

# Annual Report 2013-14



**North East Research & Social Work Networking  
(NERSWN)**

# Health Programme

**Introduction:** The project for “Empowering Community and Strengthening Institution for Equitable Access to Healthcare” is in its 3<sup>rd</sup> phase and 4<sup>th</sup> year of implementation. In last four years project team has made all possible efforts to realize the stated objectives of the project. As a result of untiring effort by the project team, basic mental health services at least for people with acute mental illness could be made available, which earlier was completely absent. The community, who always remained passive recipients of health services, has started participating in governance and monitoring of village level health institutions. Besides, a ground for bringing positive change and constructive development at least in the intervened villages has been prepared by now. Hopefully, in the years to come, initiative undertaken so far will contribute towards countering exclusion and marginalization.

This report narrates the progress made in last six months starting from October 2013 to beginning of March 2014 and also draws some highlights of earlier reporting period.

**Project Team:** Currently total of 7 project staff are working under the project supported by Paul Hamlyn Foundation, UK, which is being led by an experienced Project Coordinator. In addition, a Mental Health Coordinator has been attached who is being supported by NRTT.

**Project Coverage:** 2 Health Blocks (Gossaigaon and Balajan Block) of Kokrajhar district. Total of 88 villages, 78 Village Health and Sanitation Committees (VHSC) and approximately 30,000 population is covered directly, indirectly the project staff extends their operational areas whenever they are being invited by other villages and when need arises. The mental health services are accessed by people from entire district and partially by almost all the districts of Western Assam.

## Highlights of the Activities Carried Out in Last Six-Months:

**Village Health and Sanitation Committee Meetings:** Total of 32 community meetings have been organized through VHSC in both the intervened blocks. In these meetings different issues were taken up for discussion and review of progress such as entitlement under NRHM, functioning of ICDS, functioning of PDS, functioning of school management committee, MGNREGA and other rights and entitlement. These meetings have attempted to take stock of the services and entitlement of the villagers under different schemes and programs. These meetings have helped expose huge irregularities in service delivery mechanisms at grassroots thereby facilitate corrective action by the community especially of health, education and food related schemes.

In many of such meetings, the villagers were shocked to know about the existence of range of schemes and programmes which have hardly reached them. Hence, many of these meetings have been useful in motivating the beneficiaries to claim their entitlement. In a way, these meetings are first of its kind discussing about schemes and programmes implemented by Government for their citizen especially in the intervened villages.

**Workshop for VHSC and SMC Members:** Total of 2 Block Level Workshops have been organized involving VHSC and SMC members. In these workshops, various schemes under NRHM and under Right to Education Act 2009 have been discussed and deliberated. The roles of VHSC and SMC for ensuring universal access to health care and education have been discussed thoroughly. In previous reporting period 1 workshop and in current reporting period 1 workshop has been conducted. In each of these workshops 45 to 50 VHSC and SMC representative have participated.

These workshops reportedly have been very useful for the VHSC and SMC members for activating their respective committees as they had been non-starter since formation. The attending members having known their powers and functions have started exercising them in right earnest. Hopefully, such motivation will sustain in the long run and help community take control over these grassroots institutions.

**Capacity Building Training for ASHAs and ICDS Workers:** Two Block Level Trainings have been organized so far for ASHA and ICDS workers. The first training was on Supplementary Nutrition and Screening Techniques of Malnourished Children. This training included sessions on menace of malnourishment in the country and importance of supplementary nutrition to deal with it. The trainees were also made aware about the existing schemes to deal with the problem of malnutrition. Then, the trainees were taught about the techniques of identifying malnourished children especially severely malnourished children. This training was imparted by Dr. Zunikar Ali, In-Charge, Nutrition Rehabilitation Center, Gossaigaon.

The second training was on Primary Health Care. In this training basic skill of handling pregnancy and other common illness were taught. The technical know how to handle Blood Pressure Machine, Rapid Diagnosis Kits and other basic techniques were also taught to ASHAs to enable them to provide basic health care services in the village. The training was imparted by renowned public health expert Dr. Sunil Kaul. Total of 34 participants have attended the training.

**Monthly Mental Health Camp:** The Monthly Mental Health Camp was started in the year 2009 in collaboration with ASHADEEP a Guwahati based mental health society. When ASHADEEP withdrew their brief period of services in Kokrajhar, it was taken up by NERSWN with generous support from Paul Hamlyn Foundation, UK from 2010 onwards.

Since then it has made a good departure towards creating a permanent mental health services by the Government. From the beginning itself, the camp was organized in the District Civil Hospital, and active support by the government health department was sought. As a result, a team of Doctors led by Mr. R.C. Debnath has been regularly overseeing the camp. Now, an OPD also has been started by Civil Hospital under the supervision of these trained doctors. The Monthly Mental Health Camp is also being attended by a psychiatrist and Professor of Fakuruddin Ali Ahmed Medical College, Borpeta.

This fiscal year, total of 12 camps have been organized and in these camps have been attended by total of 1000 (542 male and 458 female) people with mental illness (mostly acute) have attended. Out of these 174 cases are new cases.

**Home Visits and Psycho-Social Intervention:** Total of 50 home visits have been made to ensure regular and effective treatment of clients. Through these home visits apart from monitoring the prognosis and continuity of treatment, counseling, referral for occupational and vocational rehabilitation etc are being done. The psycho-Social Intervention part needs to be intensified but it has been started in a humble way.

**Referral of Acute Cases of Mental Illness and Retardation:** In this year, total of 3 cases have been referred from the monthly mental health camp. Two cases have been referred to Guwahati Medical College and Hospital and one to Kokrajhar omega Clinic. They have been taken to Guwahati for better screening and referred back to Monthly Mental Health Camp.

**BTC Level Consultation on Mental Health:** The NERSWN has been actively advocating for inclusion of Psychiatric Care with the General Health Care. It has been lobbying with the department of Health Services to implement National Mental Health Act 1987 and District Mental Health Program 1996. Despite continuous effort too, the response from the government has been very slow. Recently due to the active advocacy, the government of Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) has agreed to organize Council level consultation involving all stakeholders to chart out a way forward for inclusion of mental health in its Public Health Services. Initially the consultation was planned on 20<sup>th</sup> of September 2013 but due to bandh same has been rescheduled on 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2013.

The consultation was very fruitful as the government has accepted the fact that the mental health needs to be incorporated in their programmatic and financial plan. The Principal Secretary, BTC and Health Secretary, BTC have directed the Director Health Services to prepare a list of doctors who can be trained on Psychiatry and accordingly impart training so that they can start attending the psychiatric patients. Through consultation it was also decided to impart training to para-medical staff especially the grassroots level service providers such as ANM, MPW etc. Among many decision, one of the major decision was to keep reviewing the progress in every three months. Hence, it was a good boost to the advocacy work carried out by NERSWN.

**Capacity Building of Staff:** During this one year 3 capacity building training have been organized for 7 project staff. The first training was on Rights Based Approach in Community Health Action organized by Institute of Development Action (IDeA). Two trainings were on Basic Skill of Dealing with Mental Health and Brief Psychiatric Rating Scale. Besides, individual staff has been sent for different trainings and workshop organized by various organizations.

**Awareness Building through Booklet and Poster Campaign:** The posters in both Bodo and Assamese have been put up in all important locations. The poster speaks about the right of the

people with mental illness and also encouraging people to extend helping hand to the people with mental illness.

**Strengthening ASHA Association:** The project team has regularly worked with Porbotjhora ASHA Association. During the riot, the ASHAs from estranged communities were facing difficulty in getting together for common cause. But after regular mobilization, the ASHA Association members from different communities have been brought together. In fact, the members have given commitment to remain together irrespective of the situation and ALSO worked for reconciliation to contribute towards peace building.

The efforts have been made to form one more block level ASHA association and hopefully, it will take a final shape soon.

**Lobbying and Advocacy for Basic Service Deliver:** In the intervention area, some villages were most excluded. One of such village is Harinaguri, in this particular village there was no ICDS centre. Hence, after the village mobilization drive, both villagers and NERSWN workers lobbied hard with the Social Welfare Department and now the process for setting up new ICDS centre has been started by the department.

Another such village is Gambaribil under Porbotjora, the Government Primary School was lying defunct for six months without classes, no mid day meal, no books, no uniform in one sense total violation of Fundamental Right to Education provisioned under RTE Act 2009. These were learned by the project team in the village mobilization meeting and a complaint was lodged with the higher up of education department. As a result, one teacher has been deputed to look after mid day meal, books, uniform etc have been distributed but no regular classes are being held till today. The effort to push the department for deputing regular teacher is on.

Many such village level issues have been taken up by the project team with support from the community. In many instances, the community themselves have proactively started advocating for improvement of services.

#### **Challenges Faced:**

- The trust deficit in the aftermath of the terrible violence in 2012 at times appears as challenge in implementing the project activities rapidly.
- The frequent strike called by different organizations has been a big challenge in smoothly implementing the project.
- The high turn-over of project staff has also been a challenge.

#### **Key Learning:**

- Dealing with the challenges handed over by the ethnic conflict and yet being able to stay afoot with the project activities has been enriching learning experience so far.

- The multi-dimensional project activities ranging from education, food, nutrition, water, sanitation etc with core focus on health has really build up the capacities of the project staff.
- Dealing with the problems of 1000 plus cases of mental illness day in day out has been a very good learning point for not only the project team but organization as a whole.

**Conclusion:** This particular project is one of the key to shape the organization to its present form. When the organization was at its nascent stage itself, this project was taken up, since both this project and the organization has travelled quite a distance. Hence, this project has contributed not only to the community it serves but the organization. And behind all these, the generous and continuous support by Paul Hamlyn Foundation, UK, has made enduring impact.

## Education Programme

### **Block Level Workshop on Right to Education (RTE):**

This year a Block Level Workshop is organized in both Kokrajhar and Kachugaon Block. The main objectives was to focus on strengthening SMC Body for the proper functioning of the school and for finding measures on school related issues collectively. The workshop is attended by SMC member, Mother's Group, Head Teacher, Gaonbura and some village representatives. These workshops were facilitated by ED, NERSWN, Mr. Lakshman Brahma, CRC of Nayekgaon & Charaikola Cluster, Mr. Kwrwmdao Wary, Education Secretary, KDC ABSU, Mr. Ploraj Muchahary, Block Coordinator, NRLM, Mr. Nironjon Brahma, CRCC, North Gongia and project team.

### **BTC/District Level Consultation on RTE:**

A BTC Level Consultation was organized in Kokrajhar with total 128 participants. Sri Swmdwn Narzary, BEEO Kokrajhar, Sri Pradip Kr. Goyary Lecturer DIET Cum DPO, Ms. Priyanka Saikia Dist. Media Expert, NHM and Sri Prahallad Brahma Secy KDC/ABSU, Sri Khampa Bargayary Asst. Game & Sports Secy KDC/ABSU, SMC members, NEDAN and Gwjwng Alari from local organization have attended the programme. A presentation based on survey conducted in Nayekgaon and Charaikola clusters, on the status of RTE Act, 2009 was presented in the programme where infrastructure were seen very poor (see fig 0.1). An open discussion was also done on various issue e.g. incomplete school infrastructure, irresponsible teacher, pre-school, single teacher and MDM management issue. The BEEO, Kokrajhar in his speech took the initiative of tackling all issues and to solve as soon as possible.

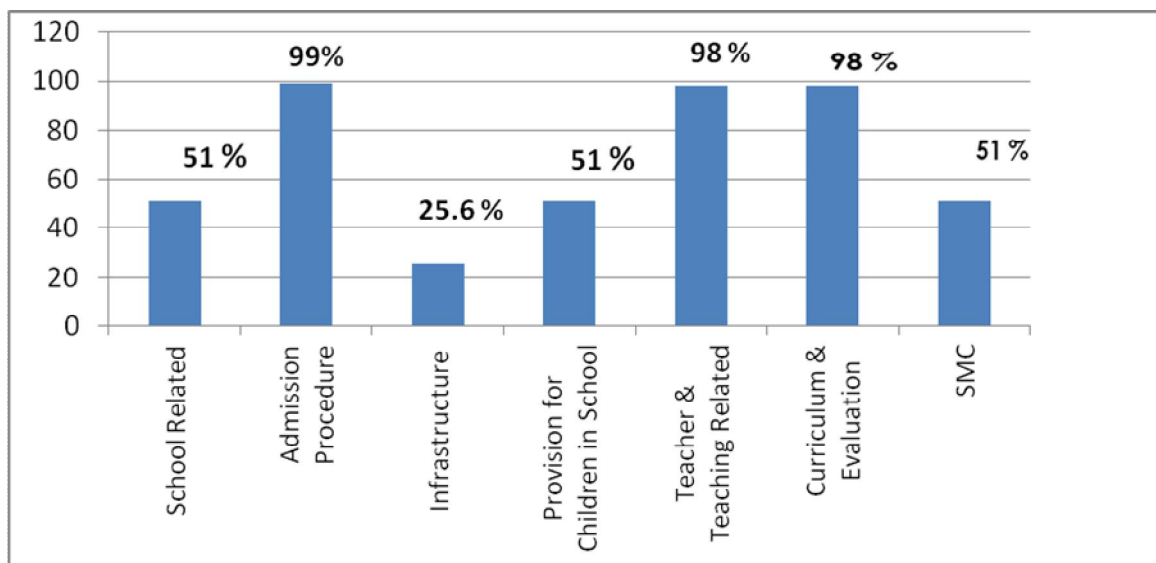


Fig 0.1: Status on RTE Act, 2009

#### **Capacity Building Training for SMC/VEC/VCDC:**

Maximum SMC members are ignorant of their role and responsibility. They lack behind skill and confidence to deal with the issues they are facing, hence in order to boost and support them in building their skill the team has interacted continuously and helped them in solving their issues. Besides, training was organized with six Schools' SMC representative of Kokrajhar block on RTE Act, 2009 and on RTI for SMCs of Gaonculka Village under Kachugaon block.

#### **Block Level SMC/VEC/VCDC meet to review implementation of RTE/ICDS/Mid-Day-Meal etc:**

A block level review meeting was conducted at both the blocks with SMC, Teachers, mothers group, village head man, health workers & ICDS workers. A reporting on last one year's progress and issues with reference to RTE Act, 2009 was given in the programme by SMC, ICDS, village headman & from Mother's group representatives.

The issues that came out are: improper drinking water facilities, no school name display board, no MDM utensils, no school uniform, lack of teacher, delay in receiving fund for MDM, irregular MDM, incomplete infrastructure, no ICDS Centre, flood issue during monsoon, poor bridge and road condition, single teacher, school boundary, no transference on SMC fund utilization, issues of EGS School, ICDS song book printed in Assamese only, etc.

During the meeting the participants have appeal to CRC to include budget for sweater (uniform) and shoe in winter, umbrellas in monsoon and dining set for MDM.

Based on those reporting a written report was given to ASCPCR but embarrassingly ASCPCR could not take any action or have given any solution. Further, the report was also taken forward in BTC/District Level consultation.

### **Formation of Gotosafwrni Afad (Children's Club):**

Till today 31 children clubs were formed. A frequent interaction was done by the team in the whole year. And various activities were conducted with those children clubs such as:

- Organized a **Quiz Competition** programme on 12<sup>th</sup> January at Tulsibil among five children club cum Box Library. Children along with parents' total of 66 participants participated in the programme. The programme was started with prayer song followed by a quiz competition, poem recitation then ended by cultural programme. The quiz completion were conducted in two Group-A (Class 6-8) and Group-B (Class 3-5) and competed among five children club cum box library. The main element of the whole programme is that the whole programme is conducted by the children clubs, preparation, decoration, anchoring, management, expenditure (by contributing Rs. 50 each club), etc. only we have given them inputs and helped in preparing questions.
- **Children Day Celebration:** As working with the children and adolescent, taking the precious occasion of 14 November, a Children's Day is observed in Nayekgaon with Gotosha Afads of Nayekgaon Cluster. Teachers of Nayekgaon Cluster, ABSU representative (Nayekgaon Anchalik), Villagers and around two hundred children participated in the programme. The programme went on smoothly with the following agendas; welcome song by Bangaldobha DIC children, few words by guest on observance of the day, learning how to write letter (wrote letter in the name of Education Representatives of BTC on educational related issue), dance performance, poem recitation, and drama on witch hunting and trafficking.

The 14<sup>th</sup> Nov. is also observed in Lokhigaon with a good number of 250 participants organized by Lokhigaon Gotosha Afad and Tulsibil Gotosha Afad. The village children, parents, teacher, from NERSWN Mijink, Beauty, Rangina and Eragdao participated in the programme. Here also a day long programme was held where children participated by dancing and teachers competing together with children by playing chair games.

- As a next step after forming children club, **Capacity Building Training for Children Clubs** was organized for building their capacity to run their clubs independently. The topics discussed on the programme were:
  1. Meaning of club.
  2. Briefing on Leadership.
  3. Role of President, Secretary and other nine representatives.
  4. Annual Activity Planning of children club.

### **Facilitating Bal Sadan (Children's Assembly):**

Conducting a Childrens' Assembly is a very new concept in a place like kokrajhar. For the first time it was conducted by involving representatives from the entire children club with a theme 'Child Rights Issue & Protection'. In last two years this has been the first event involving all the children. Total of 150 children have participated and the assembly was chaired by Mr. Praholat Narzary,



children clubs' member. Several issues were discussed and debated in the assembly like on the plight of children displaced by 2012 ethnic conflict, large scale drop out, inadequate school infrastructure, child trafficking, child labour, environmental degradation, drug abuse etc were prominent ones. After the threadbare discussions the Assembly had passed many of the issues where each of the children's clubs extended their commitment to deal with these issues in their own jurisdiction and also to write to the concern authorities to end child rights violation and protect their peers from all kinds of violence, abuse and exploitation.

#### **Organizing Training for Service Providers (AWW/ASHA/ANM/Teachers/VCDC etc):**

Health and mental health of a child is very important in a process of pursuing education. With an aim of sensitizing service providers like ICDS, AWW, ASHA, VCDC towards children's rights and health a said training has been conducted in collaboration with Health team of NERSWN. Two Trainings for service provider has been conducted on RTE Act, 2009 & Health under two Blocks. At Kokrajhar Block training has been conducted on 4<sup>th</sup> March with a total 41 participants, the training was lead by resource person Dr. Sunil Kaul, Trustee of the Ant. And on 27<sup>th</sup> March at Kachugaon Block with 39 participants. The programmes were participated by ASHA, AWW and ICDS.

#### **Related Activities:**

- Participated in **Lower Assam NGO Forum's** 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention with the theme "Children in Conflict" held on 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> February in the premises of Forest Tourist Guest house of Choraikela, Kokrajhar. The meeting was meaningfully concluded with certain discussion and resolution for the protection of children from abuses, exploitation, and discrimination and for the proper implementation of RTE Act in sixth schedule areas and protection of the children from any violence.
- Participated in **Awareness building programme on Child Trafficking & RTE** at Bodofa Cultural Complex, Kokrajhar organized by NEDAN.
- Attained Facilitator training for the **unManifesto Campaigning** at Guwahati organized by DKA,support. Further this campaign was taken forward by NEDAN & NERSWN in kokrajhar.Manifestos collected in different areas from different groups of people were submitted to Sri UG Brahma and Sri RS Mushahary the nominated candidates for 16<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha under Kokrajhar constituency on the final event of Un-manifesto campaign organized on 7<sup>th</sup> April, 2014 in the premises of Auditorium Hall, Sience College Kokrajhar. The event was participated by around 300 people and those were among college students and village people.
- **Arrangement & Hejang's Visit (from DKA):** - It's a second visit by Mr. Hejang Mesao for evaluation and monitoring of partners organization supported by DKA, so the children clubs in four villages Mainatola, Aminkata, Tulsibil and Lakhigaon were mobilized with nice discussion and gathering. According to the planning on 26<sup>th</sup> Oct, 2013 Mr. Hejang Mesao reached Kokrajhar NERSWN Office to interact to ED, NERSWN and project team members and lastly with accountant for accountancy part. Then by the noon we took Mr. Hejang for

field visit to Kachugaon Block where an hour discussions were made with SMC members and mother groups of North Gongia cluster. By the evening interacting with the children club's members of Panowary villages we returned back to Kokrajhar.

- An interesting and useful **Grassroots Comic workshop** was organized by DKA partnership of Bosco Institute in Jorhat I- Card institution (Bosco institution of social science). The program was organized for Five days. The importance of grassroots comics and drawing of cartoon comics with stories were taught in the workshop.
- This year the team has enrolled **9 dropout children** in their respective village schools and enrolled in RSTC. The six girls (5 from Gossaigaon & 1 from Kokrajhar) among them were admitted to Kamalsing RSTC, two boys from Kokrajhar to Balagaon RSTC and 1 boy from Gossaigaon has been admitted to Gambaribil RSTC. But now four students have again aloof themselves from the training center. In spite of several tries the team could not bring back those four children and the reason that the team found behind their detachment were, one of the girl have got married, two girls have run away to earn money as home maid and one boy could not adjust himself in the training centre.
- For rapport building and in order to get information from villagers a **Village Level Awareness Meeting** was conducted almost in all intervened villages. The meetings were participated by village head man, teacher, SMC members, health workers, parents, guardian and children. In different village meeting we have found different issues like single teacher LP School which is very difficult for a teacher to handle and also both medium school run by single teacher, irregularity of MDM, irregular teacher, delay or non completion of construction work, no boundary walls, no drinking water facilities, no utensil for serving MDM, no ICDS centre, no transparency on utilization of SMC's fund between teacher or SMC member or villagers, fees taken by teacher on school beg as travelling cost, no sufficient bench desk, no separate toilet etc. Some resolution were also taken during the meeting by the community like to hold a second round meeting for more transparency, to give application to CDPO for establishing mini ICDS Centre, to hold meeting with teacher etc.

## Livelihood Programme

As the second year of intensive livelihood intervention in Jhawarbil and Sapkhata is on the verge of drawing close, the project team is jubilant about rapid progresses made in contributing towards improving the livelihood scenario. In the previous year, the project being hampered considerably due to terrible ethnic conflict in the area, this year it has picked up its momentum again. As reported earlier, the efforts are mainly channelized on building human capacities and promoting community institution to sustain the livelihood initiative undertaken by NERSWN in recent years and also to enable community to take charge of their life. It is with this intention following activities have been planned and implemented during the course of current project period:

### **Planned Project Activities for the Year:**

- ❖ Setting up Farmers Resources Centre (FRC)
- ❖ Creating Revolving Fund for FRC
- ❖ Setting up Seeds Bank.
- ❖ Capacity Building Workshop for Farmers Club.
- ❖ Training on SHG Management.
- ❖ Exposure Trip for Farmers Club and SHG Members.
- ❖ Promoting System of Rice Intensification (SRI).
- ❖ Support for Kitchen garden
- ❖ Horticulture Sapling Distribution.
- ❖ Training on Livestock Management in Collaboration with KVK.
- ❖ Pig rearing and Initiating Livestock Activities around Sapkhata.

### **Brief Narratives of the Activities Carried Out So Far:**

**Setting up of FRC:** Total of 2 Farmers Resource Centres (FRC) has been formed and promoted. One FRC is being promoted at Hirlagar and second is in Jhwarbil. The Hirlagar FRC has been named as ***Eben Chasa Kouri Thwi*** with 20 members (Male 11 and Female 09). In Jhwarbil, "Jiar" FRC has been promoted with total of 13 members (8 male and 5 female).

**Revolving Fund for FRC:** Each of the FRC has been supported with Rs. 20,000/- out of the NFI grant. The FRC is empowered to give loans to the farmers for different farm related needs in their jurisdiction. Extensive processes have been followed to set rules, regulation, facilitating effective understanding of the concept of FRC etc have been carried out. It's a new concept for the farmers of the area and hence demands regular hand holding. The project team is making best of its efforts to extend all possible support to promote them as effective farmers institutions.

**Setting Up Seed Bank:** In both Jhwarbil and Hirlagar, the seed bank has been initiated. Different varieties of seeds have been supplied by the FRCs on demand driven approach. Total of 30 farmers have taken high yielding variety seeds of Cabbage, Coriander, Radish, Brinjal, Tomato, chilly, Sponge Gourd, Okra (Jhinga), several leafy vegetables etc. These 30 farmers in turn were supposed to be supplying to other interested farmers. Approximately each of these 30 farmers has supplied seeds to 3 farmers each that have directly benefited 90 farmers.

**Farmers Club Promotion:** Two (2) Farmer's Clubs are being promoted in the previous year have been functioning well. This year several rounds of meetings have been organized by Farmers Club independently to discuss about various farm related activities. The farmer beneficiaries are selected by the Farmers Club. The farm related inputs such as knowhow, seed varieties, marketing etc are discussed and decided collectively by the members of the Farmers Club.

**SHG Promotion:** So far 6 all women Self Help Groups have been promoted comprising 72 members. The SHGs are holding regular meetings. The group members are being train on group management, book keeping, leadership, democratic process to be followed, visioning exercise etc have been done. The groups have started collective savings and internal lending. Some have started internal lending for small scale livelihood expansion of the members. Adequate efforts have been made to link with bank and NRLM. But till date only two groups from Hirlagar could be linked through local federation. Process for inclusion of rest of the groups is on. The Self Help Groups of Jhawarbil are facing difficulties in linking up with NRLM as they are being considered as forest encroachers. Efforts are on to form federation of the remaining groups by mixing up with groups of revenue villages.

**Exposure Trip for Farmers Club and SHG Members:** The exposure trip for farmers in Hirlagar and Jhawarbil has become like an annual event. This strategy has been really effective so far. When the agro-based livelihood initiative was started in the area, very few farmers were interested. In fact, after having lived in the relief camp for one and half decade, most of them have lost agricultural skills. But by meeting, seeing and interacting with the successful farmers in different parts of the state, the farmers have really become motivated. This year too, total of 20 farmers have been taken for exposure trip to see farming activities of local Krishi Vigyan Kendra, vegetable cultivation of Bamunkura Village, Milon SHG which has excelled in Mushroom culture and award winning farmer Mr. Rabi Saha, of Bhaoraguri who has really shown the path by large scale vegetable cultivation, green house farming, varmi-compose, floriculture, dairy farm and other items. After having visited the successful farming sites, the farmers of both areas were really motivated and it is evident from the increasing numbers of farmers in both the location.

**Promoting System of Rice Intensification (SRI):** For last three years adequate efforts have been made to promote System of Rice Intensification Method among the farmers in and around Jhawarbil area, but the yields have not really increased. Hence, this year the project team has not taken up the SRI related activities. In the ensuing year, the team is planning to make another attempt.

But total of 25 farmers have been motivated for paddy cultivation. The area being dry and acute shortage of water, very few families have lands that are suitable for paddy cultivation. In spite of this challenge, the farmers have been able to produce 8 to 10 Mon of paddy per bigha. Each of the families has cultivated 2 to 3 bighas of land. In the ensuing year, the project team is planning to motivate more numbers of families to cultivate paddy which can contribute towards food security of the families in Jhawarbil.

**Promoting Kitchen Garden:** As many of the activities are inter dependent, the seed bank has been instrument to support the farmers taking up kitchen garden activities. The two farmers clubs have chosen 30 farmers each based on the interest and need. Hence total of 60 farmers in turn have approximately helped another 180 farmers. But in Jhawarbil by this year almost all families have started cultivating vegetable witnessing the success of other families. Moreover, in last few years of

settlement, the families have been able to purchase bullocks, buffalos etc which has also helped the farmers now to go for plough based agriculture (economy).

Many of the families have gone beyond Kitchen Garden method of cultivation; some of the farmers who have benefited from the Kitchen Garden method of cultivation now have started large scale vegetable cultivation.

Following is one of the narratives of the case which is representative of the items of vegetables being grown as part of the kitchen-garden concept of vegetable cultivation combined with the garlic and chilly in little extra proportion for better earning:

Mr. Ram Baskey (jeta bura)s of No. 1 Jhawarbil

Cultivation Pattern: Multi Cropping.

Area of cultivation: 1.5 Bighas

Vegetables: - Cabbage, Brinjal, Chilly & Garlic,

Total Item Wise Production and Sale

- Cabbage yielded 250 kg. Sold 200 kg out of 250 kg at the price of Rs.10.00, earned Rs. 2000.00, invested Rs.230.00, earned Rs.1770.00
- Brinjal yielded about 170 kg. Sold 150 kg. at Rs. 10.00, earned total Rs.1500.00, invested Rs. 230.00 and earned Rs. 1270.00
- Chilly yielded about 15 kg. Out of this sold about 10 kg at Rs. 70 per kg. earned total Rs. 700.00, invested Rs. 15.00 and earned Rs. 685.00
- Garlic yielded 100 kg. Sold 40 kg out of 100 kg at Rs. 60.00 per kg, earned Rs.1800.00 and rest will be sold when price rises, approximate total earning will be Rs. 5500.00 excluding the investment of Rs. 500.00 for seeds.

Total earning for the farmer in this season is  $1770+1270+685+5500=$  Rs. 9225.00. This case is a representative of the rest of the farmers, some of whom have earned more and some them have earned less, so on an average, total of Rs. 9000.00 is being earned by the families who have followed the processes being facilitated by the Farmers Resource Centre and project team.

**Objectives of Kitchen gardening:**

1. To meet the daily requirement of balance diet (45g fruits, 75-125g green leafy vegetables, 85g root or tubers and 85g of other vegetables)
2. To produce fresh and quality vegetables.
3. To utilize the labour of the family members profitably.
4. To obtain pleasure, inspiration and a means of recreation.

**Principles of Kitchen gardening:**

1. Select well drained sunny area at the backyard near water source.
2. Size and design of the garden depend on availability of land. However the garden should preferably be rectangular shape.
3. Selection of crops is governed by your choice of the family, size of the garden and time available to devote in the garden.
4. 200 sq.m. Area is sufficient for a five member family to supply 1.5 kg of vegetable per day.
5. Quick growing fruit trees like banana, papaya, lemons etc. should be planted in the northern side of the garden and climbing type of vegetables like cucurbits, dolichos, etc. can be grown on the other side.
6. To ensure steady and regular supply of vegetables, several sowing of a particular crop at short intervals should be done during the season.
7. Ridges which separate the beds may be utilized for growing roots crops like radish, carrot, etc.
8. Early maturing crops should be planted together in continuous beds so that the area can be made available at once for putting late crops.
9. Interspaces of the long duration crops like brinjal, tomato, chilies, etc. may be utilized for quick growing crops like spinach beet, lettuce, knolkhol etc.
10. One or two compost pits should be dug in the corner of garden to dispose the plant residues which will be reutilized as compost material.

**Piglet Bank:** Till date total of 10 beneficiaries have received piglet loan from the piglet bank. 2 beneficiaries have sold the pigs at Rs. 6000.00 and pigs of 2 beneficiaries have died untimely. The process for third batch of approval for lending piglet is on. The appraisal committee is following the laid out procedures to be followed for sanctioning the loan. The beneficiaries are selected after the home visits and while visiting the women headed households, destitute families, families with chronic illness and families with less income are being chosen. So far the recovery rate has been encouraging which has helped lending to others.

**Horticulture Based Livelihood:** From last year's initiative, this year total of 38 farmers have continued their Horticulture based livelihood. These farmers are growing banana, pineapple, lemon and black pepper. This year too efforts are on to expand this initiative and bring more and more farmers with horticulture based livelihood. In fact many families have taken up Horticultural activities. The bamboo plantation also has started. The areca saplings will also be distributed for re-plantation by end of April 2014. In a way the Horticultural activities are also gradually filling up the land of Jhawarbil area. The initial days dry and frustrating looks of Jhawabil is phenomenon of the past now.

**Pig Rearing and Initiating Livestock Activities around Sapkhata:** As the land holding pattern of the Sapkhata and Hirlagar area is very small, one family on an average is having less than 1 bigha. In fact almost all the families of Hirlagar are just having homestead land which also belongs to the government. Therefore, several rounds of discussion have been held with the Farmers Resource Centre of Hirlagar. After series of consultation, it is being decided to go for Poultry and Piggery

farming in a big way. As part of the long term plan, 10 farmers will be supported from this financial year. The selection process is over, now the chicks and piglets will be distributed soon.

**Training on Livestock Management in Collaboration with KVK:** The process is on to impart the training. The training will be imparted at local Krishi Vigyan Kendra. Initial discussion have already been made once the general election gets over, total 20 farmers from both Jhawarbil and Hirlagar will be imparted training on livestock management.

**Challenges Faced:**

- Absence of permanent village level facilitator is a constraint in the project that over burdens the Coordinator.
- Despite continuous monitoring some farmers do not follow the set guidelines and procedures for farming that hampers the production and marketing.
- Inability to come up with long term livelihood planning for both Jhawarbil and Hirlagar has been one of the constraints.
- Last two years have been able to create a critical mass for the project as a result the demand for different inputs such a skill, finances, technical knowhow etc have increased many folds but project inputs have remained the same.
- The extreme inaccessibility of Jhawarbil area comes in the way of fetching better returns from the market as the traders do no reach out to the area and locals have not still learned the entrepreneurial skill.

**Learning:**

- Failures and successes in last two years, has now helped NERSWN to become more deliberate in its intervention.
- The ongoing effort to promote community based institution has been very enriching experience for the project team and it believes that the good work presently being done will be sustained by these institutions.
- The community dynamics and common hindrances are familiar to the team now which helps the team to be more effective and focus.

**Conclusion:** Last one year has been very challenging and also critical for the team due to the post riot consequences. On one hand the fear, mistrust and trauma generated due to conflict and on the hand diminished livelihood opportunities due to inability to move from one place to another. Therefore, the ongoing project assumed far greater significance. It is with this thinking, the project team made best of its efforts to realize the project objectives. The team faced considerable constraints; nevertheless, due to good ground presence and the rapport with the community, above narratives have been possible. The team hopes to do even better in the days ahead.

# Relief and Rehabilitation Programme

**Introduction:** The project “*An Initiative for Ensuring Safe and Peaceful Resettlement of Displaced Victims of Communal Violence in Kokrajhar – A project for Rehabilitation of Displaced Population*” was began from 1<sup>st</sup> November of 2013 with generous support from Penn State and Charlotte chapters of Association for India’s Development (AID). This report is in continuation of the previous progress report being submitted to AID in the month of February. In last six months following progress has been in the direction of realizing the project objectives-

**Project Area and Population Coverage:** This particular project covers 6 villages under Kokrajhar Block of Kokrajhar district of Bodoland Territorial Council which are amongst the worse violent hit villages. These villages comprise of both Bodo tribe and Bengali Speaking Muslim population. With the generous support from Association for India’s Development (AID), NERSWN has started working in six conflict affected villages of Bangaldova , Chakrasila part-I, Chakrasila Part II, Chakrasila Muslim Basti, Tingtila and Alurbhui of Kokrajhar district under the Titaguri development block which is located inside the Chakrasila Wild Life Sanctuary and situated remotely at 50 km south-East from Kokrajhar town. Till date, the ongoing project has reached out to 215 families and 971 population (516 male and 448 female).

**Project Staff:** 1 Project Coordinator who is graduate in Arts with Diploma on Community Organization & Development Practice (CODP) with ten years of working experience. 2 Volunteers from the community who have experience of relief work in the aftermath of the recent conflict.

**Promoting Peace and Reconciliation:** In these villages several rounds of peace meetings have been held in presence of both the estranged communities. As reported earlier, a local Peace Committee also has been formed with 12 members from all the villages representing both the communities. This committee in turn has facilitated series of consultations to reconcile the estranged communities. Apart from reconciliation, the committee has taken up several cases of grievances such as lost of cattle, destruction of crops, individual disputes and also has carried out joint *shramdan*.

It was very heartening to see the Peace Committee taking proactive initiative for joint patrolling and guarding of villages by youth volunteers from both the communities in the wake of the recent spate of violence. In the post poll violence, on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2014, in two separate incidents of deadly attack by heavily armed extremist reportedly 46 people have been killed including 24 children. The first attack was in Balapara village of Kokrajhar district and followed by barbaric attack on NK Khagrabari village of Baksa district under Bodoland Territorial Council.

Following these incidents, several thousand people,, relocated themselves to safer places, but it was really inspiring to see people from the intervened villages reassuring each other and also constantly guarding the villages. As a result, despite being one of the most sensitive areas, not a single family fled from these villages. The project team felt jubilant about the journey that they made so far in the



direction realizing reconciliation and durable peace. The detail report of the peace mission carried out in the aftermath of the recent spate of killings is attached separately for facilitating better understanding.

**Community Meeting for Village Reconstruction:** In each of these villages, several rounds of meetings have been held, to discuss about the challenges being faced by the villagers. The meetings have been held almost on fortnightly intervals to not only plan for reconstruction of totally devastated villages but also to review the progress being made so far. Through these meetings following developmental activities have been decided to be carried out in these villages-

**Ensuring Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation:** During the intense period of ethnic conflict, all sources of drinking water have been brutally destroyed by the rioters. Whichever was left, the resettled villagers were not willing to use, suspecting poisoning of water. Hence, after several rounds of meetings, the project team was asked to reconstruct the destroyed source of drinking water such as Open Wells and Hand Pumps. The water scarcity was so acute during the dry season of February and March that people were literally quarrelling with each other to fetch few liters of water.

Therefore, total of 4 Open Wells were reconstructed in Allevita village, 4 Open Wells were repaired and reconstructed in Tingtila village and 5 Open Wells in Chakrasila part I and 2 Open Wells were repaired in Part II. In rest of the villages, the water scarcity was not so much, thus, on priority basis these villages have been supported with well repairing and reconstruction. With these support from the project, the water scarcity issue has been fully resolved in these villages. The Open Well, which is most commonly used source of water in the region, have been reconstructed with concrete platform for sanitary purpose as well as to provide a space for washing cloths and utensils without dirtying the water inside the well.

The well reconstruction and repairing has been done by village youths on cash for work basis. The village youths who have never done well construction have been involved with the work under the guidance of the skilled person. Hence, the initiative apart from resolving the water scarcity problem; also has helped the riot affected villagers to earn some income.

**Ensuring Basic Education for Children:** All the children up to 14 years of age, in these villages; have been enrolled into the schools. As all the villages have primary schools in their villages, the project team did not face much of difficulty in re-enrolling the children.

But the project team has faced two challenges in this front, (a) The primary school in Allevita village has close down the Bodo Medium instruction forcing the Bodo children to enroll themselves into Assamese medium resulting into huge difficulty in understanding the language which they do not speak at home and (b) Most of the Bodo families have send their children to study outside their villages as a safety measures.

Both these issues have been taken up by the project team. For restoring Bodo medium instruction, an appeal has been made to Block Elementary Education Officer and he has assured to restore the same soon. The families have been requested to bring back their wards so that a sense of permanence prevails in the area. As a result some of the families are gradually bringing back their children. This happening also because of the expenses which families cannot afford.

While discussing about ensuring education in the villages, the village children and youths have demanded lots of books from the project team, but it was difficult to meet their demands due to limited resources. Hence, the project team has promoted Children's collectives in these villages to set up and manage Box Library. Till date total of 2 Children's Clubs have been formed in Bangaldoba and Chakrasila villages. These clubs have been provided with Box Libraries.

Box Library as it is popularly, known have been promoted in many riot affected villages by NERSWN. For this, a big Trunk Box is purchased and important books are also being purchased for lending it to the club members. The club members apart from managing the Box Library are entrusted with responsibility of collecting books as donations to the club and keep increasing the numbers of books. These box libraries are also supported with subscription of periodicals, journals and news papers. The Box Libraries have not only met the book needs of children but have worked as psycho-social support, reconciliation tools as children from estranged communities have membership in the library and borrow books from it. Thus, it serves multiple useful purposes.

**Promotion of Youth Club:** One youth club also has been formed in Chakrasila village comprising 13 Executive Committee Members. The youth club is promoted in order to involve them with constructive activities such as skill development, higher education, games and sports activities, career motivation, village reconstruction, making reconciliation efforts etc. The processes for fixing up roles and responsibilities through consultative activities are on.

**Promoting Agro-Livestock Based Livelihood Initiatives:** This has been most challenging task so far. The political instability and fear of re-occurrence of conflict has really taken heavy toll on this aspect. On top of it, the families have lost all their bullocks and cattle, leaving them with helpless situation as they do not have means to plough their soil. But after series of consultation, 1 nos. of Farmers Club has been formed so far comprising 10 members Allevita village. The process for formation of another Farmers Club in Chakrasila village is on. Another challenge was limited financial resource for this particular activity which requires bigger investment. In a scenario of total collapse of livelihood infrastructure of the families due to being devastated by ethnic conflict, employing meager resources to select families became very difficult. Nevertheless, the project team is simultaneously carrying forward community mobilization and also raising additional resources for this activity. In next few months focus would be to work towards improving the livelihood scenario in the villages.

**Issues and Challenges:**

- ❖ The turmoil and instability in the region at times affects the speed of the work.
- ❖ The families being affected by such high intensity ethnic conflict is broken from inside, so motivating them immediately after the conflict has been a tough challenge.
- ❖ The limited fund in the project has been a constraint in taking up many of the activities suggested by the villagers.
- ❖ The villages being remotely located in hills and forest has been difficult to access for the project staff.

**Conclusion:** This project endeavor despite being small has been very satisfying for the project team as it has benefited the most needy families and population. It is with this project, NERSWN could reach out to such remotely located Internally Displaced Persons who have faced enormous tragedy in life by losing their beloved home and surroundings. This initiative has not only helped the targeted population but also has enriched the project staff on intricacies of dealing with conflict response work. This learning surely will be useful for planning and implementing effective developmental intervention for marginalized people.