

# Annual Report

2012-13



## Behavioural Science Centre St. Xavier's Non Formal Education Society

St. Xavier's College campus, P.B. No. 4069, Navrangpura,  
Ahmedabad - 380 009, Gujarat, India

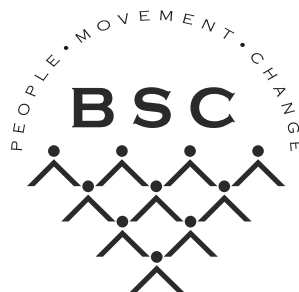
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2012-13



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St. Xavier's Non-Formal Education Society,  
St. Xavier's College Campus,  
P.B. No. 4069, Navrangpura, Ahmedabad – 380 009, Gujarat, India.

**BSC Annual Report 2012-13**

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## Preface

We are happy to present the annual report of Behavioural Science Centre for the year 2012-13.

We have continued our humble endeavour towards accompanying the most marginalized communities in Gujarat in their struggle for dignity, securing human rights and entitlements.

The Right to Food Programme has been illustrative of our efforts to fine tune community based strategies for securing entitlements. It has reiterated our belief that community has to participate decisively and take leadership in local governance institutions. It has been a multi-pronged intervention where community leaders have intervened at the Panchayat and Gram Sabha levels, activated vigilance committees, made representations from the Taluka level to the State level to ensure that the PDS, MDM, ICDS and many other food security schemes work effectively.

Our Child Rights programme made tremendous strides in enhancing the quality of primary education by facilitating the implementation the Right to Education Act, especially through capacity building of School Management Committees. Constituting and training Child Protection Committees have led to enhanced awareness regarding child abuse and child protection in the rural areas. The CPCs are poised to play a significant role as the Integrated Child Protection Scheme is being rolled out.

Establishing Seasonal Hostels for the children of Adivasi families migrating out of their villages has been a novel experience for BSC. By implementing this project of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Government of Gujarat, BSC has been able to see at close quarters the challenges of managing such a programme; the real issues in ensuring the Right to Education to a large number of Adivasi children who are forced to migrate with their parents.

BSC has continued its accompaniment of Adivasi communities in Sabarkantha and Banaskantha Districts in their struggle for forest land. The progress on settlement of claims as per the Forest Rights Act has been painfully slow. However as a party to the PIL in the Gujarat High Court along with Adivasi Mahasabha in this regard, it has been extremely satisfying that the High Court has passed an excellent order in favour of the Adivasis which will hopefully push the settlement process forward more effectively in the coming months.

The dimensions of gender justice and women's rights cut across all BSC's interventions. The training programmes to build women's leadership capable of intervening with a feminist perspective towards securing women's rights are beginning to show some transformative impact. Many women have broken their silence and started countering domestic violence; widows shattering the barrier of social taboos by being present in 'auspicious' events wearing ornaments and dresses hitherto prohibited; women fighting it out to educate their girl children.

Research and Training Wing has supported our own interventions through solid research inputs be it in the RTF programme or in providing a perspective to support the women's cooperative movement. The

research studies undertaken have all inquired into situations of the most marginalized groups and their rights. One of our landmark studies has raised significant questions on the 'model' of land acquisition in Gujarat from the perspective of the marginalized communities. Another study on the status of Women's Cooperatives has given a perspective of the kind of capacity building interventions that need to be taken up in the coming phase.

The Human Rights Cell of BSC, initiated in 2002 on behalf of the Citizen's Initiative to support the cause of justice for the survivors of the 2002 communal carnage, has realized its primary goal. The historic judgement convicting the perpetrators of the Naroda Patiya massacre was possible as a result of the perseverance and courage of the witness-survivors who survived a decade of abuse, threats and allurements, economic crisis, and discrimination; and deposed in court truthfully and courageously. The lawyers of the HRC accompanied them in every step, boosting their morale and making written submissions in court whenever required. The meticulous analysis of the case by our lawyers and the strategic steps taken at different points of time during the past one decade have gone a long way in ensuring conviction of the perpetrators.

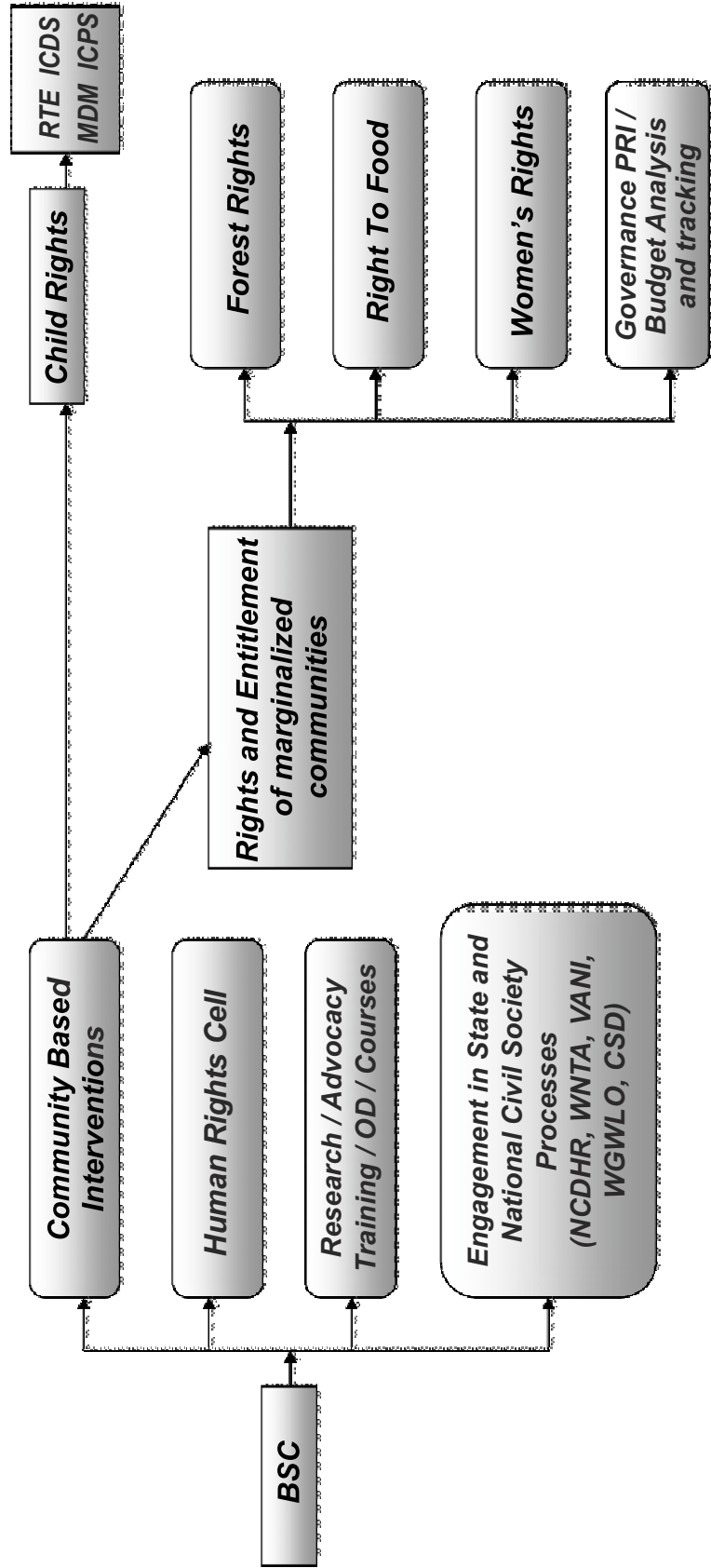
The partnership with Prayas Centre for Labour Research and Action had continued this year too; with its exemplary efforts to organize migrant labourers in different parts of Gujarat, building awareness regarding their rights and entitlements, and ensuring higher and just wages. The dismal picture of labour exploitation with wage rates in Gujarat being among the lowest of in the country exposes the high human costs that we are paying to sustain this anti-people 'growth' and development.

In an increasingly hostile legal and policy environment we have endeavoured to keep our commitment to work towards the rights of the most marginalized communities of Gujarat. There are still many more milestones ahead...

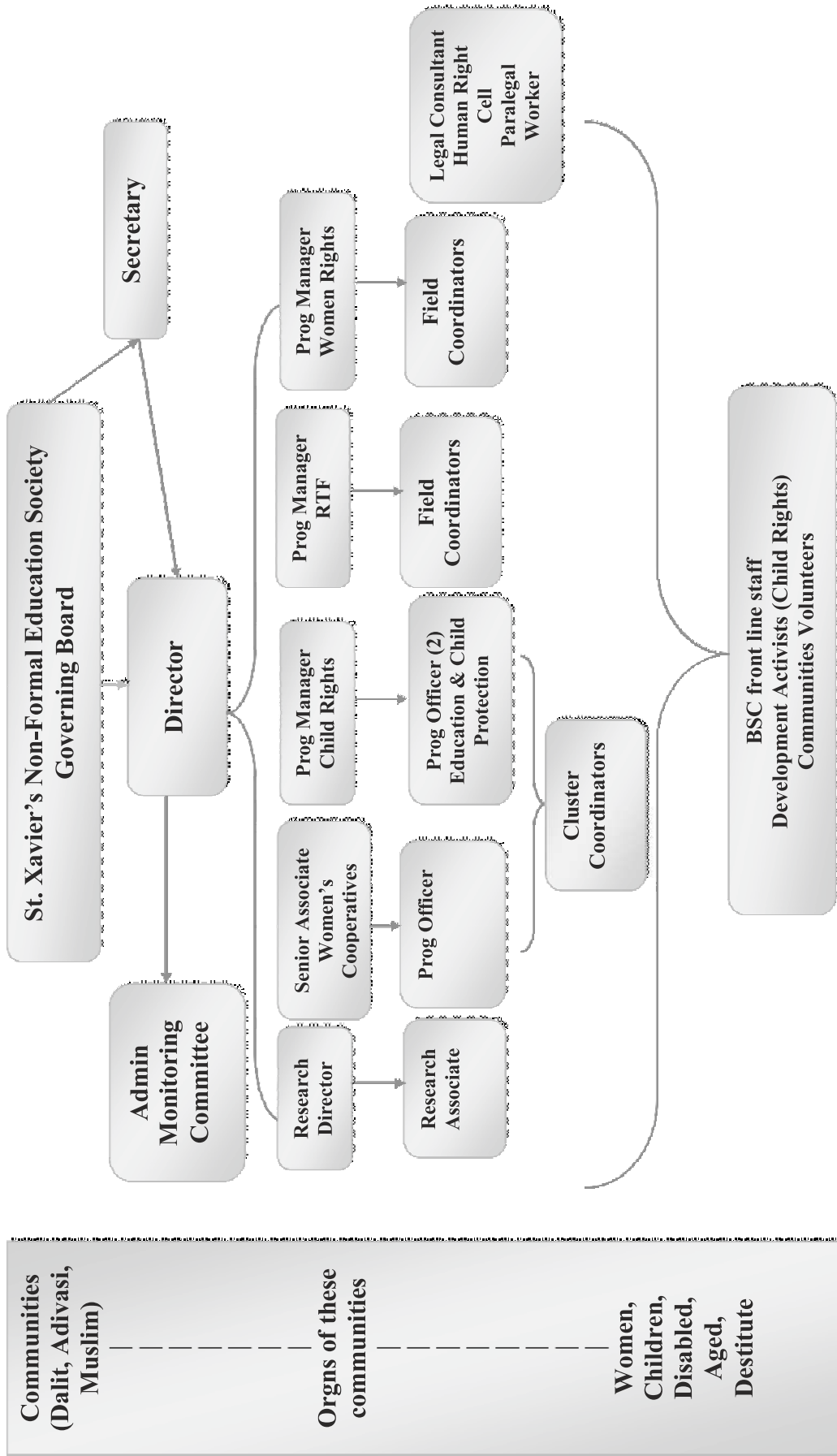
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# Organization Flow Chart



# Organogram



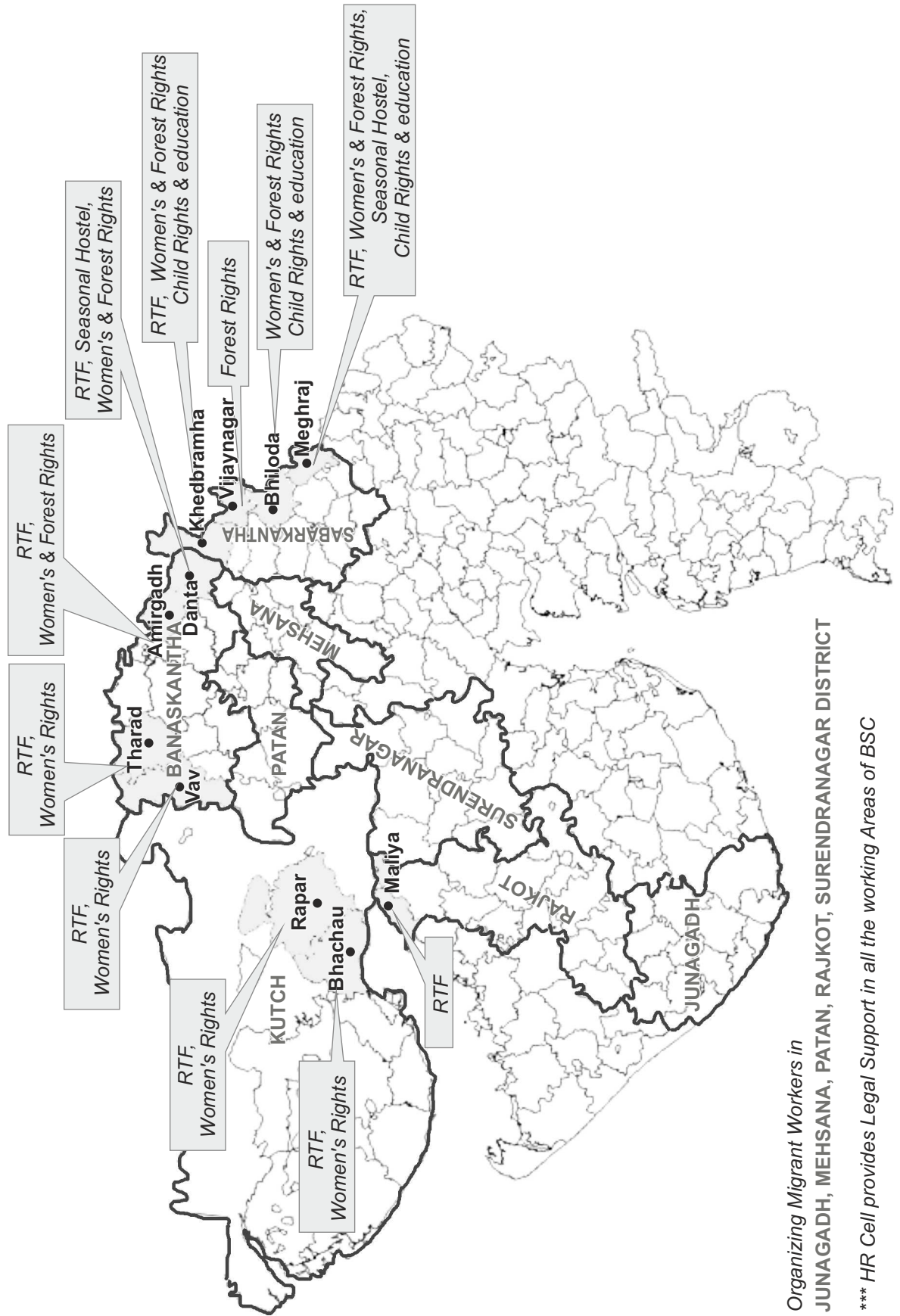
Communities  
(Dalit, Adivasi,  
Muslim)

Orgns of these  
communities

Women,  
Children,  
Disabled,  
Aged,  
Destitute



# BSC Working areas in Gujarat



Organizing Migrant Workers in JUNAGADH, MEHSANA, PATAN, RAJKOT, SURENDRANAGAR DISTRICT

\*\*\* HR Cell provides Legal Support in all the working Areas of BSC

## 1. Ensuring the Right to Food (RTF)

### 1.1 Background

The Right to Food (RTF) is inherently contained in the Right to life which is conferred by the Indian Constitution to every citizen of India. It enshrines the fundamental right of every citizen to be free from hunger and under-nutrition. The primary responsibility for guaranteeing these entitlements rests with the state or essentially the state should ensure that every Indian, particularly the poor and marginalized living even in the remotest corners of the country is able to consume adequate, good quality, nutritious food. Realising this right requires not only equitable and sustainable food systems, but also entitlements relating to livelihood security such as the right to work, land reform and social security. This has led to a sustained focus on legislation and schemes such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), Mid-day Meals (MDM) scheme, and the Public Distribution System (PDS) which plays an important role in the provision of food security. In this context, BSC has taken the initiative to create awareness about Right to Food among the masses by building their capacities & developing leadership among them so that through this campaign people could claim their rights.

To achieve this goal BSC adopted the following strategies-

- Creating a strong team of volunteers and leaders in villages to spearhead the RTF campaign
- Volunteers led local interventions with the PDS shops and interventions to access social security schemes
- Collecting data on PDS and MGNREGA to identify issues for RTF Campaign
- Networking

At present BSC is working on this issue in 330 villages of Banaskantha, Sabarkantha, Kachch and Rajkot districts in Gujarat.

### 1.2 Major Activities:

#### 1.2.1 Area Meetings

Area meetings were the first point to get the first hand information about things happening and issues at the ground. It also facilitates many actions. These include Visits & meetings with the community in their residential areas, meetings with Panchayat members, meeting with leaders & school monitoring committees etc. Regular visits were paid to PDS shops, Anganwadis & health centres. These meetings & visits not only make the community aware but also to check irregularities taking place and at the same time make the whole system accountable. In cases where irregularities could not be stopped in informal manner then formal written complaints or memorandums were also given to the concerned authority so

that they could take necessary action. These meetings also helps in data collection related to topics such as PDS, MDM etc which was done through filling up questionnaire/survey forms. Also these meetings facilitate the organization to choose the leaders from the community who could be trained to take this program ahead.

Total 98 new leaders were formed and 1954 families were approached. 912 survey forms were filled up in all the 9 talukas namely Rapar, Bhachau, Maliya, Danta, Khedbramha, Meghraj, Vav, Tharad & Amirgarh. The block wise details are given in Annexure-1

Some of the problems and issues which were addressed are listed below-

- Irregularities related to PDS such as taking bribe for making ration card, distributing less quantity, Black marketing etc.
- Scholarship of students
- Irregularities & corruption in NREGA
- Land related issues
- Birth & death registration certificates etc.



Apart from the above mentioned “Shala Praveshotsav”, School admission drive was conducted to enrol children to school. RTI's were filed for different schemes such as RTF, NREGA & Shramyogi Kalyan yojna etc also memorandums were given to the concerned authorities to solve various issues related to RTF, MDM, NREGA etc.

### 1.2.2 Planning & Evaluation meeting

Volunteers from all the nine blocks came together every month for monthly planning and evaluation meetings.. They not only share their work progress but also the problems and challenges they face. This group then collectively decides future strategy and course of action. The meetings also helped to prepare the volunteers for the family survey, prepare monthly activity plans, and assess the ground level situation regarding RTF in various blocks. This group is continuously in direct contact with the field and is responsible to identify leaders from the community who could be trained to take this program ahead. In short these meetings not only deepens their understanding and intricacies related to RTF but also enable them to organize trainings for village leaders, strategize to ensure that consumers got sufficient food grains from the PDS shops through intensive monitoring of PDS shops.

During the period total 9 meetings of two days each were conducted with number of participants ranging from 45-54 each meeting.

The new strategy to have scheme based /issue based committees emerged from these meetings. This not only facilitated the efficient handling of multiple issues, but also helped in developing expertise. Issue based committees from among the volunteers were constituted on PDS, MDM, ICDS, MNREGA, Janani Suraksha Yojana, Old age pension scheme, Sankat Mochan Yojana and land rights.

### 1.2.3 Capacity Building of leaders

Training programs were conducted for leaders from different villages, blocks so that they carefully understand the intricacies involved in the RTF Campaign and collectively determine its objectives. They were given training on various schemes under RTF and the role of PDS Monitoring Committees and social justice committees. Also to take forward this campaign effectively they were trained on legal issues with the support from local advocates. Another topic which was covered through is Panchayat and its role in RTF campaign. Both men and women leaders participated actively in the training.



Total 389 leaders & volunteers from different blocks were trained on RTF schemes, and the role of PDS monitoring and social justice committees. 451 leaders from all the 9 blocks which includes 363 men and 88 women were trained on legal issues and angles related to RTF. Also the Panchayat members were trained for their role in the Panchayat & for RTF.

### 1.2.4 Capacity building of Point Persons (PP)

Point person is the person who is overall in-charge of the project and is intensively trained to enable to play an effective role along with the BSC team in taking the RTF Campaign forward. The training focused on creating an in-depth understanding on a wide range of issues concerning RTF. During the period 4 trainings were organized for the point person on issues related to RTF and strategies for interventions.

### 1.2.5 Networking

#### A. Networking at National level

- BSC has been striving to link the local struggles for rights and entitlements to the national level advocacy efforts spearheaded by several national and grassroots organizations. Some of those efforts have been:
- Participated in the national Food security campaign in Delhi on July 30<sup>th</sup> 2012.
- 3 representatives from BSC took part in the conference on Old Age Pension from 6<sup>th</sup> May to 11<sup>th</sup> May 2012 at Delhi.
- Participated in Roji Roti Abhiyan & Pensioners' conference on 28<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> Aug 2012 at Delhi

- 3 RTF team representatives took part in the yatra organized by the Ekta parishad on the issue of land from Gwalior to Delhi on the 17<sup>th</sup> Oct. A joint memorandum regarding the issues related to land in 10 talukas was given to the prime minister
- Participated in the national campaign for dalit human rights (NCDHR) meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> Oct.2012 at Delhi and also in the conference on 23<sup>rd</sup> Oct. 2012 prior to the meeting.
- 75 persons took part in the movement on bringing reforms in the prevention of violence act in Delhi on 23<sup>rd</sup> . Nov.2012.

#### **B. Networking at state and local level**

- Networking with Gujarat dalit Sangathan on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2012
- Participated in the workshop on Panchayati Raj organized by the Kutch Nav Nirman Abhyan on 4<sup>th</sup> Aug 2012
- Coordination and participated in Right to Food Campaign on 30<sup>th</sup> Sept.2012.
- On 16<sup>th</sup> Oct.2012 which was observed as World Food Day as a part of this day 35 representatives met the governor and discuss with him the details of food security and also a memorandum was given regarding the same. This was ended in the evening at mehendi nawaz jang hall in the form of convention.
- From 10<sup>th</sup> Oct 2012 to 14<sup>th</sup> Oct.2012 an awareness campaign on Food security was organized in Vav, Tharaad, Ameerghar, Danta, & Khedbramha talukas covering 90 villages. This campaign received a very good response.

#### **1.2.6 Other Activities**

- 58 persons from BSC took part in the workshop which was conducted on 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> April on Right to Food Act 2011.
- Meeting with the chief secretaries of Food Supply & Consumer protection department on 24<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2012

#### **Case study**

*Joshi Bhagwanbhai Devrajbhai who is a volunteer from Cellari village of Vav taluka in Banaskantha district noticed that the PDS distributor of the village is not providing sufficient quantity of food grains under PDS.*

*Bhagwanbhai along with a group of some villagers & Anganwadi worker first talk to the shop owner that if he did not stop malpractice then they will take necessary action & will made complaints to the concerned higher authorities. The shop owner refuses to listen to them and continued his malpractices. And he even threatens Joshi Bhagwanbhai Devrajbhai of the dire consequences he complained about this to authorities. But Joshibhai dare and ignore the threats made complaints to the concerned authorities and with the intervention of the authorities he was successful in stopping the malpractices in PDS. This not only sets an example among villagers but also motivated them to fight for their rights*

## 2. Strengthening child rights to prevent child labour

### 2.1 Background

A pervasive and harmful child labour problem exists in Gujarat's cotton fields and seed farms: High numbers of children, from as young as eight, are employed on cotton and cottonseed farms. All child labourers work in unacceptable conditions, their most basic rights denied. All are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. Their families' economic plight is characterised by landlessness or small land-holdings, indebtedness and low wages, fuelled by social marginalisation and a pronounced gender discrimination that prevents women from playing a full and active role. Sending their children to work is often perceived as the sole opportunity for poor families to access new sources of income.

Many child labourers drop out from school or never attended school. Their health suffers as they toil for long hours (7-8hrs.) in hot and dusty cotton fields, often exposed to harmful pesticides. Adolescent girls, especially prized for their work in the cotton seed farms, are acutely vulnerable, particularly migrants, who often travel alone for seasonal work in cottonseed farms. The conditions faced by child labourers in the fields are exacerbated and perpetuated by a weak policy environment, and huge gaps in implementation of legal and social programmes.

Sabarkantha district is one of the prime cotton growing districts in the state. Gujarat state is noted for its high usage of the higher yielding *Bacillus Thuringiensis*, (BT) cotton variety. The nature of BT cotton cultivation is such that children are easily employed and exploited to keep costs low and maximise profit in case of large farmers. Most cottonseed production is carried out through contract farming. Both because of their relative cheap labour and because of the difficult physical demands made by such tasks, children particularly girls are employed for cross pollination work. Cottonseed production is notorious for its extremely high use of pesticides.

Secondly community acceptance of child labour in the absence of alternative reinforced by high rates of adult unemployment and lack of access to Government safety net schemes, and a widespread lack of access for poor and marginalised children to adequate health care/quality education that could transform a child's life opportunities. Although the intervention focuses on cotton cultivation, the programme will include other groups of working children who are at risk of exploitation.

BSC is working at state, district and community levels, with an integrated child rights methodology. This will combine community-based child protection measures with improved access to quality education and health services, and is supported by livelihoods activities to give families the opportunity to access alternative sources of income. This had specific focus on the social and economic empowerment of females in the target areas. Thus had four core sectors of child protection, quality education, economic alternatives and preventative health.

## 2.2 Major Activities:

### 2.2.1 Child Protection

#### 2.2.1.1 Formation of child groups & Meetings

Children being the major stakeholder were organized in the forms of Child Groups with 50% girls in it to balance gender. These groups play an important role in raising awareness on child labour in the community. Not only this but this platform gives girls and boys across all backgrounds (age, caste, class, religion, ethnicity, disabilities, etc.) an equal opportunity to have their voices heard. At present there are **148 active child groups in 120 villages whereas in 2011-12 there were 120. Also 40 new groups were formed in different villages.**

Every month a meeting was conducted with CG groups with the focus on mainstreaming them into school with the regular intervention and motivation. Children were also made aware & trained on life skill, child rights and child abuse. They also met child protection committee (CPC) for their queries to be raised in Panchayat or with SMC. This resulted in the increased confidence among the children in decision making about their studies & career.

#### 2.2.1.2 Formation of child protection committees (CPC)

The purpose of forming child protection committee is to strengthen local level approaches to reducing child labour and capacity building local government and labour agencies to implement and enforce child labour laws and regulations more effectively

Child Protection Committees were **formed in 120 villages** and play an instrumental role in raising awareness on the risks and negative impact of child labour on the growth and development of the child, developing strategies and approaches to both respond to and prevent protection issues from occurring and monitoring vulnerabilities to child labour in the community. CPCs are closely working with District Child Protection Core Groups, Child Welfare Committees, Juvenile Justice Boards, the Department of Labour and Child Protection Units. Every month a meeting was conducted with CPC members. They are also given training on child rights, child abuse as they are one who is the change maker at community level.

These CPCs along with school monitoring committee (SMC) were successful in **enrolling 1040 children in schools out of which 470 are girls.** It was observed that now CPC members have started taking ownership & conduct monthly meeting independently. They were also successful in **convincing 53 village panchayats to pass resolution against child labour** and those violating this will be punished. They have also helped SMC members in making school development plan. They convince parents for not to send their child for work and send them to school. They also visit schools and Anganwadi on regular basis to see monitor the services like mid may meal and the nutrition being provided by ICDS. **Total 2699 children have got their birth registration certificate, out of which 1273 are girls.** Construction work for rooms in school has been started in following villages. – Dedka, Bordi, Polapan, Bharmiya of Khedbrahma block and Kishangadh, in bhiloda block and in around 30 villages SMC members have applied for the new rooms to be built in the schools

### 2.2.2 Inclusive Education

A poor education is both a cause and a consequence of child labour. There is need to improve teachers'

capacities to attract and retain all groups of children; strengthen children's participation in teaching-learning processes in school, facilitate peer support in retention and re-enrolment and ensure the provision of accelerated learning opportunities for children who are absent from school with focus on migrant children. Also emphasis was given on enhancing parent's awareness on the right to education and its benefits in providing life opportunities for children through community participation.

#### 2.2.2.1 Anganwadi worker (AWW) and Parent meeting

The purpose of Anganwadi parents meeting was to sensitize parents about the poor infrastructure and low quality of education. During the meeting community members discussed about the facilities which are not available in the Anganwadi such as fans, water facility, mattress and utensils etc. they also discussed about the tackling the issues one by one. During the period total 1040 children were enrolled in Anganwadi out which 470 are girls and 570 are boys.

#### 2.2.2.2 Vocational or Life skill training.

The purpose of this training is to eradicate migration and child labour or in other words withdrawing & linking migrant working children to vocational training It emphasises that those working children will be enrolled in school to get good quality education and those who are not eligible or for some other reason could not go to school will be given vocational training so that they can get alternative source of livelihood. Market oriented trainings such as Beauty parlour, Handicraft making, Hand Pump repairing and Sewing Machine, embroidery as per the demands from the children. During the period **total 2039 persons receives this training out of which 1812 are girls and 227 are boys .**



#### 2.2.2.3 Access to eligible social securities schemes

Due to lack of easy access to governance mechanisms people were not able to benefit from various government social security schemes. It was obvious that such schemes would definitely reduce the economic burden on the families thereby increasing the chances of caring better for their children and sending them to school. Our efforts facilitated them to secure the benefit of these schemes such as chirnajivi Yojna, janani Suraksha, Indira Awas Yojna, manav Garima, Balika Samruddhi, widow pension, Sardar Awas yojna Kuwarbai nu mameru etc. **During April 2012 to March 2013 total 2323 persons were facilitated for various social security schemes**



### 2.2.3 Training on preventive health issues

At the same time women and adolescents were given training on reproductive health. They were sensitized about the fact that women body are more complicated to men so one really need to take care of it as they might have the negative impact if we don't look after it properly. Adolescents also shared their difficulties regarding their menstruation problem and many times during that time also they have to work a lot without any break which is very exhausting for them. so they were also taught the different alternatives options so that they can take care of their self , they were asked to take more break during their work as it will help them to get relax. Women have also shared about their difficulties regarding their health problems.

The best part of the training: where women and adolescents had discussion among themselves, as many women were experienced and knowledgeable so they gave certain inputs to them.

**During the period 6889 women and 3148 Adolescent girls were trained on preventive health issues**

### 2.2.4 Celebrating nutrition week

Nutrition Week was celebrated in 120 villages of Khedbramha, Bhiloda & Meghraj districts with the objective of checking nutritional status of the age group between 1-5 years. To find out the dietary pattern among the children who come under the chronic phase.

It was observed that out of 120 villages 80 villages reported to have contaminated water and also that the water of resources like well & pond is more contaminated than that of hand pump. Only 8% of the children surveyed said they wash hands with soap. Also the study shows that the dietary pattern remains the same in all malnourished children. It also came out clearly that during the season of BT cotton children eat less number of times as their parents are busy in working in the fields.

These findings were shared with the community to make them aware about the malnutrition issue in their own villages. Also the findings were given to different political parties with the signature of people in the form of letter so that they could take serious note of it.



## 3. Seasonal Hostels

### 3.1 Introduction

BSC has been invited to be part of the consortium of Civil Society Organizations led by The American India Foundation and the Tata Chemicals Society for Rural Development to implement the Seasonal Hostels programme of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Government of Gujarat. The members of this consortium established and managed 84 Seasonal Hostels catering to 2390 children in Surendranagar, Kutch, Banaskantha, Sabarkantha and Bhavnagar districts.

As a partner of AIF-TCSR and SSA (GoG) in this programme, BSC agreed to address the issue of children migrating with their parents out of their villages in the Adivasi areas that it has been working. Danta Taluka of Banaskantha District and Meghraj Taluka of Sabarkantha District were selected for establishing seasonal hostels for these children who would have otherwise migrated with their parents and thereby definitely drop out of schools. BSC established 11 seasonal hostels in 11 villages of Meghraj Taluka and 8 seasonal hostels in 8 villages of Danta Taluka. Through these hostels 372 Adivasi children of the age group 6-14 were retained in school.

### 3.2 Background

It was observed that in north Gujarat particularly in Sabarkantha & Banaskantha districts where Agriculture is totally based on rain and also its geographical situation is such that only agriculture is not sufficient for the livelihood, people migrate in large number to nearby places in search of livelihood.

It is also important to notice the existing hiring system of these migrant workers. The land owners had his own agents who on behalf of the owner contact the contractor (middleman). The contractor is the person who is paid on commission basis i.e. the number of workers he sends and for the number of days. This is the person who has actual contact with the workers in the village and who make the payments to these workers. Generally this contractor is a person of influence with power. He forms his team and then depending on the requirement he deployed the team. He also gives advances to these workers & deducts them from the wages.

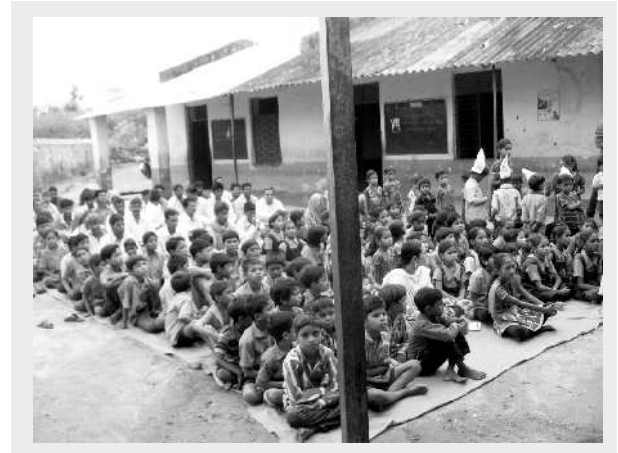
At several occasions these workers took huge advances from the contractor such as marriages, death ceremonies, illness etc. as a result many workers despite of working hard didn't earn anything during the season. So again they take advances to meet the requirement. Thus finally end up caught in the vicious cycle and then the contractor exploits them in all the possible ways even at times it resulted in bonded labour.

These workers when migrate to other places took their children with them as there is no one to take care of these children in the village. This results in the dropout of children from the school. Thus to prevent them

from being drop out & to prevent them from joining them the unskilled labour force BSC runs various academic program since last decade in **Meghraj** taluka of Sabarkantha district & **Danta** taluka of Banaskantha in north Gujarat. Seasonal hostel was started with the aim to prevent dropout from mainstream education of children of migrant workers so that they could continue their education under Sarva Siksha Abhiyaan (SSA), which ensures free & compulsory education for children from 6-14 years. Seasonal hostel were initiated in these 2 places is a part of this process.

### 3.3 Present status of the program

The spread of this program is in 11 villages in Sabarkantha & Meghraj taluka & 8 villages in Danta taluka of Banaskantha district. The number of children in these hostels is 372 out of which 178 were girls and 194 were boys. Village wise details is given in Annex 3.



### 3.4 Process

Meetings were held in Danta & Meghraj talukas to convince parents of children to send them to these residential hostels. Initially it was very difficult to convince them as they were not feeling secured but now after persistent efforts they were comfortable and feel safe to sending their children to these hostels.

The second step is identifying the warden, cook and the right building as without these it was impossible to run these hostels. Not only this but equally important is to build capacity of this system and thus an exposure visits were conducted followed by the training so that they could run the program efficiently.

BSC with an integrated approach ensures community participation and thus the monitoring of the program is done by the SMC which pays regular visits to these hostels. Also they facilitate the organization to find suitable place & ensure quality.

### 3.5 Coordination with the government

This program was implemented and taken forward with the coordination of district project office, BRC, CRC & SMC under the SSA. This includes written communication and clarifications by letters, checking of place & hostel visit. All the process ahead is by following the suggestions & under the guidance of these people.

### 3.6 Challenges faced

- The biggest challenge was lack of awareness of BRC (Block Representative Coordinator) and CRC (Cluster Representative Coordinator) about the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding). And as a result of this the teachers were reluctant to give information about date of birth & registration details of children which is mandatory for registration in the hostel.
- Due to the absence of any written document or proof it was a real challenge to prove that these are migrant workers.

## 4. Empowering, capacity building & preparing dalit, adivasi & marginalized women

### 4.1 Background

The patriarchal society & social hierarchy system existing in India undermines the status of women and especially when it comes to dalit, adivasi women. They constitute the poorest of the poor section and are vulnerable to all kind of atrocities. They could not voice their concern and are refrained from taking decision. Even if they contribute economically their contribution remains unnoticed.

The government claims to increase participation of women in politics by reservation seems long way to achieve its real goal. Also the euphoria on governance reforms, decentralisation and accountability at the national and international level by creating spaces like Panchayat & Gramsabha. But these democratic spaces lacks to articulate the voices of the marginalized and they are not been able to use these spaces and thus even today at the ground level the poor and marginalized seems to be struggling to make their 'voice' heard and to gain visibility to access their legitimate rights. The reservation of seats in the local governing institutions has ensured the presence of women, but it has not help women to fight against the historical injustice. Thus There is need to educate and empower women about their rights.

It was in the process of doing so that BSC has decided to empower and build capacities of dalit, Adivasi & other women from the marginalized communities and prepares them for social and political participation and also to develop leadership among them. It was decided to identify potential women candidates to take up leadership based on the criteria such as potential for development of personality, ability and willingness to learn, commitment etc. later to build their capacity by providing them training on various subjects. The coverage of this project includes 10 talukas in the districts of Kutch, Banaskantha, Sabarkantha and Anand in Gujarat State.

### 4.2 Major Activities:

#### 4.2.1 Trainings

Two day trainings were conducted on monthly basis on the following topics-

- Topic A** Understanding society and social discrimination: (1) Gender and Caste (2) Tribal situation (3) Disability (3) Discrimination on grounds of age
- Topic B** Development and Underdevelopment: from a rural perspective –Asset (land) ownership, education, skills Environment and development
- Topic C** 1. Constitution of India: Fundamental Rights / Human Rights / Social Legislation 2. The Indian State: Legislative, Executive and Judiciary. 3. Political Parties, Election

**Topic D** PRI, micro planning, entitlements, implementation of development schemes etc.

**Topic E** Personality Development, Leadership, Overcoming socially constructed psychological barriers



#### 4.2.2 Follow up meetings and Field visits

Block coordinators meet women in their respective villages. The objective of this was to constantly be in touch with the participants after their training. In these meetings the learning during the training programs were recapitulated and this was reinforced through explaining this to other women in the villages who may not have participated in the training. It also gives an opportunity to other women in village who were not part of the training programs to learn and understand about different issues. These meetings also helps the coordinators to build rapport at the village level, which would be important for the action plans which the women would be formulating at different stages of the training project.

The Block coordinators assist the women in the actions that they take at the village level, such as drafting applications, accompanying them to the relevant government offices, and preparing the women before such visits.

The Field Coordinators also document case studies of women who have transformed their lives.

### 4.3 Challenges faced in implementation

One of the challenges was to stabilize the block level training group and ensure uniform & sustained participation as the target of 25 women per block proves faulty. And get only up to an average of 15 women for every training program

### 4.4 Impact of the Program

The training programs, field visits and meetings with the participants in their respective village have brought visible changes among women participants. Block coordinators' capacity has also increased and they have been able to build a good rapport in the community. They have started guiding people in the

village regarding ways to access the facilities available for them by government. Overall they have been able to gain a good reputation in the community, which at some level enhances their credibility and the



trust that people have in them. Some of the women started attending the gram sabha (The village Panchayat general assembly) and also have started questioning authorities such as the Sarpanch (the president of the village panchayat) of the village. Few women have started going to anganwadis (the pre school, early childhood care program of the government) to observe their functioning and help the anganwadi worker. Some women have started discussing the issues with other women in their village about the things they have learned from the trainings.

### Case study

**Manjulaben Ramjibhai Maheshwari**, 28 yrs is a widow from Suvai village of Rapar block. She had two daughters of 7 and 3 years old. She was leading a very happy life till few years back when her husband passed away because of electric shock. After this life became miserable for her as her in-laws started torturing her. She bears everything silently as it's a social customs. But the in-laws didn't stop here. Now they stop feeding her and her daughters.

She was offered job thrice as compensation but every time the in-laws didn't allow her to take on different grounds such as this kind of work is being done by lower class people and so on. Meanwhile her elder daughter being hungry started eating food from outside and spends sixty to seventy rupees a day which she can not afford. Also she was diagnosed with the symptoms of TB as the elder brother in law is having TB. The doctor advised her to keep the child away from her uncle. In this situation she took the permission and started living in Arya Samaj. Her in-laws went there with an advocate and demanded the custody of her daughters who are the lone support of her and motivation for her to live. She denied it and due to fear that they may do something wrong to her and her daughter she went to her parents' house. Initially she was very depressed and was unable to do anything but then her mother sent her in the training program realizing its importance.

These trainings prove no less than miracle in her life as she not only regained her confidence but also made her aware. She started a job as maid and sends her both daughters to school. When the in-laws opposed this she was firm and clearly told them that she will not change her decision. She then filled the form for widow pension which helps her to continue the education of her daughters. She was also physically challenged but this didn't deter her and she got the disability certificate. All this boosted her confidence and a shy woman who could not dare to speak in front of her family members is now supporting other widows in fighting for their rights. She also made claim for her share of the inherited property from in-laws. She said why should I let it go after all I need it to brought up both my daughters and to settle their lives. Manjulaben is now transformed into bold and confident woman who is helping other such women to overcome their crisis.

### 5. Accompanying tribal communities in monitoring the implementation of the Forest Rights Act

BSC has been a partner in the struggle of Adivasis in Banaskantha district- (Amirgarh, Danata blocks; Sabarkantha district- Khedbrahma, Vijaynagar, Meghraj and Bhiloda blocks) to secure their rights & development entitlements. The interventions in these regions have resulted in local organizations of the Adivasis such as the Adivasi Sarvangi Vikas Sangh.

The Scheduled Tribe and other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 – which is commonly known as Forest Rights Act (FRA)- has the potential to undo the historic injustice done to the Adivasis as it recognizes individual as well as collective rights of the tribal people over forestland. BSC has been partnering with tribal communities in the region to claim their rights as well as tackle issues like child labour and issues of unorganized migrant tribal labour. BSC has also been a part of the process of formation and strengthening of the pan-Gujarat Adivasi platform, the Adivasi Mahasabha Gujarat, which spearheaded the advocacy for the FRA in Gujarat collectively with similar platforms in other states of India. Subsequently, over the past 7 years, BSC has been assisting the tribal communities in these Talukas to file claims and follow up their claims and disputes that arose out of the claims. The process revealed how the provisions of the FRA were being violated by officials insisting on documentary evidence that were not called for; or by use of inaccurate Satellite imagery to prove the claims false. This has resulted in very slow progress in the implementation of this act as shown by a low level settlement of claims of land by the Adivasis in the eastern belt. This state of affairs prompted the Adivasi Mahasabha to approach the Gujarat High Court to ensure that the hard earned Forest Rights Act is implemented correctly and efficiently. BSC is one of the parties on behalf of AMS in this petition along with ARCH and RSSS. The petition is expected to result in a positive verdict and direction to the Government of Gujarat to expedite the settlement of claims.

The implementation of PESA (Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas Act, 1986) is paramount to the autonomous governance of tribal areas as envisaged in the Vth and Vth Schedules of the Constitution of India, acknowledging the cultural and historical uniqueness of the Adivasi communities. BSC as part of AMS intends to take the process of advocacy for implementation of PESA in Gujarat by bringing about amendments in the current Panchayati Raj Amendment Act which is not compliant with the PESA enacted by the Parliament. In this regard BSC supported Adivasi Mahasabha in conducting a two day workshop on 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> Sept.2012 on PESA.

## 6. Research and Training Unit

The Research and Training Unit functions as both as a resource support wing to other units as well as an independent unit taking up relevant action research for civil society organizations. Research in BSC is not merely an academic exercise but designed to generate knowledge that helps actors and organizations in their work with the marginalized communities. The research and studies and the analysis, findings and knowledge generated is to help various stake holders to act, change their course of action for policy advocacy, protect human rights and bring about social transformation. The research outcomes are also to challenge us and others in critically examining the dominant development discourses and actions.

The research/studies that the Research Unit undertook emerged both as a result of internal discussions as also through, collaboration with other groups and also by request from other groups and organizations.

### 6.1 Development versus People: Gujarat Model of land Acquisition and People Voices

The objectives of the study were

- 1) To collect information and data through secondary sources including literature review about the land acquisition for development and its impact on people's lives.
- 2) To gather information and qualitative data through field visit and meeting people where land is acquired for development.
- 3) To hold a public hearing highlighting various issues of land acquisition for development and its impact.
- 4) To prepare a report for public awareness and advocacy.

This study was supported by Action Aid it was found through the study that Gujarat government claims at the national and international level that its model of facilitating land availability for corporate industrial and business groups, (for Special Investment Regions and for Special Economic Zones), has been the best in the country. Those who are working with communities at the grassroots certainly know how false this claim is; how farmers have been deceived and been forced to part with their precious landholdings; how environmental and other laws are violated with impunity to get clearances. The study tried to understand the mechanisms through which marginal farmers are forced to part with their land, the impact on the marginalized communities with marginal landholdings as also on the landless labourers.

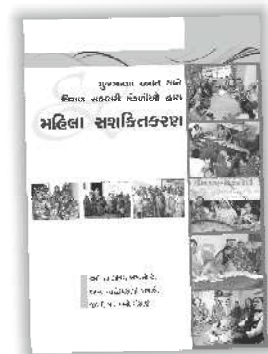




## 6.2 Saving and Credit Cooperatives: Women's Empowerment in Gujarat

The objective of the study was:

1. To ascertain as to what extent the basic objectives of these 25 cooperatives have been realized, and to identify the changes, challenges and choices before them in furthering their goals.
2. To assuage the existing realities of these cooperatives, identifying their strengths, impediments, and the missing links, which must be addressed to move forward.
3. To explore the feasibility of federating the various Church supported women's cooperative societies in Gujarat by interlinking them in terms of sharing of knowledge and best practises, management, leaderships, skills, and vision, etc.



This study was in collaboration with Asumpta Society Pune.

## 6.3 Social exclusion among single women in Kutch District

The objective of the study was to understand:

1. The nature and impact of exclusion faced by single women.
2. The role played by government, other organizations and women themselves in ameliorating their situation.
3. The study will look into social, economic and political exclusion of these women.
4. The study based on the findings will suggest ways and means of addressing the marginalization and social exclusion in Kutch.

This was in collaboration with Sneh Samuday and supported by Action Aid

## 6.4 Landlessness among individuals and farming cooperatives

Objective of this study was:

1. To see the implementation of MGNREGA
2. To find out the actual situation of Rules and regulations under MGNREGS
3. To see the present situation of and availability of basic facilities under MGNREGA at work areas.
4. To get information on increase in village commons and individual facilities.

This study was done for and supported by AVSC Khambhat

## 6.5 Implementation of MGNREGA in Khambhat and Junagadh Districts

It was done in collaboration with Sneh Samuday and supported by Action Aid with the objective-

1. To examine the present situation of landless and the process of demanding land by them.

2. To examine the present situation of farming cooperatives, and the process of demanding land by them.

## 6.6 Accessibility of Right to Food among Poorest families of Gujarat (JESA).

This study has the objective:

1. To examine accessibility of three schemes i.e. ICDS, Mid Day meal and PDS of the poorest family of each village, throughout the working area.
2. To examine the difference between entitled and actual received.

It is ongoing study and not yet completed. We have received all the data from each NGOs, and in present work of data entry is in process.

