

# VIKAS SAMVAD

## Annual Report 2013-2014

### Theme I: Nutrition & Health

#### 1. The POSHAN Initiative

International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) has been leading a partnership initiative titled “**POSHAN**” (**P**artnerships and **O**pportunities to **S**trengthen and **H**armonize **A**ctions for **N**utrition), in India. Institutions and organisations namely, Institute for Development Studies (IDS, UK), Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI), ‘One World South Asia’, ‘Vikas Samvad’, ‘Coalition for Sustainable Nutrition Security in India’, ‘Save the Children, India’, ‘Public Health Resource Network (PHRN)’, ‘Vatsalya’ and the ‘Centre for Equity Studies’ are partnering with IFPRI in this initiative. The initiative aims to generate and disseminate evidence on efficacious actions for nutrition and supports the use of the evidences in decision making in the realm of Public Health Nutrition in general, and programmatic interventions on nutrition, in particular.

That the efficacious actions would occur as envisaged largely depends on the human capital, more particularly at the field level. The Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) and the Anganwadi Helpers (AWHs) at the village level drawing upon the support and guidance of the Sector Supervisors under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme can bring about the much cherished turnaround in the programme deliverance. However, it needs to be acknowledged that these field functionaries (and their likes in the department of Public Health & Family Welfare) have rather been appearing to be a distraught lot over the recent years. More often than not, they are only “told to do”. Their thoughts, beliefs, feelings, experiences, perceptions, ideas and concerns are closed behind the door of ‘spate of instructions’. The demotivating silence and lack of ownership belittles their self-worth. The situation inhibits their personality growth and ability to take self-initiative apart from blunting their sense of exploration and wiping away a sense of confidence. These manifestations occur when communication barriers overshadow the role clarity and credibility of their services. In addition, they adversely affect the context, content and continuity of services, both for the provider as well as the recipients of services. Does it call for looking at and learning from the communication theories and models?

The sector-wide field functionaries in the domains of public health and nutrition often grapple with the challenges pertaining to factual information and its value premises whilst performing their designated roles. Being better informed and articulated helps them in relating the purpose and worth of their activities with the envisaged outputs and outcomes. It is recognised that they need to be endowed with an ongoing and incisive insight in to and urge for these premises in their work environment. It is believed that knowledge, its sharing and data sensitivity have a significant potential to instil a deep sense of achievement, pride and accountability in the functionaries. It does so by enabling them to relate the outputs of their actions to a host of

superior outcomes and impacts towards attainment of faster, joint and more effective goals of reduction in infant, child and maternal morbidity and mortality.

Consequently, the concept of Knowledge Forum took its roots in year 2013-14.

The initiative - Knowledge Forum (Poshan Samvad), thus, aims to serve the following crucial needs of programme functionaries:

- Realise the enhanced self-worth through opportunity for open-ended and trusting communication, and
- Provide a factual and value-based information to field functionaries.

It is hoped that the forum's processes will help them to confidently tread the path of exploration with a heightened sense of stakes and ownership. The thrust is on being open to newer ideas and innovations, whether at work per se or being in the intra- or inter-sector setting; and that too without being driven by the criteria of success or failure. The Knowledge Forum seeks to use this outlook to generate and disseminate a galaxy of evidences on effective actions for nutrition and public health. It is hoped that these evidences can and must pave the way for enhanced programme performance in the twin realms of 'Public Health' and 'Nutrition'.

Dialogues with and amongst the service providers at the district and block levels and with the Aanganwadi Workers (AWWs) at the village level indicate that they require wide-ranging reliable information and answers to many of their queries on a host of topics pertaining to nutrition and health issues, so that they can better perform their roles. The service providers acknowledge that a continued dialogue would greatly enhance the quality of their services, and would produce effective, results-based programmes.

Given the unavailability of a platform on which they can fall back upon, the service providers are unable to satisfy the stream of unending questions posed by the service recipients. Likewise, they feel vulnerable when falter at work and do not see a coping support. Further, they feel the need for a backup support where they can freely share and consult on their experiences and the challenges they have faced while implementing the programme without feeling threatened, humiliated or apprehensive about being mocked at or ridiculed. In addition, another objective of the Knowledge Forum is to endow the functionaries with a heightened sense of self-worth so that they may better value the significance of their roles.

It is contemplated that the Knowledge Forum would provide for and facilitate continuing dialogues that can enhance the programme-wide knowledge and morale of the field-level service providers who play vital roles in improving the status of public health and nutrition, and would afford a newer dimension in developing their professional competence (represented by the tripod of **Knowledge, Skills and Attitude - KSA**). It is believed that a heightened sense of

confidence can be inculcated amongst these functionaries by supporting them to share latest information and studies in the fields of nutrition and public health.

The first phase of deliberations at the Knowledge Forum had covered a total of 6 meetings spanned over a period of one year in 2013-14. These consultations were held at Shivpuri, Khandwa and Gwalior bringing together as many as 137 Anganwadi Workers, 49 Supervisors, 42 Child Development Project Officers (CDPOs) and 1 Divisional Joint Director. Together, these functionaries came forth to render a worthy first-hand account of their ground-level perceptions and experiences pertaining to the issue of malnutrition and its eradication.

Encouraged by the Department of Women & Child Development, Government of Madhya Pradesh, the mechanism of Knowledge Forum has been initially instituted. It seeks to bring together the service providers of the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) programme, viz. AWWs, Supervisors, and CDPOs, as the first step towards realising a synergistic deliverance of joint and shared performance by all stakeholders in addressing the formidable menace of malnutrition.

Being open-ended, inclusive and process-centric are the key characteristics of Poshan Samvad platform. Whilst it seeks and welcomes the participation of counterparts from other related sectors, particularly those from the Department of Public Health and Family Welfare (DoPH&FW), Government of Madhya Pradesh (GoMP), the forum has thus far been dwelling on the programme functionaries of the ICDS. Notably, these functionaries have keenly flagged issues pertaining to their engagement with the field functionaries of their counterpart departments, namely, DoPH&FW, especially with the Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANMs), Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs), Lady Health Visitors (LHVs), Male Supervisors, and Medical Officers at these bedrock consultations.

The Knowledge Forum flagged issues pertaining to the following sub-sets:

- Systemic, attitudinal, and operational challenges: These include field-level perceptions on technical competence of Anganwadi Workers on identification of Severe Acute Malnourished (SAM) children, issues related with referral system in the health institutions of the Department of Public Health & Family Welfare, GoMP, interfacing with the functionality of Nutrition Rehabilitation Centres, inadequacy of provision for transportation of Take Home Ration (THR), inadequacy of budgetary provisions for the Anganwadi Centres (AWCs), need for securing commensurate educational qualifications of Anganwadi workers for role effectiveness, administration of serving hot cooked food in tandem with the Mid-Day Meal – need to look at varying provisions - and challenges of efficient documentation.
- Aspects related to intersectoral convergence: These focused on issues pertaining to deliverance of health check-ups, immunization, and referral services.
- Policy and programming issues: These centred on securing a dignified and conducive work Environment for the AWWs, availability of programme resources and reporting

documents/formats/registers, inconsistency in directions and guidelines (like ensuring that the AWWs are not engaged on non-core areas) and lack of communication amongst intra- and inter-sector programme functionaries.

By enabling the field functionaries to communicate among themselves and with their counterparts, the Knowledge Forum should be seen as a welcome initiative of Madhya Pradesh in enhancing their individual and joint roles in combating malnutrition, the consultations in phase I have concluded.

## **2. Resource Partnership with Child Rights and You (CRY)**

2.1 The following programmatic activities related to nutrition and health have been undertaken in resource partnership with CRY:

- This year four media fellowships have been given on the issue of nutritional security for tribal and dalits other than those covered in the previous year. The fellows have done stories and articles on the issues and have visited their zone to get an intensive peek of the situation.
- Six short media assignments have been granted to the mainstream media professionals on the issues of Nutrition Security for Tribal and Dalits.
- Vikas Samvad's field organization, Community Development Centre, Balaghat initiated a 12-Day Nutrition programme, "Suposhan Abhiyan" (सुपोषण अभियान).
- Analysis of State Assembly Questions during the period 2009-13 has been initiated. The questions pertain to range of issues including child health, nutrition, safety and education.
- As the state government is required to frame rules pertaining to implementation of National Food Security Act, dialogue pertaining to identification of issues pertaining to ICDS, MDM and Maternal Entitlement vis-à-vis provisions enshrined under National Food Security Act (NFSA) has been taken up. Vikas Samvad convened a meeting key stakeholders on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2014 to discuss these issues with the aim to provide a better understanding of entitlements granted under the NFSA and ways to monitor their implementation. As many as 30 participants from 3 divisions of Madhya Pradesh participated in the discussion. A documentation was prepared for the purpose served as a backgrounder in the meeting. Following the deliberations, and also drawing upon the outcomes emanating from Knowledge Forum dialogues, focal areas for drafting NFSA rules were also compiled and shared with the Department of Food. The suggestions mooted have been referred by the State Chief Secretary to different departments. A committee headed by the Chief Secretary will oversee the aspects pertaining to issues of convergence amongst different departments, namely, ICDS, Food, WCD and Health with regard to implementation of NFSA in the state.
- With a view to check on the accountability, the issue of social audit of NFSA was raised with the Madhya Pradesh Social Audit Society (under department of Rural Development, Government of Madhya Pradesh). Vikas Samvad was given the responsibility for drafting the guidelines and undertake the process documentation of

audit. Also, a document was prepared on defining the domains of NFSA provisions for women and children and ICDS, MDM and Maternity Entitlements which was shared with Chief Secretary of Govt of MP, Dept. of WCD and Dept. of Rural Development in March 2014. To strengthen the process in other states too, a workshop was facilitated in Sanand, Ahmadabad (Gujarat) India by Vikas Samvad for sharing the details of the same. More than 150 participants attended it. Primer on National Food Security Act prepared and published by Vikas Samvad for Right to Food Campaign was also released in the National Convention.

## 2.2 Development and dissemination of training materials of following primers was taken up:

- Malnutrition Primer (English)
- “कुपोषण प्रवेशिका” (Hindi)
- Integrated Community Based Management of Malnutrition (English): Developed and published.
- कुपोषण का समुदाय आधारित प्रबंधन (Hindi): Disseminated amongst local organisations and field workers.
- Primer on Childhood Diseases was developed and published and disseminated.
- Growth Monitoring and Promotion Primer (English) developed.
- Primer on Growth Monitoring in Hindi, “बच्चों की वृद्धि निगरानी” developed.
- Primer on Social Audit of ICDS and Health Services drafted.
- Primer on Crèche focusing on the care of the children at care centres in terms of their health and nutrition drafted.
- Documentation of Knowledge, Attitude and Practices ‘KAP-Outcome Framework’ (English) prepared.
- Documentation of Knowledge, Attitude and Practices ‘KAP-Outcome Framework’ (Hindi), “ज्ञान, प्रवृत्ति और व्यवहार” prepared.
- Documentation and articles on interrelationship of malnutrition and TB: There is a complex relationship between malnutrition and TB as malnutrition affects Cell-Mediated Immunity (CMI) which plays a significant role in preventing TB. A document has been developed on the phenomenon and as many as 10 articles on the subject have been published in newspapers.
- Document on Public Health Nutrition: A document in Hindi, titled “लोक स्वास्थ्य पोषण-अवधारणा” focusing multiple aspects of Public Health Nutrition has been drafted. It consists of three parts, one on Public Health Nutrition, second on Right Nutrition and Health in regard to Human Nutrition and the third one on Early Childhood Development and Behavioural Change Communication for Health and Nutrition.

## 2.3 Following other significant activities have been undertaken during the reporting period:

- Publication (Hindi) on “Poshan and Matrutva Hak” (पोषण और मातृत्व हक) - (Defining Nutrition Rights and Maternity Entitlements) under the National Food Security Act.

- Info Alert notes were prepared on diseases and treatment seeking behavior and nutrition and health status of woman and children in the state after analysis of Annual Health Survey on:
  - “Madhya Pradesh mein Bachhon aur Mahilaon ka Poshan aur Swasthya” (मध्यप्रदेश में बच्चों और महिलाओं का पोषण और स्वास्थ्य).
  - “Bharat mein Teevra aur Gambheer Beemariyan” (“भारत में तीव्र और गंभीर बीमारियां”)

Around 200 alerts have since been released.

### **3. Partnership with MP Lok Sangharsh Sajha Manch (MPLSSM)**

On 10<sup>th</sup> April 2013, a workshop on Hunger Profile was organised on situation analysis of children’s hunger. As many as 45 cases prepared by members of the Manch were taken up for discussion. The cases included from communities including Baiga, Sahariya, Kol, Dalit and Muslim. Likewise, 4 members of the Manch participated in the National Convention on Right to Food Campaign which was held from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> March 2013. The participation provided an opportunity to the members to share the situation prevailing in their respective areas with regard to child hunger and malnutrition.

### **4. Bridging the Digital Divide: an Initiative for Digital Empowerment**

This initiative has been taken up by Vikas Samvad with support from Ford Foundation. It seeks to contribute positively in policy making processes in securing digital access, particularly to the poor. Recognising that digital divide has a profound impact on inclusive human development, the intervention shall go a long way in rendering ICT that can help in enhancing effectiveness in governance of health care, nutrition and education in meeting the information needs of the poor in rural and tribal areas. The 2-year long initiative is being implemented in 3 regions of Madhya Pradesh, namely, Mahakaushal, Malwa and Central. It focuses an intensive intervention in Dindori, Jhabua and Bhopal districts. In each district, 4 Gram (village) Panchayats have been taken up. The intervention includes activities across dimensions of capacity building, research and documentation and dissemination and advocacy.

## **Theme II - Child Protection**

### **1. Partnership with Hifazat**

The partnership dwells on the following programmatic areas related to the efficacious implementation of Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) through advocacy and allied actions for addressing the issues of:

- Child protection and concomitant capacitating the functionality of institutions like Child Welfare Committees (CWCs), Juvenile Justice Board (JJB), Special Juvenile Police Units (SJPU),
- Children in need of care and protection with special reference to missing children,
- Children in need of care and protection with special reference to children having taken to begging; and
- Children in need of care and protection with special reference to children living off on railway platforms.

Towards these ends, the following activities have been undertaken:

- With support from Hifazat, the state government rescued 25 children who were involved in begging, rag picking and child labour.
- A coordination meeting was held on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2013 at Gwalior in partnership with Parvarish. Wide-ranging issues were discussed at the meeting, including, reasons for children to live off on railway platforms, how to prevent the inhaling of whitener by the children. Need for opening up an Anganwadi Centre in the jail, rehabilitation of children who cross 18 years of age.
- A two-day workshop was held on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2013-1<sup>st</sup> May 2013 on research and advocacy tools for core and network members of Hifazat.
- A visit was undertaken by core members to Dindori and Mandla districts in June 2013 so as to have a first-hand dialogue with the rescued children who had gone missing as well as with their parents.
- Advocacy for child issues was flagged during elections to the state assembly.
- During November, 2013, a consultation on the issue of child protection was organized in Mandla in support of child welfare committee. 29 participants from different departments and segments like Homes, WCD, NGO and Child line, etc. attended the meeting.
- In December, 2013, coordination meeting was organized in Jabalpur. Different stakeholders from GRP, Coolie, Vendor, TT, Auto rickshaw driver participated in this meeting. Hifazat also linked these stakeholder with local organisations so that further follow up programme will be done by these organization and also the rehabilitation of the children will be ensured.



### **Theme – III Rights Perspective on Cross-cutting Themes: Food Security, Migration Displacement, Mid-Day Meal, Education, Community Mobilization, Communication & Capacity Building**

#### **1. Resource Partnership with Child Rights and You (CRY)**

Vikas Samvad has undertaken the following major activities across the cross-cutting themes in resource partnership with CRY:

- 🌍 State level consultation, 'Jan Utsav' was jointly organized by 15 civil society organizations to share the issues with government officials, community members and civil society. During the Jan Utsav, demands were raised for the health and land rights of the marginalized community and for setting off remarkable change in the MGNREGA in favour of women and child rights for ensuring its effective implementation at the grassroots.

- ✚ Network and liaison building has been pursued with like-minded journalists, alliances and concerned organisations who are engaged on the issue of child rights. Contact was established with 25 journalists and their consent was obtained.
- ✚ 4 press conferences were organized and facilitated by Vikas Samvad to share the detailed report and updates prepared by ADR and Madhya Pradesh Election watch on qualification, income, donation and criminal records of the candidates of political parties. 130 journalists from 45 different print and electronic media were present at the conference.
- ✚ Filing of RTI applications on the issues of child health & nutrition, poverty, exclusion etc. was done. RTI was filed to Food and Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection, Ministry Bhopal demanding information related to National Food Security Act 2013.
- ✚ An issue was raised with district Dhar where BPL families were not getting subsidized ration from 3 months.
- ✚ After the civil society meeting where in NFSA was broadly discussed it was raised that on kumhaar, pardhi's also needs to be included in the list of beneficiaries identified under NFSA. Khargone Civil Society and Pradhan of Balaghat has also raised issues over inclusion of OBCs and Lohar community in the list of beneficiaries.

## 2. Bridging the Digital Divide: an Initiative for Digital Empowerment

With support from Ford Foundation, the ICT project is aimed at bridging the digital divide so that the community is not deprived of communication. During the year 2013-2014, the project has achieved the completion of the following major activities:

- **Exposure visit to digital e-Panchayat in Balaghat:** A visit was undertaken to Balaghat District to understand the technology employed by Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF) to connect 18 Panchayats digitally and identification of the community information needs and means employed to fulfil it. The Wainganga Community Development Centre is an initiative of the DEF at national level. The concept of digital panchayat was laid with the objective to create a platform for local communities to voice out their opinion and share diverse local social, cultural and economic practices, stories and challenges. This visit was accompanied by our partners working in Dindori. It was aimed to understand the concept of this panchayat because in our study area we have one panchayat named Jardhobha in Panna district which is a computerized panchayat.
- **Data feeding of survey format:** Quantitative data was collected on the issue of digital access from the research area (18 communities) using three methods, namely baseline survey, sample survey and women survey. Baseline survey covered 4642 households, sample survey covered 1031 households and data from 540 women was collected during women survey. The data collected was entered into excel spreadsheet to arrange and store it in a manageable form. The data sheets generated were useful in statistical analysis of the data, generate results and document the status of digital divide in the research areas.
- **Photo documentation of issues related to digital divide in Indore, Jhabua, Dindori, Panna and Bhopal:** It was an outsourced assignment to capture different aspects of penetration, use etiquettes and barriers associated with digital technology (mobile phones, Digital TV

and Internet technology) in 200 photographs. A short power point presentation of 65 photographs was designed and shared at our website <http://digitalinequality.org/en/presentation>

- **Case study documentation of issues related to digital divide among marginalized sections of the society in Bhopal, Panna, Dindori, Jhabua and Indore:** Ms. Nanditta Chibber was assigned to document the status of penetration, use etiquettes of digital technology, barriers and challenges in efficient use of the technology among marginalized sections of society in Madhya Pradesh. The status was documented in the form of case studies, anecdotes, communities' perceptions. The facilitation was done by identifying prospective case studies, arranging and coordinating meeting and interviews with community people. The VSS team along with the support of partner organizations identified three case studies in each of the research districts. A total of 34 stories from the research area were documented comprising 18 communities across five districts of Madhya Pradesh.
- **Radio program on awareness of digital sources of information:** A script for a radio program was prepared by Vikas Samvad Team for All India Radio. The target audience were people of marginalized sections of society in Madhya Pradesh. The objective of this program is to address utility Digital Source of Information; highlight the gaps in allocation of resources and make people aware about online schemes and services. A 5 minutes purchased slot was broadcasted on different dates in five different research districts. In urban areas, it was aired through Vivid Bharti FM and in rural through Regional Relay Centres.
- **Study on status of broadband and broadcast access in Dindori, Panna, Jhabua, Indore and Bhopal:** Management related trips were made to all the five districts selected for the research. The objective was to regularly manage and monitor the task of data collection carried out simultaneously in five districts selected for studying the status of broadband and broadcast access in Madhya Pradesh. All the 18 communities' part of research area was visited regularly to ensure authentic data collection and resolve issues and problems that arose in field.
- **Translation of documents:** 6 articles based on the observations made with respect to various issues related to penetration, barriers and patterns of use of digital technology in the research area were documented in Hindi. These articles were translated in English and shared on the project website <http://digitalinequality.org/en/latest-articles>
- **Designing of E-book: Wings of aspiration: Struggle for digital inequality:** 34 case studies documented by Ms. Nanditta Chibber were assorted and compiled into one document titled as "Wings of aspiration: Struggle for digital inequality". This is hosted on the website, <http://www.digitalinequality.org/e-books>.
- **Training and Capacity building on the issue of digital divide in Bhopal:** A two day (13/9/2013 to 14/9/2013) training and capacity building workshop was planned for partner organization teams with a view to:
  - To share revised and updated methodological tools to be employed for the task of data collection.

- Share and exchange issues and challenges specific to each of the research area and design solutions for the same.
- Practical demonstration of using questionnaires and mapping exercise in the Indira Nagar Slum of Bhopal.

The intervention resulted in capacity building of 5 research teams on the issue of digital divide, methodology to be adopted, and technique to interview and record perceptions of the community using questionnaires designed for the purpose.

- **Sharing of Preliminary research findings:** Under the research on “Bridging digital divide: An Initiative for Digital Empowerment”, the first set of data has been collected from one community from each of the five research districts. The data has been analysed using simple descriptive statistics and output tables were generated. On the basis of the initial results obtained a report was prepared. A meeting in Bhopal was organized for sharing the preliminary report with members of partner organizations. 21 persons from partner organizations and Vikas Samvad Samiti team participated in the event. The sharing brought out the following:
  - Data gaps were identified and mechanism for filling these gaps was planned among the partner organization teams and VSS team.
  - The barriers to penetration and use of digital technology among marginalized sections of society in the research area were identified during the discussion on preliminary results obtained.
  - Based on the preliminary results, an intervention at community level in one community in each of the district was planned. The objective was to bridge the technological gap in these communities and observe its impact on the communities’ use of internet technology
- **Research designing and planning meeting:** A two day meeting was organized in Bhopal. All the partner organizations were part of the meeting so as to share the issue of digital divide and to plan and design the research strategy and methodological tools. As result, three types of survey designs were formulated by incorporating inputs from all the partner teams and the content for three questionnaires was outlined.
- **Capacity building and training of research in field:** With a view to understand and resolve the challenges and issues experienced by the research team, workshop was held in Indore. It helped in linking technical aspects to different technical experts.
- **Sharing and field testing of household survey formats in Indore, Jhabua, Panna, and Dindori:** The planning, designing and development of research tools (survey formats, data sheet and questionnaires) is an iterative process. The initial draft of the research tools designed after incorporating inputs and feedbacks from experts and research team was shared with partner organizations and tested in the field. Formats of three surveys namely household format for baseline survey, detailed households questionnaire for sample survey and Women questionnaire for women survey were field tested to check the efficiency in Indore, Jhabua, Panna and Dindori. Based on the reviews and feedbacks of research teams at field level and field observations of VSS team the formats were revised. The reviews from different stakeholders of the research program were highly productive in formulating an effective format for all the three surveys.

- **Cross verification of survey formats of research project bridging the digital divide: an initiative for digital empowerment Indore, Jhabua, Dindori and Panna:** The data collected by field teams appointed by partner organization was verified by VSS team. The VSS team visited the research areas and verified the data for 10% of the total households studied in the survey. The errors of wrong recording or misquoting were identified and rectified in the field with the support of field research team. The process enhanced the data quality and ensured authentic data collection.
- **Impact of community radio in enhancement of free speech and expression in Shivpuri:** Visit to Radio Dhadkan: Radio Dhadkan is a community radio for Sahariya dominated 20 odd panchayats in Shivpuri district. The was made so as to assess the impact of community radio on Sahariya dominated community, how it empowers and makes the people aware about using digital source of information and how radio can connect the community on certain issues, like health, environment, hygiene as popular medium to inspire behavior change. It emerged that community radio is a two way communication tool, where people respond through various mediums like Internet and mobile phone to have their say. Radio Dhadkan uses GRINS (Grameen Radio Inter-Networking System) having telephony, SMS and internet integration, where they can broadcast a community based program live, as well as people from the community can broadcast any activity using mobile phone. It certainly encourages people to use digitized sources of information and enhance their capacity. Further, it reaches deep in to the community, breaking all the barriers of social class, language and educational capacity to connect and empower people to raise their voice.
- **Visit to Tikamgarh (Bundelkhand) for understanding issues of broadband and broadcast:** The visit was conducted with a view to assess the prospect of collaborating with Development Alternatives as our study partner in Bundelkhand (Madhya Pradesh) and to analyse the work done by Development Alternatives in mitigating environmental challenges through innovative techniques applied in the area, while using digital source of information like their community radio (Radio Bundelkhand) to make the community aware about it. Indeed, it is a challenge to sensitize people to adopt clean energy solutions developed by Development Alternatives (DA) for sustainable life, agriculture and livelihood options. However, DA has been able to achieve certain behaviour changes in the community through community radio.
- **Exposure trip to Pukaar, Mumbai:** The visit was helpful in understanding the concepts and methodologies adopted in research planning and designing in slum communities. This information was useful in planning research design and methodological tools specifically for Urban Slum areas.
- **Preliminary report sharing meetings in Pune with national level partners of Ford Foundation:** A meeting was hosted by CCDS, Pune where six partners of Ford Foundation working on the issue of digital divide in five different states were invited. The preliminary report, a compilation of case studies and a photo document: 'Reflections of Digital Divide' were shared with partners of Ford Foundation working on the issue of digital divide in different parts of India.
- **Centre for Internet and Society, Bangalore:** A week long (June 8-June 14, 2013) residential course was organized by Centre for Internet and Society in Bangalore with

financial support from the Ford Foundation. Mr. Soumitra represented VSS team at the course. The event was helpful in understanding the technical, legal and social aspects of access to digital technology and the various associated issues specified.

- **Designing of website: [www.digitalinequality.org](http://www.digitalinequality.org):** Website provides a medium or platform with high flexibility, wide user coverage, and great speed to disseminate and share experiences, observations, activities and updates. With this as a prime objective, the idea of designing a website was conceived and that [www.digitalinequality.org](http://www.digitalinequality.org) was launched. The website interacts in both Hindi and English language. The information is available in the form of word documents, photographs, videos, power point presentations etc.

### **3. Right to Education Act**

**3.1 Sharing of Report on Looking up the Right to Education:** A meeting was held on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2013. As many as 25 participants from 18 organisations working in the field of education took part in the meeting. The meeting dwelled on the situation of implementation of Right to Education in 10 districts of the State. Aspects related to factors impacting quality of education were taken up for discussion at the meeting. These included teacher-pupils ratio, availability of teaching material and resources, status of boundary wall in the physical infrastructure of school building, rooms, toilets, drinking water, regular and active meetings of school management committees, monitoring of schools. In addition, lately rise of phenomenon of punishing of children by school teachers was also discussed. It was agreed to intensify the efforts for advocacy in improving the quality of education in the state.

**3.2 Reports on Status of Availability of Toilets in Schools in MP:** Two reports were shared on the subject. One pertained to availability and use of separate toilets for girls in 159 schools across 10 districts in the state. The other was on availability and use of separate toilets for girls in 95 schools in Gwalior city. Equipped with the emerging recommendations, the organisers called on Child Rights Commission, Principal Secretary, Department of School Education, Rajya Shiksha Kendra and State Human Rights Commission towards securing requisite corrective measures.

**3.3 State Level Convention on Right to Education:** Organisations including BGVS, Bachpan, Muskan, Samavesh, Vikas Samvad, Eklavya, CRO and Pratham convened the convention on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2013 at Bhopal. The deliberations brought together national and state level officials and helped them gain a keener insight in to ground level situation towards casting appropriate initiatives, both from the policy and programme implementation perspectives.