

**Capacity Building and Policy Advocacy for Land Rights and Entitlements of the SC communities, particularly Women in Gaya District of Bihar (January 2012- January 2016)**



## **Executive Summary**

Deshkal Society geographically has been working at three levels namely, grassroots, state and national levels. At the grassroots level, the organization has been working in approximately 100 villages of the Gaya district in Bihar for the last ten years through Dalit Resource Centre based in Gaya. In Bihar, focus of the work has been through addressing issues and challenges in the thematic areas of land rights, elementary education, sustainable livelihoods and culture. Micro level strengths of Deshkal Society have been leveraged at the national level for realizing the policy advocacy and networking related goals. As a result of this, the organization has developed constructive and creative linkages in twelve state of India in collaboration with civil society organizations, government and international agencies with policy advocacy, facilitation in the uptake of entitlements, formation and development of community based organizations and research being at the center of operations. The themes that have been primarily addressed in these geographical areas are land rights, elementary education, sustainable rural livelihoods and culture.

Deshkal Society and its network partners developed an innovative approach for facilitating delivery of parcha and parwana to women-headed households in selected blocks of Gaya district, Bihar. With support of the Poorest Areas Civil Society (A DFID Programme), the initiative reached out to Scheduled Castes communities spread over 480 villages in 4 blocks of the district. Over a period of four years, beginning 2012, a total of 11,426 applications from eligible households were initiated of which 10,125 women-headed households received entitlement documents for homestead lands with active association and support from district and block-level administrations of Gaya district, Bihar. Apart from these, they have facilitated 3250 PTM meetings supported the formulation of 240 School Education Committees as well as developed a sustained programme for strengthening the School Education Committee through training and improvement of midday meals in 84 schools and ensuring 100% enrolment in 257 government primary schools.

Notable in the initiative is the community-based approach for mobilizing the community, which brought them together as cohesive groups and build their capacity to act as an effective pressure group. In the process, Deshkal Society and partner organization established and strengthened 480 village level community based organizations (CBOs), 54 panchayat level CBOs, four block level CBOs and one district level CBO. The Department of Revenue & Land Reforms, Government of Bihar, puts on record the success of this unique state– non-state collaboration in reaching out to the landless poor, especially Scheduled Castes, an helping them secure their legitimate rights from right-based perspective.

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## List of abbreviations

<b>CBO</b>	Community Based Organizations
<b>CO</b>	Circle Officer
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organizations
<b>GNK</b>	Gram Nirman Kendra
<b>IAY</b>	Indira Awaaz Yojna
<b>IGC</b>	International Growth Centre
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communication Technology
<b>LSSK</b>	Lok Shakti Shikshan Kendra
<b>PACS</b>	Poorest Areas Civil Society
<b>PGSS</b>	Prakhan Gram Swaraj Sabha
<b>QPR</b>	Quarterly Periodical Report
<b>RTI</b>	Right to Information
<b>SC</b>	Scheduled Castes
<b>SEC</b>	School Education Committees
<b>SSA</b>	Sarva Siksha Abhiyan

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1. About the organisation and the network partners

- **Origin and brief history of the organisation(s) including the network partners.**

Deshkal Society, since 1995, has initiated and innovated research, advocacy and grassroots interventions to further the inclusion and equity of marginalised communities in a democratised mainstream society. Issues of social exclusion/ inclusion, marginality and diversity in education, land rights and entitlements, and culture and sustainable livelihoods are the main focus where we continue to develop a conceptual understanding of the mainstream discourse and how it has evolved to limit and marginalise the underprivileged communities. Our knowledge based activism, including publications, consultative seminars and a sustained partnership between marginalised communities and our learning centres has helped us in democratising mainstream knowledge structures and policy development in favour of marginalized groups for their empowerment, social equity, inclusive growth and freedom.

There were three network partners, Prakhn Gram Swaraj Sabha (PGSS), Gram Nirman Kendra (GNK) and, Lok Shakti Sichan Kendra (LSSK), in the project. It is significant that all these organisations were formed in early 1980 and their common key objectives changed the lives of marginalised communities, especially of Musahar community in villages of Gaya district as well as built a struggle against oppression and exclusion of Scheduled Caste communities, especially SC women, from right-based approach.

- **Vision and mission of the organisation. Geographic coverage**

Deshkal Society aims towards commitment to equality, social diversity and sustainable development to build an egalitarian society.

Geographical coverage of the work of the organization national level across states in India focussing on implementation project in three districts— Gaya, Katihar and Purnia in Bihar

- **Social issues / themes and community groups with which the organization works.**

Deshkal Society works primarily in three key themes for social change and inclusive development of society, mainly of the marginalised and historically-excluded communities. These are as follows:

- A. Elementary education
- B. Homestead land rights
- C. Sustainable rural livelihood and culture.

They work with marginalized and subaltern groups and communities, primarily Dalits, minorities, children, women and landless laborers.

## 2. About PACS supported project

- **Key issues / problem that the project sought to address, project objectives and approach.**

The key objectives of the project were to improve uptake of land rights and entitlements by SCs, particularly women and enable transformation for them to live with dignity.

The team had identified a number of critical issues which were taken up during the implementation of the project. They are mainly legal entitlement of homestead land; creating awareness and delivering of homestead land, especially to SC women; building an effective participation and generating a strong voice for demand of existing development schemes, primarily right to homestead land as well as school education committee; and building an effective pressure for improvement of schools in terms of regularisation of midday meal and inclusive practice against discrimination of children from marginalised community.

- **Articulation the “Theory of Change” for the project.**

Deshkal Society do understand the key factor of inequality and caste operation is primarily determined by structural inequality and ideology and practice of caste hierarchy persistently existing in contemporary society and history of Indian society. It also understands that the oppressed and marginalised communities have been taking initiatives and organising to build resistance and struggle against oppression and subjugation.

- **Coverage including geographic coverage, communities with which the project worked, socio-economic and political context in which the project interventions are located.**

Gaya district consists of the highest percentage (around 33%) of the Scheduled Caste (SC) population among all the districts in Bihar, and nearly two-thirds (around 60%) of its SC population belongs to the most marginalized Musahar community (Census of India, 2001). The Musahar community is socially at the bottom of the caste status ranking even among the SCs. They are also educationally the most marginalized community with abysmally low percentage of literacy- 4.0% for male and 0.3% for female (K.S. Singh, *The Scheduled Castes*, 1993). In terms of poverty, they occupy the lowest layer among social groups in Bihar ( Shashi Bhushan, “Reflections on the Material Conditions of Musahars”, in Hemant Joshi and Sanjay Kumar (ed.), *Asserting Voices: Changing Culture, Identity and Livelihood of the Musahars in the Gangetic Plains*, Deshkal Publication, Delhi.).

The occupational structure of the community shows that historically they have been mainly bonded agricultural labourers under the traditional Kamiauti system, and now they are primarily landless agricultural labourers (95.3%) and have the lowest percentage of workers as cultivators of land (2.5%) (K.S. Singh, op. cit.). Socially disaggregated data computed from NSSO shows that close to three-fourth (72.3%) of the rural SC households in Bihar do not own any land other than homestead (Aparajita Bakshi, ‘Social Inequality in Land Ownership in India’, Indian statistical Institute, Calcutta.). With reference to homestead land, a large number of households that are shown in NSSO data to have ownership may not in fact have legal ownership of the same, since ownership is taken as de facto ownership-like possession only and not as de jure or actual legal ownership. A base line survey carried out by Deshkal Society and its partners during the PACS1 programme clearly revealed that about 65% of the SC households, particularly Musahar households, did not have legal entitlement to homestead land they have been living on, even for generations.

- **Key strategies and approaches taken up for the implementation of the project.**

- Awareness generation and mobilization among SC communities on laws, policies and provisions on land rights and entitlements.
- Formation and strengthening of CBOs among SC communities, and enhancing their knowledge and skills, particularly of women, to take up leadership roles in CBOs and CSOs; to raise their collective voice and influence decision making processes in local governance institutions such as Village Panchayats; and act as effective pressure groups for claiming their rights and entitlements.
- Enhancing the knowledge, skills and capacity of CBOs and CSOs for improved dialogue, effective interface and networking with PRIs and the government at block, district and state levels.
- Public campaigns and advocacy led by networks of CBOs, and CSOs through mass rallies/ dharnas and public hearings.
- Awareness generation and sensitization among government officials on the land rights and entitlements of SCs through interface meetings at Panchayat and block levels.
- Advocacy and Policy engagement with the government at district, state and national levels led by CBOs, CSOs and networks through interactive meetings and workshops.
- Bringing out information bulletins in Hindi on land rights for dissemination among the CBOs, CSOs, social workers, researchers, intelligentsia and govt. officials.
- Media meets of local and national print as well as electronic media to share the developments, experiences and lessons from the project implementation.
- Development of website with interactive features completely focused on the issue of land rights to generate dialogue and debate on the issue among various stakeholders.
- Process documentation, and preparation, publication and dissemination of the report on the experience and lessons of the project among various stakeholders.
- **A summary of the key activities taken up under the project.**
  - **Base line survey for obtaining data of the status of homestead land in selected villages.**  
A random sample survey of 10% of the target households in the four target blocks was conducted by the project team in order to identify and establish a baseline status of the households not having legal entitlement to homestead land and landless households eligible for distribution of surplus govt. land. The survey identified surplus govt. land available for distribution to the landless households. With regard to elementary education, the survey identified percentage of out of school children. It also identified the percentage of functioning/ non-functioning mid-day meal scheme as well as the school based practices and processes that discriminate against children from marginalized communities. The project team conducted the survey with the help of Community leaders and PRI
  - **Formation of village/ tola and panchayat level CBOs as well as forming federation at block and district level CBOs**



Active SC community members, especially women members, were identified and selected through village meetings. These selected community members were formed CBO Name Gram Vikas Samitte. 480 villages/ tolas, and select from among themselves office bearers such as president and secretary of the Gram Vikas Samitte. Women were especially encouraged to take up leadership roles. The village based CBOs were actively involved in planning, implementation and monitoring of all the village based activities. **CBOs** Panchayat level federation of village based CBOs were formed in 54 Panchayat through a meeting of members of the entire village CBOs. Each village CBO was selected a certain number of their representatives who were formed the Panchayat level federation, Each Panchayat Level CBO selected a certain number of Members formed 4 Block Level CBOs and selected members of All four Block level CBOs formed one District Level CBOs. The Panchayat, Block and District Level federations of CBOs were responsible for planning, implementation and monitoring of activities at the Panchayat, Block and District level, negotiating and engaging with the Mukhiya, ward members, and govt. officials such as Karmachari and Amin, Cos, LRDCs Additional Collector, and DM and assessing the progress of the project. Representatives of village/ tola based CBOs have been the main stakeholders. Project staff and CSO members were facilitated the formation of Panchayat, Block and District level federations of CBOs.

➤ **Training of Folk artists and Performance by Folk Artists**

A Two days training of Folk Artists was organized for preparation of songs and performances on the themes of land rights and education. 10 Folk Artists Folk artists, particularly from the SC communities, were engaged for awareness generation, sensitization and mobilization of the community on the issues of land rights and education. The medium of songs and street plays were used by the folk artists for effectively communicating messages and information to the communities on various aspects of the issue of land rights and education. The folk artists were composing songs especially based on the themes related to land rights and education. Before starting their performances, a two-day practice training of the folk artists was held. Folk artists, CBO members, and communities were the main stakeholders. One performance by folk artists was held in each of the targeted panchayats. Thus, a total of 54 such performances were held. In 1<sup>st</sup> year 25 performances and in 2<sup>nd</sup> year 29 performances were held

➤ **Meetings of Block and district level federation of CBOs**

Meetings of block level federation of CBOs, were held to identify the issues and problems at the Block and Panchayat levels; to negotiate and engage with the elected representatives of the PRIs and to assess the progress in implementation of the various activities. All these 24 meetings were also discussed and identified issues and problems related to the functioning of primary government schools and how to improve their functioning on issues such as improvement of teaching-learning practices and processes, Mid-day Meals, sanitation and toilet facilities, especially for girls, barrier free access for children with disabilities, representation of parents from socially excluded communities in SMC etc.

➤ **Parent-teacher meetings in schools**

3250 Parent–teacher meetings were organized in the primary schools in the project area. These meetings were discussed issues of the representation of women and SC communities in the SMCs and the functioning of the SMCs. Various school based factors responsible for low attendance, low retention and high drop-out of children, especially from SC communities, and the measures that need to be undertaken at the school level for improvement in the functioning and performance of schools were also discussed and identified. These meetings will be participated by teachers, head teachers, parents, SMC members, village level CBO, PRI representatives, and the project staff.

➤ **Joint workshops of block level federation of CBOs, CSOs, govt. officials and representatives of PRIs**

32 Joint workshops of block level federations of CBOs, CSOs, govt. officials and representatives of PRIs were organized for sharing and discussing the issues and information on land rights of the SCs, the provisions of laws and policies, the ground realities with regard to implementation of laws and policies and granting of land rights of the SCs, the problems and constraints faced by the SCs in acquiring their rights and entitlements, the issues and problems related to improvement of schools and the efforts and measures that need to be undertaken by the govt. as well as by the community at various levels. These joint workshops were sensitized Block level officials to the issue of land rights and entitlements of the SCs, as well as issues of school improvement, and develop plans for effective and proactive measures to be undertaken by the govt. officials. These workshops were participated by CBO members, project staff, CSO members, CO/BDO, CI, Block Panchayat Samiti members and Pramukh, CRC and BRC coordinators, BEOs, as well as representatives of communities other than the SCs.

➤ **Interface meetings between block and district level federation of CBOs and block level govt. officials**

24 Interface meeting in Block and 6 Interface meetings in District Level federations of CBOS and Govt. officials were organized to share and discuss the constraints and hurdles being faced in resolving the claims for settlement of legal entitlements to homestead land and distribution of surplus government land to the eligible SC households, as well as in improvement of quality of teaching-learning in schools, and to evolve strategies for overcoming the specific hurdles. These interface meetings were helped in keeping a constant pressure on the officials for early resolution of the claims and applications on land rights, and the problems in school improvement. These meetings were participated by members of block and District level federation of CBOs, CSO activists, project staff, Block Panchayat Samiti members, Zila Parishad members and govt. officials such as COs, LRDCs Additional collector, Circle Inspectors, CRCs and BRCs coordinators and BEOs

➤ **Joint workshops of the District Federation for Land Rights and govt. officials**

7 workshops were organized to share and discuss the project objectives and activities, the constraints and hurdles in realization of the land rights of the SCs, and implementation of RTE Act, the need for streamlining and simplifying administrative procedures and processes, and the need for setting up joint planning and monitoring committees at Block and District levels in order to facilitate the implementation of land rights of the SCs. The CBOs were presented and discussed their plans and recommendations in these workshops with govt. officials, and evolve and formulate, jointly with govt. officials, concrete plans and strategies for removing the administrative hurdles and effective implementation of the laws, policies and provisions on land rights of the SCs. Concrete plans for proactive measures and for setting up joint committees for planning and monitoring of the effective implementation of the laws and provisions were evolved during the workshops time to time.

➤ **Public Hearing at state level**

A Public Hearing on Land Rights and Entitlements of SCs was held at Gaya. A panel of eminent persons officials of govt. departments such as land reforms and revenues, all COs of Four Project Blocks, All LRDCs Additional collector and DM Gaya, members of SC communities, including women, from the target villages, CBO leaders from SC communities, and social workers and activists with regard to the practices and processes of implementation of the laws and provisions and the denial of land rights to the SC communities were Participated. On the basis of the hearing, the panel will formulate

concrete recommendations for ensuring the realization of the land rights of the SCs. As the result of this public hearing a State level Core committee was formed in State level by Department of Land Reform committee, Govt. of Bihar.

➤ **Workshops with govt. officials at state level**

2 state level workshops with govt. officials were organized at Patna under the leadership of the District Federation on Land Rights and CSOs to share and discuss the constraints and hurdles in realization of the land rights of the SCs, the need for streamlining and simplifying administrative procedures and processes, and the need for setting up joint planning and monitoring committees at Block, District and State levels, and the need for prioritization and proactive action by the govt. in order to facilitate the effective implementation of laws and policies on land rights of the SCs. As the result of these workshops a Circular for settlement of AAM gairmajarua land for homestead

➤ **Filing of application for settlement of homestead land and distribution of surplus govt. land**

Project staff and the CSO activists were assisted and facilitated the CBOs for preparing and filing applications for granting of legal entitlement of homestead land to SC households, and for distribution of surplus govt. land to landless SC households. As a result about 12000 Application were filed out of which 10125 families were provided with Legal entitlement of their homestead land.

➤ **Bringing out information bulletins and media meet**

The documentation team of Deshkal Society has regularly published a quarterly bulletin Vaas Bhoomi ka Haq for four years from July 2012-December 2015. Therefore, the total number of quarterly bulletins published were 14 issues. The purpose of the bulletin was to advocate the critical issues of homestead land among key stakeholders and disseminate the achievement of the project among key stakeholders. Apart from these, the bulletin was key instrumental to coordinate and strengthen the emerging network among CSOs and govt. organisations. So, we are still planning to continue the regularity of the bulletin in the same commitment and spirit.

Deshkal Society also hold an interaction with journalists of print and electronic media at district level. It was a good occasion through which the team shared challenges and achievements of the project. It is very significant that a section of the journalists paid serious attention to the work of Deshkal Society and as much as possible they published news about it from time to time in respected daily newspapers of both Hindi and English. Therefore, the dissemination of our achievement has spread out in public domain at state level.

➤ **Process documentation, report preparation and publication for dissemination**

The documentation team of Deshkal Society consistently documented the entire processes, critical issues and challenges of the project in the form of reports. The total number of such kind of report is four. As a result, we have also developed very relevant quantitative and qualitative data through this documentation on the basis of implementation of the project. Needless to mention, the dissemination of the report has not only provided opportunity to share our achievements among key stakeholders but also played a critical role for strengthening network building among govt. officials and CSOs.

### 3. The change story of the project

As per the project, Deshkal Society and its network partner primarily took up theme of homestead land, and additionally Right to Education.

The communities, especially women, took initiative and not only raised issues and demands for change of their lives for proper implementation of developmental scheme but also created pressure at grassroots level to key officials of governance. In other words, they are empowered in the true sense for demanding their rights and raising their voice for implementation of developmental schemes at village and panchayat levels. Apart from these, the participation of Scheduled Caste communities and especially women has increased in local public institutions, primarily gram sabha of panchayat and School Education Committees. They also understand not only the role and responsibility of gram sabha but also know their role in strengthening the gram sabha and School Education Committees. It is also significant that they have developed their own capacity for collective bargaining to pressurise the local authority for fulfilling their demand.

#### Results and Impact

- Increased dialogue and partnership between socially excluded communities, PRIs, block and district level revenue officials for inclusive land rights.
- Existence of sustainable and committed network of key stakeholders for advocating land rights at various levels.
- Enhanced support of revenue officials and PRI representatives for application processing, Parcha and Parwana delivery and possession of land.
- Increased policy advocacy and visible policy measures demonstrated through government policies and directives.
- Enhanced knowledge, skills, capacity of CBOs and Civil Society Organization (CSOs) for improved dialogue, effective interface and networking with PRIs and the government.
- Formation of 539 CBOs and federation of CBOs with 9640 members from socially excluded groups.
- Delivery of 10125 legal entitlements to the households in terms of Parcha and Parwana.

#### 3.1 Summary of outcome of the project on homestead land:

Block	Gram Panchayat	Villages	CBOs and federation of CBOs	Households (SC)	Applications Submitted	Parcha/Parwana delivered to women heads of Households
4	54	480	539	44,717	11,426	10,125

#### 3.2. Summary of outcome in education:

Activities	Numbers
Parent teacher Meetings	3250
Formation of SMCS	240 Schools in four blocks

Training of SMCs	With members of 50 school's SMC Members
Improvement in midday Meal	84 Schools in 4 blocks
Enrolment of Children	257

### **Most Effective Strategies and the enabling factors**

As discussed earlier, approach and methodology of forming and sustaining CBOs are primarily based on collective strength of communities. Therefore, communities are the backbone for social change and organizations in the form of CBOs provide them a platform to take initiative as well as sustain their own efforts and demands. Apart from this, the team observed that historically excluded and marginalized communities are realizing their oppressive past to build their struggle and change their lives in a long term. We feel that the external agencies, either civil society or political party can facilitate the whole process of change instead of being on the vanguard of social change.

Apart from this, CBOs have strategically built up creative and organic relationship in the macro context in terms of policy advocacy as a result, issues emerging through implementation of the project have been well noted by Department of Revenue and Land Reforms, Govt. of Bihar and certain rules related to procedure of delivering homestead land have been changed by the concerned department. For example, earlier Divisional Commissioner was entitled to issue *parwana* for the *raiti* land but this authority was given directly to District Magistrate in Bihar. Therefore, it is one of the best example of how CSOs has developed creative engagement with state level government department and succeeded to change certain rules and procedures on this critical issue.

### **Challenges faced**

During project implementation, Deshkal Society and its network partner realised the need to build constructive dialogue and creative engagement with state actors, especially key officials of local government institutions. Generally their views are different and sometimes hostile to that of the CSO representatives and project team. They also questioned the legal validity of these groups in facilitating the processes of legal entitlement. So in the beginning of the project, the team and members of CSOs adopted a strategy to develop consistent dialogue and one-to-one meeting with them. Apart from this, they have invited them to meetings, training and workshop for collective discussion on this agenda. In this process the team submitted a number of applications to the block office as well as facilitated the process for legal verification of applications at village and panchayat level. This is so that local revenue officials can understand that members of civil society are their partner committed for collective agenda instead of acting as supervisor or vigilante of their work. The result is that they finally realised a true sense of partnership with civil society organisations and the constructive and co-operative role of the team and civil society organisations.

Another key challenge of the whole project has been to build creative and constructive linkages between micro-context and macro-context. In this regard, Deshkal Society and partner organization have organized a district-level workshop attended by key officials of the government, including Principal Secretary of Department of Revenue and Land Reforms, Govt. of Bihar. They were properly educated not only of the value of partnership between state and non-state actors but also of the message given by the Principal Secretary to co-operate and work with the team and representatives of civil society organizations.

## Issues of exclusion and discrimination faced

There are considerable number of issues of social exclusion and discrimination in the work area of the organization. One of the major reasons for low uptake of the entitlement to homestead and other land rights despite the existence of provisions under the law is due to the predominant impact of a mind-set where SCs, particularly Musahar communities become a victim of discrimination and neglect in realizing the entitlements to homestead and other land rights. The government officials and institutions are not responsive, and sometimes even hostile, to the rights and entitlements of the SCs. The implementation of the laws and policies are, therefore, neglected by them. The applications filed by the SCs for settlement of land are kept pending by the officials. They are also denied access to official land records and information. The format of application for land settlement has twelve headings and every heading requires 3-11 items of information. The SCs find it extremely difficult to procure all this information as they are denied access to govt. officials, records and information. Due to lack of legal entitlement, SCs are always at the risk of being evicted from their homestead land. In case of *railyati* land, the landowners use the threat of eviction to force SCs into oppressive labour relations. In case of *gairmazarua* land, the settlements are declared illegal by the officials and denied basic facilities like drinking water, link roads, and even BPL cards and voter ID cards. The SC communities are also politically marginalized in the local power structure, and are unable to assert their voice and influence decision making processes in local governance institutions such as Village Panchayats for claiming their legitimate rights and entitlements.

There is a perception among dominant caste and class that children belonging to the marginalized communities suffer from deficient learning due to genetic inheritance. They also think that the reasons for the existence of backwardness among the marginalized communities primarily Musahar community is inherent in their culture and thus they tend to believe that their progress is something that is no possible. This is aptly manifested in the folklore where it is said ' *Musahar kitna dekhta hai? Thali Itna* '. There also exists a deep mindset in both marginalized and non-marginalized communities that girls cannot compete with boys in education. Such a mindset translates into discriminatory behavior toward the members of marginalized communities in general and Musahar community in particular. For example there are many instances where members of the community feel that their dignity is the threatened and this is most explicit when direct and indirect reference is made to adoption of pig rearing by Musahar community. In the schools, children suffer due to expressions based on the caste identity that have a debilitating impact on the personality and potentiality of first generation learners belonging to SC communities. Access to the provision of national flagship programmes such as Midday School programme in the school gets severely affected as a result of this mindset.

## Learning

There are number of learning from the process of implementation of the project which are as follows:

**CBOs:** Deshkal Society, project team, and partner organization realized deeply that collective strength of the community is pivotal for social change. In other words, communities properly know their own problems and subjugation as well as oppression and time to time they take initiative in their own ways for betterment of their lives but the fundamental problem before us is when they face severe onslaught of repression in terms of structural inequality in society as well as everyday form of resistance from dominant caste, and class, including insensitive bureaucrats. Consequently,

they are harassed in this process and lose their spirit of struggle. In this context the team understood the collective strength of the community and developed a strategy through which they have formed community-based organizations in every targeted village of the project. Therefore, it is a critical learning for us to understand their collective strength as well as relevance of community-based organizations.

**Relation between state and non-state actor:** How to build a development programme in true partnership between state and non-state actor is also a very significant learning for us. Here state indicates government agencies and non-state, civil society organizations. In the process of implementation we have learned co-ordination, negotiation and dialogue with key officials of state actor. The result of this is that we succeeded in developing a true partnership between key stakeholders of the project.

- **Role of Women**

Since the beginning of the implementation of the project the progress of the Scheduled Caste communities have been in the forefront in terms of forming of community-based organization, generating demand for legal entitlement of homestead land, taking initiative from village, block and even district level with reference to building pressure on key officials of government organization. Therefore, the project team has not only ensured participation and leadership of women through strategy of the project but also gave a collective platform through which women of Scheduled Caste communities can raise their voice collectively for demanding the legal entitlement of homestead land.

The impact of the process can be evaluated in terms of output of the project. The project team had ensured 100% legal entitlement of homestead land in the name of women in each and every household. Consequently, these women for the first time realized a sense of ownership in terms of homestead land and most importantly, they felt deeply that they can achieve their right if they move ahead for receiving entitlement through collective strength as provided by different development schemes and as envisaged in the constitution. In education theme narrate women centric initiative, perceptible change in women's role in the community and leadership building SMC

**Project impact for strengthening the organizational systems, processes and capacities and influencing organizational approach and understanding towards social exclusion and inclusive interventions. Contribution of PACS towards organizational visibility, creation and utilization of opportunities.**

Deshkal Society and partner organization have received consistent support from PACS team in terms of strengthening and capacity building of organizations. Needless to mention, the methodology of evaluation and monitoring through QPR and regular field visit from PACS team have given a professional training and organized a system for professional implementation of the project. Through this process the project team have learnt not only to maintain the schedule of the project but also understood how to ensure achievement of the project as per the timeline of the proposal. Therefore, we realized the value of time as well as professional monitoring and evaluation system through QPR.

Since conceptualization and beginning of the project Deshkal Society and its partner organization were fully aware of understanding of social exclusion and inclusion in society as well as in the

process of development. However, during the process of the implementation of project the team realized through interaction with the PACS team that we have to ensure at every stage and processes, participation and decision making of those communities who have been historically excluded. Therefore, at every stage in the process of implementation of the project, the community especially Scheduled Caste women took leadership for taking forward the project and identified demands and issues which were essential for inclusive development.

Apart from this, Deshkal Society and its partner organization also realized the need for ensuring greater participation of those from marginalized community especially women in terms of management, staffing pattern and governing board.

The role of PACS with reference to organization visibility and utilization of opportunities had been to link and co-ordinate with government officials at district and state levels as well as build a collaborative platform with civil society organizations working in common areas and issues of social exclusion. Apart from this, PACS team have consistently provided ITC materials in terms of pamphlet, posters for advocating our critical issues in public and policy domain. Not only this, they have created a strong ground at state level in terms of number of seminars and workshops in which Deshkal Society and its partner organization have represented their own voice and issues in front of key stakeholders of government officials. Therefore, we realized how macro context have creatively and meaningfully linked with macro level through this strategy for supporting PACS team.

- **Networks, alliances and forums of CSOs promoted by PACS and how did PACS contribute towards strengthening them.**

Deshkal Society do believe that PACS meaningfully and constructively created a consistent dialogue on equal footing among diverse background of key stakeholders of the project. Needless to mention, dialogue is key instrumental for ensuring the creation and sustainability of any network and forum. Therefore PACS succeeded in this thoroughly. Apart from this, they identified clearly the common concern and interest among diverse background of civil society organizations and developed a common agenda like common minimum programme through intense engagement and consultation with these civil society organizations. Most importantly they have successfully given a message of the value of collective strength to these organizations. They also took initiative constructively through which they realized alienation and discontentment among forums of CSOs. Besides they have not only engaged in constructive dialogue with them but also solved problems as much as possible among forums of CSOs. Consequently role of PACS have been very crucial and significant in terms of negotiation and sharpening the agenda of the network as well as mitigate the crisis among forums of CSOs.

- **Recognition of the project work**

The Department of Revenue and Land Reforms, Govt. of Bihar has considered this project as a model project on Homestead land from community-based approach. Here, **the document endorsed by Department of Revenue and Land Reforms, Govt. of Bihar has been attached.** Apart from this, London School of Economics and Oxford University under the programme of International Growth Centre (IGC) have also considered a significant work on homestead land from the approach of effectively of local governance. Therefore, the work on homestead land which has been developed



through the project in partnership with PACS has been recognized duly at the state as well as international level.

- **Future programme intervention**

Deshkal Society is planning to scale up its programme on Homestead Land in Gaya, Bihar: A Model of Community Based Approach in newly selected four blocks of Gaya district of Bihar. In this context, we will like to share that recently Deshkal Society has developed a partnership with London School of Economics and Oxford University for project The Impact of Community Mobilization on Land Rights Governance: Evidence from a Homestead Land Entitlement Initiative in Gaya District of Bihar, India under the programme of International Growth Centre (IGC) funded by UK Aid for the period of January 2016- June 2017.

The aim and objective of the scaled-up project is how and to what extent can community mobilization initiatives improve homestead land rights governance. In particular, does community mobilization help to secure the entitlement of homestead land for landless members of the Scheduled Castes (SCs)? If so, through what channels are effects exerted? The project will attempt to address these questions through a mixed methods evaluation of a specific intervention through Deshkal Society's "Homestead Land Rights in Villages of Gaya District of Bihar" initiative. The policy research as well as implementation will include three components: a) a village-level randomized control trial of household samples from 150 villages; b) 65 in-depth stakeholder interviews; and c) a conflict case study comparative analysis.

An integral part of the project methodology is to initiate, facilitate and ensure legal entitlement of homestead land to landless poor from Scheduled Caste household primarily women through formation of community-based organization in these treatment villages.

#### **4. Interventions to strengthen community leadership and action**

- **Making communities aware on rights and entitlements & protective laws**

Public meeting, focus group discussion, training, workshop and dharna have been significant means of strengthening community leadership and their public action. Since the beginning of project implementation, the team adopted a number of activities primarily related to awareness and education about critical theme of the project with reference to their right and entitlement. So they discussed in detail law and provision of homestead land as well as disseminated properly key points of rules, provisions and procedure of homestead land among communities, particularly head of community-based organization in project area. Needless to mention, these materials were very useful not only to make them aware but also educate properly about rules, provisions and procedure of homestead land. Apart from this, the team with the support of the leader of community-based organization has mobilized the community, particularly women for regular participation in training and workshops. Through these, women not only had the awareness about the practices and processes of homestead land but also provided a good platform through which they built their own leadership capacity. Most importantly community-based organizations were very critical to build a leadership at horizontal basis. As we are aware, methodologically in the project CBOs as an organization have been the backbone of implementation of the programme and at each and every stage leaders of CBOs; especially women have been at the forefront to progress

the agenda. Therefore all the above mentioned activities have been playing critical role for giving awareness and education about right and entitlement and its laws to Scheduled Caste communities, especially their women.

At one level, on the completion of the project on homestead land we are glad to share the communities led by women are taking initiative for their entitlement and rights in terms of getting benefits of existing developmental schemes and programmes at panchayat and block-levels. Now, they are not only aware about these programmes but also know how to build up pressure to key officials of block and district level for their right-based demands. Most importantly, they are taking initiative for their demand through community-based organization and also clearly express their issues with key officials of district and panchayat level. In this context, they have developed negotiation skills and collective bargaining power in terms of their demands and discussion with key officials of block and district levels.

Community-based organizations have given a platform through which a section of Scheduled Caste communities are members of these organizations. Needless to mention, regular monthly meetings and discussion with the members and head of the CBOs have played a significant role to consistently facilitate the process of engagement with the community. Therefore, the whole process of formation of CBOs, their membership and functioning have played a greater role for strengthening community leadership and their action.

## **5. CBO- A legacy of empowered citizens**

### **Rationale for formation of the CBO**

Deshkal Society and its partner organization do believe that communities are the backbone to initiate, mobilize and change their problems from right-based approach. In other words, in a larger context, the collective community strength is instrumental for social change. So, right from the beginning of the project, the team first organized communities in each and every village of project location from the approach of collective strength of the community. Most importantly, the team followed methodology as discussed in the project proposal to mobilize and organize communities in the form of community-based organizations which was primarily instrumental as a sustainable organization for social change in general and implementation of project in particular.

- **Strategies, approaches and activities to strengthen the CBOs**

The team first developed one-to-one dialogue with those who are active for their own demands and issues in village. In the process of dialogue with them the team invited all members of household for discussion on real issues, mainly homestead land and right to education. The team soon realized that trust had to build between the team and communities. Therefore, it was very significant that in the process of co-ordination and discussion they build rapport on critical agenda of homestead land and right to education.

On the basis of constructive and meaningful relationship between selected members of communities and the team, the project team, initiative was collectively taken to form community-based organizations in all villages of the project. The number of community-based organization is

around 20 and they were given nomenclatures. It was collectively decided through meeting that women would be priorities for the selection of office-bearers and leaders of CBOs.

For strengthening of CBOs, the team and leaders of CBOs jointly fixed monthly meetings, maintained register for regular meeting, formulated critical issues of development and properly recorded and documented these meetings.

### Numbers, thematic focus and distribution of CBOs

Thematic focus: The thematic focus of the project is Right to Homestead Land and Right to Education.

Distribution of CBOs: CBOs were formed in 480 villages of 4 blocks in Gaya district of Bihar.

#### 5.1 Block wise CBO Membership showing Male female

S.N	Name of Block	No of CBOs	Male	Female	Total
1	Wazirganj	155	1550	1550	3100
2	Atri	69	690	690	1380
3	Paraiya	76	760	760	1520
4	Mohanpur	180	1800	1800	3600
<b>Total</b>		480	4800	4800	9600

- **What are the key achievements of the CBOs?**

Deshkal Society and its network partner do sincerely believe that the output emerged through project implementation has been primarily from the collective strength of community-based organizations. Here, it can be seen in table form.

#### 5.2 Summary of outcome of the project on homestead land:

Block	Gram Panchayat	Villages	CBOs and federation of CBOs	Households (SC)	Applications Submitted	Parcha/Parwana delivered to women heads of Households
4	54	480	539	44,717	11,426	10,125

#### 5.3 Summary of outcome in education:

Activities	Numbers
Parent teacher Meetings	3250
Formation of SMCS	240 Schools in four blocks

Training of SMCs	With members of 50 school's SMC Members
Improvement in midday Meal	84 Schools in 4 blocks
Enrolment of Children	257

- **Strength, independence and sustainability of the CBOs**

As discussed earlier, approach and methodology of forming and sustaining CBOs are primarily based on collective strength of communities. Therefore, communities are the backbone for social change and organizations in the form of CBOs provide them a platform to take initiative as well as sustain their own efforts and demands. Apart from this, the team observed that historically excluded and marginalized communities are realizing their own oppressive past to build their struggle and change their lives in a long way. We feel that the external agencies, either civil society or political party can facilitate the whole process of change instead of being on the vanguard of social change.

- **Key quotes from CBO leaders.**

“We have realized our collective power and efforts through the formation and successful functioning of the Community Based Organization (CBO) in our village. The members of the CBO initiated community mobilization for entitlements to homestead land, collected data on those who do not have legal entitlement, assisted in filling up of applications and their submission at the block level.”

— Ms Ruby Devi, President,

**Community Based Organization, Gaya**

“The Parwana is not only a legalised document on our homestead land but also a procedural document that provides us the right to get the benefits of Indira Awas Yojana scheme and enables us to open accounts in the Bank of our choice.”

— Ms Bhagiya Devi, Eru,  
Member, Community Based Organisation, Wazirganj, Gaya

## 6. Effective engagement with service providers

- **Engagement at district, block and village.**

As discussed earlier, it was clearly mentioned that the methodology of the project was to link and developed creative and meaningful engagement at village, block and district levels. In this context, the team first formed community-based organisations in every village. The total number of CBOs is 539. One can see the register as a document in which minutes and proceedings of regular meetings and discussions with CBO members has been properly documented. Apart from this, one can also visit these villages and interact with CBO members and office-bearers. Similarly, we have also formed a confederation of CBOs at district and block levels and followed the same pattern for documentation of proceedings of meetings of these CBOs. Besides, the team has submitted for verification approx. 13,000 applications for legal entitlement of homestead land at four blocks of these districts. Photocopies of these applications can be viewed at Deshkal office. Needless to mention, in the whole process of the implementation at every stage, the team realised the instrumental role of block officials as an important agency of local governance. So, in the beginning of the project Deshkal Society and its network partners developed constructive and meaningful

engagement with key block officials through one-to-one discussions, trainings, workshops etc. As per the provision of legal entitlement of homestead land applications are submitted to block offices and finally approved by key district officials. So, the team developed a good network with key officials of district level like SDO, LRDC, including district magistrate for approval of legal entitlement of these applications through training, workshops and one-to-one meeting. It is also significant that the documentation officer of the project has not only prepared a proper report of activities of village, block and district levels but also disseminated their programme through print and electronic media.

- **Use of Right to Information Act.**

The team have strategically used the provision of RTI for getting status of submitted application regarding legal entitlement of homestead land at block and district levels. As a result, government officials took serious notice and not only provided information of the application status but also facilitated the process for delivery of entitlement of homestead land to beneficiaries.

- **Social audits and public hearings conducted.**

Deshkal Society and its partner organisation made a public hearing in the fourth year of the programme. A number of representatives of different backgrounds participated in this hearing and demanded to deliver the pending application soon. Most importantly, leaders of CBOs, especially women, raised voices for their demand and narrated importance of legal entitlement of homestead land. Besides they have not only asserted their own collective strength but also shown their capable leadership for this demand and struggle in the public hearing.

- **Recommendations made to the government, if any.**

In the light of the situation discussed and the problems identified above, the following measures are recommended to be taken up for effective implementation of the existing laws and policies and for ensuring the realization of the right to housing and homestead land for the rural landless in Bihar.

i) The administrative procedures and processes involved in implementation of the laws, policies and provisions need to be streamlined and simplified. The government needs to adopt a bottom up proactive approach to identify record and process for settlement all the eligible cases of landless households that need to be granted homestead rights. Collecting various types of information required for filing of application for legal rights over homestead land is a tedious task, and certainly an insurmountable task for the landless poor. Instead of filing of individual applications, it should be the responsibility of the Block level revenue officials to record the eligible cases of households for granting of homestead rights. This can be done in a mission mode through organising village camps and recording all the eligible cases with the help of Village Panchayat and Gram Sabha.

ii) While raiyati land can be settled by the Circle Officer and gairmazarua khas land by the District Collector, in case of gairmazarua aam land the process goes up to the Department of Revenue and Land Reforms after it is recommended by the Divisional Commissioner. The process of settlement of gairmazarua aam land can be further simplified by giving authority to the District Collector to settle such land. However, it should be kept in mind that a lot of gairmazarua aam land has been encroached upon by the powerful landed interests. There

should be proper checks and balances to ensure that non-eligible persons do not take undue advantage of the simplification of the processes to regularize their illegal encroachments.

iii) The provision of the maximum area currently fixed by the government for allotment of house sites needs to be revised and enhanced. Earlier, the maximum area had been fixed at Conclusions and Recommendations 612 decimals which were later increased to 3 decimals. In the light of the observations and recommendations of the Eleventh Five Year Plan, the Government of Bihar should also increase the minimum area of homestead land to be allotted to the landless households to 10 decimals so that along with shelter it provides space for some supplementary sources of livelihood such as livestock rearing, fodder development and planting fruit trees or vegetables growing etc., to the rural landless and marginalized communities. Studies have shown that house plots of this size can make significant contributions to improvement in food, nutrition and livelihood security of the households.

iv) There is a need for streamlining the revenue administration at various levels. The lowest-official, the karmachari, should be provided with a permanent office space with necessary facilities for due discharge of duties. The existing karmacharis should also be given appropriate training to upgrade their knowledge and skill to function effectively. There should be at least one Circle Inspector for 25-30 revenue villages. Each Circle Inspector should be assisted by one trained Amin. The Circle Officer and the Sub-Divisional Officer should ensure that parchas/parwanas are assigned to the right people and those with parcha/parwana get physical possession of the land.

v) The Government should update the land records and revenue maps of villages. These records should be properly maintained and should be made available to the public on demand.

vi) The Government should compile copies of laws, circulars and policy guidelines as well as prepare an official manual which can provide guidelines to officials at various levels for taking appropriate action. These should be made available at all the Block and District Offices. The Government should also organize periodic training programmes for revenue officials to familiarize them with the system of land revenue administration, laws and policies.

vii) Since there are no data and information available on ownership of rural homestead land, a village survey needs to be conducted in Bihar to identify the households that do not have legal ownership rights over their homestead land as well as those that do not have access to land for house-site. Such a survey is already being conducted by the government for Mahadalit households. This should be extended to cover landless poor households from all the communities in all the villages in the state. The village Panchayats can be roped in for this exercise and can be given the responsibility of collecting, maintaining and displaying the complete list of all the landless and house-site less households that need either granting of legal rights over their existing homestead plots or allocation of house-sites.

viii) The village Panchayats, with cooperation from the Block officials and approval of the Gram Sabha, should also record and maintain an inventory of areas of land and locations under private ownership, public use and common property (grazing and fallow 62 Right to Housing and Homestead Land in Rural Bihar lands), as well as land that can be made available for allocation to landless households for house-sites. These records should be

available at the village level for easy access by all.

ix) The state government should develop an aggregated database of available land collected at the district and Gram Panchayat levels. The government should also take initiative to seize gairmazarua land, put a ceiling on surplus land, community common land and other type of public land held by big landowners. This would help in reallocation of land suitably to accommodate the demand for homestead lands.

x) It is necessary to significantly step up the quantum of rural housing being added every year under the IAY scheme. The Government of Bihar can also initiate suitable schemes for meeting the housing needs of the BPL families that remain left out under the IAY scheme.

xi) Habitat development and improvement is currently not linked with the schemes for allotment of house-sites to the landless poor. Along with allotment of house-sites, assistance for house construction under the IAY and provision of facilities like safe drinking water, sanitation, etc., can be done by the department of Rural Development under its various schemes. There is a need for coordination and convergence of these various schemes under the Department of Rural Development.

Apart from these recommendations, Deshkal Society has also demanded to pass the pending Bihar Right to Homestead Bill, 2014.

- **Perception of service providers towards PACS and the CSO's work.**

Approach of key officials of block and district levels as well as representatives of Panchayati Raj institutions was very positive and constructive to the implementing organisation Deshkal Society and its partners during the process of project implementation. Key stakeholders of local government institution realised the role and responsibility of these organisations and felt that they are facilitating the implementation process properly due to which they are progressing fast towards delivering entitlement of homestead land to beneficiary group. The team not only provided technical human resources like *Amin* for verification of these applications at village level but also, a large number of revenue village maps including certain legal documents like katiyan and format of the application. It is a well-known fact that in Bihar, *Amin* and *karamchari* are not available in Panchayat and blocks as the state needs and even the gap between supply and demand is very large and it is 1:5 ratios. So those who work at panchayat and block levels are compelled to work with deep pressure. Gradually they began to be cordial with the members of CSOs. However, in the beginning of the project the approach of key officials of block and district levels were sometimes indifferent and hostile with the team and representatives of CSOs. The reason was that they felt Deshkal Society and partner organisation overpowered their work. The officials were not sure if Deshkal society and other partner organisation had any vested interest in facilitating the processes of legal entitlement of homestead land.

As far as PACS is concerned, it is a matter of fact that key officials of blocks and district levels were not aware about PACS. And so, they have shown indifference to the role of PACS in the project but in the process of development of the project they understood that PACS was an integral part of the project and Deshkal Society and PACS both were committed for delivering homestead land to Scheduled Castes, primarily women. In the process of implementation of the project, key officials of local government agencies had the

opportunity to participate in a series of trainings, workshops and meetings organised by Deshkal Society and PACS. Needless to mention, these were good occasion where they interacted not only with members of the team but also sometimes directly with representative of PACS. At the end of the project, those who are associated directly with revenue work at block and district levels became familiar with PACS as well as objective of PACS to some extent.

## 7. Learning and legacy

- **Key learning that can be derived from the PACS interventions.**

There are a number of learning's from the process of implementation of the project which are as follows:

**CBOs:** Deshkal Society, project team, and partner organisation realised deeply that collective strength of the community is pivotal for social change. In other words, communities properly know their own problems and subjugation as well as oppression and time to time they take initiative in their own ways for betterment of their lives but the fundamental problem before us is when they face severe onslaught of repression in terms of structural inequality in society as well as everyday form of resistance from dominant caste, and class, including insensitive bureaucrats. Consequently, they are harassed in this process and lose their spirit of struggle. In this context the team understood the collective strength of the community and developed a strategy through which they have formed community-based organisations in every targeted village of the project. Therefore, it is a critical learning for us to understand their collective strength as well as relevance of community-based organisations.

**Relation between state and non-state actor:** How to build a development programme in true partnership between state and non-state actor is also a very significant learning for us. Here state indicates government agencies and non-state, civil society organisations. In the process of implementation we have learned co-ordination, negotiation and dialogue with key officials of state actor. The result of this is that we succeeded in developing a true partnership between key stakeholders of the project.

**Monitoring and documentation:** Deshkal Society and partner organisation have been learning on how to regularly monitor the processes and outcome of the project. In this regard, we have developed a number of technical formats through which we assessed regularly on-going activities as well as outcome of the project on a monthly basis and planned for next stage. Therefore, the team knew consistently their own weakness, constraint and strength.

Apart from this, regular field diary, notes and reports of on-going project were very necessary for documentation. So, the project the team maintained collections of qualitative and quantitative data as well as experiences of key stakeholders and documented it accordingly.

It is significant that there are a number of recommendations were accepted by the Department of Revenue and Land Reforms:

- a) Advertisement and appointment of Amin and karamchari
- b) Developed training module as well as a training programme by Department of Revenue and Land Reforms for Circle officers and LRDC
- c) The final authority of legal entitlement of aam garmazua land was assigned to District Magistrate instead of Divisional Commissioner.



- **“value for money” and benefits in terms of assets creation**

Total worth of “value for money” is INR 49, 20, 75, 000 (Forty Nine Crore Twenty Lakh Seventy five thousand). It shows total worth of 30, 375 decimals of homestead land were given for legal entitlement of homestead land to landless and houseless Scheduled Castes communities in the project.

CBOs are instrumental to ensure sustainability of processes developed through implementation of the project. Apart from this, we will try our best to get additional financial support from international as well as government agencies, including Department of Revenue and Land Reforms, Govt. of Bihar.

- **Issues that need to be addressed in the future intervention areas.**

On the basis of critical learning of PACS project, Deshkal Society has already planned intervention to improve and strengthen local governance, primarily related to critical issues of land right governance. In this regard, the planned project envisaged for future intervention will deal with the key question of how and to what extent can community mobilisation initiatives improve homestead land right governance.

- **Success in mobilising resources or external support to continue the PACS ongoing work**

Deshkal Society is planning to scale up its programme on Homestead Land in Gaya, Bihar: A Model of Community Based Approach in newly selected four blocks of Gaya district of Bihar in partnership with London School of Economics and Oxford University.

An integral part of the project methodology is to initiate, facilitate and ensure legal entitlement of homestead land to landless poor from Scheduled Caste household primarily women through formation of community-based organisations in 75 treatment villages in selected four blocks of Gaya district.

## **8. Voices from the community**

Three case studies representing “Stories of Change” in lives of individuals from the project intervention area have been attached. Their file names are:

- a) Bilond Village\_Land Rights\_Case Study 1
- b) Aam Gairmazarua Land\_Case study 2
- c) Deshkal Society -Case Study 3

## **9. Reflection from the CSOs**

*Excerpts from an interview with the Chief Functionary of the CSO based on the following pointers. (1 page)*

- **What changes the CSO has been able to bring about through the PACS project?**

Deshkal Society and its partner organisation have formed 539 community-based organisations in four blocks and have developed networks at block and district levelson the basis of these formed CBOs. Most importantly, through these CBOs, they have selected leaders and build a capacity for social change. This is reason that 10125 *parcha* and *parwana* have been entitled to landless women of SC communities. Apart from this, they have strategically built up creative and organic relationship with macro context in terms of policy advocacy as a result, issues emerging through

implementation of the project have been well noted by Department of Revenue and Land Reforms, Govt. of Bihar and certain rules related to procedure of delivering homestead land have been changed by the concerned department. For example, earlier Divisional Commissioner was entitled to issue *parwana* for the *raiti* land but this authority was given directly to District Magistrate in Bihar. Therefore, it is one of the best example of how CSOs has developed creative engagement with state level government department and succeeded to change certain rules and procedures on this critical issue.

- **Has PACS project helped to integrate issues of exclusion and discrimination into their on-going work?**

As we are aware the key objectives of PACS project has been creating a ground through which oppressed and excluded communities primarily Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes can raise their voice and stand against exclusion and discrimination. Therefore, right from the beginning of the project Deshkal Society and its network partner not only took initiative on these issues but also in the programme, social profile of the staff and knowledge building from the lens of inclusion. This is the result that the team had developed tremendous impact to build value of inclusiveness in midday meal and active participation of members of SECs coming from Scheduled Castes communities against exclusionary practice existing in schools.

- **How did PACS provide an overall support in institutional strengthening of the CSO? *This may include financial systems and processes, programmatic and strategic inputs, networking and collaborations, learning and its dissemination etc.***

**Financial systems and processes:**

- a) Strengthening of documentation of financial policy and developing the mechanism of internal control of account.
- b) Ensuring the statutory compliance of financial management on time.
- c) Budget management on the basis of utilisation and planned budget.
- d) Standardisation of book of accounts.

**Programmatic and strategic inputs:** The team and chief functionary of the project have received consistent support and co-operation in programme from PACS team. PACS team have given input mainly at two levels to the project team. A) Through six monthly assessment of on-going project B) Assessment of QPR and annual review report In this context they have not only identified the gap of the project but also given concrete input in terms of strategy and innovative activities so that we can ensure the outcome of the project.

**Networking and collaborations:** PACS team built network at two levels, first with Deshkal Society and those CSOs working in common issues, and second facilitating process for networking with diverse background of key stakeholders with reference to government institutions. For example, PACS facilitated the process of network building of land rights at state-level through which diverse background of key stakeholders became part of the network and nomenclature of the network is Land Reform Core Committee formed by the government and civil society organisations.

**Learning and its dissemination:** Deshkal Society has developed a creative and meaningful means of dissemination of the processes and output of the programme through their quarterly bulletin, Facebook and website. Apart from these, members of cultural group from Scheduled Caste communities have performed plays (nukkad natak) on critical issues of social exclusion and

discrimination. This team of folk theatre have created tremendous impact in terms of mobilisation of communities in approx. 500 villages of four blocks in Gaya district as well as circulated key messages against exclusion and discrimination of Scheduled Castes among thousands of landless labour and SC people in this area. Therefore, Deshkal Society has integrated both means of communication—non-modern as well modern.

## **10. Reflections from PACS functionaries**

*Excerpts from an interview / write-up from the State team of PACS discussing CSO and its strength as a whole. (1/2 page)*

Deshkal Society, since 1995, has initiated and innovated research, advocacy and grassroots interventions to further the inclusion and equity of marginalized communities in a democratized mainstream society. Issues of social exclusion/ inclusion, marginality and diversity in education, land rights and entitlements, and culture and sustainable livelihoods has been the main focus of the organization work. Deshkal under PACS Program was influential in empowering the Marginalized communities about the various processes involved in claiming the homestead land entitlement. Constant engagement with the society through various program has impacted the communities in accessing more than 85% of the land entitlement application filed. The communities now are confident and vocal to interact with the government officials not only on the issues of Land but any matter relating to discrimination faced in accessing entitlement. PACS program contributed immensely in building leadership in the community and building understanding of exclusion within the communities and ways to fight back. Some of the potential women from the Musahar Community were able to monitor the Mid-Day meal in the school and ensure discrimination free entitlement accessibility after them becoming members of School education committee. The whole process of selection of School education Committee has set a platform among the community that will ensure continuous active representation of the Marginalized communities in the SEC which otherwise would have been a notional representation. Though Deshkal did not adopt Mass action by the communities to access entitlement but a played crucial role in educating the CBO leaders on the skill of interface and questioning the duty bearers. Deshkal holds strong rapport with the policy makers and is also actively involved in perspective building of the key stakeholders on inclusive education. Deshkal will continue to work towards inclusive education and promoting Land entitlement accessibility post PACS program.

## Annex 1

### Case Study Format

*This case study format was sent out to partners in May 2015. Of the 89, 66 partners responded with 190 stories. PACS commissioned professional journalists and photographers to go out and collect 124 of these stories, interviewing beneficiaries and writing up narratives (including first-hand quotes). These narratives and photographs are available on request. As a reviewer you may choose to meet the same case story respondent to analyze the story of change with your development perspective to add value to what exists.*

### PARTNERS: SUCCESS STORIES SUBMISSION FORM

To be in with a chance of receiving a visit from a professional photographer/storyteller, please briefly answer the 9 questions below. 2 to 5 stories (ideally on different themes).

#### SUCCESS STORY 1

<b>Name of Partner</b>	<b>Deshkal Society</b>					
<b>State</b>	<b>Bihar</b>					
<b>1. What is the theme of your story?</b>  <i>Put an X in the relevant box</i>	MGNREGA		Land Rights	X	Forest Rights	
	Health		Nutrition		Education	
	Legal Literacy		Women's Empowerment		CBO Empowerment	
<b>2. Who is this story about?</b>	<i>Name of individual or community</i>  Dalit communities particularly, Rajvanshis, Musahars, Chowdhrys, Dhobis and Ravidas					
<b>3. Where is this story based?</b>	<i>Name of district, block and village</i>  Village: Kandha, Wazirganj Block, Dist Gaya, Bihar					
<b>4. What was the problem for the individual/community?</b>	The households in Kandha did not have any legal entitlements to homestead land in terms of Parcha and Parwana, in spite of having laws and schemes like, Bihar Privileged Persons Homestead Tenancy Act, 1947 in place, which granted the landless, and the Dalit or Adivasi communities the right to ownership over the land they have been living on.					
<b>5. What work have you/CBO partners</b>	Deshkal Society had begun its endeavors to facilitate the households in Kandha village to acquire <i>Parwanas</i> in beginning					

<p><b>done to address the problem for that individual/community?</b></p>	<p>of 2012. In its first visit to the village, Deshkal began with organizing a meeting of village men and women. Through this the team could identify how many of them have <i>Parwanas</i> for the lands their houses are built on and how many don't. Deshkal team made a list of such people in the village. Within a week, applications were made and status of concerned lands was classified with the help from the local <i>Amin</i>. Along with a brief description of applications, the team then submitted them at Wazirganj Block Headquarter. After physical verification and inspection, the block's <i>Karamchari</i> and Circle Inspector identified the lands as belonging to <i>Gairmazarua</i> category. After endorsement, they sent the applications to the Anumandal Land Revenue Deputy Collector (LRDC) and Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO).</p> <p>The LRDC and SDO too endorsed them and forwarded to the District Collector for further action. From there it reached the Divisional Commissioner. Given the complexity of this process, Deshkal team followed up at each stage of the process. The team knew well that without meticulous follow up, the applications would remain stuck in bureaucratic red-tapism. The team was also aware that though the poor and landless can be granted <i>Parchas</i> and <i>Parwanas</i> for <i>Raiyyati</i> and <i>Gairmazarua</i> land at District and Block levels but, according to laws, power to grant <i>Parwanas</i> lies with the Divisional Commissioner.</p> <p>The Deshkal team has built consistent pressure on the Divisional Commissioner to process the submitted applications for <i>Gairmazarua</i> land. Finally, the team succeeded in getting the approval on 51 applications from the Divisional Commissioner, Magadh division for providing legal entitlements to homestead land. The order of the Divisional Commissioner was sent to Wazirganj block with instructions for providing right to home stead land to SC communities soon.</p> <p>Deshkal team evolved a strategy whereby it was ensured that each applicant from <i>Kandha</i> receives a copy of the <i>Parwana</i>. It was also ensured that the applicants --i.e. those who were to be given habitat land-- receive <i>Malguzari</i> receipt. To this end, each such applicant deposited Rs. 10 with the <i>Karamchari</i>. Thereafter, Deshkal team set up camp in <i>Kandha</i> and in August, 2013 helped grant land to Dalits and landless families.</p>
<p><b>6. How has this work benefitted the</b></p>	<p>After many decades of pleas and struggles, they have acquired legal ownership of their homes. In legal terminology the</p>

<b>individual/community?</b>	ownership deed is called <i>Parwana</i> . They were granted <i>Parwana</i> in 2013.
<b>7. How has the project helped to address discrimination for that individual/community?</b>	<p>The struggle of the people in <i>Kandha</i> village for land entitlements is heart rending, which had been going on for a very long time. Shri Kameshwar Manjhi, 60, narrates how his father and he struggled for the land several times; but never was land granted. He does not forget to inform how 40 years ago when they lived on '<i>dih</i>' (a plot of 27 <i>bighas</i>), the powerful of the village had ejected them. At that time, too, he and others had appealed to <i>Panchayat Mukhiya</i> and Block officials to safeguard their right to habitat under the Law. They were uprooted from their own lands, lands that were owned by their grandparents and great grandparents and where they lived and died.</p> <p>Homestead land rights is a basic human right, which is inherent in every human being. It gives power to the people to assert their other human rights and thus remains a fundamental right of the people. Through legal rights to homestead land in terms of <i>parcha/prawana</i> one can take care of the process of being ejected or uprooted and displaced by a hierarchical social system. The <i>Parwana</i> will ever remain an instrument in their hands for homestead against displacement and suffering, and will provide a means to a dignified life.</p>
<b>8. What is the wider picture?</b>	<p><i>How many other people/households/communities are you working with on this issue as part of PACS?</i></p> <p>Deshkal Society and its partner organizations, with support of the Poorest Areas Civil Society (PACS) Programmes, joined hands in 2012 through a four year project to work with the Dalit communities in 480 villages spread over four blocks of the Gaya district.</p> <p>This project aims to improve the uptake of entitlements pertaining to land rights among the Dalits, particularly women in order to enable them to live with dignity. Deshkal Society has established and strengthened 480 village level community based organizations (CBOs), 54 panchayat level CBOs, four block level CBOs and one district level CBO. It is our believe that community based approaches to development translate into mobilizing the community, bringing them together as cohesive groups and</p>

	<p>building their capacity to act as an effective pressure group.</p> <p>Thus the project focused on the capacity building of the rural communities through training and awareness generation programmes on laws, policies and provisions that enable the groups to take up issues affecting the local community. We also provide handholding support to these community groups for effectively using tools such as RTI and Public Hearing, in order to make service providers more responsive and accountable. Sustained capacity building and handholding have enabled CBOs to evolve as vibrant pressure groups that proactively engage with the government, service providers and other key stakeholders. Since all CBOs leaders are from the socially excluded groups, they serve as case studies of bring the leadership of the socially excluded groups to the forefront.</p> <p>Through our efforts, <b>10426 applications</b> for settlement of homestead land and distribution of surplus government land has been filed. <b>8129 among these have received their legal entitlements</b> in terms of <i>Parcha</i> and <i>Parwana</i>.</p> <p>Deshkal Society and its partner organizations understand what excites community and therefore we experiment with new and innovative ideas and tools to raise awareness on critical issues.</p> <p><b>10 folk artists trained</b> for this purpose have done over <b>54 performances</b> illustrating key components of various acts and schemes in <b>54 Gram Panchayats (GP) under intervention</b>.</p> <p><b>State level public hearing on land rights</b> held in December, 2013 <b>sensitized key Govt. officials</b> for making them more supportive and accessible to the socially excluded community.</p> <p><b>A Quarterly news bulletin Waas Bhumi</b> has brought wider sharing of key learning's and policy updates. <b>A book on Bihar Me Vasbhumi aur Awaas ka Adhikar</b> by Sanjay Kumar and P. D. Singh with a foreword by K. B. Saxena and published by Deshkal publications has been widely appreciated by various stakeholders, including the Government of Bihar, which ensured its distribution to all blocks in the state.</p>
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<b>9. Can we visit this individual/community?</b>	<p><i>If there are any constraints in travelling, please let us know.</i></p> <p><i>Yes. There are no constraints in travelling.</i></p>
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**Annex 2: Analysis on some of the key indicators based upon data from MIS and thematic tracking (according to the themes applicable for the project)**

**MIS data**

**Training and Sensitization Events**

**Table1: Number of Training and Sensitization Events**

<b>Types of Events</b>	<b>Progress (Total Number of Events)</b>	<b>Per cent of Total</b>
Internal Staff Training	10	10.3
External Training	87	89.7
Total Training and Sensitization Events	97	100

**Table 2: PACS Output Focus of Training and Sensitization Events**

<b>PACS Output Indicator</b>	<b>Progress (Total Number of Events)</b>	<b>Per cent of Total</b>
Output 1: Stronger civil society organizations priorities and raise issues of women and socially excluded population in PACS targeted areas	87	89.7
Output 2: Socially excluded population are better represented and have more voice in CSOs, Government decision making bodies and in village committees		
Output 3: Civil Society Organizations make service providers more responsive and accountable to socially excluded people	10	10.3
Output 4: Civil society ensures wide dissemination of PACS lessons		
<b>Total events</b>	97	100

**Table 3: Participants in Training and Sensitization Events**

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Progress (Total Number of Participants)</b>	<b>Per cent of Total</b>
PACS Project Staff	277	10.6
Government Officials	76	2.9



Front Line Service Providers	2	0.1
Media Persons	17	0.6
PRI and Village Committee Members	68	2.6
CBO members	1822	69.5
Community Members	349	13.3
CSO Members	9	0.3
Others		
Total	2620	100

**Table 4: Level of Training and Sensitization Events**

Level	Progress (Total Number of Events)	Per cent of Total
State Level		
District Level	4	4
Block Level	81	84
Village Level	12	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>100</b>

**Output 1: Stronger civil society organizations priorities and raise issues of women and socially excluded population in PACS targeted areas**

#### **CBO Formation and Development**

**Table 5: CBOs Formed**

	Progress	Per cent of Total
CBOs formed	455	
CBO Members	8764	
CBO Members from SEG	8764	100
Number of CBOs led by SEGs	455	
Number of CBOs who are members of Federations	455	

**Table 6: Types of CBOs formed**

	Progress (Total Number of CBOs)	Per cent of Total
Labor Union/Group		
Farmers Group		
Human/Dalit and /Tribal Rights Group	455	100
Forest and Land Rights Group		

Village Monitoring/Development Group		
Self-Help Group		
Producers Group/Cooperative		
Common Interest Group		
Youth Group		
Women Group		
Children Group		
Others		
<b>Total</b>	<b>455</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 7: SEG Members Distribution in CBOs**

	Progress	Per cent of Total
SC Members	8764	100
ST Members		
Muslim Members		
PWD Members		
Total SEG Members in CBOs	8764	100

### Addressing Discrimination

**Table 8: Number of Discrimination Cases**

	Progress	Per cent of Total
Number of discrimination cases identified		
Number of discrimination cases where action was taken		

**Table 9: Thematic Coverage of Discrimination Cases**

Theme	Number of cases identified		Number of Cases where action was taken	
	Progress	Per cent of Total cases	Progress	Per cent of Total cases
MNREGA				
Forest Rights				
Revenue Land				
Skills Development				
Education				
Health				
SC/ST Atrocities Act				
Domestic Violence Act				
RTI				
Others				
<b>Total</b>				

**Table 10: RTI Applications**

	Progress	Per cent of Total RTI

		<b>applications</b>
Number of RTI claims - made/filed		
Number of RTI claims - addressed/response received		

**Table 11: Advocacy Meetings with Government Officials**

	<b>Overall Progress</b>
Number of Advocacy Meetings with Government Officials	<b>8</b>

**Table 12: Levels of Advocacy Meetings with Government Officials**

<b>Level</b>	<b>Progress (Total Number of Meetings)</b>	<b>Per cent of Total Meetings</b>
National Level		
State Level		
District Level		
Block Level	<b>8</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 13: Thematic Coverage of Advocacy Meetings with Government Officials**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Progress (Total Number of Meetings)</b>	<b>Per cent of Total Meetings</b>
MNREGA		
Forest Rights		
Revenue Land	<b>5</b>	<b>62.5</b>
Skills Development		
Education	<b>3</b>	<b>37.5</b>
Health		
Nutrition		
SC/ST Atrocities Act		
Domestic Violence Act		
RTI		
Others		
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 14: Advocacy Meetings with Other Stakeholders**

	<b>Overall Progress</b>
Total Number of Meetings with other Stakeholders	<b>4</b>

**Table 15: Levels of Advocacy Meetings with Other Stakeholders**

Level	Progress	Per cent of Total Meetings
National Level		
State Level		
District Level		
Block Level	4	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 16: Thematic Coverage of Advocacy Meetings with Other Stakeholders**

Theme	Progress (Total Number of Meetings)	Per cent of Total Meetings
MNREGA		
Forest Rights		
Revenue Land		
Skills Development		
Education	4	100
Health		
Nutrition		
SC/ST Atrocities Act		
Domestic Violence Act		
RTI		
Others		
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 17: Recommendations Proposed**

Level	Number of Recommendations Proposed		Number of Recommendations Accepted/Adopted	
	Progress	Per cent of Total	Progress	Per cent of Total
National Level			Awaited	
State Level				
District Level				
Block Level				
<b>Total</b>				

**Table 18: Thematic Coverage of Recommendations Proposed**

**Table 19: Social Audits, Public Hearings and other Community-Service Provider Interface Meetings**

	Progress	Per cent of Total Meetings

Number of Social Audits and Public Hearings	<b>13</b>	
Number of Villages Covered Under Social Audits and Public Hearings	<b>94</b>	
Total Number of Participants	<b>449</b>	

**Table 20: Thematic Coverage of Social Audits, Public Hearings and other Community-Service Provider Interface Meetings**

	<b>Progress (Total Number of Events)</b>	<b>Per cent of Total Meetings</b>
Theme		
MGNREGA		
Forest Rights		
Revenue Land	<b>8</b>	
Skills Development		
Education	<b>5</b>	
Health		
Nutrition		
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	

### **Thematic Data**

Note- Please provide the data on the basis of indicators under PACS themes. Please also mention the source of verification of given data at the end of each table. The data needs to be filled from 2012 to 2015.

#### **1. Enhanced access to entitlements under legal provisions on Revenue Lands**

<b>Key indicator</b>	<b>Unit of Measurement</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Achievement</b>
Applications for tenure rights on revenue lands made	No. of applications made for rights over revenue / Panchayat lands	4250	5101	2075		11426
SEGs application for tenure rights over revenue land.	No. of applications made by SEG households for rights over revenue / Panchayat lands	4250	5101	2075		11426
Rights over revenue lands received	No. of certificate issued for entitlement over revenue / Panchayat land	523	3188	2820	3594	10125
SEGs access to revenue land	No. of certificate issued to SEG households for	523	3188	2820	3594	10125

	entitlement over revenue / Panchayat land					
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(Source of Verification- Respective Block's Record and Deshkal and partner Office Record)

### Enhanced access to entitlements under Right to Education (RTE)

(Source of Verifications – Records of respective Schools, BRCs and records of Deshkal Office)

Key indicator	Unit of Measurement	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Overall Achievement
Enhancing enrolment in primary schools	No. of dropped-out and out-of-school children enrolled in school	65	46	146	257	65
Enhancing enrolment of children from SEGs in primary schools	No. of dropped-out and out-of-school children enrolled in school, who belonged to SEGs	65	46	146	257	65
Improving access to full entitlement of hygienic nutritional supplement	No. of children who have received hygienic mid-day meals over last two years			10 422	10422	
Improving access to full entitlement of hygienic nutritional supplement among SEGs	No. of children belonging to SEGs who have received hygienic mid-day meals over last two years			6594	6594	