; IDYWC, MP; LJK, Jharkhand; MVS, Bihar; and, Nidan, Bihar) to work with pre-existing CBOs. Also more active groups where CSOs have chosen to work intensively in a smaller number of villages.

**Even if communities are well mobilised, the realisation of entitlements they seek is crucially dependent on the larger institutional environment and delivery systems.** For example, some of the CBOs of MVS in Bihar and Asmita and Sahayog Nirmitee in Maharashtra, despite their sustained efforts have not been able to ensure regular attendance of health personnel and additional teachers in the local school. It is important then to appreciate that the concerns around the emergence of CBOs as pressure groups or the effectiveness of GSs need not always reflect the implementation quality of the PACS Programme and could arise from the limited responsiveness of local governments and public service providers/ institutions. The absence- by design (given the demand-orientation of the PACS Programme with its focus in generating 'demand' for entitlements)- of any systematic engagement with the government (at various levels) and/ or public service providers/ institutions, in retrospect, could have contributed significantly to the current situation.

**Clearly, part of the reason why the PACS Programme impacts have been mixed lies within the larger context.** However, acknowledged (by PSTs) and reported (by ROs and CSOs) issues around project design and implementation strategies, CSO capacities and limited engagement at the State and policy-level point to another set of 'internal' factors and strategic issues that need to be discussed. These are presented in Section 5 below.

## 5. EMERGENT ISSUES

### 5.1 Emergent Issues

Discussions with ROs and CSOs, observations from field visits and secondary references point to the following emergent issues, in addition to those arising from the challenging Programme context and the limitations of a demand-side approach (where ‘supply-side’ responses are not always forthcoming and few efforts were envisaged- it needs to be emphasised again, by design- to ensure this):

**Project design and implementation strategy:** Project designs and implementation strategies have had limitations though this is less evident in the study projects. In Maharashtra, 5 of the 13 projects recently reviewed were recognised to have weak linkages between project objectives and implementation plans (Maharashtra PST, December 2005). The MP State-level Synthesis (November 2005) has pointed to the ‘surface level’ problem analyses and baselines, lack of ‘clarity in strategy’ and ‘vague and generalised outputs and indicators.’ RO Reports from MP corroborate the absence of ‘relevant analysis’ of baseline data and focus on ‘inputs and not on outputs and processes’ (Bhopal Rehabilitation, September 2004).’ RO Reports from UP for CSOs such as Gender Training Institute (GTI), Manila Magritte Munch (MJM) and Sarvodaya Ashram and the UP State Synthesis (May 2005) point to gaps in design and the lack of strategic focus in projects.

The study projects in Bihar reflect a similar picture. Here, GENVP, realised that its initial focus on capacity building of GP representatives was insufficient to ensure better local self-governance and its subsequent attempts at working with SHGs to ensure the same had their own limitations (as acknowledged by GENVP) leading to facilitation of *Dalit Sangharsh Morchas* (DSM). Further, CSOs such as GENVP and MVS admit that their envisaged coverage was unrealistic leading to energies being dissipated across a larger number of villages rather than focused work in a smaller number of locations. (Notably, GENVP works intensively in only 60 of its proposed 156 villages and MVS in 20 of its 160.) In the case of GPSVS (where a central objective was to ensure better preparedness against recurrent flood), training on diving, swimming and rescue operations, considered important from the CSO perspective, is not supported by the PACS Programme.

Issues around project design and implementation strategy could have arisen from several reasons, including CSOs over-reaching themselves. This risk was anticipated (‘risk that an influx of substantial DFID funds will distort... (CSOs)...by encouraging them to work outside their existing area of focus, expand more rapidly than desirable or create new artificial consortia to absorb funds (DFID, 1999)’) and RO Reports have confirmed it suggesting that ‘groups have probably taken up too much work and are not able to do justice’ to the same and that ‘groups that have focused on fewer, but very well defined main tasks are doing better’ while others ‘trying to achieve too much by carrying out lots of activities are losing energy and initiative (Bhopal Rehabilitation, September 2004).’ This is consistent with the positive findings in the case of SPAR (Jharkhand) and the two ‘casualties’ in Maharashtra (the CSOs BDBGVS and GRASP whose projects were scaled down, and in the case of BDBGVS later terminated).

Further, the project development process itself might have been rushed (some proposals reportedly came only a month before scheduled PSC Meetings) and dependence on Project Development ROs (PDROs), engaged to support CSOs in project development partly because

of the need to submit proposals in English, could have resulted in PDROs influencing project design and the proposals not being fully understood by the CSOs (MP PST, December 2005).

Negotiations on technical aspects owing to budgetary constraints and limited appreciation in the early stages of the project of how these could impinge on outputs could have contributed to the situation further. For example, CSOs such as GENVP, GPSVS and MVS in Bihar believe that the project activities they settled for were with unrealistic budgets. Evaluations and RO Reports of projects implemented by the Indian Institute of Social Development (IISD and MJM in UP, corroborate the issue of budgetary constraints.

**Limitations of capacity and perspective among CSOs and limited effectiveness of efforts in this direction:** Limitations are observed with respect to perspectives on poverty, empowerment and entitlement and capacities to build on ongoing work to achieve stated outputs. This is confirmed in discussions with ROs and the PSTs and reflected in the concerns expressed by the Bihar PST about addressing ‘real’ concerns of the poor, the MP PST which has pointed to the limited perspectives and skills and inappropriate attitudes among CSO personnel and RO assessments and self-evaluations of projects implemented by ABSSS, GTI, JPSS, MJM, PGSS and Sarvodaya Ashram in UP. This applies less to Maharashtra where civil society, including PACS Programme-supported CSOs, have had a significant history of engaging with issues of empowerment. These limitations are most visibly manifest in a situation where women’s empowerment is equated, in the interpretation of field personnel in particular, with formation of SHGs and ensuring their smooth functioning (rather than SHG formation being interpreted as the first step towards larger empowerment goals)- an issue that is discussed later in this Section.

Even the National Synthesis Report, Draft- 3, February 2006 mentions that ‘there are several key areas where partners will benefit from capacity building, including management skills, perspectives on governance and livelihoods and connects between poverty and entitlements.’ In response to these limitations of capacity and perspective, much effort has been made. These including project-level capacity building events at the CSO level and Programme-level capacity building events at TARAGram on a range of themes. Further, learning and reflection opportunities have been afforded through MEAL, PLWs, documentation and dissemination of experiences and peer exchange visits. However, it is likely that the results from these efforts are mixed.

**Capacity building events:** Discussions with ROs and CSOs suggest that the capacity building events, while appreciated in terms of their intent, may not always have had desired results. Interactions with nodal CSO personnel and others who had attended such events suggest that the principal concern was over the appropriateness of the themes and ‘how what has been learnt is to be used within the project.’ Among the key issues suggested by CSOs (and ROs) is the need for more systematic training needs assessment (TNA); better participant selection (so that field personnel have opportunities to attend and participants of different (skill and hierarchical) levels are not mixed); administrative and logistical improvements (to ensure that information about events is made available on time and not delayed); arrangements for training reinforcement (for internalisation of learning may not happen on a single occasion); and, systematic analysis of training impacts. These suggestions have been echoed in various State-level Syntheses too (Various PSTs, November/ December 2005). The National Synthesis Report, Draft- 3, February 2006 also acknowledged that while ‘a large number of capacity building efforts have been undertaken by the projects or by the (PACS) Programme’, ‘there have been lesser efforts to match (such events with) what the CSOs really require.’

Further, 'experience reveals that we (the PACS Programme) have not answered such questions as to who needs what kind of CB (capacity building) inputs within each CSO... (and)... in what way they will use the... (input)... received in their local context.'

**Peer Learning Workshops (PLWs):** Over time, the PLWs have served as platforms to share experiences, issues and strategies to address the same; organise 'perspective' presentations (often by external resource persons) on themes such as advocacy, CSO- government engagement, child rights, communication, identification of BPL households, land rights, NREGS, networking, RTI, service delivery and women's empowerment; clarify issues and concerns around MEAL; take stock of the PACS Programme at the National and State-levels; and, reinforce the larger objectives of the PACS Programme. In principle, the PLWs have been recognised as presenting significant opportunities for learning and experience-sharing. However, all the 16 CSOs met perceive that the PLWs represent an opportunity that has been underutilised.

In most cases, this has been traced to the differing PLW foci over time- the First PLW introduced the PACS Programme, the Second PLW focused on sharing findings from peer learning visits, the Third PLW centred around MEAL, the Fourth PLW was devoted to discussing issues around LSG and RTI, the Fifth PLW centered around livelihoods and the Sixth PLW on the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme- NREGS - and the limited opportunities these are perceived to have provided for follow-up. Further, participants' feedback on Third (September 2004) and Fourth (March 2005) PLWs in MP refers to the need for limiting 'subjects for discussion rather than (opting for) a wide array (of subjects)' so that there are greater opportunities for CSOs to 'speak out, share problems and find solutions' ('the CSOs should get a full-day to themselves where they can choose what they want to share and discuss'). Also, external resource persons have not always expressed 'thoughts clearly and briefly' and tended to go into 'confusing debates which did not provide clear learning at the end of the day.' CSOs like JPSS, LJSS, NEED and PLVDS in UP have also highlighted the need for greater CSO participation in deciding the PLW agenda.

**MEAL:** Mixed CSO responses have been received on MEAL. While MEAL is acknowledged as useful for introspection, analysis and learning by most CSOs met (and there are indications that internal reflections as part of MEAL have allowed field personnel to find a 'voice' on where the projects are headed and the kind of corrections they may need (Bhopal Rehabilitation, March 2005)), concerns have been expressed regarding (a) the workload it entails; and, (b) closure of feedback loops.

Concerns over workload might be arising on account of the periodicity of reporting and the need for additional orientation on MEAL formats. The issue relating to closure of feedback loops is perhaps more crucial. Currently, the response to CSOs on emerging issues and needs is less swift than desired leading to concerns over 'who is learning' and 'what is being used' from MEAL Reports. Even the proceedings of the Sixth PLW in MP (March 2006) report this issue and the MP State-level Synthesis (November 2005) has listed the need for providing 'regular feedback on MEAL Reports' under its 'future directions.'

However, it is acknowledged that the culture of reflection that MEAL seeks to introduce is difficult to establish in a short period of time. Thus it is realised that 'much more needs to be done to improve the quality and spirit of the implementation, more so as the system is focused on reflection and self-analysis', particularly since 'some CSOs have started implementing MEAL in their non-PACS (Programme) projects,... others are focused only on

submitting reports in MEAL formats rather than using it as (a) tool for reflection and learning.’ Further, some CSOs may continue to stick to the earlier version of ... (their)... projects and may not be keen about redefining outputs’ (Bhopal Rehabilitation, March 2005). Difficulties in reworking committed and agreed project budgets, durations, activities, etc. may also be contributing to the latter.

Importantly, for some ROs and CSOs, concerns over the availability of feedback on MEAL Reports are reflective of a larger situation where relevant documentation is not always shared widely. Thus, some ROs report difficulty in accessing past Annual Reviews and several CSOs have reported difficulty in accessing RO Reports pertaining to their work, delayed information about training and capacity building events and clarification on contractual and financial issues and the documentation of PLW Proceedings. This is at variance with the PACS Programme’s emphasis on transparency and its openness in acknowledging its own deficiencies (as reflected in the content and tone of the National and various State-level Synthesis Reports).

**Peer exchange visits:** Views on this are available from the Third (September 2004) and Fourth (March 2005) PLW Proceedings in MP. The Third PLW Proceedings in MP suggest that these visits tended to focus on positive aspects and less on areas for improvement. The Fourth PLW saw participants ‘divided in their opinion on the utility of the visits as they produced either useless mutual appreciation reports or insensitive feedback resulting in organisational conflicts’ and concluded that ‘if the cross learning visits are to start, they should follow a comprehensive preparation of systems of feedback, terms of reference and relevant choice of the visited and the visiting CSO.’ This is supported by interactions with CSOs and ROs in other States which suggest that, while peer exchange visits had the potential benefits of learning and knowledge sharing, these typically ended up in mutual appreciation of each others work or in discovering/ highlighting weakness of others.

**Documentation and dissemination of experiences:** Efforts have focused on documenting success stories, and, even within this, there is a case for systematic analysis of context, outcome determinants and lessons.

**Limitations of an SHG-focused Approach:** As mentioned above, the limitations of capacity and perspective are most visibly manifest in a situation where women’s empowerment is equated, in the interpretation of field personnel in particular, with formation of SHGs and ensuring their smooth functioning (rather than SHG formation being interpreted as the first step towards larger empowerment goals). The results of this are evident in the concern expressed over the emergence of CBOs as pressure groups in Bihar and Jharkhand (reported earlier in this document); RO assessments and CSO-level Reports for CSOs such as BGVS, NEED, Peoples Network for National Integration (PANI), SEWA and Sarvodaya Ashram in UP (UP PST, December 2005) which have suggested the need for SHGs to go beyond their usual saving and agenda and engage with issues concerning the community at large; and, in CSO-level Reports for CSOs such as AARAMBH, CARD, GVM, NIWYCD, SIRDI, SRUB and YUVA in MP which appear consumed by a mix of issues relating to ensuring regular meetings and savings and proper record keeping; enabling bank linkages; federating SHGs; and, identifying and taking forward robust income generation activities. Much the same situation obtains in the study projects in Bihar and Jharkhand.

Importantly, these activities, while being legitimate attempts to take forward the SHG activity and having the possibilities of ensuring benefits, have their own (and significant) operational

demands that, along with limitations of capacity and perspective, have overwhelmed the focus on empowerment. Even in instances such as CARD and GVM in MP where the larger import of SHGs is recognised by the CSOs, future directions remain unclear. CARD, for example, has acknowledged the ‘lack of clarity over the strategy to develop pressure groups (DIIS, 2006).’

The focus on SHGs thus presents a challenging situation whereby SHGs present an option for mobilising the poor, particularly women, in view of the quicker and more tangible benefits in terms of credit that they can offer but come with the risk of overwhelming the larger empowerment agenda given their significant operational demands.

**Under-utilisation of RO Potential:** ROs engaged for supportive supervision are expected to understand requirements of, and hand-hold, CSOs; review work plans and relate plans to actual implementation; correlate activities to budgets; provide inputs for planning and orientation; and, identify capacity building needs of CSOs. They are thus envisaged to play a ‘critical intermediary role’ in the PACS Programme, ‘channelling and transforming the ideas and directions offered by the DA/ PwC into action within local contexts in the State, re-interpreting and modulating inputs from Delhi into usable and actionable elements for the networks and partners’ and, also, the ‘sensitive role of representing the partners’ concerns upwards to Delhi while providing process and conceptual support for their growth and institutionalisation process (Second Annual Review, 2003).’

The ROs, particularly those in Maharashtra and MP, have an established reputation within, and nuanced understanding of, the State and have, over time, principally through their quarterly visits to CSOs and their presence in the PST, have been instrumental in hand-holding, sharing their insights with and providing feedback to CSOs; tracking project progress; supporting the refinement of project designs and identifying CSOs with high support and project re-orientation requirements; identifying capacity building needs of CSOs; and (in their role as PST Members), preliminary screening of proposals and reflections on the course the PACS Programme is taking in the State.

Despite this, there is reason to believe that the potential of the ROs engaged in supportive supervision could have been utilised better. This could be on account of the following:

- RO inputs of even the highest quality may not yield desired results in the context of weak proposals, constraints of capacity and perspective within CSOs and the mixed results of capacity building, reflection and learning efforts (the key issues discussed above). Further, project re-orientation and capacity building needs identified by ROs have not always been systematically addressed. This could have arisen from the (pre-MEAL) ‘lack of a system for monitoring CSO response’ to RO feedback (MP PST, November 2005) and the reluctance of some CSOs about ‘redefining outputs’ (Bhopal Rehabilitation, September 2005) (partly on account of the difficulties in reworking committed and agreed project budgets, durations, activities, etc.). Post-MEAL, this is expected to have improved but revisiting project designs may still be a challenge.
- The wide ranging support requirements of CSOs may be difficult for even established and competent ROs to meet. ROs with dedicated teams populated by thematic area experts could have been in a better position to meet these requirements but the current quarterly contracts (short-term contracts with associated uncertainties) have not permitted the same.

- Bihar and Jharkhand have witnessed high RO turnover. It is recently that supportive supervision arrangements through ROs has stabilised. This has meant that not all CSOs have enjoyed regular RO support.
- CSOs, despite efforts to correct the impression, may continue to view ROs as ‘monitors’ rather than those engaged to provide ‘supportive supervision.’ High RO turnover which has meant changes in RO personnel engaging with CSOs and contractual issues which have constrained dedicated teams, may have added to this perception.

**Progress on State-level engagement and policy advocacy:** The PACS Programme design recognised that ‘it is not sufficient to work at the local level alone... (as) ... State, national and international policies and practices can be the sources of the problems facing the poor’ and mentioned the need to ‘identify those policies which work against the poor, or alternatively, those which can be made to work positively in the interests of the poor’ so that ‘the policy advocacy component would... help CSOs to lobby for changes in such policies.’ Further, ‘policy advocacy, particularly at State and national levels... (was felt) ...necessary to break the patterns of public inertia’ in certain States. Elsewhere, the PACS Programme design posited that ‘influencing policy requires effective advocacy at all levels... (and that)... advocacy is not just about lobbying and campaigning but also about generating grassroots awareness of entitlements and state obligations, research and documentation, communication, development of advocacy methods and skills and forming networks and alliances.’ Crucially, the possibilities of ‘advocacy and social cohesion activities’ leading to ‘political controversy’ were discussed (DFID, 1999).

A gap appears to be emerging in the PACS Programme with regard to State-level engagement and policy advocacy. NAB and PSC members, ROs and CSOs have pointed to this though the articulations differ across States. This is not to suggest that efforts have not been made. In Bihar, while notable success has been achieved with the BPSA, there has, according to the Bihar PST, emerged the need for wider strategic partnerships and stakeholder co-operation. In Jharkhand, the JSM marks an initiative to work on issues of local self-governance but has been delayed in ‘take-off’ with time taken in agreeing an agenda and on account of financial constraints. In MP, the PEVAC met success but the PST itself has acknowledged the limited work in the area of policy advocacy and engagement at the State-level. The Maharashtra Drought Forum has achieved significant successes. Further, in almost all States, efforts have been made to engage with State-level government and financial and academic institutions through the State Core Group (SCG); and, State-level consultations have drawn participation from individuals from a range of backgrounds.

However, these efforts at the State-level and policy engagement need to be strengthened. The current status could owe to a mix of reasons including limitations of experience and skill among the CSOs and the possibilities of certain types of policy advocacy efforts being deemed inappropriate for bilateral support.

The orientation and character of the PACS Programme partners may be another reason for some CSOs opting for activities that yield demonstrable results rather than engage in the more difficult terrain of policy which, at the project level, may involve negotiating with and/or confronting the powerful local elite. (As mentioned earlier in another context, about two-thirds of the CSOs that the PACS Programme supports have backgrounds in welfare and service delivery approaches and limited experience of working with rights-based approaches.) In instances where CSOs have made an effort in this direction- for example,

ABSSS has sought to lobby at the district-level for better implementation of schemes and NEED has approached trade unions- they admit lack of relevant skills and expertise and seek capacity building support.

Clearly, this is a vexed issue, particularly since CSOs are increasingly realising the need for working at the State level to seek solutions to issues they are confronted with locally. Thus, for example, CSOs in MP have suggested the need for engagement at the State-level on a range of issues such as land rights and transparency in (local) government (AARAMBH), allowing differently-abled children from non-ST households accommodation in school hostels for STs (CAN), financing of income generation efforts (GVM), etc (DIIS, 2006). A similar need is observed among communities in Maharashtra where even well-mobilised CBOs have not been able to pressure changes locally due to larger constraints that GP, block and district-level stakeholders have cited.

Notably, the discussion around the issue of State and policy-level engagement is more mature in Maharashtra. While some PST members in the State have maintained that such engagement is not really a mandate of the PACS Programme, others appear to subscribe to the idea of ‘people-centred advocacy.’ Though an unexceptionable idea, the experience of Sahayog Nirmitee illustrates the limits of such advocacy.

In the drought of 2005, Sahayog Nirmitee and its partners carried out a number of training programmes on the Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS) procedures like how to apply for work, what types of work could be taken up under the EGS and how work is measured. It submitted the EGS work demand forms from 53 villages of Tuljapur and Ausa talukas. In many of these villages, every household applied for work. An agitation was organised for issuance of receipts against EGS work applications but despite this EGS works were started only in 23 of the 53 villages that applied. When Sahayog Nirmitee organised protests, the bureaucracy interrupted the works leading to greater hardship for those who had not migrated and had chosen to work at the EGS sites. Sahayog Nirmitee then organised two *rasta rokos* (road blockades) under the aegis of the Maharashtra Drought Forum. Detailed village data collected by the CSO and certified by GPs convinced the District Collector, who ordered a detailed enquiry. Sahayog Nirmitee’s efforts on EGS have been remarkably successful to the extent that women were mobilised and took the lead in the agitations. Information combined with collective action yielded results in many cases, for example, for correct measurement of work and rightful wages. Many of the agitations did not, however, yield results. For example, the women of village Killaj had to wait nearly an year before the 15 days wages due to them were paid. This is less a limitation of Sahayog Nirmitee’s work and more due to the heavy odds against it.

*Source:* TARU Primary Study, 2006.

**HRM issues within CSOs:** These relate to emoluments of field personnel and issues and concerns of female CSO personnel. Emoluments of field personnel may be below the stipulated minimum wage in certain projects and while this can be ‘explained’ as ‘honoraria’ and relating to ‘part-time’ work, it is inconsistent with the PACS Programme’s values and could be an embarrassment for the Programme, if challenged. It is understood that the MC is seized of the matter. Proposals to address the issue need tracking.

At a workshop on ‘Women Employees Working in PACS CSOS: Opportunities and Challenges’ (March 2006) and, later, at the Sixth PLW in MP, issues and concerns of female CSO personnel were discussed and principles/ measures/ action points such as avoiding ‘personal questions targeted to female candidates only’ during job interviews, assessing the division of labour between men and women employees on the principle of work-life balance, ensuring ‘greater representation of women in organisational decision-making pertaining to

planning and implementation schedules,' developing plans and policies for 'equal access and comfort to the male and female employees,' stating 'specific facilities to be provided to women employees... in the administrative manual so that these appear as entitlements,' assuming responsibility for the security of female employees and identifying specific steps relating to this in organisational rules and terms of employment, adopting the Vishakha guidelines and constituting organisational committees to address issues of sexual harassment at the work place, developing robust assessment systems and gender training for all employees, agreed. These hint at significant HRM issues within CSOs that need to be taken forward.

## 5.2 The Import of Emergent Issues

It follows from the above that:

**Most projects have focused at the village-level and there is little evidence of systematic, sustained engagement at the State and policy level** (as opposed to events that draw participation from policy makers and State-level stakeholders) without which larger conditions that contribute to poverty can be addressed only in a limited manner. This could owe to the limitations of a demand-side approach where- by design (given the demand-orientation of the PACS Programme)- systematic engagement with the government (at various levels) and/ or public service providers/ institutions, was not envisaged.

In addition to this, the limited engagement at the State and policy-level could also owe to the character and orientation of PACS Programme partners, limitations of skill and capacity, issues around the appropriateness of bilateral support for certain activities in the policy advocacy domain and the limited participation of 'non-NGO' CSOs in the PACS Programme. The latter has been traced to a variety of reasons, principally the lack of FCRA registration (another limitation of bilateral support that has been worked around through arrangements such as network projects). This is not to suggest that the potential does not exist- it is amply demonstrated in the themes selected and achievements cited of the BPSA and the Maharashtra Drought Forum- but to underline that a largely demand-side approach has its limitations (especially in environments where 'supply-side' responsiveness is not always assured).

**Even at the village-level, the 'spread' is thin.** Though the number of villages reached (about 15,300) is impressive, they constitute only about 5 percent of all villages within the districts reached. If only the 7,000-odd intensively covered villages are considered, the proportion of villages reached (within districts reached) could be as low as 2 percent.

**These essentially point to the significant challenges ahead.** With limited engagement at the State and policy level and with wider civil society and focus on village-level projects with varied interpretations of empowerment and entitlement (arising from limitations of capacity and perspective) and inadequate projects designs, it is difficult to claim that the PACS Programme has led to a situation where the poor are empowered to realise their entitlements effectively and sustainably and where effective civil society partnerships have been enabled (with even the experience of 'internal' partnerships through network projects being mixed). This is not to deny the impressive change catalysed by the PACS Programme in select locations and the opportunity it has afforded to CSOs to consolidate their work and strengthen their management systems but to emphasise the 'limits' of village-level projects and management system improvements in CSOs. *Importantly, the NAB and PSC, both*

*comprising individuals more than capable of steering the PACS Programme, have not always had the space to take a more considered view of it (as indicated in interactions with select NAB and PSC members).*

## **6. THE WAY FORWARD**

### **6.1 Near-term Agenda**

Encouragingly, the MC and the PSTs are seized of many of the emergent issues highlighted above and have been considering proposals to address the same. These include:

**Revisiting project designs in recognition of issues around the same:** This has already been undertaken in about half the projects- including about 40 percent of the projects in Bihar, about 60 percent of the projects in Jharkhand, about 80 percent of the projects in MP (and Chattisgarh), about 10 percent of the projects in Maharashtra and about 55 percent of the projects in UP (National Synthesis, Draft- 3, February 2006). Importantly, the MP State-level Synthesis has pointed to ‘indicators (that) are yet to make (project designs) result oriented’ despite project design changes and some CSOs might continue to ‘stick to the earlier version of ... (their)... projects and may not be keen about redefining outputs (Bhopal Rehabilitation, March 2005).’ This could have been the reason for some of these changes being time consuming but these are essential and need to be negotiated, for these, particularly outputs agreed, could have a bearing on future assessments. (This is discussed later in this section.) Moreover, accent needs to be placed on agreeing realistic (as opposed to over-ambitious or convenient-to-achieve ones) outputs.

**Capacity building:** In recognition of the limitations of capacity and perspective, the limitations observed in capacity building efforts so far and their bearing on the PACS Programme, formation of a Capacity Building Core Group (CBCG) has been discussed and issues around matching inputs to what CSOs ‘really require’ and ‘who needs what kind of capacity building inputs within each CSO (National Synthesis, Draft- 3, February 2006).’ This recognition needs to be followed up with training needs assessments at the CSO-level so that critical issues around relevance and participation are addressed. RO inputs and MEAL Reports can be drawn upon for the training needs assessment.

Further, the balance of training and capacity building events probably needs to be revisited to ensure that more of these occur at the regional/ project-level so that relevant participation is higher and CSO representatives working in specific areas have an opportunity to come together and discuss (common) issues confronting their respective projects. This is consistent with the emerging thinking on opting for a cluster-hub approach where lead CSOs ‘manage hubs in a resource center approach where pooling of resources are enabled and coordinated thematically and geographically (National Synthesis, Draft- 3, February 2006).’

The two issues around MEAL, of reporting quality and regular feedback to CSOs, also need to be addressed. It is understood that these are proposed through a second version of a Facilitator Manual for ROs (under development) and a RO refresher orientation (proposed) to address some of these issues.

**Strengthening State level and policy advocacy:** Some efforts have already been made in this direction (as mentioned above) and a range of stakeholders are sought to be involved through the SCGs and during various events. These provide a platform to build upon in an

area that needs attention. While fora such as the BPSA, the JSM and the Maharashtra Drought Forum need to be encouraged, a space needs to be searched for others to ensure that policies not consistent with to the interests of the poor are identified and pursued. This is likely to be challenging given the constraints of bilateral support, the character and orientation of the PACS Programme CSOs and their skill and capacity limitations. However, the experience of the BPSA and the Maharashtra Drought Forum suggests that despite these limitations, there can be opportunities to engage with State-level policy issues.

Efforts in this direction should ideally begin with identification of issues that need to be pursued at the State-level in a forum like the PLW (so that issues pursued are consistent with ongoing CSO work), an assessment of these issues for their appropriateness for bilateral support and the likely coalitions of civil society (including academic and research institutions at the State and national-level and the PACS Programme-supported CSOs) that would be most appropriate to take forward the agreed agenda. Livelihoods, a theme which the PACS Programme partners have shown much interest in and done initial work around, could be one area where carefully-identified issues could be pursued at the State-level. Parallel efforts, as have been envisaged by the MC and various PSTs, for building CSO capacities in the area of policy advocacy will provide the added edge to these efforts.

**Greater role for the NAB and PSC:** As mentioned above, select NAB and PSC members met have expressed the view that they need greater space (time and independent feedback) for taking a more considered view on emergent issues. Given the composition of the NAB and the PSC it is likely that many of the emergent issues may have been assessed at earlier stages, had independent and regular feedback on the working of the PACS Programme, and time to discuss the same, been available.

**A case has been made for greater DFID involvement.** NAB and PSC Members and ROs and CSOs recall close DFID involvement in the PACS Programme initially and observe that, over time, DFID has chosen to maintain a ‘distance.’ While this is appreciated by the MC for the operational latitude it provides, the others have made a case for greater DFID involvement to ensure that strategic issues such as the ones described above receive early attention and issues among PACS Programme partners are acted upon more fairly. Such DFID involvement has been suggested, besides the NAB and the PSC, in the various PSTs.

**On future assessments:** The range of themes, activities, partners and contexts (which can vary at the village, let alone regional or State-level) with which the PACS Programme engages implies that future impact assessments cannot be envisaged as conventional impact assessments but as exercises that will draw upon multiple sources. These include:

- Various National and State-level Syntheses which take stock of the developments within the PACS Programme and draw on CSO-level data to identify issues impinging on the PACS Programme performance (the PST-level assessments such as those initiated in Bihar and Jharkhand, if taken forward in other States, would be valuable)
- End-of-project evaluations of completed projects which systematically assess what projects have achieved on outputs agreed during project design revisions (and hence, the importance of well-defined, realistic outputs)- these should ideally be done independently and not through ROs or other CSOs because of potential conflict of interest issues

- MEAL Reports from projects which will enable a better appreciation of the project inputs, processes and outputs *within the specific project context and design*

Given that many of these sources, such as the National and State-level Syntheses and MEAL Reports, are essentially self-assessments, it would be important for future impact assessments to include a component of primary study where reflections in the National and State-level Syntheses and MEAL Reports are verified on ground.

Note that this is different from conventional impact assessments that draw on a sample of representative projects, secondary data and stakeholder perceptions of changes. These have their own limitations of representativeness of project selection and biased stakeholder perceptions. On the other hand, with the PACS Programme, having moved ahead with practices such as National and State-level Syntheses, end-of-project evaluations and MEAL, it is only appropriate that future assessment draw on these.

## **6.2 Beyond the PACS Programme Horizon (2008)- Suggestions**

That the PACS Programme agenda of empowering the poor to realise their entitlements and strengthening civil society is relevant is beyond doubt. However, the discussion on the future beyond the envisaged PACS Programme horizon needs to consider the following:

- Bilateral support, as mentioned earlier, has its limitations precluding support to certain formations, approaches and issues. Cross-country studies have pointed to challenges for DFID in engaging with CSOs with ‘some CSOs... keen to maintain their independence from the State and donors;’ and, ‘host country governments... (being)... reluctant to allow funding in sensitive areas (National Accounts Office, Government of UK, 2006).’ The PACS Programme may have been constrained in working with a larger variety of organisations, given the need to work with organisations registered under the FCRA, and on certain themes, particularly those related to policy advocacy and social cohesion, given the likelihood of these being considered inappropriate for bilateral support.
- The PACS Programme was envisaged primarily for States where DFID was not engaged with the State Government (the non-DFID Focus States, where DFID working with the State Governments was not a ‘realistic option’- DFID, 1999) and where there was a case for working given high poverty levels. The PACS Programme design envisaged that ‘support under the PACS (Programme) may be replaced over time by government-to-government approaches (DFID, 1999).’

**In view of the above and in line with the findings from this Impact Assessment, the following suggestions emerge for consideration for the future beyond 2008:**

- **There is a need to continue DFID engagement in the PACS Programme States,** particularly Bihar, Jharkhand and UP. The case for this emerges primarily from the high poverty in these States, DFID’s commitment to poverty reduction in India and the implications of poverty in these States for achievement of India’s MDGs. In case, further prioritisation is required within the States of Bihar, Jharkhand and UP, a stronger case for engagement emerges in the case of Bihar and UP on account of the large numbers of the poor in these States (over 100 million as per projections for 2006-07). MP, it is noted is already a DFID Focus State, and Maharashtra, despite its significant regional inequities,

is relatively better off and will occupy lower priority among the PACS Programme States when rated along most developmental parameters.

- **It might be appropriate to consider government-to-government approaches given the limitations of demand-side approaches.** The PACS Programme, as mentioned above, was initiated in the non-DFID Focus States, where DFID working with the State Governments was not a ‘realistic option’ (DFID, 1999) and where there was a case for working given high poverty levels. Further, the experience of the PACS Programme suggests that a demand-oriented approach has its limitations in environments where the responsiveness of governments (at all levels) and public service providers/ institutions need improvement- bringing sharply to focus, the need to engage in parallel, on the supply-side too. It is opportune then to assess whether the PACS Programme States now present realistic options for government-to-government approaches. The option of a government-to-government approaches being pursued in parallel with civil society engagement is also available though this will require a systematic assessment of the experience in Orissa- a DFID Focus State where a Civil Society Programme also runs.
- **Reaching the poorest may require a different approach.** This is an important lesson from the experience of the PACS Programme. The PACS Programme design did not distinguish between the poor and the poorest and did not envisage separate strategies for engaging with the poorest. NAB and PSC Members met during the course of the Impact Assessment have argued that engaging with the poorest might require a service delivery component that responds to their immediate and medium-term needs rather than an approach where potential benefits are non-tangible and likely to be long-term.
- **Thematic Areas are useful to specify but need to be supported by Position Papers to avoid ambiguity.** These have laid the broad agenda within which the PACS Programme efforts have been located. In the absence of such Thematic Areas, there was the likelihood of efforts being dissipated in various directions and themes. It is realised that the Thematic Areas often overlap in real-life situations and that there may be some ambiguity around how, for example, social cohesion or women’s empowerment is to be interpreted and pursued in a project frame. However, a set of Position Papers on Thematic Areas might serve to clarify issues around the latter.
- **A cap on resources intended for Self-help may be considered.** The discussion on Thematic Areas is also the appropriate place for discussing the Thematic Area of Self-help and issues around SHGs. SHGs presents a situation whereby they present an option for mobilising the poor, particularly women, in view of the quicker and more tangible benefits in terms of credit that they can offer but come with the risk of overwhelming the larger empowerment agenda given their significant (and at one level, legitimate) operational demands. It is perhaps in anticipation of this that the PACS Programme design envisaged support for self-help initiatives ‘where it is sustainable, complements the actions of governments and supports the thematic priorities’ and discussed the possibility of ‘a limit on the proportion of programme devoted to it to avoid it crowding out longer term empowerment initiatives.’ It might be appropriate to consider this option in the future.
- **The current institutional arrangement has several merits and may be continued.** The current arrangement ensures that a body of eminent persons guides the Programme (as the NAB) and selects projects (as the PSC) while a set of professionals manage the

Programme with support from State-level Resource Organisations. Such an arrangement has the potential to ensure that the Programme benefits, both at the strategic and operational level. However, the experience with the PACS Programme also suggests that for such an arrangement to achieve its potential: (a) the NAB and the PSC need greater space (time and independent feedback) for taking a more considered view on emergent issues; and, (b) contracting issues for Resource Organisations need to be resolved so that uncertainties are minimised. A competitive process for RO selection with a long-term contract (such as the one envisaged for the Management Consultants) might address the latter.

- **Choices are available with respect to projects and Programme location.** The experience of the PACS Programme suggests that:
  - **A balance of village and State-level projects would be more appropriate** so that not only are empowerment processes unleashed on the ground (as appears to be the case currently in select locations) but are also capitalised upon through systematic State-level engagement where larger constraints that impinge on realising entitlements are addressed.
  - **A balance of network and individual projects needs to be maintained and a choice need not be made exclusively in favour of either.** Some of the most significant benefits to smaller CSOs supported by the PACS Programme have been through network projects. There is case for encouraging such implementation arrangements (especially since these provide an opportunity to reach smaller CSOs who might not have FCRA registration) bearing in mind though that several network projects have not achieved desired objectives with concerns over the capacity building and other support provided by lead partners, opportunities for experience sharing and learning, coordination levels and limited project ownership among network partners.
  - **National or State-level Programme location needs further investigation.** A State-level location is perceived to have the advantages of proximity that will enable better hand-holding, responsiveness and communication flow from the Programme Managers. However, this will have to weigh the capacities available for Programme Management at the State-level and the risk of such an arrangement leading to certain networks (and these are strong in some States) dominating the agenda and affording fewer opportunities to others.

## ABBREVIATIONS

AARAMBH	Advocacy for Alternative Resources Action Mobilisation & Brotherhood
ABSSS	Akhil Bhartiya Samajik Sewa Sansthan
AMM	Ambava Mahila Mandal
ANWC	Asha Niketan Welfare Center
BDBGVS	Bhartiya Dnyanpith Bahuudeshiya Gramin Vikas Sanstha
BGVS	Bharat Gramodyog Vikas Samiti
BJSA	Bharatiya Jan Sewa Ashram
BPL	Below Poverty Line
BSS	Bundelkhand Sewa Sansthan
CAN	Concerned Action Now
CAP	Communication Advisory Panel
CARD	Center for Advanced Research and Development
CBIA	Community-based Impact Assessment
CBO	Community-based Organisation
CCDS	Chotanagpur Craft Development Society
CIG	Common Interest Group
CII	Confederation of Indian Industry
CM	Chief Minister
CMS	Catalyst Management Services
CPPI	CSO Project Performance Index
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DA	Development Alternatives
DFID	Department for International Development
DIIS	Desktop Interactive Information System
DSM	Dalit Sangharsh Morcha
FCRA	Foreign Contributions Regulation Act
GoI	Government of India
GENVP	Gramin Evam Nagar Vikas Parishad
GP	Gram Panchayat
GPC	Gandhi Peace Center
GPSVS	Ghoghardiha Prakhand Swarajya Vikas Sangh
GRASP	Grassroots Action for Social Participation
GS	Gram Sabha
GTI	Gender Training Institute
GVM	Grameen Vikas Mandal
HDR	Human Development Report
IDAS	Integrated Development Action for Solidarity
IDYWC	Institute for Development of Youth, Women and Child
IT	Information Technology
JPSS	Jan Priya Sewa Sansthan
JSM	Jharkhand Swashashan Manch
KMAGVS	Kalapandhari Magasvargiya and Adivasi Gramin Vikas Sanstha
KSA	Krishnarpit Sewa Ashram
KSS	Krishak Sahayog Sansthan
LJK	Lok Jagriti Kendra
LJSS	Lokpriya Jan Seva Sasthan
MC	Management Consultant
MCG	MEAL Core Group

MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MIS	Management Information System
MJM	Mahila Jagriti Manch
MP	Madhya Pradesh
MSP	Multi-state Project
MSS	Margdarhsak Sewa Sansthan
MSSM	Marathwada Sheti Sahayya Mandal
MVS	Mahila Vikas Samiti
NAB	National Advisory Board
NBJK	Nav Bharat Jagriti Kendra
NEED	Network of Entrepreneurship and Economic Development
NFHS	National Family Health Survey
NFI	National Foundation of India
NGO	Non-government Organisation
NREGS	National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
OBC	Other Backward Caste
OD	Organisational Development
ODSA	Organisational Development Self-assessment
PACS	Poorest Areas Civil Society (Programme)
PANI	Peoples Network for National Integration
PC	Planning Commission
PDS	Public Distribution System
PEO	Programme Evaluation Organisation
PEVAC	Pre-election Voter Awareness Campaign
PFI	Pathfinder International
PGSS	Purvanchal Gram Sewa Samiti
PL	(Jan) Pragati Luyadih
PLVDS	Paragi Lal Vidya Dham Samiti
PLW	Peer Learning Workshop
PRI	Panchayati Raj Institution
PSC	Project Selection Committee
PST	Programme Support Team
PwC	PricewaterhouseCoopers
RAISE	Research and Action Institute for Social Empowerment
RO	Resource Organisation
SBCA	State-based Communication Agency
SC	Scheduled Caste
SCG	State Core Group
SEDT	Socio Economic Development Trust
SEWA	Self Employed Women's Association
SHG	Self-help Group
SGSY	Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana
SGVK	Sampurna Gram Vikas Kendra
SIRDI	Satpura Integrated Rural Development Institution
SM	State Manager
SMC	State MEAL Coordinator
SMVS	Sankalp Manav Vikas Sanstha
SPAR	Society for Participatory Action and Reflection
SRUB	Society for Rural Upliftment, Betul

ST	Scheduled Tribe
ToR	Terms of Reference
TA	Thematic Area
TNA	Training Needs Assessment
UP	Uttar Pradesh
VHAI	Voluntary Health Association of India
VISKASAN	Vihar Samaj Kalyan Sansthan
VSS	Vikas Sahyog Sansthan

## ANNEX- I: THE PACS PROGRAMME- A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

The seven year (2001-08), DFID-supported PACS Programme was initiated with the intention to cover 108 of India's most poor districts in a largely contiguous area of Central and Eastern India. It aims to strengthen the capacities of the poor in these areas so that they can influence policy; advocate their rights; demand entitlements and services; overcome social and economic barriers; and, create opportunities for a better life for themselves. It seeks to achieve this by strengthening CSOs working with the poor.

### THE PACS PROGRAMME: GOAL, PURPOSE AND OUTPUTS ENVISAGED

**Goal:** Poor people in the most backward and poorest districts of India are empowered to realise their entitlements more effectively and in ways in which can be sustained

**Purpose:** CSOs in the most backward and poorest districts of India are more effective in helping poor people realise their entitlements

**Output 1:** Successful interventions promoting self-governance, women's empowerment, policy advocacy, social cohesion and self-help to meet basic needs

**Output 2:** Effective partnerships of civil society

**Output 3:** Lessons learnt and disseminated

*Source:* India: Poorest Areas Civil Society Programme, PRC Submission, DFID India, September 1999

The focus of the PACS Programme is on strengthening awareness and capabilities of the poor to demand better services and entitlements through an empowering rather than service delivery orientation. The objectives of the PACS Programme are to: (a) support the poor to help them access as well as demand their rights; (b) influence governments to adopt successful methods for reducing poverty; (c) making government at all levels more effective and accountable; and, (d) making society more responsive to the problems and aspirations of the poor (Second National Synthesis Report (Draft- 3), February 2006).

The PACS Programme currently supports 143 projects implemented by carefully selected CSOs. These projects are in five broad thematic areas: (a) local governance; (b) women's empowerment; (c) social cohesion; (d) policy advocacy; and, (e) self-help. These core themes are addressed through more than 75 generic activities broadly classified as awareness generation (through meetings, rallies and camps); communication (through wall paintings, posters, puppet shows and newsletters); CSO capacity building (through training programmes and exposure visits); advocacy (through public hearings, media exposure and protest); strengthening linkages with government departments and other agencies; and, monitoring and supporting smaller CSOs involved in the programme. Within the framework of its broad objectives, the Programme has created space for CSOs to work on critical areas such as land rights; flood preparedness; child rights; livelihood for the differently-abled; and, short and long-term drought management.

## CSO ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AND PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS

### CSO Eligibility and Selection Criteria

In the PACS Programme framework, the term 'CSO' includes: international, national and local non-government organisations (NGOs), trade unions, cooperatives, business and cultural groups, community organisations, farmers' associations and looser forms of associations such as movements.

To be eligible for support, a CSO needs to fulfil the following criteria: (a) registration under the Societies Registration Act, Trust Act, Cooperatives Act, Trade Unions Act, etc.; (b) registration under the Foreign Contributions Regulation Act (FCRA); (c) Registration under Section 12 A of the I-T Act; (d) established procedures, practices and systems for programme and financial management; (e) proven expertise in capacity building and grasp of the PACS Programme thematic areas; (f) track record of implementing poverty alleviation projects; (g) existing network and capability of building networks; and, (h) focus in identified districts.

CSOs that fulfil the above criteria can ally with other CSOs in the implementation of projects. For example, a large CSO working in several States or districts can ally with small CSOs working in particular geographical or thematic areas. (These are referred to as network projects.) In such networks, the lead CSO is fully accountable and responsible for the project. The PACS Programme managers deal only with the lead CSO.

### Project Selection Process

The project selection process has seven steps:

- **Outreach:** The PACS Programme Managers contact CSOs that can implement the Programme through outreach workshops and other efforts. Alternatively, interested CSOs contact the Programme Managers.
- **Submission of Concept Paper:** CSOs that meet the selection criteria submit a Concept Paper in a specified format for a project that could be considered for PACS Programme funding. Decisions (acceptance/rejection) on the Concept Paper are made within six months from the date of submission. If a CSO's Concept Paper is rejected, it can re-apply a year after receiving feedback.
- **Support for Making a Detailed Proposal:** If the Concept Paper is complete and acceptable, the CSO is provided guidelines for making a detailed proposal. If necessary, the CSO is given a planning grant not exceeding Rs. 200,000 to build its capacity to develop and formulate projects.
- **Submission of Detailed Proposal:** The CSO submits a detailed project proposal for appraisal. If necessary, the CSO is given a planning grant not exceeding Rs. 200,000 to fine tune its proposal. However, CSOs given planning grants are not assured of receiving funding under the PACS Programme.
- **Preliminary Appraisal:** Detailed project proposals are scrutinised. CSOs may be asked to review their proposals. Acceptable proposals are sent to the Project Selection Committee (PSC) for final appraisal.
- **Appraisal by the PSC:** Detailed project proposals are scrutinised by the PSC which may ask for revisions. The proposals are then accepted or rejected. CSOs whose proposals are rejected by the PSC cannot be considered for PACS Programme funding again.
- **Signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU):** The PACS Programme managers and the CSO whose proposal has been accepted sign a MoU for proper disbursement and use of funds.

*Source:* [www.empowerpoor.org](http://www.empowerpoor.org)

The Programme is managed by the MC- guided by a National Advisory Board (NAB) and a Project Selection Committee (PSC; which reviews proposals received for PACS Programme support) and supported by national and State-level Resource Organisations (ROs). The ROs support CSOs in project development, carry out supportive supervision, develop communication strategies, undertake process documentation, prepare strategy papers and

analyse CSO proposals. Further, an RO has been specifically identified to take forward the Information Technology (IT)-based monitoring, evaluation and learning system (MEAL) to improve programme efficiency and ensure reflection and knowledge and experience sharing.

### **PACS PROGRAMME: INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS**

#### **National-level**

- **National Advisory Board (NAB):** Guides the PACS Programme; represents a cross-section civil society, academia, the private sector and government
- **Project Selection Committee (PSC):** Reviews proposals from CSOs seeking PACS Programme support
- **Management Consultant (MC):** Responsible for overall management and implementation
- **MEAL Core Group (MCG):** Responsible for devising MEAL policies and procedures and National and State-level synthesis; comprises representatives from the MC, State Managers (SM), ROs and State MEAL Coordinators (SMC)
- **Communication Advisory Panel (CAP):** Renders advice on strategic communication issues

#### **State-level**

- **State Core Group (SCG):** State-specific advisory group that governs the PACS Programme at the State-level
- **State Managers (SM):** Responsible for overall management of the PACS Programme at State-level; from the MC
- **State MEAL Coordinator (SMC):** Responsible for managing the State Office of the PACS Programme and facilitating MEAL implementation in the State
- **Resource Organisations (RO):** Provide management and programme support to CSOs to enable them to enhance their capacities and achieve their outcomes; also monitor CSO progress
- **Programme Support Team (PST):** A team of ROs, SM and SMC together implementing and managing the State Programme and MEAL
- **State Based Communication Agency (SCBA):** Engaged with the purpose of facilitating learning and its dissemination

#### **Local-level**

- **CSOs:** Includes NGOs and CBOs who implement the PACS Programme projects

*Source:* Second National Synthesis Report (Draft- 3), February 2006

DFID funding for the Programme includes GBP 20.5 million of Project Grants and GBP 4.5 million of Planning Grants. The Project Grants support CSO projects while the Planning Grants are aimed at strengthening CSOs for better implementation through communication, capacity building and MEAL. Project Grants are for various types of projects: (a) Category A Projects (more than Rs. 15 million) are run by regional and State-level CSOs with large networks; (b) Category B (between Rs. 5-15 million) and C (between Rs. 2-5 million) projects are run by CSOs with district-level networks and/ or good grassroots presence; and, (c) Category D (less than Rs. 2 million) projects are run by small grassroots-level CSOs.

## **ANNEX- II: IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE PACS PROGRAMME- BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES**

As the PACS Programme completes five years, it is considered opportune to evaluate signs of its impact and effectiveness in empowering the poor and recommend mid-course corrections. In brief, the specific objectives and tasks to undertaken as part of the Impact Assessment are:

### *Benchmark Project Information*

- Develop a baseline on project coverage and reach
- Describe primary stakeholders based on operational definition used
- Analyse socio-political institutional climate in project areas in study States

### *Assess Programme Impact on Institutional Status, Strength and Performance of CSOs*

- CSO capacity to undertake long duration projects and leverage greater accountability
- CSO capacity to internalise OD process and monitoring & learning mechanisms
- CSO capacity to establish, sustain CBO networks in clusters; analyse cluster approach-success, constraints
- Assess fulfilment of capacity building needs of frontline staff and limitations thereof
- Difference in approach between CSOs that existed before PACS and those specifically floated by PACS
- Analyse effectiveness of CSO spend in consonance with output delivery and outcome
- Assess specific initiatives that can be scaled up; suggest opportunities where PACS support may be drawn
- Assess impact of other government /CSO-supported initiatives on the poor in study States

### *Assess Programme Impact on Government Programmes at State/ District/Local PRI Level*

- Analyse institutional provisions such as GSs, parallel committees, social audit etc.
- Assess accountability and responsiveness of public institutions to needs of local people
- Assess effectiveness in improving quality of life of people

### *Assess Overall Programme Impact*

- Analyse overall quality and reach
- Assess whether CSOs are partners in progress or new patrons
- Assess effectiveness in addressing gender and social exclusion
- Analyse MEAL in the development and use of new tools such as output tracking
- Lessons from State & national-level consultations; analyse effectiveness in lobbying, forming alliances
- Comment on ability to raise profile of poorest districts, getting poverty issues focussed in public fora
- Identify unintended impacts, both positive and negative

### *Assess Achievement of Empowerment Indicators*

- Highlight success (or failure) stories of poor realising entitlements and attribute factors to the same
- Assess extent of people's participation and contribution in processes and activities
- Articulation of individual and community interests and perception of poor towards change in their status

### ANNEX- III: PROFILE OF STUDY PROJECTS

CSO	District	Category	Implementation Arrangement	Thematic Area (TA)*	Stage of Implementation
<b>Bihar</b>					
GENVP	Nalanda	C	Individual	LSG, PA, WE	Extended
GPSVS	Madhubani	B	Network	LSG, SC, WE	Withdrawal
MVS	Nawada	D	Individual	LSG, SC, WE	Extended
NIDAN	Vaishali, Muzzafarpur	B	Network	PA, SHI, WE	Withdrawal
<b>Jharkhand</b>					
LJK	Deogarh, Giridih	B	Network	All but PA	Extended
PL	Saraikele	D	Individual	LSG, SHI, WE	Withdrawal
SPAR	Ranchi, Hazaribagh	B	Network	All	Extended
Shramjeevi Unnayan	West Singhbhum	A (MSP)	Network	All	Withdrawal
<b>MP</b>					
AARAMBH	Raisen	C	Individual	All but PA	Consolidation
IDYWC	Chhindwara	C	Individual	All	Extended
<b>Maharashtra</b>					
Asmita	Yavatmal	D	Individual	LSG, SHI, WE	Withdrawal
MSSM	Aurangabad, Jalna	B	Individual	LSG	Extended
Sahayog Nirmitee	Latur, Osmanabad	C	Network	LSG, WE	Withdrawal
<b>UP</b>					
ABSSS	Chitrakoot	A	Network	All but SHI	Withdrawal
JPSS	Pratapgarh	B	Network	LSG	Extended
NEED	Sitapur	C	Individual	WE	Withdrawal

## **ANNEX- IV: THE PACS PROGRAMME-PROGRESS AND STATUS**

*(This draws significantly from the Second National Synthesis Report (Draft- 3), February 2006. All data, issues and quotes are drawn from this source unless reported otherwise.)*

### **THREE PHASES OF IMPLEMENTATION**

The PACS Programme has been implemented in three phases:

**Phase I (2002-03): Intervention Planning and Start-up** which focused on:

- Establishing systems and structures within the MC
- Grounding the PACS Programme and starting interventions with various thematic foci

**Phase II (2004-05): Sound Interventions** which focused on:

- Adding livelihood and disability dimensions to the thematic foci
- Capacity building for CSOs and CBOs
- Introduction of MEAL as a tool for reflection and learning

**Phase III (2005-07): Managing for Better Impact** which focuses on:

- Strengthening leveraging, convergence and partnerships at local, State and national levels
- Cluster hubs
- Advocacy and communication

It emerges from that above that while the initial years were spent on setting up systems and processes, more recent efforts have concentrated on enhancing the developmental impacts and outcomes of various interventions within the framework in place.

### **GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE**

Key geographical coverage related data is presented in Table (IV.1). The following are of special note:

**The PACS Programme reaches 85 of the 108 districts (about 80 percent) it intended to.** The number of districts where the PACS Programme reaches is highest in Bihar and UP (21 and 20 districts, respectively), slightly lower in MP (and Chattisgarh) and Jharkhand (17 and 18 districts, respectively) and lowest in Maharashtra (9 districts).

**Reach to districts is lesser than envisaged primarily on account of the status in Bihar and MP (and Chattisgarh).** This is not considered a cause for concern and is traced mainly to the lack of sound proposals from credible CSOs (despite the MC's extra outreach efforts).

**The PACS Programme reaches 435 of the 1,125 blocks (about 40 percent) in the 85 districts it extends to.** Of the 435 blocks where the PACS Programme extends to, the largest number is in Bihar and UP (over 100 blocks each), followed by Jharkhand (89 blocks) and Madhya Pradesh (and Chattisgarh) and Maharashtra (around 70 blocks, respectively). The proportion of blocks covered within the districts where the PACS Programme reaches, ranges from about 45-65 percent in most States, barring Bihar where it is about 20 percent.

**TABLE (IV.1): PACS PROGRAMME- GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE AND REACH**

Item	States*					Total
	BH	JH	MP	MH	UP	
Total no. of districts within State	37	22	62	35	70	226
No. of districts originally identified for PACS Programme	34	19	24	11	20	108
No. of districts to which the PACS Programme reaches	21	18	17	9	20	85
No. of districts originally identified to which the PACS Programme has not reached	13	1	7	2	-	23
Total no. of blocks in districts to which the PACS Programme reaches	507	140	128	118	232	1,125
No. of blocks to which the PACS Programme reaches	106	89	66	69	105	435
Proportion of blocks to which the PACS Programme reaches within the districts reached	21%	64%	52%	58%	45%	39%
State share in the total no. of blocks to which the PACS Programme reaches	24%	20%	15%	16%	24%	100%
Total no. of villages in blocks to which the PACS Programme reaches ( <i>in 000s; rounded off</i> )	45.1	29.4	21.9	11.0	25.7	133.1
No. of villages to which the PACS Programme reaches ( <i>in 000s; rounded off</i> )	2.3	4.6	3.6	1.9	2.9	15.3
Proportion of villages to which the PACS Programme reaches within the blocks reached	5%	16%	17%	17%	11%	12%
State share in the total no. of villages to which the PACS Programme reaches	15%	30%	24%	12%	19%	100%
Average no. of villages reached per district to which the PACS Programme reaches	111	258	213	207	143	180
Proportion of villages to which the PACS Programme reaches within the districts reached ( <i>assuming equal distribution of villages across blocks</i> )	1%	10%	9%	10%	5%	4%

Note: BH= Bihar; JH= Jharkhand; MP= MP (and Chattisgarh); MH= Maharashtra

Source: Second National Synthesis Report (Draft- 3), February 2006

**The PACS Programme reaches more than 15,000 villages within the 435 blocks (about 12 percent) in the 85 districts it extends to.** Of the more than 15,000 villages the PACS Programme extends to, the largest number is in Jharkhand (about 4,600 villages) and the lowest in Maharashtra (about 1,800 villages). The number of villages the PACS Programme extends to ranges from 2,300-3,600 in the other States. The proportion of villages covered

within the blocks where the PACS Programme reaches, ranges from about 16-17 percent in most States, barring Bihar and UP where it is about 5 percent and 11 percent, respectively. *Importantly, 'not all villages where work happens have received equal intensive focus' and 'some experiential estimate(s) suggest that only about 40-50 percent (of the) villages are receiving intensive interventions.'* This, in turn, *'reduces the reach of (the) PACS Programme' as locations 'where interventions have been minimal cannot be considered as actual reach to the poor' and 'better reach to (the) poor... and... better results in improving their quality of life are expected in about 7,000 villages.'*

**The PACS Programme reaches about 5 percent of the villages in the districts reached by the PACS Programme** (assuming equal distribution of villages across blocks). This proportion is particularly low in Bihar (about 1 percent) and ranges from 5-10 percent in the other States.

**The number of villages reached is highest in Jharkhand and MP (and Chattisgarh).** Jharkhand accounts for nearly 30 percent of the total villages to which the PACS Programme reaches. The average number of villages reached per district in Jharkhand (258) is also the highest. MP (and Chattisgarh) account for about a fourth of the total villages to which the PACS Programme reaches. The average number of villages reached per district in MP (and Chattisgarh) (213) is also significant. Thus, between them, Jharkhand and MP (and Chattisgarh) account for about 55 percent of the total villages the PACS Programme reaches. In contrast, Bihar, Maharashtra and UP, account for 12-20 percent of the total villages to which the PACS Programme reaches with the average number of villages reached per district in these States ranging from 110-200.

## **PROJECT COVERAGE**

Key project coverage related data is presented in Table (IV.2). The following are of note:

**The PACS Programme works through 143 projects with the largest number in UP and Bihar.** UP has the largest number of project (43 projects) followed by Bihar (32 projects). Jharkhand, MP (and Chattisgarh) and Maharashtra account for about 20-25 projects each.

**The average number of villages reached per project is over 100; the figure is highest in Jharkhand and MP (and Chattisgarh).** The average number of villages reached per project is about 107. It is highest in Jharkhand and MP (and Chattisgarh)- about 185-190 villages reached per project. In contrast, the number of villages reached per project ranges from 65-85 in the other States.

**The 143 projects are undertaken through 474 CSOs- an average of about 3 CSOs per project.** However, Maharashtra has an average of about 6 CSOs per project compared to other States (where the average number of CSOs per project is 3-4).

**Network projects account for nearly half the projects; the proportion of network projects is highest in Jharkhand.** While about two-thirds of the projects in Jharkhand are network projects, the proportion of such projects is lower in other States.

<b>TABLE (IV.2): PACS PROGRAMME- PROJECT COVERAGE AND REACH</b>						
Item	States*					Total
	BH	JH	MP	MH	UP	
No. of villages to which the PACS Programme reaches ( <i>in 000s; rounded off</i> )	2.3	4.6	3.6	1.9	2.9	15.3
Total no. of projects	32	25	19	22	45	143
State share in total no. of projects	22%	17%	13%	15%	31%	100%
Average no. of villages reached per project	73	185	191	85	64	107
No. of CSOs engaged in projects	84	94	47	137	112	474
State share in total no. of CSOs engaged in projects	18%	20%	10%	29%	24%	100%
Average no. of CSOs per project	3	4	3	6	3	3
No. of network projects	16	17	7	8	20	68
Proportion of network projects	50%	68%	37%	36%	44%	48%
State share in total no. of network projects	24%	25%	10%	12%	29%	100%
No. of projects in advanced stages of implementation (as defined above)	16	16	8	13	14	67
Proportion of projects in advanced stages of implementation within the State	50%	64%	42%	59%	31%	47%
State share in total no. of projects in advanced stages of implementation	24%	24%	12%	19%	21%	100%
No. of small (Category C & D) projects	21	13	9	14	24	81
Proportion of small (Category C & D) projects within the State	66%	52%	47%	64%	53%	57%
Note: BH= Bihar; JH= Jharkhand; MP= MP (and Chattisgarh); MH= Maharashtra						
<i>Source:</i> Second National Synthesis Report (Draft- 3), February 2006						

**About half the projects are in advanced stages of implementation<sup>9</sup>; Bihar and Jharkhand have the highest number of such projects. Of the 67 projects in advanced**

<sup>9</sup> Advanced stage of implementation refers to projects reported to be in the consolidation (where projects have been ongoing for about 50-75 percent of their estimated time frame) and withdrawal stages where projects have been ongoing for more than 75 percent of their estimated time frame). Other stages are the initiation (where projects have been ongoing for less than 20 percent of their estimated timeframe) and establishment where projects have been ongoing for about 20-50 percent of their estimated time frame).

stages of implementation, the largest numbers are in Bihar and Jharkhand (16 projects each), followed by UP (14 projects), Maharashtra (13 projects) and MP (and Chattisgarh) (8 projects). The significant proportion of projects in advanced stages of implementation offers ‘opportunities for gain consolidation and possibility of extension in new thematic and geographical areas.’ On the other hand, the projects in the early stages offer ‘windows of opportunities... for improving project performance based on experience and learning available till date.’

**About 57 percent of the projects are smaller (Category C and D) projects.** The proportion of smaller projects is around 50 percent or more in all the States. Further, with about 60 percent of the Category A & B projects being network projects, this suggests that a large proportion of PACS Programme projects are being carried out by small and medium-sized CSOs. This is corroborated by the fact that of the 474 CSOs associated with the PACS Programme, at least are ‘small’ organisations, 100 are ‘medium-size’ organisations and 74 are large organisations.

## **CBO COVERAGE**

Key CBO coverage related data is presented in Table (IV.3). The following are of note:

**The PACS Programme works through a range of CBOs.** These include women’s self-help groups (SHGs), men’s SHGs, mixed SHGs, village-level groups and federations/ apex bodies. About 60 percent of these CBOs were already existing while others have been specifically facilitated by PACS Programme partners.

**The PACS Programme works with about 17,500 CBOs with a total CBO membership of about 211,000.** The average membership per CBO ranges from 11-13 in various States. The average number of CBOs per village reached is about 1-2 across various States and the average CBO membership per village reached ranges from 10-18.

**The largest number of CBOs and CBO members are in Jharkhand and UP.** These States, with about 5,000 and 4,000 CBOs and 59,000 and 49,000 CBO members respectively, account for over 50 percent of the CBOs and CBO members. In other States, the number of CBOs ranges from about 2,300-2,900 and the CBO membership from 32-38,000.

**The average number of CBOs per project is around 125 and the average number of CBO members per project 1,500; the average number of CBOs and CBO members per project is highest in Jharkhand and MP (and Chattisgarh).** In Jharkhand and MP (and Chattisgarh), the average number of CBOs per project is around 150 or more and the average CBO membership per project is around 2,000 or more. In contrast, the average number of CBOs and CBO members per project ranges from 75-135 and 1,000-1500, respectively, in the other States.

**The average number of CBOs per CSO is around 37 and the average number of CBO members per CSO is about 450; the average number of CBOs and CBO members per CSO is also highest in Jharkhand and MP (and Chattisgarh).** In these States, the average number of CBOs per CSO exceeds 50 and the average CBO membership per CSO exceeds 600. In contrast, the average number of CBOs and CBO members per CSO ranges from 20-40 and 250-450, respectively, in the other States.

<b>TABLE (IV.3): PACS PROGRAMME- CBO COVERAGE AND MEMBERSHIP</b>						
Item	States*					Total
	BH	JH	MP	MH	UP	
No. of villages to which the PACS Programme reaches ( <i>in 000s; rounded off</i> )	2.3	4.6	3.6	1.9	2.9	15.3
Total no. of projects	32	25	19	22	45	143
No. of CSOs engaged in projects	84	94	47	137	112	474
Total no. of CBOs ( <i>in 000s; rounded off</i> )	2.4	5.0	2.8	2.9	4.4	17.5
State share in total no. of CBOs	13%	29%	16%	17%	24%	100%
Average no. CBOs per project	74	201	149	134	99	123
Average no. of CBOs per CSO	28	53	60	21	40	37
Total no. of CBO members ( <i>in 000s; rounded off</i> )	31.6	59.2	37.7	33.4	49.1	221.0
State share in total no. CBO members	15%	28%	18%	16%	23%	100%
Average no. of CBO members per project	987	2,367	1,986	1,520	1,090	1,476
Average no. of CBO members per CSO	376	629	803	244	438	445
No. of women's SHGs	2.0	3.0	1.4	1.9	2.7	11.1
State share in total no. of women's SHGs	18%	27%	13%	17%	24%	100%
Proportion of women's SHGs among the total no. of CBOs	87%	60%	50%	65%	61%	63%
Note: BH= Bihar; JH= Jharkhand; MP= MP (and Chattisgarh); MH= Maharashtra						
<i>Source: Second National Synthesis Report (Draft- 3), February 2006</i>						

**Women's SHGs account for over 60 percent of the CBOs.** The proportion of women's SHGs ranges from 50 percent in MP (and Chattisgarh) to about 87 percent in Bihar. Jharkhand and UP, with about 3,000 and 2,700 women's SHGs, account for nearly half the women's SHGs. The number of women's SHGs in other States ranges from about 1,400-2,000.

## CSO STAFFING

Key CSO staffing related data is presented in Table (IV.4). The following are of special note:

**About 2,700 personnel work on PACS Programme projects- an average of about 20 personnel per project and 6 personnel per CSO.** The average number of personnel per project is highest in Jharkhand and MP (and Chattisgarh)- about 25- and lowest in Bihar (12). The average number of personnel per CSO is 10 in MP (and Chattisgarh), 7 in Jharkhand and UP and 3-4 in Bihar and MP (and Chattisgarh).

<b>TABLE (IV.4): PACS PROGRAMME- CSO STAFFING</b>						
Item	States*					Total
	BH	JH	MP	MH	UP	
No. of villages to which the PACS Programme reaches ( <i>in 000s; rounded off</i> )	2.3	4.6	3.6	1.9	2.9	15.3
Total no. of projects	32	25	19	22	45	143
No. of CSOs engaged in projects	84	94	47	137	112	474
Total no. of CBOs ( <i>in 000s; rounded off</i> )	2.4	5.0	2.8	2.9	4.4	17.5
Total no. of CBO members ( <i>in 000s; rounded off</i> )	31.6	59.2	37.7	33.4	49.1	221.0
Total staff working on PACS Programme projects	374	622	459	423	818	2,696
Average no. of staff per project	12	25	24	19	18	19
Average no. of staff per CSO	4	7	10	3	7	6
Average no. of villages covered per staff member	6	7	8	4	3	6
Average no. of CBOs covered per staff member	7	8	8	5	4	6
Average no. of CBO members covered per staff member	84	95	82	79	60	78
No. of women staff working on PACS Programme projects	169	195	85	135	343	927
Proportion of women staff working on PACS Programme projects	45%	31%	19%	32%	42%	34%
No. of women staff at field level	151	177		107	294	729
Proportion of women staff at field level of total women staff	89%	91%		79%	86%	79%
Note: BH= Bihar; JH= Jharkhand; MP= MP (and Chattisgarh); MH= Maharashtra						
<i>Source: Second National Synthesis Report (Draft- 3), February 2006</i>						

**At an average, an individual ‘covers’ 6 villages and CBOs and about 80 CBO members.** The average number of villages and CBOs covered per staff ranges from 3-8 across various States (lower in UP compared to other States). The average number of CBO members covered per staff ranges from 60 in UP to about 80 in Bihar, MP (and Chattisgarh) and Maharashtra and is as high as 95 in Jharkhand.

**About a third of the personnel working on PACS Programme projects are women; about 80 percent of them work at the field level.** Barring MP (and Chattisgarh) where the proportion of female personnel working on PACS Programme projects is about 20 percent, the proportion of female personnel working on PACS Programme projects ranges from 30-45 percent in the other States. Most female personnel engaged on PACS Programme projects are at the field level- their proportion ranges from 80-90 percent across the States. Only about 10 percent of the female personnel are in the middle and top management- the largest proportion of such personnel is in Maharashtra (about 20 percent), the lowest in Jharkhand (about 4 percent).

## **MEAL IMPLEMENTATION**

Anchored by Catalyst Management Services (CMS), MEAL implementation has been proposed in two phases:

- **Phase I: Input Activity, Process and Output Monitoring Systems (IAPO):** Phase I has been completed in about three-fourths of the CSOs, with most of the CSOs that have not been covered being those awarded projects in recent months. The Phase I MEAL implementation have been completed for all the CSOs in Maharashtra, about 80 percent of those in Jharkhand and MP (and Chattisgarh) and 60 percent of those in Bihar and UP. The slow progress in Bihar has been traced largely to the high turnover of ROs in the State and that in UP to the large number of recently awarded projects.
- **Phase II: Community-based Impact Assessment (CBIA) and Organisational Development Self-assessment (ODSA):** Progress vis-à-vis this has been slow, including the workload and capacities of ROs and the belief that CSOs ‘should not be overloaded with a variety of new tools at once.’ CBIA has been initiated in 25 projects in Jharkhand and Maharashtra and ODSA piloted among 7 CSOs. Concerns over the approach to OD, resource constraints and RO capacities, which, in turn, led to the realisation that ODSA ‘in isolation would be detrimental’, followed by significant internal discussion and debate, have now led to the decision that ODSA will be implemented only in 25 CSOs.

**At the CSO-level,** MEAL is reported to have ‘provided an opportunity for CSOs... to reflect in depth on various project issues’ and the process of MEAL facilitation (over October 2004-June 2005, 128 MEAL workshops were conducted for 104 projects to ‘orient, build capacities and customise systems’) across CSOs is said to have led to ‘capacity building of the project teams on project design and strategies, refinement and concretisation of the project design, framing of guidelines for tracking quality of processes, streamlining of internal Management Information Systems (MIS) of the projects, reflection on project outputs, etc.’

Some of the key illustrations of the culture of self-assessment that MEAL and other OD processes could have encouraged include:

- Identification of five key processes and 15 indicators for quality of process by CSOs (this has the acknowledged limitation of over-statement but RO reports and data for 26 projects suggest that over-statement has been an exception)
- A CBO grading technique developed by the Bihar PST
- A self-evaluation undertaken by the Jharkhand PST based on a set of 10 parameters for the entire State Programme and a set of six parameters for its role and achievements
- An analysis of CSO Project performance based on CSO Project Performance Index (CPPI) by the UP PST

However, it is realised that ‘much more needs to be done to improve the quality and spirit of the implementation, more so as the system is focused on reflection and self-analysis’, particularly since ‘some CSOs have started implementing MEAL in their non-PACS (Programme) projects,... others are focused only on submitting reports in MEAL formats rather than using it as (a) tool for reflection and learning.’ It is felt that ‘CSOs need for more follow up support and motivations from (the) ROs in effectively reflecting on processes and outputs and in documentation of their experiences.’

Among the requirements identified for improved quality of MEAL implementation are:

- ‘Regular feedback to CSO reports to improve their quality
- Increased follow up support and motivation by ROs/ PST
- Facilitation of output-level tracking workshops and project-level impact assessment workshops (after CBIA) by ROs
- Improving process guidelines and project design
- Supporting network projects in building internal MIS for better reporting
- Adherence to communication flow chart by CSOs/ ROs/ PST/ CMS/ MC’

A second version of a Facilitator Manual for ROs is being developed and a RO refresher orientation is proposed to address some of these issues.

**At the State and national-levels**, MEAL has contributed, *inter alia*, to the Second National and State Synthesis Reports, analysis and maintenance of State and national-level databases and new methods and approaches of analysis. A notable initiative has been the Desktop Interactive Information System (DIIS)- a ‘user-friendly interactive system for information sharing and data mining at various levels’ with ‘simple front-end software that links all information on (the) PACS (Programme) in a systematic manner so that it can be effectively used by a variety of stakeholders’ and act as a ‘ready reckoner that links data and analysis in a usable form.’ In the near future, the focus of State and national-level initiatives would be on updating the National and State Synthesis Reports and the DIIS.

## CSO CAPACITY BUILDING

Four broad approaches to capacity building have been identified:

- **ROs as capacity building providers:** Here, ROs working closely with a set of CSOs will be primarily responsible for identifying the capacity building needs of each CSO and will provide on-the-job support to CSOs on technical, managerial and community facilitation aspects.
- **Centralised capacity building:** This refers to State/ regional/ cluster-level capacity building fora and events that are to be coordinated and facilitated by the PST with support from the MC.
- **Project-initiated capacity building:** This refers to CSOs organising their in-house capacity building efforts with tie-up with external agencies as and when required.
- **PST as capacity building node:** Here, CSOs can seek support from the PST for any support in the capacity building process. The PST is expected to 'proactively support' CSOs in effectively running their capacity building events, maintaining capacity building resources and databases, monitoring the quality of capacity building efforts and compiling and using the best practices that have emerged.

In line with the above, State Capacity Building Strategies have been developed for each of the States, PSTs and ROs have identified capacity building needs and finalised capacity building plans for their allocated projects. Among the key areas identified where CSOs may benefit from capacity building efforts are 'management skills, perspective on governance and livelihoods, connects between poverty and entitlements and rights-based approaches.' These are important as more than two-thirds of the CSOs working with the PACS Programme 'have not worked on rights-based issues and have experience of working with the 'welfare and service delivery approach'.'

Till date, capacity building efforts have been undertaken at three-levels:

- CSO/ project-initiated capacity building efforts
- PACS Programme-initiated capacity building efforts (mainly those organised by the PSTs/ ROs or centralised efforts of the MC at TARAGram, Orchha)
- Other donor/ institution/ agency- initiated capacity building efforts

Analysis of recent capacity building data *pertaining to a six month period* (no systematic data is available for the past and the data presented herein does not take into account the progress in Bihar on which information is reportedly awaited) from 54 projects from all States barring Bihar reveals the following:

- **A total of 206 capacity building events were organised with participation from over 1,600 individuals.** This suggests an average of about 4 capacity building events per project.

- **A third of the capacity building events were project-initiated, about 28 percent of the events were PACS Programme-driven** and the balance (about 40 percent) were initiated by external agencies.
- **Community facilitation and Natural Resource Management (NRM)/ Livelihood are the major themes on which capacity building efforts have concentrated.** Together, these account for about half of the 206 capacity building events undertaken. Other notable themes on which capacity building events have concentrated in the recent past are local self-governance and MEAL.
- **Over three-fourths of the capacity building events focused on PACS Programme-related issues.** Managerial and OD-related events accounted for the balance- suggesting ‘lesser attention’ to these issues ‘than is required.’

It is acknowledged however that while ‘a large number of capacity building efforts have been undertaken by the projects or by the (PACS) Programme’, ‘there have been lesser efforts to match (such events with) what the CSOs really require.’ Issues around ‘quality of training at different levels (project, networking level, Programme level, etc.)’, lack of ‘follow-up data’ to understand the ‘impacts of capacity building efforts on individual CSOs as well as the grassroots(-level)’ and limited analysis on factors affecting capacity building (and) learning to implement at the grassroots level, are recognised as the limitations of the above analysis.

## **SOME OTHER SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS**

Other significant developments include:

- **National and State-level Livelihoods Consultations:** These events brought together a range of stakeholders and ‘facilitated a dialogue on felt concerns regarding poverty in general and livelihoods in specific’ and looked at possible ways forward to frame and actualise livelihood related issues and interventions.
- **Peer Learning Workshops (PLWs)** undertaken at the State-level have provided opportunities for sharing experience and learning among PACS Programme partners and collective reflection on issues of concern in the specific context of the State
- **Pre-election Voter Awareness Campaigns (PEVACs)** on a large scale in MP and UP
- **Jharkhand Swashashan Manch** constituted in March 2004 to engage with issues of local self-governance in the State
- **Maharashtra Drought Forum** to work collectively on drought-related issues in the State (a similar collective for engaging with flood-related issues exists in Bihar)