

*National Institute of Women, Child and Youth Development
(NIWCYD)*



*Annual Report
2000 – 2001*

Preface

The year that has gone by has been instrumental in giving a new thrust to the NIWCYD's development initiatives. The main focus remained on

- *sustainable livelihoods through capacity building at the grassroots*
- *natural resource management*
- *promoting the process of participation of the people in democratic decision making processes*
- *gender justice*
- *advocacy for the rights of tribals and*
- *child development*

These issues that form the core and philosophy of our work and have been the main line of action for the last several years. As we enter a new millennium we resolve to continue working with the most vulnerable sections of society in the tribal and rural areas of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. We do not feel that we can 'do' anything for the people : what we can perhaps achieve is an awakening amongst people and perform the role of facilitating the development process. We have always been conscious of our limited reach and have never harboured ambitions of supplanting the government machinery even in the areas we work in. Our interventions are always aimed at experimentation and model development. We hope to demonstrate new models, based on peoples participation, which can be taken up the government machinery or other NGOs.

The year under report has seen forays into the area of child development including elimination of child labour, elementary education, reform of juvenile homes and Reduction of neonatal mortality.

The years to come are likely to be challenging and exciting and we look forward with great hope and expectations.

*R K Malaviya
Vice President*

Introduction

The National Institute of Women, Child and Youth Development (NIWCYD) is active in Central India - Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh and the Vidarbha Region of Maharashtra. It works at the grassroots directly and also in association with a number of smaller grassroots organisations. NIWCYD's aim is to *"engender peoples empowerment through the twin interventions of capacity building and sustainable natural resource management"*

The main focus of the work is in tribal and rural areas of the three states. Most of NIWCYD's interventions are aimed at reaching the people from the Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes with special focus on those living below the poverty line. Most of NIWCYD programmes are planned in a holistic manner and aim to address all the major development issues and concerns in the geographical area of work.

All the projects and programmes undertaken in the year under report can be divided into three broad areas

- A. Integrated Rural and Tribal Development.
- B. Child Development.
- C. Study, Networking and Advocacy.

INTEGRATED RURAL AND TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT

A number of smaller projects form part of this programme which NIWCYD is implementing in five districts of Madhya Pradesh (Balaghat, Betul, Dindori, Jabalpur, Mandla) and two districts in Chattisgarh (Kanker and Bastar). In all, over 125 villages and a population of over 25,000 is reached directly through one or more of the projects. The many facets of this programme make it truly a holistic and integrated approach. Some of the major interventions in the programme include

Soil Water Conservation and Development

One of the main problems that the people in the tribal and rural areas face is one of food insufficiency. The yield that can be derived from rain-fed agriculture on poor quality land is sufficient for the marginal and small farming families only for about 5 to 7 months on an average. This leads to starvation, malnutrition, poor health,



migration, indebtedness and in general disruption of family life. NIWCYD believes that there is need to maximize the benefits that can be derived from natural resources of land and water.

NIWCYD therefore undertakes activities like land leveling and stone bunding to improve the quality of agricultural land. In the year under report **191.42** acres of land belonging to **509** families in **23** villages was developed. The beneficiary families participate in the planning and implementation process. NIWCYD ensures that only a small portion (1/2 to 1 acre) of the beneficiaries land is developed. It expects that once the benefits of this development are witnessed the family will undertake land development activities on the remaining part of their land holding on their own. This ensures that the impact of the activity far exceeds the targets set and makes the process cost effective.

To overcome the issue of lack of irrigation systems, NIWCYD undertakes water development activities including building of new wells / lakes, dredging and repair of old wells and lakes, spring development and building of small check dams. In the year under report **8** water sources were created / refurbished in **7** villages. These activities seldom address families. They are meant for the benefit for the entire village community.

Improvement in agricultural yield

The next logical step after the land and water development activities is improving agriculture techniques. NIWCYD, with assistance from experts in



agriculture, tries to ensure that the farmers adopt the appropriate and sustainable agriculture techniques. Some of these inputs include crop rotation principles, NaDEP / Vermiculture for organic fertilisers, natural pesticides, appropriate use of water etc.

In the Baiga Chek area in the state of MP, NIWCYD has undertaken a research into the aspect of crop diversity and rotation. It conducted seed trials and soil testing in order to determine the most effective and suitable agricultural inputs and techniques.

In almost all the areas where this activity has been carried out for the last few years, NIWCYD has recorded increase in agriculture yield by **25-30 %**. This means that the primary issue of food insufficiency is on the way to being solved.

Income Generation Programmes (IGPs) for families

Land and water development activities help those families with some land holding. For the landless families NIWCYD promotes Income Generation Programmes (IGPs). These are built round locally available raw material and

native skills of the people. Some of the income generation activities that NIWCYD has promoted include pig rearing, goat rearing, poultry, community vegetable and fruit selling, collection, processing and marketing of Minor Forest Produce, craft related activities like bamboo work, grass mats weaving, fans etc. NIWCYD tries to promote these activities in groups in order to ensure that the success rate is enhanced. Skills are imparted to the families through the twin process of training and exposure. Seed capital is often provided in form of loans administered out of the Gramkosh.

Building the Gramkosh (Village fund)

The community contributes in all the programme that NIWCYD undertakes. Since the beneficiaries often come from the poorest families, their contribution is often in form of labour. Very early into its programme, NIWCYD realized the need for formally organizing the contribution. In most areas where soil and water conservation activities are implemented, the people contribute 50 % of the wages received for the land development and 30 % of the wages received for water sources development to the Gramkosh! The Gramkosh is then used for undertaking other development activities in the village like thrift and credit, providing loans to the farmers for agriculture related activities, co-operatives and income generating activities, providing financial assistance in emergency situations like death, marriage, birth and other social and religious occasions, establishing fair price grain shops. Management of the Gramkosh rests with the local people. A committee is nominated by the Gramsabha for the same. This committee includes women from villages who have participated in the decision making process with consultation from Gramsabha. Each Gramkosh has a separate bank account. To date NIWCYD has established Gramkosh in **23** villages. The total amount available in these is Rs. **960,563/-** an average of **Rs.41,763/-** per village.

Establishing seed and grain banks

Due to food insufficiency in the area, indebtedness to money lenders was widely prevalent. On studying the situation, NIWCYD realized that most of the original loans had been for purchase of grain in the lean months (April - August) and seed (June). The rates of interest charged by the usurious moneylenders resulted in propagation of the debt trap. NIWCYD therefore established seed and grain banks by making an initial capital contribution. These banks now operate on the initial capital and the grain / seeds returned, with interest, by the borrowers. In some cases, stock was replenished and augmented from the funds available out of the Gramkosh. A committee of the people normally manage the seed and grain bank and take care of all activities like making purchases, stocking, distribution and recovery of all loans. To date NIWCYD has established seed and grain banks in **17** villages. Over **40** quintals of grain and **70** quintals of seeds are available in these banks.

One of the most important impacts of these interventions is the reduction in indebtedness of the people. In villages where NIWCYD has been active for over 2-3 years, moneylenders have almost lost control over the people. From a situation where almost all families in these villages were caught in a debt trap before the advent of NIWCYD, at present only 5-20 % families still owe the moneylenders. This has

resulted in breaking of the shackles of exploitation that came with the debt. This gives the beneficiary families the psychological and economic space to think of other aspects of life like education and health.

Awareness and capacity building of the Gramsabha

This activity is normally carried out in all the areas where the more intensive soil and water conservation activities are implemented. In addition villages in the neighbourhood are also covered. The NIWCYD strategy in this intervention is simple: at the outset it tries to ensure that the Gramsabha is formulated and is



made functional. This is because the Gramsabha is an important institution in context of rural development. All the major decisions in the village are needed to be taken by the Gramsabha. NIWCYD tries to consciously promote a consensus model of decision making rather than rule of a simple majority. This ensures that all the people are involved in the process of decision making and any activity or process finds

support amongst all villagers. Women are actively promoted and motivated to participate in the Gramsabha.

NIWCYD feels that for the full benefits of government development schemes to reach the villagers, the community has to take advantage of their rights under the Panchayat Raj Act. The Gram Panchayat needs to be fully aware of the scope and extent of the same. Training classes / discussion sessions are conducted in each village to ensure that each person in the village is made aware. NIWCYD has implemented these awareness activities in **50** villages. It has received the maximum amount of success in the Mahakoushal region of Madhya Pradesh.

Mobilizing women and youth

Women and youth are mobilized through formation of Self Help Groups round the saving and credit activity. The members are trained and exposed to other similar groups in the area. These groups will be encouraged to participate in all village level activities and decision-making processes.

Those amongst these groups who show leadership potential, are trained so that they can take up the mantle of leadership in the village. Over a period of time, NIWCYD gradually transfers the decision making in these villages to these local leaders and the community on the whole. This also helps in smooth withdrawal of NIWCYD from the activities that it was managing entirely in the early stages.

Health and education services

In almost all the villages where NIWCYD implements its Integrated Rural and Tribal Development programme, health and education services are an integral part. NIWCYD undertakes health and environmental sanitation demonstrations and camps, trains community level health workers and works with the government health system to ensure that services like immunization, malaria treatment etc reaches the people.

NIWCYD also runs crèches, balwadis (pre-primary education centres) and Non Formal Education classes for the children out of school. In the last year, NIWCYD has also started remedial classes for children who are enrolled in school but who do not achieve the expected academic attainment standards.

NIWCYD is also implementing a programme aiming to improve awareness amongst people in the rural areas on the issue of Reproductive and Child Health. This programme is being implemented in 40 villages in Jabalpur, MP and 20 villages in Nagpur district, Maharashtra.

Child Development

This area is relatively new in the NIWCYD portfolio. In the year under report four significant projects were implemented.

Addressing child labour

NIWCYD is implementing the project in six villages. These villages have been affected by the Bargi Dam constructed on the river Narmada. The local people have lost their lands in the outlets and canals of the dam without adequate compensation. They are bereft of any other sources of employment except the stone crushing units and sand quarries. Poverty forces people in the villages to exploit the labour of their children. This results in the dropping out of the children from the formal school system. The incidence of sexual exploitation of the working adolescent girls is very high, especially in the stone crushing units that are owned and managed by the local underworld elements.



The issue of child labour is being addressed by NIWCYD through

1. Educational activities that include Non Formal Education classes that have covered over 300 working children in the last year. In the last year two NFE centres were closed down as all the **22** children covered by these were admitted to the formal schools in classes 1 and 2. **63** children were also encouraged to appear in the formal examination system in these villages.

2. Health interventions involving health check up camps for the children and their parents, training of community health workers, awareness camps etc. These interventions which include provision of kits to trained community health workers, **have benefited over 900 families in the area.**
3. Counselling of parents and adolescent girls in the region in order to expose and sensitise them to the dangers of exploitative work that the latter are being forced into. NIWCYD wishes to empower and awaken these girls so that they willingly come out of the forced labour. **A start has been made and ten girls have refused to work in the stone crushing units where they were being sexually exploited.**
4. Income generation programs for the families like goatery has been initiated in 2 villages. **This programme has benefited 12 families directly. All children from these families have stopped working and now attend school.**

Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE)

NIWCYD is implementing a programme for UEE in 128 villages in seven districts in the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra. The programme is being implemented at two levels by NIWCYD - on the one hand it is involved in direct implementation in 20 villages and on the other it is co-ordinating the efforts of 14 NGOs which are implementing the programme in 108 other villages.

The programme comprises two components

1. Remedial education classes for children who are enrolled in school but who fall below the expected academic attainment levels. Over 2500 children have been directly reached through this component.
2. Non Formal Education classes for the children out of school in order to bring up their academic levels to a point where they can be enrolled in formal schools. Over 1000 children have been reached in this component.

In this programme NIWCYD received technical assistance from Pratham Mumbai Education Initiative and Pratham Pune Education Foundation. Over the last one year, NIWCYD has internally developed a team of trainers and monitors yielding it the capacity for implementing the programme in other areas as well.

Reforming the Juvenile Justice System

The Juvenile Justice Act, 1986 calls for a change of focus from punishment and correction of juvenile offenders to their growth, development and rehabilitation. The Act also calls for NGOs to assist the state run the juvenile homes in

1. Identifying the systemic changes required to improve the quality of work of these homes.
2. Sensitising different cross sections of the society in order to facilitate the process of rehabilitation of the inmates.

NIWCYD decided to work on an experimental basis with the Juvenile Home in Durg in MP. In the first year it undertook the responsibility of

- Speedy disposal of pending cases especially where children who had run away from home were languishing in the juvenile home for lack of follow up. On an average 5 cases were disposed off each month.
- Follow-up, through home visits, of 25 cases.
- Sensitisation of the juvenile home staff to the emotional needs of the children. This was attempted through a common workshop of the staff, policy makers, children, NGOs, child psychologists etc.
- Providing space for the children through sports meets, outdoor camps and other recreational activities. The feedback from the children to these has been very encouraging.
- Meetings at the community level in the city of Durg where a cross-section of the society is invited and the needs and issues facing the children and the home are discussed.
- A 'needs assessment exercise' covering children from 8 such juvenile homes in the State.
- Ensuring that the children were mainstreamed with the society by enabling them to join the formal school system on their release and rehabilitation.

The findings of this exercise are to provide pointers to the policy makers at the state and central level as to the role that NGOs can play in making the Juvenile homes perform better in spirit in which the Act was framed.

Child Death Study

NIWCYD was part of a study into the cause and incidence of child deaths. NGOs from 13 different parts of the state are studying the issue with a view to understanding the complexity and extent of the problem. The study was undertaken with technical support and guidance from SEARCH, Gadachiroli. In the study, NIWCYD has covered a population of 21,505 from 20 villages in the Ramtek Tehsil of Nagpur district of Maharashtra. Some of the learnings are that

- The issue of high child mortality is not restricted to tribals areas like Melghat, Dhule and recently Nandurbar as reported in the popular press and electronic media. The situation is quite serious in other parts of the state as well. As expected the CMR is highest in the tribal areas (92.2) followed by the urban slums (86.6) and rural areas (76.1).
- Still Birth Rate is highest in the urban areas (37.9) as compared to the rural (34.6) and tribal (27.1). Perinatal Mortality Rate (Still Birth Rate + Early Neonatal (below seven days) Mortality Rate) was found to be 67.3 %. This is an indication of the poor health and nutrition of expectant mothers.
- Neonatal Mortality rate was around the 50 mark in all areas. Neonatal mortality has accounted for 58.7 % of all child deaths and 75 % of the infant death recorded.
- The findings of the survey when compared with the official rates (government health department) show that **the true figures of the child deaths are at least 3-5 times higher than those reported officially**. This in itself is a vindication of the need for the survey and the need to record the incidence of births and deaths more accurately. .
- Even by government expectations (coming out of the SRS) over 120,000 neonates are expected to lose the survival fight each year ! However, the figure reported by the state health department is around 30 % of this figure !

Study, networking and advocacy

Promotion of crop diversity for regenerating indigenous farming systems

The program is an integral component of the sustainable agriculture programme being promoted by NIWCYD. The basic aims of the project are to strengthen the indigenous seed conservation and improve awareness of the farmers on their rights over the genetic resources. Through Adaptive research, a variety of wheat seed was developed which can be sown in areas where limited quantities of water are available. The seeds thus developed were distributed to the farmers in three areas - Bargi dam (Jabalpur district), Shahpur (Balaghat district) and Baiga Chek (Dindori district). The results from the yield were encouraging. They are being analysed for further development of the variety. Exhibitions on sustainable agriculture practices were held in Indore.

A centre for advocacy

NIWCYD has established a centre for public advocacy, studies, research, training and social action in Jabalpur. The centre aims to provide assistance to the marginalized sections of society who are asserting their rights over livelihood resources and for influencing suitable policy change. The main focus of the centre is

- Creating awareness among people against human rights violations
- Promoting the adoption of Extension of Panchayat Raj for the tribal areas
- Capacity building of the grassroots activists on advocacy skills, particularly relating to Panchayat Raj and empowerment of women.

Various activities like training, information dissemination, legal assistance etc are provided by the centre

Resource Centre

NIWCYD has established a resource centre for NGOs and other peoples organisations in Nainpur, district Mandla, MP. The main activities include

1. Collection, analysis and dissemination of information on Government Resolutions, law and bills tabled in parliament and state assemblies
2. Strengthening people based campaigns
3. Networking amongst NGOs, academia and government officials

A number of NGOs have been taking advantage of the service provided by this centre.

The year to come

In the coming year, most of the programmes from NIWCYD are expected to continue. In addition some new programmes are likely to be taken on. Three of the most important ones amongst these are

1. Integrated Rural and Tribal Development programme in 6 villages in the Baiga Chek region, 10 villages each in Jabalpur and Chindwara in MP and 10 villages in Kanker district of Chattisgarh.
2. A research project studying the replicability of the Home Based Neonatal Care model designed by SEARCH, Gadachiroli. This project will be part of an overall exercise involving seven NGOs at various sites. NIWCYD will implement the same in 15 of the 20 village suit had chosen in the study.
3. A project that aims to promote fair trade practices. NIWCYD will co-ordinate the production and sale of products from the tribal areas – Minor Forest Produce, Craft work, organically grown crops etc. The effort will be to ensure that the producers and the consumers are both satisfied and that employment opportunities are generated in the rural and tribal areas.

R K Malaviya
Vice President

SUPPORTING AGENCIES

The NIWCYD Governing Council wishes to acknowledge the support it has received from a variety of individuals and institutions in the year under report. This includes financial support from

- OXFAM India Trust, Nagpur
- Indo German Social Service Society, Bhubaneswar
- Child Relief and You, Mumbai
- Society for Service to Voluntary Agencies, Pune
- Swiss Aid, Mumbai
- AID, Mumbai
- Terre des Hommes, Pune
- Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, New Delhi
- Family Planning Association of India, Bhopal
- AWO, Germany

and Technical support from

- GreenEarth Social Development Consulting Pvt. Ltd.
- National Environment Engineering and Research Institute, Nagpur
- Pratham Mumbai Education Initiative
- SEARCH, Gadchiroli

The governing council also wishes to thank the staff, volunteers and various technical associates who have contributed greatly to its programmes and mission.

Head Office

National Institute of Women, Child and Youth Development (NIWCYD)
Main Road, Khamla, Nagpur - 440 025
Maharashtra - India
0091 - 0712 - 260929
niwcyd@nagpur.dot.net.in

Branch Offices

National Institute of Women, Child and Youth Development (NIWCYD)
Poli Pathar, Narmada Road, Near Perfect Pottery, Jabalpur - 482 008
Madhya Pradesh - India
0091 – 0761 – 665368

National Institute of Women, Child and Youth Development (NIWCYD)
N-9, Adarsh Nagar, Durg - 491 001
Chhattisgarh - India
0091 - 0788 - 333717