

Pratibimb



ISSUE 5: FEBRUARY 2013 – APRIL 2013

A REFLECTION

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REKHA CHOUHAN AWARDED WITH HT WOMAN 2013 AWARD

→ Ms. Rekha Chouhan from Mahila Swarojgar Samiti (MSS) received the HT Woman 2013 Award for empowering underprivileged women in Sonebhadra and Mirzapur district, Uttar Pradesh. MSS is an IGSSS partner under its livelihood intervention in Sonebhadra.



Insight

A field study reflects women's experiences with regard to their role and allocation of work under MGNREGA.

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EDITORIAL

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Mustard Tree

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ED'S DESK

BPL – APL – IPL

● India has large scale poverty and its depth and width are matters of intense debate within Government, Media and Civil Society. It does not matter what percentage of the whole population of India is above or below the poverty (APL vs BPL). What is relevant is to ask the question whose priority matters for the policy makers. I am sure this does not require any debate. The ones who can throw their weight around have it. Be it fiscal strength – security for Antilla, be it physical strength and underworld, be it patriarchy, or brutalization of humanity. Just a look at India today (print and visual media) all of this is there and to top it off we have IPL (Indian Premier League) too.

We have come to an era of 'either or'. The dimension of a true inclusive approach, the possibility that we can agree to disagree and yet be one, the futuristic view of taking matters forward even when we do not necessarily see the **End** all of these seems to be matters of a bygone era. If one can be from a gender, a particular country, from a particular class, race or caste, have certain religious and political views and yet being able to understand and accept others, agree to the goodness in the world out there – is this not what all of humanity want. Yet at the drop of a hat we see people getting on to the throat of the other.

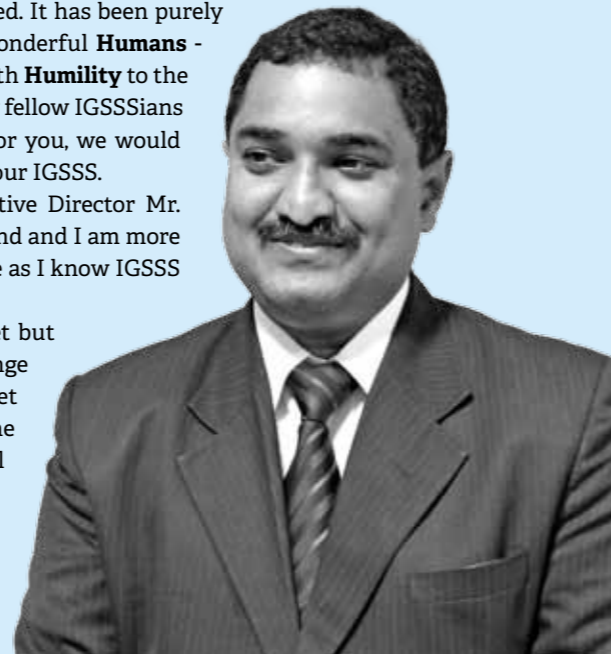
In these situations IGSSS and organizations like IGSSS have been doing an yeoman's service to the society – building bridges, serving **Humanity** and not any particular group, keeping the need of the most marginalized as the most important, finally to include and not exclude and in the process healing wounds and building strength. In this process we have those with resources supporting those who do not have. This is not for a position for alms giving or of might or weakness but truly from the values we stand for – Life, Freedom and Dignity.

It has been close to five years of my direct association with IGSSS. In May 2013 when I say bye I am filled with gratitude and proud of the collective successes we have achieved. It has been purely a great team effort – a bunch of wonderful **Humans** - who made all this possible. I bow with **Humility** to the Almighty and with **Pride** I salute my fellow IGSSSians both the present and past. If not for you, we would never have had what we cherish as our IGSSS.

I also welcome our New Executive Director Mr. John Peter Nelson – all the best friend and I am more relaxed with you being in the saddle as I know IGSSS is in safe hands.

And the bye is NOT to ever meet but as is said in Indian culture phir milenge (to meet again). So hats off till we meet and wishes of grand successes in the future. In some form or other I shall be truly be a part of IGSSS!!!

Smiles... Joseph



OPINION

The Personal is Political

Sreya Mozumdar,
MANAGER, GENDER MAINSTREAMING

The Justice Verma Committee, constituted on December 23rd 2012 after public outrage over the Delhi rape case, released its report on the 23rd January 2013. Calling for suggestions from the public, the Committee received over 80,000 suggestions from stakeholders, social activists and the general public. The Committee also interacted with special interest groups and political parties in the process of formulating its recommendations. Having attributed the cause of the heinous rape squarely upon the lack of governance rather than lack of legal provisions, the Committee did put forward a few amendments to criminal law strongly.

The Committee clearly rejected the gender neutrality of rape as a crime both for victim and perpetrator, as projected under the Criminal Law Amendment Bill. Exhibiting a nuanced understanding of sexual violence, the Committee also recommended that sexual crimes on persons other than women – transgendered persons, gay men and other vulnerable groups – must be made punishable.

The Committee threw its weight behind the formation of a new law on 'command responsibility' that all special privileges accorded to armed forces should be done away with and all army personnel who commit sexual offences should be subject to the laws of the land.

The Committee recommended the recognizing of new offences under the Indian Penal Code – acid attacks, sexual assault (including all acts of non penetrative sexual violence), public disrobing of a woman, voyeurism and stalking.

The Committee also expanded its purview to include amendments on trafficking laws, provisions to prevent the exploitation of juveniles for labour or sexual exploitation and better protective measures for children against Child Sexual Abuse.

A significant recommendation was on the constitution of a Bill of Rights for women wherein

Breaking the Silence





United we Stand against violation and violence.



Justice Verma, the chief architect behind this report passed away on 22nd April, 2013. This remains his legacy for future generations of policy and lawmakers in India.

the state shall commit itself to provide right to life, security and bodily integrity; democratic and civil rights; equality and non discrimination; right to secured spaces; special provisions for elderly and disabled women; and protection of women in distress.

Unfortunately, most of these recommendations were not taken into cognisance under the Criminal Law (Amendment) Ordinance passed subsequently in February 2013. Serious concerns still remain at the conflating of penetrative and non penetrative assaults, the criminalizing of consensual sexual contact aimed at regulating sexual activity among the youth, the gender neutral definition of sexual assault (including rape), the refusal to amend permission required to prosecute

armed personnel in regions under Armed Forces Special Powers Act or other special laws, the failure to provide for rehabilitation of victims/survivors of sexual assault by the state and the retention of protectionist language of 'outraging the modesty of a woman' in the new law.

In essence, the Justice Verma Committee report has provided a framework (both philosophical and practicable) against gender inequity and violence in the country. In that sense, it has gone over and above its scope, as originally delineated and has clearly indicated the roadmap ahead for government and law makers alike. It, however, stands the risk of being reduced only to a catalogue of misogyny, if unheeded.

A report on Consultative Workshop on Community Based Disaster Management and Risk Resilience – South Asia Perspective

Sohini Bhattacharjee
EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATION

The inaugural session started with Ms. Nagma Firdaus, Senior Specialist, NDMA and Mr. Vikrant Mahajan, CEO, Sphere India sharing about the objective of the workshop which primarily focused on developing framework for Community Based Risk Resilience System. Another focal point for discussion was Good Practices developed under Disaster Risk Reduction interventions in South Asia.

This was followed by special addresses by Mr. Achut Luitel, Regional Director, Practical Action South Asia, who spoke on the issue of Climate Change. Mr. Achut shared that South Asia is diverse geographically and we are confronted with multiple

issues of disaster such as drought, flood and we need to design innovative measures when responding to them. He cited the successful example of aqua culture livelihood experiences of Practical Action to provide livelihood opportunities to communities during flood in Bangladesh.

Another special address was given by Mr. Ram Kishan, Regional Emergency Manager, Christian Aid, South Asia. He stressed on the fact that during any disaster intervention, preparedness is the key but takes otherwise a backseat as more focus is on response. He also shared that with regard to disaster interventions one needs to look at the issue of Climate Change and how it could be integrated at the policy level.



While formulating any rehabilitation plan, the needs of varied sections of population such as children, women etc should be focused and framed based on their special needs.

The keynote address was given by Dr. Muzaffar Ahmad, Hon'ble Member, National Disaster Management Authority. He shared that studies showed that investment on risk reduction with regard to disaster is cost effective. Dr. Ahmad also opined that dissemination of information, advocacy and awareness is of paramount importance in reducing vulnerabilities of communities.

In the technical input session, Professor Santosh Kumar, Professor and Head, Policy and Plans, spoke about the importance of documentation of the responses undertaken during any disaster based intervention. He also opined that community perspective or the role played by any community during response should also be highlighted while documentation. Confidence in community will be enhanced if we build their knowledge. Co-ordination of agencies is significant while carrying out relief work when hit by a disaster. He also shared that while preparing the framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, emphasis should be given towards inclusiveness of different categories of community such as women, differently abled, youth etc.

Mr. Colin McQuistan, International DRR and Climate Change Advisor, Practical Action, UK, shared that early warning system can prepare community to address the

threats posed by any imminent disaster. He stressed that with regard to DRR; there should be a shift in perspective from risk management to risk avoidance. Mr. Colin also shared the experiences of Practical Action with regard to Emergency Market Analysis and development of pre-disaster linkages of communities.

Gehendra Gurung, Head of Programme, Climate and DRR, Practical Action South Asia, spoke about the importance of effective planning. He shared about the usage of LIDAR and GIS technologies for flood risk mapping in Ambalantota, Sri Lanka. Based on identification of zones (High – Medium – Low) led to effective flood mitigation. Additional livelihood promotion such as handicrafts, sawing, eco-tourism amongst communities affected by flood proved to be beneficial. They were also encouraged to use flood resistant crop varieties.

A bottom up planning before pre monsoon season plays a critical role to reduce the impact of flood. Mr. Gehendra also shared that usage of appropriate technology helps to risk identify, risk monitor, risk communicate and building response capacity on the basis of risk information. He spoke about two good practices such as the silage for flood period in Bangladesh which saved livestock and handing over cash endowment to communities for flood



Setting up of alternative livelihood avenues for communities exposed to recurring disaster situations will immensely contribute towards securing their livelihood.

management in Sri Lanka which benefitted the community immensely in securing their livelihood. He also emphasized that water management through conservation and effective utilization of water resource will be significant in addressing drought.

Mr. Banku Bihari Sarkar, UNICEF India, shared UNICEF's approach with regard to community based disaster risk reduction. He shared that UNICEF follows a bottom up approach in DRR mainstreaming. Review and realization meetings are conducted with the community wherein discussion mostly revolves around questions such as when hit by a disaster what was its impact on the community, is there any possibility to reduce the losses and when the community agrees for the intervention. Village specific DRR plans are prepared and thematic task forces are set up to address issues such as on Malnutrition, WASH. He also suggested that as a future prospect, DRR cadres could be developed through self motivated volunteers.

Mr. Raman Kumar, Sphere India, spoke about some best practices on Disaster Risk Reduction documented in the book Turning the Tide published by Sphere India. The prominent best practices mentioned includes the Pond Excavation approach in Purulia West Bengal which was successful in drought mitigation, traditional water harvesting at Alwar, Rajasthan, building disaster resilient houses, Sunderban, West Bengal, community based shelter creation for floods, Barmer, Rajasthan, women led emergency health management, Dhemaji,

Assam, training local masons in building safe structure through traditional means in Uttarakhand, Dehradun, weather insurance – rainfall insurance scheme for farmers in Jamnagar, Gujarat.

The final session was based on Parallel Group Discussion and Panel Presentation on what is the strategic focus that India needs on CBDRR (Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction) and Risk Resilience. The participants were divided into four groups comprising of seven members and the core points that emerged from each group presentation will be shared as Recommendation to NDMA while policy framing and planning on CBDRR.

Teams were to discuss on four thematic points i.e. Early Warning System as a key element of Risk Resilient Communities, Integrating Climate Change and DRR, Institutional framework for operationalising CBDRM, CBDRM Policy and Planning: Linkage with Government Programmes.

The IGSSS representative chose to be part of the CBDRM Policy and Planning: Linkage with Government theme. Discussions revolved around developing a common framework across different bodies of Government Ministries such as Environment Ministry Forest Ministry which has a direct or indirect bearing with regard to disaster. Consortium forums should be initiated by the Government mechanisms at grassroot level and based on that structural framework should be developed. It was also suggested that the policy framework on Disaster need to take into account even the urban context such as office spaces.

The IGSSS representative shared that Government should design Information Penetration Tools in the local context through the usage of locally understood/referred media to disseminate any information with covering all the welfare schemes, risk reduction processes and every important aspect of disaster.

The final core points evolved during discussion which was finalized to be included as recommendation points for the policy framework on CBDRR is as follows:

- Holistic decision making framework to be developed that will involve nodal ministries and also the community in terms of framing policy guidelines.
- Community need to be engaged before the advent of any development process and a bottom to top approach involving the grassroots should be adopted by the government during disaster related interventions.
- Dissemination of Information to empower communities.
- Developing Complaints – Feedback Mechanisms and accountability based on that need to be ensured.

Recommendation list to be presented to NDMA. It will be a roadmap for implementation with regard to CBDRR.

The workshop ended with a vote of thanks by Mr. Dipankar Patnaik, Christian Aid, South Asia.



Community involved in setting up of High Raised Platforms in Dhakuakhana, Dhemaji, Assam

An Action Research on MGNREGA

JOEL JOSE,
ASSISTANT MANAGER, LIVELIHOOD

A study on “Effectiveness of MGNREGA in Ensuring Livelihood Security and Checking Distress Migration among the Vulnerable Section of Population in Pearl Project Areas” was carried out in the months of February – March 2013, in 3 districts in 3 different states covering 3 blocks, 8 Gram Panchayats, 16 villages and 80 Most Vulnerable families. The study aimed at assessing how the MGNREGA schemes implemented under the PEARL project, have been effective in providing livelihood support to the Most Vulnerable families on a sustained basis and in checking distress migration.

KEY FINDINGS OF THE STUDY ARE While the MGNREGA schemes were being implemented not as per the statutory norms mentioned in the guidelines of both Central and State Governments, the study still witnessed a positive impact of these schemes in terms of providing additional employment (about 30 to 100 days) and income (about Rs. 3000.00 to 12000.00) per annum to the MV families.

Assets created through MGNREGA schemes have directly and indirectly benefitted the MV families in increasing their income through better farm practices and wage earnings.

Supplementary income of the MV families generated through schemes under MGNREGA along with other safety net programs have enabled them to fight and eliminate absolute poverty and the hunger situation.

The improved situation of the MV families has enabled them to gradually reduce the incidence of distress migration

After implementation of MGNREGA, the local wage rate of the farm labourers has increased and it has come at par with the Minimum wage rate prescribed by the state governments for the agricultural wage laborers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Community / CBOs need to be sensitized and capacitated to enable them to demand jobs applying the right based approach and catalyze the provision of MGNREGA as per its statutory norms.

Community should be capacitated to envision MGNREGA as a means for village development and not merely as an employment generating/wage earning program.

Schemes under MGNREGA need to be planned as per the labour demand calendar, which is to be prepared taking the seasonal activities of the labourers into consideration.

Participation of the community needs to be assured while preparing a holistic Village Development Plan with an Integrated Area Approach (asset creation vis-à-vis labour plan).

Leadership qualities should be developed among the women members to create pressure on the implementing agencies to involve them in the planning and monitoring of the programmes and to also ensure the maintaining of transparency and accountability.

To ensure better service delivery, Customer Service Provider system (Andhra Pradesh Model) should be introduced in all the states

POLICY LEVEL

There is need to develop strong institutional arrangements to ensure proper implementation of provisions under MGNREGA in terms of:

Adequate trained Human Resources including technical persons need to be deployed at all the PRI levels.

Data base management information systems at GP level to track the job work processes should be developed.

Actions should be taken for introducing an effective grievance redressal mechanism.

The MGNREGA schemes should be redesigned to cover at least harvesting activities in the farm fields of the Marginal and small farmers.

A road construction in progress in North Chhattisgarh.



A Study on the Participation of Women in MGNREGA Planning and Social Audit Processes

Sreya Mozumdar,
MANAGER, GENDER MAINSTREAMING

MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) is an opportunity to redefine the rural women's identity in various ways; decision making, spending their wages independently or on their children's education, healthcare and clearing debts etc. However, an assessment of the involvement and investment of women in the planning and social audit processes envisaged under the Act, an exploration into existing structures of governance and a review of how enabling these institutions really are – these remain critical areas of enquiry from the gender perspective. Hence, this study attempted to undertake an assessment in Madhya Pradesh (Jhabua) and Rajasthan (Churu) – such that recommendations may emerge from experiences and voices of women on the field.

Recommendations

Development of an overall advocacy plan after analyzing the existing key gender gaps and looking at methods of translating the plan through state/district level initiatives.

Campaigning on breaking myths on gender roles and rights led by civil society organisations and collectives

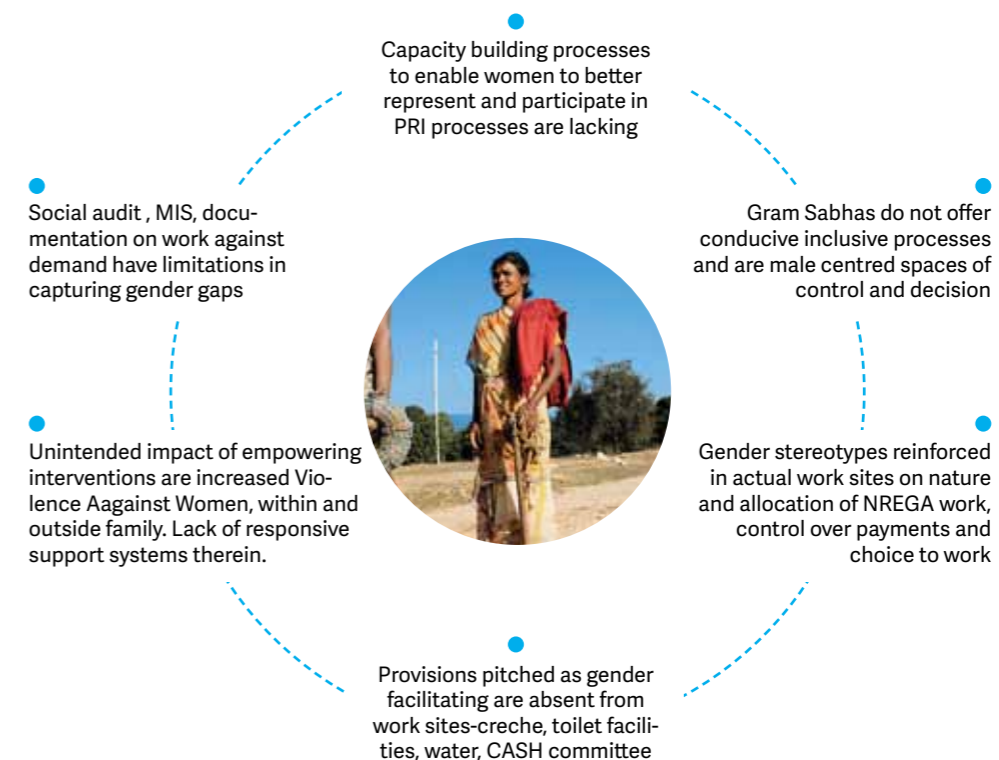
active in the area.

Gender specific measures in actual MGNREGA implementation process:

- Dialogue on diversifying the work being done through MGNREGA
- Enhancing engagement of women in planning, decision making, distribution of work through capacitating processes
- Financial allocation for addressing processes necessary for increasing women's participation
- Holding ward meetings exclusively with women for gathering their perspectives
- Positive discrimination measures for extremely marginalised women i.e. deserted women and widows
- Proactive planning to capture violence and discrimination by setting up women empowerment centres in a cluster of 10-12 villages.

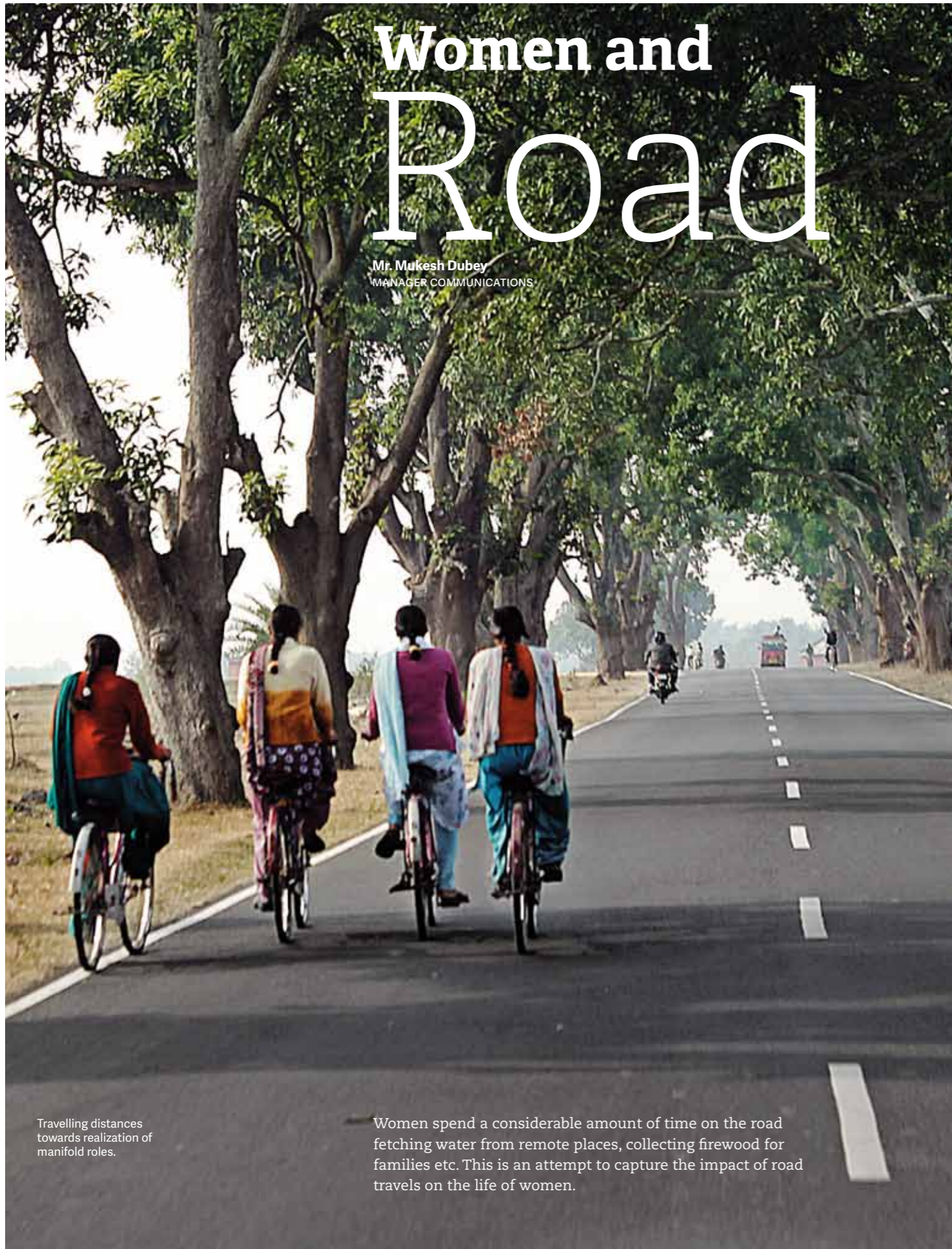
Broader linkages with other institutions to make MGNREGA an ongoing sustainable empowerment process for women.

Stand alone advocacy with women headed Gram Panchayats to demonstrate and advance advocacy and model building.



Women and Road

Mr. Mukesh Dubey
MANAGER COMMUNICATIONS



Travelling distances towards realization of manifold roles.

Women spend a considerable amount of time on the road fetching water from remote places, collecting firewood for families etc. This is an attempt to capture the impact of road travels on the life of women.



From top: Trading difficult terrains in search of livelihood; School bound; Travelling miles... to keep the kitchen burning at home; Trading at the local market .

Food Support for the evicted at Ejipura, Bengaluru

Jyoti Gupta
EXECUTIVE PROGRAMS, CITYMAKERS



A shocking eviction drive of Economically Weaker Section (EWS) of people took place at Ejipura near Kormangala in Bengaluru from 18th to 21st January, 2013, by BBMP (Bruhath Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike). The four days demolition drive of over 900 households (approximately 5000 people), rendered thousands homeless overnight.

This eviction took place because Bruhath Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) and Maverick Holdings entered into a Public Private Partnership (PPP). This 15 acres of prime property where the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) Quarters once stood shall be used to construct malls. As per the agreement, half the land will be commercially developed, and the remaining will house the 1,512 original allottees of the EWS Quarters that were demolished in 2003. But, this seems to be a remote possibility as most people have migrated to different places and it seems highly unlikely that they will ever return to claim their allotted land.

However, when asked about the alternative arrangements for the displaced families in Ejipura, the BBMP officials said "Where is the land available?" The BBMP functionaries could not force the developer to allocate land temporarily.

IGSSS along with several likeminded organizations came together for the rights of the people at Ejipura. The organization along with the Akshaya Patra Foundation arranged for 15,000 plates of meals for the evicted people for 20 days. Additionally, IGSSS also supported 800 plates of food for two days. In coordination with Youth for Seva Organization, horlicks and milk was arranged for the children at Ejipura.

Apart from this, one memorandum was submitted to the Chairperson, National Human Rights Commission, Delhi (NHRC), through CSO Forum for the CityMakers - Karnataka, demanding justice for the evicted community of Ejipura.

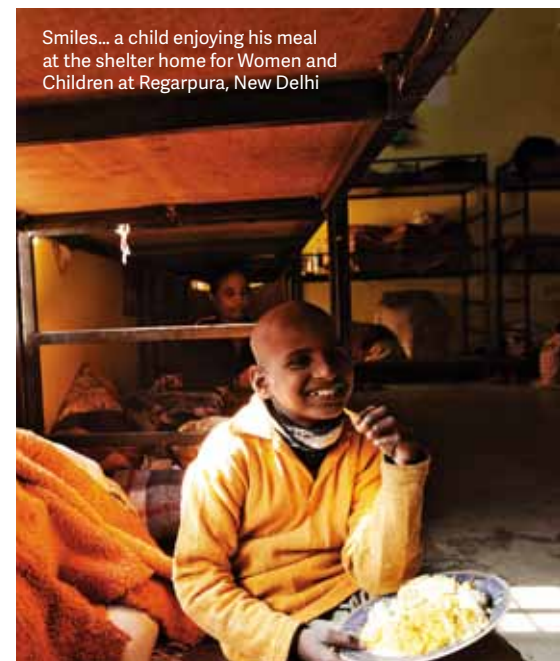
NHRC replied in affirmative stating that this case has already been registered with the Commission and it was also shared that the organizations' complaint will be clubbed together with this case.

OFFICIAL MADE TO STEP DOWN OVER INSENSITIVE STATEMENT ON THE CITYMAKERS

Ambalika Saha
OFFICER COMMUNICATIONS, URBAN POVERTY

AK Sharma, Director, Night Shelter, DUSIB, in a letter addressed to Dr Joseph Sebastian (Executive Director, IGSSS) on 14th Feb, 2013, expressed doubt about the mode of payment to the advocates who appears in the court on behalf of SAM – BKS. The court, however, questioned the legal sanctity which compelled him to draft an authoritative letter while being fully aware that this is a suo moto case.

His answer to the court remained unsubstantiated where he quoted that his intentions to extract unnecessary information from an organisation that defends the rights of citymakers were personal. He was not only reprimanded but the fear of losing his job was impressed upon him by competent authority. The ethos of the struggle to ensure a dignified life for all was best captured when the judge asked Mr. Sharma, to spend a night outside in the cold, may be then he can understand what a home is.



Smiles... a child enjoying his meal at the shelter home for Women and Children at Regarpura, New Delhi