

External Evaluation of CNI-SBSS for the phase 2001-2004

conducted by
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Table of Contents

I.	Acknowledgement
II.	Methodology
III.	Acronyms
IV.	Recommendations
V.	Executive Summary
VI.	CNI-SBSS: Background
VII.	Programme Components and Institutional Structures
VIII.	Issues, Interventions and Impact
IX.	Gender Status and SHGs
X.	CNI-SBSS/DBSS: Organisational Dimension
XI	Shifts with the Introduction of the Rights Based Approach
XII	Factors Affecting Programme Effectiveness
XIII	Financial Management
XIV	Concluding Observations

Annexures

1. Tables –1-12
 - i. Peoples' Organisations: Zonal Profile
 - ii. DBSS, Area, Cluster, Village Committees: Registration Profile
 - iii. SBSS: Core Achievements
 - iv. Community Study Centres
 - v. SBSS-DBSS: Gender Profile
 - vi. SHGs: A Profile
 - vii. Panchayat Raj Institutions in Reference Area: A Profile
 - viii. People's Contribution and Resource Mobilisation
 - ix. Campaigns/Rallies/Demonstrations
 - x. Capacity Building Programme
 - xi. Networking: A Profile
 - xii. Co-operative Societies: A Profile
2. Terms of Reference
3. Methodological Note on Organisational Self-Analysis Instrument (OSDI)
4. OSDI – Instrument and Scores

List of References

I

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II

Methodology

The development initiatives of CNI-SBSS cover 23 dioceses in the Central, North, North-Eastern and Eastern zones of northern India. To analyse the patterns across this wide spectrum within the short time given to us, the evaluation team adopted several elements of stakeholder evaluation.

A. The Programme and Organisation Evaluation

1. Perusal of secondary sources of data, which included annual reports, monthly journal - *Abhivyakti*, evaluation reports, project proposal, review process reports, etc.
2. Focussed discussions with:
 - a) Chairman and Chief – Co-ordinator of CNI - SBSS.
 - b) the headquarters staff of CNI - SBSS
 - c) the programme staff of the four zones.
3. Interactions with Bishops and Pastors.
4. Administration of a specially prepared instrument, entitled 'Organisational Self-Diagnosis Instrument' (OSDI) in three zones (north, central and eastern zones). Respondents included Board members, Zonal staff and the staff of DBSS.
5. Collation of data on the following:
 - a) Core Achievements of the four Zones.
 - b) Self-help groups and co-operatives
 - c) Panchayati Raj Institutions
 - d) Gender profile of SBSS,
 - e) Networking
6. Field visits to Agra and Ranchi zonal offices.
7. Field visits to the following DBSSs, which included discussions with the programme staff of DBSSs, Bishops, Pastors and Board members.
 - a) Tejpur, Assam and Kalimpong, Eastern Himalayas (North-east)
 - b) Agra and Ajmer (North Zone)
 - c) Cuttack (Berhampur) and Chotanagpur (Eastern Zone)
 - d) Pune and Mumbai (Central Zone)
8. Field Visits to the reference communities in various Dioceses which included discussions with members of Village Development Committees (VDCs,) Cluster and Area Committees, Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and Self-Help

Cooperative Societies (SHCS), Community Service Centres (CSCs) and ward committees.

B. The Financial Management Evaluation

The team conducted the evaluation based on:

- a. Visits to Central Office of CNI – SBSS, New Delhi and the four zones, i.e. North, Central, Eastern and North Eastern.
 - b. Visits to two Dioceses in each zone.
 - c. Visits to following offices:
 - i. CNI-SBSS, New Delhi;
 - ii. Central Zone, Nagpur; Nagpur Diocese;
 - iii. Boregaon Village, Tiri Village and Bhandara Field Office under Nagpur Diocese;
 - iv. Mumbai Diocese and Mumbai – Sewari Slum Field Area;
 - v. North Eastern Zone, Durgapur; Durgapur Diocese;
 - vi. Kolkata Diocese and Thakdari Slum Field Area under Kolkata Diocese;
 - vii. Agra DBSS;
 - viii. Amritsar DBSS,
 - ix. Chhottanagpur DBSS; and
 - x. Delhi DBSS.
 - d. Meetings with:
 - i. the target groups;
 - ii. members of VDC, CLC and ALC;
 - iii. CNI-SBSS Community Organizers; Programme Organizers;
 - iv. DBSS Coordinator;
 - v. Board Members of the DBSS; Board Members and office bearers of Diocese;
 - vi. Bishop of Mumbai & Nagpur, Agra, Amritsar and Delhi;
 - vii. Programme Coordinators, Finance Monitoring Associate and Programme Staff of the Zones; and
9. the Chairman, Programme Coordinator and Finance Manager of CNI-SBSS.

III

Acronyms

AC	Area Committee
Ban Samraksha Samiti -	Forest Protection Committee
DBSS	Board of Social Services
CAP	Congregation in Action and Participation
CC	Cluster Committee
CNI	Church of North India
CSC	Community Service Centre
EED	Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst (Churches Development Service)
Gairan Lands	Grazing Lands
HQ	Head Quarters
IGSSS	Indo-German Social Service Society
MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly
MP	Member of Parliament
MIS	Management Information systems
NA	Not Available
OMOT	Organisation, Motivation and Organisational Training
OSDI	Organisational Self-Diagnosis Instrument
Palledars	Headloaders
Palli Sabha	Gram Sabha
POE	People's Organisation and Empowerment
POTA	Prevention of Terrorist Act
PA	Programme Administration
PM	Programme Management
PME	Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
PRIs	Panchayati Raj Institutions
RBA	Rights Based Approach
SEE	Socio-Economic Empowerment
SCs	Scheduled Castes (Dalits)
STs	Scheduled Tribes (Adivasis/Tribals)
SBHS	Synodical Board of: Church of North India
SBSS	Synodical Board of Social Services
SHG	Self-help Group
SHCS	Self-Help Co-operative Society
TBA	Traditional Birth Attendants
VDC	Village Development Committee
VDS	Village Development Society
Yuvathi	Adolescent Girls
Yuvak	Adolescent Boys

IV

Recommendations

The quarter century of CNI - SBSS, since its inception and growth, has been a period of struggle, incubation of ideas and translation of these into action. The emergence of SBSS as the development wing of the Church of North India reflects the church's commitment to social action in the most backward regions of the country. The history of CNI - SBSS also reveals responses to the reference communities that are empathetic and multi-faceted. Our evaluation of the last three years of CNI - SBSS comes at a time when the organisation has reached a critical stage in its growth. While the passage of 25 years of CNI - SBSS's work is a matter of celebration, it is also a time for self-assessment. In the light of this we make the following recommendations, which, we hope, would contribute to the strengthening of the organisation to meet the tasks and challenges ahead.

I. Strategic Plan for the Next Phase

1. a. Based on the findings of the external evaluation, SBSS-DBSSs would do well to initiate several course corrections before they can get into the next phase. Therefore we recommend that the present funding period may be extended by one more year with additional funding to carry out these corrections.
- b. In future too the funding consortium should consider altering the funding period to four- year time-slots instead of the current three years.
- c. The present budget is totally inadequate for the effective implementation of the programmes. Appropriate budgets need to be worked out that will allow CNI-SBSS to address the development dimensions of rights-based approach.
2. There is a critical need to professionalise the staffing structure of CNI-SBSS-DBSSs. This would include planning out several measures, including the following :
 - a. We recommend that a professional development expert (I prefer a less pretentious phrase than "expert" – perhaps "recommend that a person who is professionally qualified and experienced in development work be...") be recruited as the Chief Co-ordinator.
 - b. The present arrangement of one functionary holding the two portfolios of Programme Coordinator and Capacity Building is an unsatisfactory one. These posts must be held separately by two functionaries who have the necessary professional and other qualifications required for each.
 - c. The Zonal Programme Coordinators and Associates should be given a tenure of 6 years instead of the present practice of being eligible for transfer every three years. The planning should be carefully done so that through a process of rotation (as in the Rajya Sabha) even after 6 years the continuity of the programme will be safeguarded.
 - d. In general all programme related staff should have either professional social work qualifications and/or significant social work/development work experience. All appointments for all posts should be based on qualifications and on merit.

II. Organisational Development

SBSS-DBSSs would be significantly helped if it went through a comprehensive organisational development process. Among other things this process should include the following elements :

- a. CNI - SBSS, in collaboration with representatives from the DBSSs (at all levels) should go through an organised reflection on the rights-based approach that is contextual to SBSS-DBSS work. This will help to create a common understanding throughout the organisation that takes into account the the strengths and limitations of its church-based structure. The reflection should be constructively critical, giving room for the modification of the current approach in the light of the field level experiences of the programme staff. This exercise should enable the organisational staff at different levels to own the rights-based approach and related programmes, and will help to overcome the feeling that it is a programme that is imposed from above.
- b. CNI-SBSS should aim to promote an organisation that is participatory in nature. This implies that hierarchy within the organisation must be only functional and not based on power. Additionally, the organisation will have to explore the re-structuring of the functioning of these offices so that they neither function, nor are perceived to function, out of such a strong hierarchical mode as was the perception of the majority of the staff at all levels.
- c. SBSS (HQ and Zonal Offices) need to start fulfilling a more facilitative and capacity building role vis-a-vis the DBSS staff at all levels. Towards this end expertise of various kinds has to be developed in the SBSS offices. A team of specialists should emerge for programme implementation.
- d. CNI - SBSS needs to re-look at the content and procedures of its reporting process, in order to make it more qualitative and less time-consuming. Simultaneously, both SBSS and DBSS staff also need to be trained to be able to analyse and focus on processes rather than on activities only.

III. Organisational Functioning

The existing standardised planning process has stunted people's planning.

- a. CNI - SBSS should reflect on the current gap between its intentions and practice in creating a people-centred participatory approach (both within the organisation and its outreach). It must consider setting up systems that would cater to lessening this gap more easily.
- b. There is a critical need to evolve structures and practices that promote flexibility in planning. Such flexibility would allow the programmes to respond positively to people's issues at the micro level.
- c. There is much scope to enhance efforts at networking, lobbying and advocacy. Strategic frameworks have to be developed to consolidate the rights-based approach.

- d. Database and documentation at the SBSS headquarters is woefully inadequate. The SBSS HQ should be equipped with quantitative and qualitative data and information base to capture emerging patterns and issues at the grassroots. Analytical and interpretative frameworks to guide strategic interventions have to be evolved for DBSSs and the Central office.
- e. The SBSS must invest in developing the capacity of its programme and administrative personnel. In addition, we recommend that SBSS-DBSS should be equipped with modern systems and professionally trained personnel.

IV. Human Resource Development

In terms of building competencies of human resources in SBSS-DBSSs, several events have to be organised.

- a. Retreats/workshops should be organised for Zonal Co-ordinators, Programme Associates and DBSS staff to consolidate their learning and programme perspective.
- b. The capacity and skills of DBSS staff (at all levels) to function as motivators and `activists' have to be developed significantly, if the rights based approach is to be persisted in.
- c. Capacity building should give further focus to the following:
 - i. Concept and perspective building on rights, PRI, gender, micro-finance and networking.
 - ii. Building leadership
 - iii. Need based skill development
 - iv. PRI and local governance
 - v. SHG and micro-finance
 - vi. Resource mapping
 - vii. Facilitation skills
 - viii. Developing perspectives in women's empowerment and gender.
 - ix. Specific programmes for diocesan leaders on rights perspectives and leadership
- d. Interested individuals from within the existing personnel could be capacitated in these areas mentioned above. Wherever necessary experts could be recruited from outside.
- e. Community organisers should undergo an upgradation kind of training twice a year. Some of these trainings should be held in the field.
- f. Documentation skills have to be enhanced. For example, wherever possible, each DBSS should be asked to prepare a certain number of thematic case studies of initiatives every year; some of which can be published in *Abhivyakti*.

V. Gender

There is much that SBSS-DBSSs can do to strengthen the empowering processes that women have initiated. It can be helped to specifically address the gender issues by including the following elements :

- a. The entire staff of SBSS-DBSS needs to undergo a gender perspective development programme. This should be an in-house programme and facilitated by an external team (woman-man team). It is of utmost importance that CNI-SBSS develops competencies in gender.
- b. Systems and processes have to be set up to create sensitivity and change. This could be helped by setting up a cross-functional gender working group which include women and men.
- c. The present gender policy has to be reworked, as it does not reflect grassroots realities. In consultation with the reference groups, each diocese has to work out its own gender policies that then can be consolidated in terms of issues, objectives, short and long term strategies.
- d. Conscious efforts have to be made to bring more women into decision-making positions and processes at all levels.
- e. Strategic focus is the need of the hour to enhance the capacity of women to participate more effectively in local governance systems.
- f. Appropriate systems should be immediately put in place to respond effectively to any issues of sexual harassment.

VI. Working with People

People's organisations - VDCs, Area and Cluster Committees, SHGs, Co-operatives etc - are in different stages of growth. Several of them have to be revitalised towards sustainability. Towards this end :

- a. SBSS-DBSSs has to first benchmark the various people's organisation on a development index for identifying issues for course corrections and to promote renewal process.
- b. To be effective, two community organisers (one woman and one man) should be given charge of one or two panchayats, keeping in view the size of panchayats. Depending on the nature of the terrain, motorized two- wheelers should be provided for the community organisers, especially for women (one vehicle for two community organisers). This mobility of women will also help to set an example in the villages that could assist in breaking down traditional perceptions of women.
- c. The livelihood issues of the reference community have largely remained unanswered. Clearly, the rights-based approach as it is currently practised in SBSS has not given sufficient attention to the development dimension. It is critical that the next phase gives focus to initiatives in management of natural resources – be it land, water, enterprise development etc. As an initial step, a few of the interested DBSSs should promote models of such management.
- d. SBSS should begin a more effective collaboration with SBHS to address health issues. There is much scope to promote health workers and re-activate primary health centres etc. in the SBSS programme framework.
- e. The SHG programme has to be strengthened so that it becomes an instrument of economic as well as political empowerment. Effective micro-finance systems have to be set up for planning and monitoring. Concerted efforts and focus have to be given to promote self and home-based employment. A few exposure programmes for women leaders should be planned.

- f. A database must be created on women-headed households. This would help CNI-SBSS/DBSS in future strategic interventions.

VII. Working with the Churches

Several critical interventions have to be planned to bring about a deeper linkage with the churches.

- a. There is a need to increase the capability of SBSS/DBSS in animating the congregations (including the Bishops, the Board members and the Pastors) so that the outreach of SBSS/DBSS is understood and 'owned' by the congregation.
- b. The Diocesan Board has a critical role to play in enhancing the development processes. It is crucial therefore that the selection of members of the Board is based on suitable criteria of development work.
- c. SBSS-DBSSs should set up systems to deal effectively with the conflict of interests of Church personnel on the one hand and the demands of effective rights-based development work of the reference communities on the other. (For example, selection of personnel, choice of reference communities and monitoring and evaluation of the work of the staff must be based on the requirements of effective outreach, and governed by objective criterion.)
- d. During our field visits we could discern that some Dioceses have their own problems, 'politics' and legal cases. These developments should not jeopardise the mission and work of the DBSS and a proper system has to be devised towards it.
- e. Platforms have to be created to promote dialogue for effective partnerships between the congregations and SBSS-DBSS.
- f. For the CNI-SBSS to bring effective collaboration with the congregations funds for Congregation in Action and Participation (CAP) should be enhanced.

VIII. Financial Management

These recommendations are aimed at instilling accountability at all levels; instituting fiscal discipline; better cash flow management; and strengthening internal controls. It also takes into account the lessons learnt from the Nagpur DBSS episode and sets up an early warning mechanism.

Audit

- Since the funds are released to DBSS based on the audit report, there is a need to strengthen the audit function;
- The audit must be conducted once in a year;
- Auditors may be selected based on a minimum defined criteria, without influence of Church patronage;
- Selection and appointment of auditors may be carried out by the Zones;
- The auditors must be local firms of Chartered Accountants;
- Terms of reference as well as the audit report format must be defined to bring in uniformity in reporting;
- The auditors must also undertake specified number of field visits;

- A separate section must be incorporated in the audit report in order to cover status of the compliance of previous observations; and
- The DBSS must submit an audit action taken report within a specified time frame.

Fund Flow

- For better cash management, as well as to enable the Zonal office to closely monitor programme implementation as also to avoid possible diversion of funds, funds may be released periodically on need basis rather than based on cash flow for six months:
- Funds may be released to DBSS for programme implementation requirement of two months and based on the recommendation of the Zonal Office;
- In order to provide for any delay in release of funds, a buffer may be maintained by each DBSS for contingencies; and

Financial Report

- A uniform format for reporting may be introduced;
- The reporting format to be one-pager and provide information about; opening cash balance; funds received during the period; budgets and expenditures, cumulative, as well as 'for the period'; details of local contribution; closing cash and bank balance; request for funds component-wise for subsequent two months; details of buffer funds; fund required after deducting the closing balance; and a statement of outstanding advances (with dates);
- The expenditure report to be accompanied with the bank statement and bank reconciliation statement; and
- Expenditures incurred on activities not provided in the budget need to be recovered and proof of recovery to be attached with the monthly report

Financial Monitoring

- The reports of the FMA (Financial Management Associate) to include a section on status of previously agreed actions;
- The FMA to regularly visit the DBSS;
- The FMA to compile a report on pending actions on each DBSS and bring it up through the Zonal Coordinator in the six monthly Zonal review meeting;
- The report on accounts and finance may also be reviewed in the SBSS executive committee meetings;
- Set up a mechanism that the financial performance and irregularities detected are compiled and action taken is reviewed by the executive committee of the Diocese and the SBSS;
- The SBSS, Finance Manager should work in close coordination with the Zonal FMAs. Budgets should be closely monitored at the same time adequate flexibility should be provided to respond to programme needs.

Budgeting

- Budgets should be prepared on a yearly basis. Adequate flexibility should be built in to provide for project implementation. Six monthly Zonal progress reviews may continue;
- DBSS may be allowed inter component transfers after intimating the Zonal staff;

- Being a dynamic need based programme it is suggested that authority levels may be defined at Zone and SBSS to address enhancements in budgetary provisions to cater to programme requirements not provided for at the time of budgeting.

Staff Benefits

- DBSS may ensure that available benefits are granted to the staff.
- Salary structure of community organizers may be reviewed in relation to place of posting.

V

Executive Summary

Introduction

- From its inception in 1978, the quarter century of development initiatives of CNI-SBSS has given thrust to improving the life situation of the most marginalised communities – the dalits, tribals and other backward communities in the areas in which it has been working. What is noteworthy is the endeavour of CNI-SBSS to promote a development initiative with secular underpinnings.
- While the current phase began with a nine-month orientation to the programme staff from July 2000 to March 2001, the operationalisation of the programme appears to have commenced only by November 2001. It is important to highlight that the implementation phase of the current phase is just 22 months old.

Rights Based Approach

- Since 1999, the growing realisation that their goal of restoring “human dignity of the marginalised communities through collective struggles’ was not being adequately realised, and that on the contrary a dependency was being created in the reference communities, persuaded the CNI-SBSS combine to shift their approach to a rights-based approach. The term, ‘a rights-based approach’, however, may mean different things to different groups. This report indicates that SBSS-DBSS as an organisation, needs greater clarity with regard to their understanding of the meaning and implications of the rights based approach. Furthermore, considering its own particular situation as a church-based organisation it would also be necessary for the organisation to consciously reflect on and articulate its own limitations in using such an approach.
- Another question that emerges is whether the rights-based approach adequately addressed people’s needs and interests? Answers to this question give a mixed picture. If one takes the entire spectrum of interventions in the 23 diocese, SBSS-DBSSs do have achievements to their credit.
- However, several factors have affected its programme effectiveness.

SBSS-DBSS, as an organisation, is intimately linked in its structure to its various Boards, the Bishops who are ex-officio chairpersons, the pastors in whose constituencies the work is carried out, and the congregations who have to be animated to support SBSS-DBSS in its outreach to the marginalised. A major issue here relates to the reluctance of owning the programme by the diocese and its congregations. Wherever Bishops have taken interest and got closely involved with DBSS’s work, the programme has received a visible push in terms of leadership and impact. The CAP programme of DBSSs was meant to give orientation programmes to the Church members – youth, pastors and women,- in order to increase their awareness levels as well. This interface of SBSS-DBSS and the congregations is an area in which SBSS/DBSS is fully aware of its limitations. While diverse viewpoints prevail on ‘owning’ processes, there appears to be no concerted effort to find solutions to this impasse.

A related question which has come up again and again is: “How well equipped is a church-based organisation to get into rights based activism?” A rights-based approach can be more effective if it complements mobilisation, conscientisation

and campaign with a development dimension. While SBSS-DBSS has given thrust to a certain extent to the former, it has not included the latter. The predominant focus of programme intervention has been on awareness generation, a few rallies and demonstrations. While the campaign mode has yielded certain results, a host of issues relating to the livelihood systems of the reference groups have been ignored. In some ways this inadequacy in the holistic understanding of the rights based concept have also resulted in poor participation levels in people's organisations.

- While lobbying, networking and advocacy are critical to rights-based work, SBSS-DBSSs' efforts in this direction are quite inadequate. At the central level, while SBSS has organised a few seminars and workshops on communalism, POTO, these were not taken forward with any follow up action. SBSS is still to evolve a framework for advocacy and lobbying.
- The expertise base of SBSS-DBSSs for a rights-based activism appears to be indeed limited.

Institutional Arrangements

- Over the years, the reach of SBSS-DBSSs has expanded to include 23 dioceses in Eastern, North-eastern, North and Central zones of northern India.¹ To mobilise resources and be sustainable, the DBSSs of Chotanagpur, Tejpur, Nagpur, Amritsar, Bhopal, Nasik, Agra, and Sambalpur have registered themselves under the societies act. A few of them have even got the FCRA registration to access foreign funds directly.
- Significantly, each of the 23 dioceses in the four zones reveals diverse contexts in which development praxis has surfaced. However, the SBSS –DBSSs has put together a standardised programme across the 23 dioceses. This has consciously or unconsciously impeded flexible planning. With 23 diocese contexts, SBSS-DBSSs can ill afford to have a standardised framework. A review of PME reveals features of project/programme-driven orientation rather than a process-orientation which is critical to a rights-based approach.
- Over the two and half decades of its functioning, the SBSS has evolved a multi-layered institutional structure to promote development initiatives. The SBSS Board oversees the entire programme. On a day to day basis, SBSS with its central (Delhi) and Zonal (Ranchi, Durgapur, Nagpur and Agra) staff facilitates the programme, and the various DBSSs, each of which is under the purview of the diocese and has its own DBSS board to guide it, implements the programme. At the field level, a three-layered institutional arrangement – the Village Development Committee (VDC), Area and Cluster Committees have been promoted to empower the marginalised groups. There are altogether 923 VDCs and 144 Cluster/Area Committees.
- Routing the programmes through this multi-level structures and systems – Central, Zonal, DBSS Board, DBSS staff, Area Committees, Cluster Committees and VDC have clearly resulted in procedure orientation within SBSS. Decision making processes appear to be subject to many procedural compulsions. Several factors appear to have impeded people's planning. The multi-layered structure

¹ SBSS is working with 23 dioceses. There are no DBSSs in Chandigarh as well as in Andaman and Nicobar islands. The number of villages (2500) of SBSS-DBSSs appears to be a rough estimate, as they do not correspond with the number of estimated VDCs (923). We are told that in many instances, VDCs include several villages.(Table 1)

has not been an enabling factor. The programme budgets have also given sole focus to mobilisation and conscientisation processes, which have dipped people's interests. The participation levels of people, especially the interest levels of men have come down.

- As far as the MIS and PME processes are concerned, SBSS-DBSS has made great efforts to make sure that financial and other reports are prepared and submitted in time. The planning process has been carefully worked out so that people at every level there is an opportunity for people to be drawn into the process. However, there is apparently an urgent need to fine-tune this process so that the 'voices' of the people really influence the decision making for both programmes/processes and budgets. This might mean a re-thinking on the kind of reporting requirements and budget processes that currently take up a lot of unnecessary time and paper-work.
- The ability to choose and decide for oneself is an obvious criterion in assessing the level of self-reliance and human dignity that has developed among individuals or communities. In reality, the organisational structure – at least as it is experienced by its personnel – does not reflect the kind of flat structure that seems necessary to promote participatory values in decision making and which it has tried to bring into being. However, the very fact that the process of planning and decision-making involves a series of steps that start from the village level indicates that the problem is only in the implementation and that the organisation itself does believe in a participatory process.

Programme Interventions

- As wage workers, self-employed and marginal and small farmers, the reference communities emerge as vulnerable communities – economically and socially. The many alienating processes make their livelihoods fragile. Issues of food-security often surface as a critical issue in the lives of many. Given the low-income levels of reference groups and fragile livelihoods, there are several issues of food security and livelihood issues that need strategic interventions.
- A major area of programme intervention relates to awareness building and information dissemination. There is a realisation among the reference groups that they have to take initiatives to demand their rights. The expectation/dependency levels of the reference groups on DBSSs appear to have scaled down to an extent.
- A major struggle of the dalits and tribals relates to land, be it legal entitlements, degradation of land, poor productivity levels due to drought conditions resulting in migration or commercialisation of agriculture (Amritsar) which has depleted the water table. For example, in Marathwada region, getting title deeds for the gairan lands (grazing) that the government has given to dalits is one of the initiatives of the DBSS. From various accounts, the gairan issue in the Marathwada diocese has taken on elements of a movement. A few interventions on gairan lands include networking with NGOs, campaigns and submission of applications for getting legal titles. The Bishop of this diocese is said to have taken an active part in rallies and demonstrations. These kinds of effective interventions must be more widespread.
- The introduction of panchayat raj institutions has begun to change the complexion of local governance in rural India. During the last elections, the DBSSs claim to have backed 959 (112 women) candidates out of which 438 got

elected. Our discussion with a few women ward members points to a certain empowerment. However, their participation in PRIs continues to be one of struggle. A major battle that they are waging is about gender mindsets. Whether the SBSS-DBSS are making use of the new panchayats and municipalities for realising the goal of rights based approach is a moot question.

- The gender profile of SBSS-DBSSs reveals predictable patterns. While there have been a few efforts to recruit women, there has been no conscious effort to bring women into decision-making processes. Out of 4 Zonal Co-ordinators, there is just one woman. Again, out of 13 programme associates, there are 5 women. All the 24 co-ordinators of DBSS are men. Out of 22 Programme Organisers, there is just one woman. However, out of 217 community organisers, there are 70 women. The policy document prepared before the current phase has not evolved out of SBSS grassroots experience. It is striking that most of the programme staff is not in the know of the ongoing dialogue on gender within the country. In many ways, SBSS does not emerge as a gender-aware organisation.
- The entry of SHGs has begun to visibilise women's issues and alter their lives in small ways. There are altogether 919 SHGs with a membership of 12816. In the north-eastern zone where women's empowerment through SHGs is most visible, federations of SHGs have begun to emerge. Considering the vast constituency base of SBSS-DBSSs, the number of SHGs (919) promoted is negligible, indicating insufficient efforts. However, the potential to increase the number is vast and as these SHGs grow, SBSS-DBSSS will have to gain insights into the complex dynamics of micro financing at the level of concept and practice.
- At a conceptual level, SBSS-DBSSs views SHGs not as savings and credit groups but primarily as pressure groups. However, there is no clear articulation on the concept of SHGs within SBSS-DBSS. There is no denying that SHGs have created spaces for women's empowerment. One must hasten to add that these processes are still in their nascence with much potential for growth and maturation.
- The introduction of community study centres (CSCs) in a few dioceses in the three zones of Central, Eastern North-eastern has much relevance in that it not only gives an opportunity for children to attend school but allows for the families of children to see the relevance of formal education. There are altogether 74 CSCs with 3488 children.

Human Resource Development

- Developing and consolidating competencies of human resources lies at the centre of creating a learning organisation. A review of the capacity building programmes reveals limited investments in building human resources of SBSS-DBSSs. A rights-based approach does demand a highly committed staff with informed activist orientation. But the policy of transferring the programme staff every three years has not been enabling for sustaining the rapport building and consolidating the programme processes. There has also been apparently a high turnover of the programme staff with the result that the majority of the staff has only 5 years of experience. Developing human resources of the SBSS-DBSSs, especially with specialist skills is a need of the hour.
- The effectiveness of any organisation is closely linked to the human resources it has. SBSS-DBSSs staff have built good rapport with many of their reference communities, and have grown in experience and skills over the past years.

However, they need a more proactive leadership and guidance, and need to feel more empowered themselves, if their full potential can be tapped. SBSS is attempting to do this, but their own limitations in skills and number of personnel at the HQ level particularly (and the Zonal level too) is what holds them back from making the outreach even more effective. There is need for this to be seriously considered and planned for, in the forthcoming funding-cycle period.

Future Agenda

- To take forward their agenda into the next phase, SBSS-DBSSs apparently has some plans to select certain pastorates in each diocese and train a certain number of volunteers in each of the pastorates to facilitate development initiatives. This would help to fulfil a major objective, which is to integrate development initiatives within the context of congregational engagement and enhance the owning processes. However, it is critical that this plan should take into account the expertise and sensibilities of current SBSS-DBSSs personnel.
- Planning a sustainable consolidation plan for the ongoing efforts is yet another agenda. To consolidate the gains made until now would involve concerted efforts to overcome the existing lacunae in the programme. Several course corrections have to be made, be it building competencies, developing a vibrant leadership or strengthening the institutional processes.

VI

**CHURCH OF NORTH INDIA – SYNODICAL
BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES
(CNI-SBSS)**

Background

From its inception in 1978, the quarter century of development initiatives of CNI-SBSS has given thrust to improving the life situation of the most marginalized communities – the dalits, tribals and other backward communities. Most of the reference groups are either marginal farmers or landless, eking a living through a combination of wage and self-employed work. The vision of CNI-SBSS states, 'SBSS, the development wing of the Church of North India, strongly believes in a society based on equality, justice and peace in harmony with nature.' To translate this vision, the SBSS works in each Dioceses through the respective Diocesan Board of Social Services (DBSS). The SBSS-DBSS combine has assisted the marginalised communities in numerous ways, but primarily through the delivery of their various services to the selected reference communities in each diocese.

However, since 1999, the growing realisation of the dependency that was being created in the reference communities and their inadequate success '...to restore human dignity of the marginalised communities through collective struggle', has compelled the CNI-SBSS/DBSS combine to shift their approach to a rights-based approach. Over the years, the reach of the SBSS-DBSS has expanded to include 2500 villages of 23 dioceses in Eastern, North-eastern, North and Central zones of northern India.² What is noteworthy is the endeavour of CNI-SBSS to promote development initiatives with secular underpinnings. A sizeable section of the reference groups of SBSS is non-Christian. This rights-based intervention during the last three years has also allowed for the expansion of the constituency base of SBSS-DBSS beyond the 750 (350-400 in upper reaches of tribal areas) families that each community organiser is expected to cover (Table 1). While the liberating elements of theology offer much scope for leveraging the development work of SBSS-DBSSs, one of their objectives is also to facilitate the congregations to increasingly get involved in community development work and even integrate developmental objectives in their theological engagement.

Since the operational field of CNI-SBSS-DBSS is vast, covering several states and regions in northern India, each of the 23 dioceses in the four zones reveals diverse contexts in which varying development praxis has surfaced. A brief analysis of the 23 DBSSs thus reveals distinct histories and development processes, stemming from differing starting points, leadership and specific development contexts. To illustrate this let us take 3 cases.

1. The DBSS of Amritsar, which has carried forward a vibrant SEDP programme of two and half decades, has a distinct development history.³ Significantly, the history of this SEDP reveals a few elements of a rights-based approach, as

² SBSS is working with 23 dioceses. There are no DBSSs in Chandigarh and Andaman and Nicobar islands. The number of villages (2500) of SBSS appears to be a rough estimate, as they do not correspond with the number of VDCs (923). We are told that in many instances, VDCs include several villages.(Table 1)

³ The SEDP programme was integrated with the DBSS during the current phase.

and when, the head-loaders (*Palledars*) in Amritsar were organised on union lines to assert their rights.⁴

2. A different pattern has emerged within the diocese of Bhopal, which has integrated a two-and-half decade development initiative of one Village Development Society (VDS). The VDS, earlier promoted by a cadre of motivated missionary activists, has promoted innovative models of grain and seed banks. It has given a special thrust to health issues.⁵ This health project of VDS has now been integrated with the Synodical Board of Health Services (SBHS) of CNI.
3. Another initiative known as Asha in Orissa has evolved on different lines. It is said to have given emphasis to Organisation Motivation and Organisational Training (OMOT).⁶

What is being argued here is that each of the 23 dioceses displays different development contexts, styles of functioning and varying impact of programme interventions.

The strength of CNI-SBSS is seen in the location of its programmes within the 23 dioceses, which not only offer infrastructure facilities but a constituency of dalits and adivasis who can be readily mobilised.

The Programme

While the theme of motivating, orienting and organising has been a running strategy of SBSS since its inception, the current phase of CNI-SBSS (2001-2004) has given a strategic thrust to the 'rights-based approach'. This is a radical shift from its earlier orientation, which gave predominant focus to service, welfare and development. The theme of the current phase of SBSS, 'Building communities of resistance of hope' aims at enabling their reference groups to emerge as self-managing, empowered collectives to address their own developmental issues. While the current phase began with a nine-month orientation to the programme staff from July 2000 to March 2001, the operationalisation of the programme commenced only in November 2001. It is important to underline here that the implementation period of the current phase is just 22 months old.

⁴ *The SEDP was originally initiated in Barrackpore and later introduced by Amritsar and a few other dioceses.*

⁵ *One Ms. Pauline Brown initiated and coordinated the VDS along with a few pastors. Ms. Pauline Brown's work has gained much visibility within CNI-SBSS. Some of their interventions include promotion of grain, seed banks, health workers etc. The VDS worked with the semi-nomadic Bhil community.*

⁶ *Efforts are on to integrate Asha within Sambalpur diocese.*

VII

Programme Components and Institutional Structures

Five components of the CNI-SBSS/DBSS rights based programme

- a. People's Organisation and Empowerment (POE): POE includes awareness building, campaigns (rallies, demonstrations), and promoting and strengthening people's organisations.
- b. Socio-Economic Empowerment (SEE): The SEE has given focus to SHGs, co-operatives, and a few initiatives such as fisheries that aim at gainful employment.
- c. Programme Administration (PA)
- d. Programme Management (PM)
- e. Congregation in Action and Participation (CAP): The CAP aims at building awareness and motivating church members – pastors, youth, women to participate in community development work.

Institutional Structures

Over the two and half decades of its existence, the CNI-SBSS has evolved a multi-layered institutional structure to promote development initiatives.

At the apex level there is the CNI-SBSS Board with a four-member executive committee. At the executive level the Central Secretariat functions from Delhi, headed by a Chief Coordinator.

The Zonal Offices (Ranchi, Durgapur, Nagpur and Agra) facilitate the programme and extend support to the DBSSs which are under the purview of the respective dioceses.

The DBSSs implement the programmes in the field in each diocese. The DBSSs are headed by a Board in each Diocese, which includes the respective Bishop, Pastors and representatives from the Congregation including women. Each of the 23 DBSSs has a dual accountability. Its programme staff is guided by the SBSS-Zonal office for programme implementation on the one hand but is also answerable to the DBSS Board on the other. The DBSS has three levels of functionaries — the Coordinator, programme organiser and community organisers.

The strength of SBSS-DBSS are to be found in the community organisers (147 men and 70 women). These community organisers are the field-face of the programme. Based in the field, these community organisers, especially those from local areas have rich experience in working at the grassroots level. On the whole they have good commitment as well. The Co-ordinator, Programme Organiser along with the Community Organisers constitute the programme team of DBSS.

A three-layered institutional arrangement has been promoted to empower the marginalised groups. At the village level, there is a VDC comprising of representatives from three groups – farmers, youth and women. The VDCs are then networked through a Cluster (a group of villages) committee. The Cluster committees within an area are further networked through an Area committee. The programme objective is to enable VDCs identify the felt needs of the reference groups and prepare plans, which are then taken to Cluster, and Area committees for

finalisation. The Cluster and Area committees act as monitoring bodies and have only recommendatory powers. While VDCs and Cluster Committees function as voluntary bodies through people's contribution, the activities of the Area Committees are budgeted. There are altogether 923 VDCs and 144 Cluster/Area Committees. (Table 1). Significantly in several villages, reference groups have built office space (through *shramdan* – voluntary labour) for the programme staff.

To mobilise resources and make themselves economically sustainable, the DBSSs of Chotanagpur, Tejpur, Nagpur, Amritsar, Bhopal, Nasik, Agra, Sambalpur have registered themselves under the societies act. (Table 2) A few of them have even acquired Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) registration that allows them to access foreign funds. However, efforts to mobilise resources by the DBSSs continue to be minimal, as for example when the the Tejpur DBSS accessed funds from the Indo-German Social Service Society (IGSSS) for one of its programmes. As discussed later the very positioning of DBSS has in many ways diffused and slowed down the owning processes by the dioceses. Except for the bi-annual reporting meet of the Co-ordinators, SBSS has not created platforms for sharing of experiences which are essential for the purpose of cross learning.

It is pertinent to mention here that even as SBSS has made a radical shift to the rights based approach, it continues to function through the erstwhile standardised structures. The question that requires reflection is how flexible and functional are these structures to facilitate a rights-based approach? (See Section – Organizational Dimension)

VIII

Issues, interventions and impact

The overriding theme of SBSS relates to the marginalisation of the dalits, adivasis, and other backward groups and in particular women. While it is difficult to capture in detail all the development issues within the SBSS constituency, the following section highlights a few trends, some of which are diocese specific. While the achievements of SBSS-DBSSs are severally spread over the dioceses, we have tried to capture a few salient ones (Table 3) for analysis.⁷

Basic needs

The lack of right to basic needs and facilities, - be it food security, primary health care, access to drinking water, primary education, information and access to government schemes or infrastructure facilities - bog the reference communities. In many remote villages, there are either no schools and where they do exist they do not function. There is also a high drop out rate. The approach roads to villages are pathetic, affecting people's mobility. In many remote places, bridges that connect the villages are broken or in fragile condition. Village ponds are silted and in different stages of decay. Poor rainfall and drought conditions have degraded lands especially marginal holdings, which have little access to irrigation, resulting in poor productivity. In one of the villages in Durgapur, for example, the only pond has dried, resulting in 60-70 percent of the tribals migrating in search of livelihood. The growing number of unemployed in a few reference areas has resulted in endemic migration.

Within the context of the rights-based approach SBSS-DBSS has responded to the above needs by awareness building and information dissemination. This has given a certain push to the reference groups to relate themselves to the district administration, Block Development Officers (BDOs), department of forests, agriculture, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Corporations and a few others to access development schemes of the government. Resource mobilisation through these schemes by the 23 DBSSs does reveal people's initiatives. (Table 8). In a few instances, the reference groups have managed to access MLA and even MP's Local Area Development funds. We could conclude that a beginning in people's initiatives to access government schemes has been made. While DBSS's role to catalyse people's initiatives is visible, it is important to add that several actors – the local leaders, the sarpanch (village panchayat president), as well as committed officials have been part of this endeavour.

During our field visits we could study a few efforts at activating primary schools, services of ANM (auxiliary nurse midwife) etc. However, initiatives in the field of education and health are quite insufficient even though SBSS-DBSSs are well positioned to bring pressure on delivery systems of the state and para-statal institutions. The introduction of community study centres (CSCs) in a few dioceses in the the Central, Eastern and North-eastern zones has much relevance in that it not only gives an opportunity for children to attend school but allows for the families of children to see the relevance of formal education. The CSCs are a joint programme of CNI-Ministry of Children and SBSS. There are altogether 74 CSCs with 3488 children. (Table 4). Wherever CSCs exist, there are efforts to link them with VDCs

⁷ This section is based on one day discussions with the Zonal programme staff, Annual Report CNI-SBSS (2002-03), mid-term review and field visits by the evaluation team.

through village education committees. The CSCs are also being viewed as platforms to activate the VDCs.

The health concerns in tribal areas of north eastern and eastern zone are manifold. We found women are anaemic with poor nutrition levels. Many villages are without the services of even traditional birth attendants (TBA). Therefore promoting village health workers (with health kits) has much relevance, especially in remote reference areas. The SBHS of CNI can play a significant role in the area of health in cooperation with SBSS - DBSS. However currently, there appears to be minimal collaboration between SBHS and SBSS-DBSS.

Money lenders and other intermediaries

Exploitation by middlemen is a critical concern in the reference area. There is also much indebtedness. We have observed in our field studies that lack of markets force the forest dwellers to sell their forest and agriculture produce at depressed rates to middlemen. There are instances of farmers leasing their standing crops to moneylenders and even engaging in distress sale of their lands. In eastern Himalayas, for example, we found several cases of adivasis who have mortgaged their lands. Even to access government schemes, the villagers have to negotiate middlemen. While the reasons for indebtedness are varied (drought, low-productivity, low income-levels, social expenditure on life cycle ceremonies), the presence of exploitative moneylenders and intermediaries (popularly known as the majhajans) is an issue that looms large.

The newly set up five co-operatives in Orissa under the initiative of the Cuttack DBSS have created direct links with the markets, fetching a fair price for agricultural products. (Table 11). The SHGs have also begun to reduce the dependence on moneylenders. But these are only small beginnings.

Land issues

A major struggle of the dalits and tribals relates to land, be it legal entitlements, degradation of land and poor productivity levels due to drought conditions or excessive commercialisation of agriculture (Amritsar), which has depleted the water level. Along with the depletion of water level that is reported in most of the drought-prone areas, there is also much environmental degradation. The brunt of all this is borne largely by the marginal farmers with poor soil conditions and lack of irrigation facilities. Due to these conditions, the lives of dalits and adivasis with marginal holdings often verge on fragility.

The concerns of the adivasis, on the other, are complicated by issues of their domicile and identity. In the North-eastern zone, the tribal issue is compounded by inter-tribal identities as for example between the Bodos and adivasis (munda, oraon etc) and furthermore between tribals and Hindu communities. The dalits are also engaged in establishing a distinct identity of their own. A cause for concern is the many internal divisions within the dalits and tribals. It is noteworthy that in a recent strategy exercise, SBSS has identified 'dealing with diversity' as major theme for programmatic focus.

SBSS-DBSS has responded to these issues in varying ways with differential impact. For example, in the Marathwada region, during the seventies, the government allowed dalits to occupy village-grazing lands – popularly known as *gairan* lands. However, bureaucratic procedures continue to slow down the process of acquiring legal titles to these lands. A few of the recent interventions on *gairan* lands include networking with NGOs (Sankalpa, Manvi Hakka and Jamin Adhikari

Andolan), 'rasta roko andolan' by SHGs, a rally of *gairan dharaks* (5000 participated), and submission of 600 applications for getting legal titles. Until now 30 acres of land have been legally acquired. From various accounts, the *gairan* issue in the Marathwada diocese has taken on elements of a movement. It may be mentioned here that the Bishop of this diocese has taken an active part in rallies and demonstrations.

The entire spectrum of entitlements to land and identity issues remain a major issue for future interventions.

Migration and employment

Migration has become an endemic feature of rural households and several patterns of migration - seasonal, intra, inter-district and outward migration to distant places have come to prevail. Even though migration brings in remittances – which are not always a regular feature, the brunt of migration is felt most by women and the ageing elders. It is reported that 60 to 70 per cent of the Phulia tribals in village Malda (Durgapur) are forced to migrate due to acute shortage of water. The only pond in the village has dried up. Another well-known case of high migration (8 months in a year) is that of the semi-nomadic Bhils in Jhabua district in Bhopal diocese.

In nearly all dioceses, migration emerges as an issue. Two or three DBSSs have identified migration as a critical area of intervention. There have been studies on migration in Durgapur and Bhopal. There are plans underway to set up labour co-operatives/banks to address the issue of exploitation of the migrants (Chotanagpur, Agra, Durgapur, Bhopal). During our field visits we got an impression that due to the savings and income generating activities of SHGs there were cases of migration coming down. The complex issue of migration requires that the DBSSs take up certain firm steps like building a strong database leading to action research for planned interventions. The focus on the issue of migration requires clarity both at the level of concept and strategic intervention.

Natural calamities such as the devastating earthquake and communal violence in Gujarat have unleashed a different set of issues for intervention. The DBSS in Gujarat has given primary focus to rehabilitation as well as addressing the mental and physical trauma of the victimised.

Local governance

The introduction of the new Panchayat Raj and Municipalities as Institutions of local government after the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments in 1993 has begun to change the complexion of local governance in India. Increasingly several development schemes are being routed through them by the State governments and the Central government. The policy of reservations has created opportunities for dalits, adivasis and, in particular, women to mainstream their interests. With a few exceptions, in most reference areas, elections to PRIs have been held. In some areas, (Chotanagpur, for instance,) the panchayat elections have not been held. But the DBSS has not actively engaged in either educating the people about the great possibilities of the new panchayati raj system or making collective efforts to arouse public opinion for holding the panchayat elections as per the constitutional mandate. The entry of the Panchayats through the Panchayat Extension to the Scheduled Areas Act of 1996 in the tribal areas has raised a different set of issues as the tribals have for long been governed by their traditional (Padha Sabhas) local-governing bodies.

While all DBSSs maintain that they have motivated and supported candidates from reference areas, active support to candidates in the reference areas appears to have been extended only in a few dioceses. (Table 7) However, from various accounts, it emerges that people have begun to question electoral processes of local governance. There is much dialogue on 'why and whom to vote?' While it is too early to analyse the impact that these members are making, the critical issue is about sensitising and capacitating them and more importantly altering their value premises on grassroots democracy and participation in governance and development. During our field visits, many observed that women's participation in local governance could make much difference. There are many success stories of women elected members fighting alcoholism, domestic violence and corruption in their respective villages and towns. There is much potential to sensitise and capacitate the panchayat and municipal members. To do this, the programme staff of DBSS must undergo rigorous training on the functioning of the local government institutions.

Our field visits reveal that the conceptual and practical understanding of the new local self-government system among the SBSS-DBSS staff is totally inadequate to take up the local governance issues. We are of the view that concerted efforts must be made to overcome this lacuna.

Food security

As daily earners, self-employed as well as marginal and small farmers, the reference communities emerge as vulnerable communities – economically and socially. Many social and political factors make their livelihoods fragile and thus issues of food-security often surface as critical in the lives of many. While in the past, a few DBSSs have promoted initiatives like grain and seed banks, such initiatives have been kept in the back burner during the current phase. However, a few DBSSs (Nagpur, Jabalpur and Cuttack) have made concerted efforts to regularise public distribution systems (PDS). Questioning the criteria for 'Below Poverty Line' (BPL) beneficiaries, demanding the re-survey of BPL musters and inclusion of new members in the BPL list (in Nagpur diocese) are a few successful interventions.

In Cuttack for instance, an entire village was mobilised to meet the Block Development Officer (BDO) and successfully got BPL cards. Given the low-income levels of reference groups and fragile livelihoods, there are several issues of food security that need planned interventions. Towards this, SBSS has to integrate a sustainable development dimension to their rights-based approach.

IX

Gender Status and Self-Help Groups

Gender Profile: The gender profile of SBSS and DBSS reveals the predictable pattern. This means that while there have been a few efforts to recruit women, there has been no conscious effort to bring women into decision-making processes. Out of 4 Zonal Co-ordinators, there is just one woman. Again, out of 13 programme associates, there are only five women. All the 23 co-ordinators of DBSS are men. Out of 23 Programme Organisers, there is just one woman. However, out of 217 community organisers, 70 are women (*Table 5*).

Concept and Policy: The term gender is a recent entrant in the SBSS-DBSS lexicon. Unfortunately, this term is also generally equated only with 'women's issues'. Only two women staff have undergone gender training until now. The programme staff have not been either sensitised on gender issues nor have they gone through an exercise in gender perspective building. As a result, there is no shared understanding on gender in the SBSS-DBSSs.

While there is a policy paper, we were told that it has not yet been shared among the programme staff. More importantly, it is not a document that has evolved out of SBSS-DBSS grassroots experience. The policy document, which was prepared before the current phase, does not reflect grassroots realities. It is striking that most of the programme staff is not in the know of the ongoing dialogue on gender within the country. Indeed, SBSS has to wake up to building perspectives on gender and evolving a policy that is context specific. In many ways, SBSS does not emerge as a gender-aware organisation. (See section – Organisational Dimension)

Women in Local Governance: The introduction of the 73rd Constitutional amendment has resulted in a quantum leap in women's numbers in local governing bodies. According to estimates, absolute numbers of women in Local Government Institutions (LGIs) has touched a million.⁸ This has opened up tremendous possibilities. According to the SBSS data, the DBSSs have backed 959 (112 women) candidates out of which 438 got elected. (*Table 7*). Our discussions with a few women ward members point to a certain minimum level of empowerment. However, their participation in panchayati raj institutions (PRIs) continues to be one of struggle. A major battle that they are waging is about gender mindsets. While women members have gone through orientation on local governance, continuing support has to be given to them in terms of confidence building, knowledge base, and skills in negotiation and above all value-orientation. As mentioned earlier the programme staff of DBSSs have to update their knowledge on local governance and in this case specially on women in LGIs. SBSS-DBSS has to give programmatic focus to value-based participation of their members.

What emerges from this review is that women have gained a certain level of confidence in the new political environment at the state and national levels that allows them to be a little more articulate and mobile. However, as far as their ability

⁸ See Women's Political Empowerment Reports (1994-2003) by the Institute of Social Sciences, 8 Nelson Mandela Road, New Delhi.

to question the patriarchal culture is concerned, they have a long way to go. Therefore what is crucial is to sensitise the men on the gender issues.

Self-Help groups

What was heartening during our field visits was to observe the empowering processes in women's lives. While *mahila sabhas* of VDCs have been in existence for sometime, it was the entry of SHGs that had made women's issues visible, enabling them to alter their lives. Today there are altogether 919 SHGs with a membership of 12816. The savings of these groups stand at Rs.39, 23,672. Several of these SHGs have begun to access loans from banks and financial institutions. (Table 6) In the North-Eastern zone where women's empowerment through SHGs is most visible, federations of SHGs have begun to emerge. While a few of these federations are registered, others have plans to register. To strengthen their base, platforms have to be created for sharing of experiences between these federal bodies. Considering the vast constituency base of SBSS-DBSSs, the number of SHGs (919) promoted is negligible, indicating insufficient efforts. However, the potential to increase the number is vast. As these SHGs grow, SBSS will have to gain insights into the complex dynamics of micro-finance at the level of concept and practice.

At a conceptual level, SBSS views SHGs not as savings and credit groups but primarily as pressure groups. However, there is no clear articulation on the concept of SHGs within SBSS-DBSS.

There is no denying that SHGs have created space for women's empowerment. One must hasten to add that these processes are still in their nascent stage with much potential for growth.

We capture below a few patterns.

1. Majority of women in the reference groups are either adivasis or dalits with plural identities. Their poor economic condition force them to take up work on daily wage or go for domestic service/self-employment. As daily wage earners or self-employed, these women experience certain economic empowerment and mobility. Evidently taboos on women in dalit communities and specially in tribal societies are much less. The consequence of these liberating elements is seen in the greater degree of freedom and mobility that these women enjoy. From the accounts we heard during the field visits it appears that women in the reference communities are forced into the upkeep and management of the family, as men are either away on migrant work (sending periodic remittances) or fritter away their money on drink and gambling. We also ran into a few women-headed households where women self-manage their marginal farms and are breadwinners of the family. It is important that the SBSS should develop a database on women-headed households. A number of action-research projects are called for on these issues.

2. Traditionally women resorted to several ways of keeping their savings away from the prying eyes of men. The SHGs now persuade women to save regularly and put their savings to productive use. "Earlier we used to save differently. When we had a couple of rupees, we were tempted to spend them on tea and snacks. We never imagined that each of us could save as much as Rs.1200/. This has given us a lot of confidence", remarked a group of women. This was echoed in other quarters also during our field visits.

3. How do the women use the loans? Several patterns prevail. The loans are being used for – education of children, to set up petty shops, to procure agricultural seeds, buying livestock (sheep, goats etc.) During our visit to one of the clusters of eastern Himalayan diocese, women spoke of using their savings for releasing of their mortgaged lands. We also heard that savings have begun to reduce migration in a small way. There appears to be a small dip in the exploitation of money-lenders. However, no systematic documentation of the loan usage exists.
4. We found that a few SHGs are engaged in tiny enterprises such as vermi-composting and leasing land for cultivation. In one of the clusters of Tejpur of North-Eastern zone, the SHG women managed to get a piece of public land and are thinking of creating a health unit and cultivating crops on a tiny scale. The matriarchal traditions of the region appear to have also aided women's empowering processes. The North-Eastern zone has identified women's empowerment as a focal area of their work.
5. While in most SHGs women are saving Rs.20/ a month, in one of the clusters (Merma in Berhampur, Orissa) we found members saved only a mere Rs.6/, as they are giving contributions to other activities such as the SHCS and the church. It is important that every DBSS tracks the saving and credit patterns of their SHGs to bring appropriate course corrections for sustainability.
6. We assume that each community organiser has covered 350 (upper reaches of tribal belt) to 750 families (in the plains). If we keep the 350 as an average number of families that each community organiser may have covered, we would have a total of around 75,000 families spread out over the membership area of over 2500 villages. Even if one member from each family is drawn into the SHG fold, the number of SHGs could increase much beyond the present number of 919. *In terms of scale, the present numbers and savings of SHGs are at best minimal.* DBSSs have also to make micro-finance systems more efficient and effective.
7. As pressure groups, it is creditworthy that several SHGs have begun to emerge as pressure groups. We bring below a few highlights:
 - A number of SHGs have made planned interventions to address the issue of alcoholism and domestic violence. Women spoke about how they managed to get the support of several social activists to demolish local liquor *bhatties* (shops). During our field visit to a cluster in Eastern Himalayas, women were negotiating and planning with the local Pradhan (panchayat president) to stop men from regular gambling in a public building and also banning liquor vending. We also heard of cases of women being encouraged to boycott men if they get into excessive drinking resulting in violence on women. In some ways, SHGs are emerging as watchdogs – allowing space for women to collectively reflect on their situation and find solutions for women in distress. Such women's initiatives call for a lot of support.
 - "Whenever we have rallies and demonstrations, we bring women forward. They not only come in large numbers but have developed negotiating skills." During our field visits, we had large groups of women meeting us. Paradoxically, the presence of men was negligible.

X

CNI-SBSS-DBSS: Organisational Dimension

The evaluation of the organisational situation of the CNI-SBSS/DBSS must inevitably focus on the structures and systems in place that are meant to enable the organisation to move towards its stated vision and mission. However, an outsider's view on these structures and systems will be necessarily limited by

- a) The brevity of the visits one can make,
- b) The limited number of offices that could be contacted personally, and
- c) The inevitable "fears and hesitations" of the persons who could be interviewed.

In order to overcome these limitations the evaluation team member assigned to this section of the evaluation, decided to create and use a special "instrument" which has been termed, an "Organisational Self-Diagnosis Instrument" (OSDI). Through this instrument, the evaluator was able to cross-check the impressions gained in the various field visits, by getting a significant sample of board members and staff at different levels to record their own perceptions on various aspects relating to the organisation.

The results/findings that have emerged from an analysis of the responses to the instrument have therefore been used as a way of checking out the validity of the evaluator's comments. Accordingly the following section is divided into various themes, Under each theme, after a brief introduction, the self-perception of SBSS/DBSS staff is presented after which the evaluator closes with a summary finding on the organisation from the point of view of that particular theme.

Rights Based Approach (RBA)

The term, 'rights-based approach', (RBA) is now common parlance among NGOs all over the world, and yet it may mean different things to different groups. Therefore it was important to clarify what this term meant for the staff of CNI-SBSS and DBSS. Any action to fulfil its mission and vision will flow out of their understanding of this approach. The OSD Instrument ([See Annexure 1](#)) indicates that in actual practice (according to 90.6%⁹ of the respondents, #13)¹⁰, the RBA as practised in the SBSS-DBSS areas of influence consists of building of awareness among the reference communities about the government schemes and services to which they are entitled, and assisting them at times in rallies or demonstrations that the villagers may organise to claim the benefits of the schemes. Furthermore, 60% of the respondents believe that SBSS-DBSSs really do not have any other strategies to empower people to claim their rights (# 15). Despite the limitations of these efforts, over 92% of the respondents feel that their work over the past few years have

⁹ All percentages indicated are based on the total number of respondents *excluding* those who have responded with a "No Opinion" option. IF, however, there is a significant number of respondents with a "No Opinion" choice, then that will be indicated in a footnote. In this particular case only 5 out of 69 respondents (7%) answered with a "no Opinion" option and hence this is NOT considered a significant percentage.

¹⁰ The symbol # indicates the number of the statement referred to in the OSDI.

definitely borne some fruit so that in many places the villagers have been empowered to try and get government schemes for themselves and thus have become less dependent on SBSS-DBSS (#17). (*See Section – Development Context*).

At the same time, a significant portion of the respondents (73.7%) do not feel comfortable with SBSS's exclusive focus on a Rights Based Approach, as they feel that it is important to continue some form of welfare support (income generation schemes, welfare schemes etc) to take care of the daily basic needs of the reference communities (#1). In fact over 78% believe that the switch to a rights-based approach was a decision made 'from the top' (#20), as was the theme of "Building Communities of Resistance and Hope" (88.8% in # 19).

As far as understanding of the RBA is concerned, a large percentage (80.7%) believe that the majority of the SBSS staff have accepted and internalised the RBA (# 8), while around 71% believe that this is also true of the DBSS staff (# 10). But what does this approach mean? Though many (around 80%) seem at first glance to accept that the above mentioned 'practice' expresses adequately the meaning of working from a rights based perspective (# 2 # 3), yet a significant number are also able to sense that the RBA goes much beyond this, and enters the sphere of changing the power relations between the marginalised and those in power, with the possibility of leading to confrontations with the government and others in power (#4, #5, #12, #18). A number are also aware that such an approach could lead to possible physical danger to themselves and to their families (#7, # 16).

Moreover, there is a division of opinion on whether a Church-based organisation can go fully into a rights based approach (# 12), and whether the DBSS staff have the internal capacity to lead the reference communities in a rights based kind of approach towards changing power relationships (#11). Perhaps these hesitations surface in the work, because around two-thirds of the respondents also admit that the DBSSs have not really been able to empower the reference communities to take serious risks in the struggle to claim their rights.(#14)

What is also clearly accepted by most is that though there has been a significant shift in the approach since the past three years the structures that are in place in SBSS/DBSSs are those that were meant for a different kind of approach (#141, #142).

It can be concluded then that SBSS/DBSS (as an organisation, and as its staff) needs greater clarity with regard to their understanding of the meaning and implications of the rights based approach. Furthermore, considering its own particular situation as a Church-based organisation it would also be necessary for the organisation to consciously reflect on and articulate its own limitations in using such an approach. Currently there is certainly a lack of this clarity in the organisation on this matter and this would necessarily have implications on the organisation's ability to work towards its Mission of restoring human dignity through building communities of resistance and hope.

Decision-making Processes

The ability to choose and decide for oneself is an obvious criterion in assessing the level of self-reliance and human dignity that has developed among individuals or communities. And this applies not only to the reference communities but also to the staff of the organisation itself.

In accordance with this insight, the planning process developed in the SBSS-DBSS system (as explained earlier) starts with an initiative from the village level, moves through the Cluster & Area Committees, to the DBSS board, the Zonal level and finally reaches the Headquarters level. It is thus meant to be a bottoms-up approach, which fits in well with the stated mission of CNI-SBSS/DBSS.

The staff of DBSS/SBSS were however divided in assessing whether the result in fact is truly representative of the voices of the people. Slightly more than 50% of the respondents (# 31, 32) indicated that the villagers were truly free to make their own plans, and were not unduly constrained in this regard by those at the SBSS level. Even with regard to the budget approval for these plans, 43.4% believed that the pruning by SBSS of budgets proposed at the DBSS level were not an indication of any lack of respect for the integrity of the bottoms-up planning process (#33). Around one-third believed that the budgeting process was indeed people-centred even if sometimes “cuts” were made at a higher level (#27, 28).

On the other hand over 88% (#29) believed that since India is so varied it is inevitable that if the programmes are really planned at the grassroots level then they would be very different in different parts of India. And over 60% (#30) were of the opinion that the fact that similar programmes are being run in almost all the 23 dioceses of CNI would be an indication that the programmes are not really being planned freely by the people at the grassroots level. Moreover, as indicated above, around 56% believed that the cutting down by SBSS offices of budgets prepared by DBSS reflected a lack of respect of the DBSS’s efforts in this regard (#33).

Furthermore, though there may be different opinions on how “people-centred” the planning process is, there seems to be little doubt that the organisation as a whole is perceived as being quite hierarchical (83.8% # 21) right to the point where even the SBSS board is not seen as the real decision making body, but only the 4-member Executive Committee within that Board. (90.1% # 23). Over 90% believe that starting from the village level right up to the donor level, the “higher” level holds the control (#24), while a somewhat smaller (though still significant) percentage (63.4% # 27) believed this was specifically true about the budgeting process. This perception of a hierarchical structure also applies beyond SBSS HQ, and extends to the perception of the relationship between the donor/resource consortium and SBSS. Thus around 60% of those who had an opinion also believe that in finalising the budget, the donor agencies too treat CNI-SBSS as supplicants and beneficiaries, and not as equal partners. An even larger percentage (70.8%) also believe that the control exercised by the donor’s reporting requirements are so stringent that they do not allow much time or flexibility for work at the field level.

It is apparently because of this perception of the organisational structure, that a large percentage (81.9%) of respondents were of the opinion that staff members in both DBSSs and SBSS often feel afraid to challenge or question those at “higher” levels (#25). Three-fifths of the respondents believed DBSS staff see themselves as basically carrying out the programme as it has been decided from “above”. On a very mundane level, over 80% of the respondents expressed concern that this hierarchical structure is also reflected in the food and lodging facilities offered at the different “levels”, so that, as one Bishop remarked, the arrangements at the very “top” are close to 4-star arrangements. (# 22).

An evaluation of the organisation’s decision-making structure/systems then must conclude that it does not reflect the kind of flat structure that seems necessary to promote participatory values in decision making and which it has tried to bring into

being. This is also the experience of most of its personnel. However, the very fact that the process of planning and decision making involves a series of steps that start from the village level, indicates that the problem is only in the implementation and that the organisation itself does believe in a participatory process. This itself is a very important achievement. And since the intention is already there, SBSS/DBSS would only need guidance and help in translating this intention into more effective processes.

Planning Monitoring Evaluation (PME) and Management Information Systems (MIS)

The PME and MIS of SBSS/DBSS can be explored under the following general categories:

- a. Finance and administration
- b. Personnel
- c. Processes/activities/programmes

As far as the category of FINANCE and ADMINISTRATION is concerned, much more will be spelt out in the section of this report that focuses on this aspect. However, it may be mentioned here that there is general agreement that the staff at least feel that this is being adequately done (85.7%, # 93), and that there is a generally satisfactory degree of honesty in these matters among the personnel (#34 & 35).

There is of course a concern among more than three-fifths of the respondents that perhaps the streamlining of the financial aspects has taken up so much time that the programme related and process monitoring work has been relatively sidelined (61.1% in # 66, and 63.9% in # 67). Similarly there is a strong perception that the "paper work" of the SBSS systems needs to be radically re-thought as this administrative work is taking away precious time from working for and with the people (88.8% in # 68, and 75% in # 65).

The budgeting process warrants a special mention. According to the present system, in spite of the budget being passed and approved at the beginning of each 3-year cycle, there is a tedious process of re-doing the budget every 6 months. Over half the respondents (52.3% in # 94) believe that this is an unnecessary and time-consuming process. However, more than three fourths (75.8% in # 97) believe that while the budget must be evaluated and approved only once at the beginning of the 3-year cycle, it can and must be monitored by the Zonal offices every 6 months to make sure there is no unjustified diversion of funds.

There is also a concern that the budget needs to be made more flexible (84.1% in # 96). In the present system with the amounts being allocated to specific activities, over three-fourths of the respondents (76.2% in # 98) believe that the staff are often more concerned about fulfilling programme activities so that the money is utilised before it lapses by the end of 6 months, rather than responding to pressing issues of the people that emerge in the course of their work.

It may also be mentioned here that it is commonly accepted in the SBSS/DBSS set-up, that the amount of money that actually reaches the villages in programme related expenditure is proportionately very small (# 99). However, this fact must be taken in conjunction with two other factors. First of all it is significant that despite this being allegedly a much smaller amount than what used to reach the villages in the earlier welfare-based efforts of SBSS, the staff have been able to continue to work with the villagers and empowered them to access funds from other places especially

from Government sources. Secondly there is the contention that the rights based approach, by its very understanding, will inevitably mean more is spent on travelling, resource personnel, meetings, etc since a lot of the work involves awareness building, networking, etc. Consequently it is expected that there will be less money/services reaching the villagers directly. Thirdly there is a certain amount of overhead expenditure (salaries etc) that are fixed or inevitable whatever the work undertaken - and therefore it would not be fair to highlight the percentage spent on overheads when the donor agencies have significantly cut down on the funds requested by SBSS (from 21 crores to 14 crores) in the just concluding 3-year cycle. These overheads could have been questioned only if the salaries in SBSS/DBSS were very high or if the organisation is unnecessarily overstaffed – both of which are apparently not the case.

As far as the PERSONNEL category is concerned, there is a general sense (82.5% in # 107) that the self-appraisal process is not very effective in evaluating particular DBSS/SBSS staff members in their work. Over half (54.5% in #106) also believe that the external evaluation of DBSS/SBSS staff is not being done very effectively.

In this context it is important to mention that 91.6% of the respondents believe that one of the limitations of SBSS/DBSS is that they have to work without upsetting the CNI church structures (#81). Thus, a large percentage (86.2% in # 105) are of the opinion that SBSS/DBSS need more freedom to evaluate and take disciplinary action with regard to various staff members without “interference” by pastors. In fact 72.1% (#82) believe that the selection of personnel for SBSS/DBSS is also heavily influenced by Church “realities” and another 71.6% are of the opinion that a certain amount of nepotism comes into play in the selection of DBSS staff and board members. In the light of these realities, monitoring and evaluation of personnel is inevitably difficult.

With regard to the PROGRAMME/PROCESS category, there is a general sense (77.2% in # 100) that since the introduction of computers and e-mail there isn't much delay in communications between the DBSS, Zonal Offices and Head Office. However, some of the staff at the Head office felt that despite this technology being made available, very often they had to repeatedly remind the staff at other levels to make sure that reports were sent to the Head office in time. Things seem to have improved with the appointment of a specific person at headquarters to focus on communication and documentation.

Another area of concern is that the reports that are sent up or even the sharing that takes place at Annual meetings are primarily “activity” reports/sharings, and are not focussed enough on process or analysis (# 89, and # 91). Consequently, many (65.5% in # 60) believe there is no real flow of insights and knowledge from the village level to the head office level and vice versa. It is of concern that 61.9% believe that the real “voices” of the people are therefore not reaching those who are in the upper levels of SBSS (#59). This seems to lead to the conclusion that the management information systems with regard to the programmes of SBSS/DBSS are mostly catering to the communication of administrative reports and are not of a reflective type (88.3% in # 103).

As a result more than half the respondents feel that the SBSS staff (Zonal and HQ) play a “report-monitoring” role rather than a “process-monitoring” role (54.8% in # 87). In any case almost everybody (96.9% in # 88) is convinced that while

monitoring is needed, it must not be just a “paper-based” type of monitoring. This also means that there is need for a reflective/process report from the DBSS level and not just an activity report (93.5% in #90).

Furthermore, communications in the other direction (from HQ or Zonal Offices to DBSS and Community Organisers’ level) are also sometimes “stuck” at the DBSS level and do not reach the reference community (76.3% in # 104). The movement of funds through the DBSS boards to the DBSS office is also another area where there are bottlenecks or delays.

Another point that was noticed by the evaluators themselves and confirmed by over 70% of the respondents is that while there is a lot of paper work, access to relevant or strategic data/information is not very easy to obtain in the SBSS/DBSS offices (#102). More than three fourths believe that SBSS does not have an adequate centralized data base (# 101).

Despite all these lacunae there is a general sense that both the Headquarters and the Zonal offices do have an important role to play in the overall functioning and facilitation of the organisation (# 114, 124, 127). This is a very good sign and opens up the possibility of re-designing the working of these offices, so that they can function in a more proactive mode that guides and leads the various DBSS offices. Therefore there is no question that these units have a very important role to continue to play, but only a common belief that this would require significant streamlining and modifying, together with the introduction of more staff who would have the expertise to offer such guidance in specific areas (# 116, 117, 119, 125, 128).

It seems clear then that SBSS/DBSS has made great efforts to make sure that financial and other reports are prepared and submitted in time. The planning process (as mentioned earlier) has been carefully worked out so people at every level are drawn into the process, though they apparently don’t seem to influence the decision-making very strongly. Therefore there is an urgent need to fine-tune this process so that the “voices” of the people really influence the decision making for both programmes/processes and budgets.

Secondly, the vast majority of the SBSS/DBSS personnel believe in the value of the role of SBSS offices at the headquarters and zonal levels. However, what is perhaps urgently being demanded is a more facilitative type of leadership from the SBSS offices (HQ & Zonal Levels), and this might mean a re-thinking on the kind of reporting requirements and budget processes that (without necessarily improving the quality of the work in the field) take up a lot of unnecessary time and paper-work.

Human Resources and Capacity Building

The effectiveness of any organisation is closely linked to the human resources it has. Furthermore, an organisation’s functioning can be enhanced through appropriate capacity building processes that build people up, who can then work more effectively towards the fulfilling of the vision/mission of the organisation. It was in this context that the entire OSDI focussed on the perceptions of the personnel who are intimately linked with the functioning of SBSS/DBSS’s outreach.

The staff of SBSS/DBSS are perceived as hard working (#34 & 35) persons who genuinely want to bring about change in the reference communities among whom they work. They come across as people who truly have the good of the marginalised at heart. They also rate themselves as /experiencing a fair amount of satisfaction in their work (# 54 and # 55).

The degree of contact with the reference communities is of course different at different levels. Around 97% are convinced that both the Community Organisers/Motivators and DBSS Programme Organisers keep close contact with the reference communities (#56 and #61). A significantly lesser number (42.7%) believe that the DBSS co-ordinators also have such contact with the reference communities, but this lower figure could be explained by the fact that 81.25% (#132) believe that there is too much of paper work to be done by the DBSS offices and this work is primarily the responsibility of the Coordinator. Furthermore, 87.3% (#64) believe that the lack of adequate transport facilities (just one motorbike to be shared between the Programme Organiser and the Co-ordinator) limits the possibility of the latter keeping close contact with the reference communities.

Unfortunately many of the staff come across as not feeling empowered enough themselves (68.8% in # 44) and interactions with many of them seem to suggest that many of them are currently functioning with an abiding sense of insecurity about their jobs. Perhaps because of this insecurity, and/or the lack of avenues for advancement within the organisation (#52), as well as a lack of experience/skills in an activist kind of work (#41, 42), many of the respondents admit that there is a lack of vibrancy among DBSS staff (82.7% in # 38) and also among the SBSS staff (62.9% in # 39).

Again, perhaps because of the great stress on an activity-based kind of reporting, the staff are not perceived as having the capacity to do process monitoring, to politically analyse and strategise, as well as to critically analyse their own work in the field (# 43, 45, 46 and 47).

SBSS has clearly recognised the need to offer continuous capacity building opportunities to its programme personnel, though apparently not as much to its administrative staff particularly at the headquarters level (# 149). In fact both financial and administrative staff at the headquarters level have little direct exposure to the field (# 63). Subject to this limitation, the number of capacity building programmes that the staff go through in one year, is quite impressive compared to other similar organisations (#148).

However, most of the trainings organised for their personnel are geared to an increase in knowledge and information, with little or no capacity building in skills for motivating and organising people, or in strategising politically in order to guide the reference communities to claim their rights (#150, 151).

Furthermore, though there is a clear attempt to build up the capacities of its personnel, the impression gained is that there is a high turnover of staff – with individual staff members at the Zonal Office level or at the DBSS office level lasting just around 3 to 5 years. Some of the reasons that could explain this turnover include the perception among some that salaries are low in comparison to what is normally available in an NGO of a comparable size (#140, 138, 136, 135), the transferability of certain jobs (# 51), the lack of avenues for advancement (# 52), and the lack of “ownership” of the programme (#50). As a result many of the SBSS/DBSS staff are perceived to tend to use this job (and the training they have received) as a stepping stone to other jobs (# 49). This turnover also means that SBSS/DBSS staff do not have much of an institutional memory that could guide them in their current work (# 53) and this is a great loss for the organisation since lessons once learnt in the field by one group of staff members have to be learnt all over again by their replacements.

Generally, then, the SBSS staff have built a great rapport with many of their reference communities, and have grown in experience and skills over the past years. However, they need a more proactive leadership and guidance, and need to feel more empowered themselves, if their full potential can be tapped. SBSS is attempting to do this, but their own limitations in skills and number of personnel at the HQ level particularly (and the Zonal level too) is what holds them back from making their facilitative role even more effective. There is need for this to be seriously considered and planned for, in the forthcoming funding-cycle period.

Gender

SBSS has generally not paid too much attention to gender issues (#110). Moreover, as in many parts of the world, and particularly in the Churches in India, gender issues are often identified with “women’s” issues, and therefore the efforts that have been made in this regard have been limited to hiring more women in an attempt to create greater gender balance in the personnel. In addition to this the only other effort made has been the preparation of a paper giving some reflections on issues related to women.

However, despite the increase in the number of women hired, there are very few women in decision-making positions in the organisation, and even more seriously the women in such positions themselves do not seem to experience the environment as being very conducive to being treated as equals. And the “paper” referred to above, remained in the files of the organisation and was distributed only recently (after the evaluation was started) at one of the meetings held in Delhi.

Despite this apparent lack of awareness of gender issues, it is important to note that 71.1% of the respondents agreed that patriarchy still controls the SBSS/DBSS systems (#109). Another 72.2% believe that the ability to look at structures and work from a gender perspective seems to be missing in SBSS/DBSS (#112). An overwhelming 95.45% are convinced therefore that there is need for gender training and sensitisation in the organisation at all levels (#111).

On the question of whether there has been any sexual harassment in SBSS/DBSS, surprisingly around 46.8% (or nearly half) claim that they have heard that there have been some cases. If there had been appropriate systems in place to respond to such allegations that these people seem to have heard of, then such a problem could be nipped in the bud. Since this is only a question of hearsay, there may or may not be truth in these feelings, but it certainly demands that something must be done to clear up the air.

The Gender issue is therefore clearly an area in which SBSS/DBSS needs to find its own feet and proceed to set up systems and create sensitivity.

The Relationship with the Churches

SBSS/DBSS, as an organisation, is intimately linked in its structure to its various Boards, the Bishops who are ex-officio Chairpersons, the Pastors in whose constituencies the work is carried out, and the congregations who have to be animated to support SBSS/DBSS in its outreach to the marginalised.

The functioning of the organisation therefore is influenced by these various constituencies/entities. This is well recognised by the personnel of SBSS/DBSS as only one single respondent disagreed with the statement that “one of the limitations

of SBSS and DBSS is that they have to work without upsetting the CNI church structure” (#81). The earlier sections have also indicated the influence of Church realities on the selection and evaluation of staff personnel of SBSS/DBSS (# 80 82, 83), so that SBSS/DBSS could sometimes tend to function, as one respondent said, “as an employment agency for CNI Church members”. Yet 88% of the respondents believed that it was strategically important (in the current political situation) for SBSS/DBSS staff to have more non-Christian staff among its personnel (#84).

All, except one respondent, believed that the Boards themselves (both at the SBSS and DBSS levels) are clearly not as active and involved as the organisation would want them to be (# 70). Moreover there is a feeling among a large majority that the boards of the DBSSs, in general, include many people who are not really in touch with the reference communities (# 71). The ability, then, of such Boards to guide the DBSSs is clearly questionable.

As far as the Bishops are concerned, 92.45% of the respondents indicated that very few of the bishops of CNI actually “own” the work of DBSS/SBSS (# 72), and that many of the Bishops themselves are not too motivated or convinced about the importance of social action (# 73). This leads to the conclusion that SBSS’s work is limited partially at least by the hesitancies of the Bishops of CNI (#74).

Like the Bishops, the pastors too, according to 93.6% of the respondents, are not too motivated or convinced of the importance of social action. Moreover, there is a feeling among a little over half the respondents that the selection of reference communities is very often not clear (#86) and also that such selection is heavily influenced by the needs or conveniences of the pastorates (#85).

Finally, despite the funds allocated for the Congregational Animation aspect (CAP), a large percentage of the respondents (84.8% in # 76) believed that the congregations do not get involved in DBSS work because for them religion is primarily connected with the vertical dimension (i.e. relationship with God, prayers, the Bible etc). Moreover, when they do get involved in social outreach these congregations are more interested, according to the respondents, in social welfare work as against social action (#77, 78) and in any case prefer NOT to report to SBSS on these matters (#79). It must also be noted that 71.6% of the respondents also indicated that DBSS staff do not have the competency to handle congregational animation (#40). The field visits also indicated that either the existence of a budget for the congregational animation was not known to some Boards/Bishops, and/or were not being used effectively.

It may be concluded then that this interface of SBSS/DBSS and the congregations is one area regarding which SBSS/DBSS is fully aware and is apparently already taking steps to redress. However, staff of the DBSSs – at least in one zone and perhaps in others too – were extremely agitated on this matter as many of them perceived that this attempt to involve the congregations far more actively in the work of DBSSs meant that they themselves were to be eased out of their jobs. This perception, whether based on fact or not, has created a negative mind-set among many personnel at the DBSS level. SBSS/DBSS needs to take this perception into account even as it tries to build up the congregational involvement in its work.

XI

Shifts with the Introduction of the Rights-based Approach

The shifts that have come about after the rights-based approach was introduced are briefly outlined here. In general there is a realisation among the reference groups that they have to take initiatives to demand their rights. The expectation/dependency levels on DBSSs of the reference groups, appear to have scaled down considerably.

Some voices from the field:

”There is a growing recognition of the effectiveness of collective action. A few grassroots leaders have gained experience in interfacing with the government machinery. Even within this short time, women who barely stepped into the public domain earlier are now bold. They not only do attend meetings, but have learnt to negotiate with the local administration.”

“The gains we have made in this area should not be lost but get consolidated.”

“ While we are collaborating with the block and district administration, we are also opposing them.”

A few pastors have been motivated to actively participate – as advisors, monitors. “We have a few Bishops who have taken the path of activism – participating in rallies and campaigns. Impacts are most visible wherever Bishops have got involved.”

Have the lives of people improved? Yes. “People are eating and clothing better. Their purchasing power has visibly increased. Over the years, wages have increased too. Periodically, the people have been able to access government schemes such as housing (Indira Awas Yojana), widow pensions and other health schemes.”

“Savings through SHGs have definitely increased the confidence levels and purchasing power of women.”

The newly formed co-operatives in Orissa have begun to remove the exploitation of the middlemen. “We now take our produce to the markets and get higher prices”, voiced several members of SHCS in one of the clusters of Berhampur.

XII

Factors Affecting Programme Effectiveness

Several factors have diluted the effectiveness of the programme.

1. Who owns the programme?

A major issue that has affected the programme effectiveness relates to the reluctance and indifference of the diocese and the congregations in owning the programme.

-The Bishops and Pastors are much pre-occupied with the church related work and their motivation to actively get involved is far from adequate. Not all Bishops and Pastors are well equipped with the conceptual framework of the rights-based approach. However, wherever Bishops have taken interest and got closely involved with DBSS's work, the programme has received visible push in terms of leadership and impact.

- We were also told that in some instances the Pastors were ready to get into development work but did not get the mandate of their Diocesan authorities.

- Everyone agrees that the church youth can play a vital role in DBSS's work. The CAP programme of DBSSs was meant to have given orientation programmes to the church members – youth, pastors and women and increased their awareness levels. During our field visits, the general impression was that this effort has not been too successful, but there appears to be no concerted effort to find solutions to this impasse.

While the issue of owning the programme is an old issue, SBSS-DBSSs have to make strategic efforts to promote meaningful interaction and dialogue between congregations and DBSSs. Currently we are told that they meet once a year. Pastors' needs also have to be addressed. One strategy could be to increase the budget for CAP with a specific mandate to consolidate and deepen the linkages between the congregation and DBSSs. To cohere with the churches, it is important that interventions through CAP should be collaboratively planned with the pastors and members of the church.

During our field visits, we were told that the Dioceses have problems, 'politics' and even engaged in legal cases involving property disputes, etc. Our concern was whether these will be reflected on the work of the SBSS and even affect the mission and vision. In one Diocese we were told that it does. Is there any way to guarantee that DBSS will not get affected by the problems and politics of the Dioceses? How much autonomy we can give to DBSSs?

2. Rights-based approach

Has the CNI-SBSS/DBSS rights-based approach addressed adequately people's needs and interests? Answers to this question give a mixed picture. If one takes the entire spectrum of interventions in the 23 diocese, SBSS-DBSSs do have achievements to their credit.

A rights-based approach often takes on an activist mode. The unfolding of rights-based work even in the short period of last two years has witnessed campaigns,

rallies and demonstrations in some dioceses (Table 9). While these are welcome efforts, rights based struggles could also take on political undertones. The question here is: 'How well equipped is a church-based organisation to get into rights based activism of this political type ? And how crucial is such involvement for a rights based approach ? This query has also to be placed within the current political climate of the country. From our discussions, it emerges that SBSS-DBSSs has to evolve strategic frameworks to address the opportunities and limitations of CNI-SBSS to take their rights-based agenda forward.

A rights-based approach can be more effective if it complements mobilisation, conscientisation and campaign with a development dimension. While SBSS-DBSSs has given thrust to a certain extent to the former, it has not included the latter. The predominant focus of programme intervention has been on awareness generation, a few rallies and demonstrations. While the campaign mode has yielded certain results, a host of issues relating to the livelihood systems of the reference groups have been ignored. One must remember that the majority of the reference groups are daily wage earners, self-employed and marginal farmers with low earning power.

In all the villages the team visited, the team members found that the daily wage earners are not getting the statutory minimum wages. Several community organisers or activists didn't even know what was the statutory minimum wage. For the DBSS this issue would have been an ideal case within the rights based approach. It would have exposed the exploitative system. Another injustice prevailing in the villages – women getting lower wages than the men - has not attracted the DBSS action programme. Had it been taken up, it would have said a lot about SBSS-DBSS concern with regard to gender discrimination and unjust, exploitative systems.

Reference groups have begun to ask: 'What next?' They are desirous of getting tangible benefits through skill development, micro-enterprise, land development and other interventions. In some ways this inadequacy in the translation of the rights based concept have also resulted in poor participation levels in people's organisations. The programme budgets have given sole focus to conscientisation processes, which have dipped people's interests. People's participation levels especially that of men have come down. It is only in the newly formed SHGs/SHCGs that one finds a certain vibrancy and that is because of the tangible benefits in savings and loans.

While lobbying, networking and advocacy are critical to rights-based work, SBSS-DBSSs' efforts in this regard have been quite inadequate. However it may be mentioned here that a few efforts at networking (Marathwada, Kolhapur, Bhopal and Chotanagpur) have apparently yielded tangible results. (Table 11) In Chotanagpur, for instance, small efforts are being made to network with Durnikirman Mandal, LokSangrama Mancha, Chasi Muliya Sanghatan.

There is also a growing realisation that 'rights' work has to be backed by legal expertise and support.

3. Voices of the people

The critical question that frequently surfaced during our field visits is about the involvement of people in planning processes. Several factors appear to have impeded people's planning. As discussed elsewhere, the multi-layered structures have not been conducive.

The SBSS –DBSSs has put together a standardised programme across the 23 dioceses. This has consciously or unconsciously impeded flexible planning. With 23 diocese contexts, SBSS-DBSSs can ill afford to have a standardised framework.

A rights-based approach does demand a highly committed staff with informed activist orientation. The policy of transferring the SBSS staff every three years has not created an enabling environment for sustaining the rapport-building processes and consolidating the programme processes. There has been a high turnover of the programme staff with the result that the majority of the staff has not more than 5 years of experience.

4. Capacity building

While human resources are the lifeline of an organisation, developing and consolidating their competencies lies at the centre of creating a knowledge based organisation with learning as a continuous process. Indeed programme effectiveness is directly linked to the repertoire of skills that programme staff have at their command. A review of the capacity building programmes reveals inadequate investments in building human resources of SBSS-DBSSs.(Table 10). Developing human resources of the SBSS-DBSSs, especially with specialist skills is the need of the hour.

At the central level, while SBSS has organised a few seminars and workshops on communalism, POTA, etc; these have not been taken forward with follow up actions. The CNI - SBSS is still to evolve a framework for advocacy and lobbying. While the SBSS efforts at networking currently remains limited, it has much potential to take it forward. To retain its secular character, SBSS has to make concerted efforts to network with a variety of NGOs and movements.

Building and enhancing competencies of human resources is a continuous process. The capacity building desk has to plan for events (training, retreats, exposure and workshops) to continually upgrade the skill and knowledge profile of its staff. For example, the skill and knowledge base of community organisers need continual updating. But the picture we get about the present training, capacity building scenario is that the primary effort is a 45-day induction programme aimed at imparting a comprehensive orientation to all the staff and the recent strategic development programme, aimed at charting a future course of action.¹¹

While initially all the programme staff went through an orientation on the rights-based approach, the Zonal Coordinators have gone through another round of training to consolidate their perspectives. Paradoxically, the Programme Associates (Zonal Office) have not until now been exposed to a comprehensive training on rights perspectives.

As mentioned earlier, the entire field of developing perspectives on gender has been left untouched.

Sharing and learning platforms have to be created between the 23 DBSSs. Cross-learning processes have to be promoted between Clusters in each diocese. The expertise base of SBSS-DBSSs is indeed limited. Apart from deep conviction and facilitation skills, any rights-based approach should be accompanied by expertise in a variety of fields - lobbying and advocacy, communication and media, social justice legal expertise, decentralization, local governance and grassroots democracy, gender and micro-finance, to mention a few.

Presently the critical portfolio of capacity building in the SBSS central office is not independently handled by a professional expert. It is clubbed with the programme coordinator. The present arrangement of one person handling two important portfolios of programme coordination and capacity building has become

¹¹ Until now, two workshops on strategic planning have been held to plan for the next phase.

dysfunctional and therefore it must be urgently reviewed. Capacity building has to be linked to result-orientation. For example, the whole area of sustainability of people's organisation has to be addressed. Towards this competencies have to be built *contextually* at different levels in the following areas.

- a) Resource Mapping
- b) Facilitation skills
- c) Building leadership
- d) Need-based skill development
- e) PRI and local governance
- f) SHG and micro-finance
- g) Consolidating perspectives on rights.
- h) Developing perspectives in women's empowerment and gender.
- i) Specific programmes for diocesan leaders on rights perspectives and leadership

5. Multi-tiered Structure

Routing the programmes through multi-layered structures and systems – Central, Zonal, DBSS, Area Committees, Cluster Committees and VDC have clearly resulted in procedure orientation within the SBSS. Decision-making processes appear to be subject to many procedural compulsions. The question for reflection here relates to the flexibility of these structures to promote rights based activism.

A review of PME reveals features of project-driven orientation rather than a process-orientation, which is essential to a rights-based approach. Addressing people's needs and promoting people's planning demand flexible planning. What is being argued here is that standardised structures or programmes are not always suitable for promoting the above. Those implementing the programmes must have flexible systems emphasising on results and output. But of course their activities must be accountable and transparent throughout.

The planning process is expected to begin at the VDC level, which is then presented at the cluster and later at the area committee for finalisation. While the VDC is expected to meet twice a month, the Cluster committee comprising of representatives of VDCc and Area Committee which consists of representation from cluster committees, have quarterly meetings. The village plans are expected to progressively travel up to the DBSS, Zonal and Central level. Often times, these meetings are not held on a regular basis. Furthermore the feedback the evaluation team got was that in actual practice the decisions are made at the highest level.

There are differing patterns of monitoring. The community organisers meet every month to review and plan. The cluster and area committees are both planning and monitoring bodies. Few pastors participate in these programmes. They are rarely part of the planning and monitoring processes. The programme organiser during his visits monitors too. The Programme Associate has a mandate to make monthly visits to 2 dioceses. The Co-ordinators of DBSSs have bi-annual meetings for reporting. Finally all the zonal staff meets once a year. What is of concern is that all these monitoring processes have not resulted in adequate process documentation and has not enriched the planning process.

6. Reference Communities

A noticeable trend has been the non-participation of men in most of the VDCs. Their livelihood pursuits constrain them from attending meetings on a regular basis,

especially when interventions tend to focus on awareness building without appropriate follow-up. Most of the VDC meetings have no budgets and are held with people's contribution. On the other hand, we found that women have become active. "When we cannot solve our problems, we bring them to the VDC to seek men's support", said a lady during our field visit.

VDCs also appear to get activated only when issues requiring collective action surface. We also ran into a few active VDCs. In eastern Himalayan diocese, for example, we ran into VDCs, which have succeeded in getting represented in government forest committees. Again in North-Eastern (Tejpur, Assam) diocese, a few VDCs have promoted collective farming. While instances of active VDCs exist, the majority of VDCs appear to have lost their relevance. SBSS should rank the VDCs in the four zones to analyse the trends for course correction.

Similar trends are found with Cluster Committees. We are told that often cluster committee meetings are not held as members living in far-flung villages find it difficult to forego their wage work to attend these meetings. "Even if members are willing to attend, food becomes an issue", said a villager. Discussions in the field reveal that the Cluster and Area committees also do not feel motivated as they have only a recommendatory power. In a few places we found that Cluster Committees have replaced Area committees. A pattern that appears to be emerging is that people's institutions are being activated only when specific issues surface.

The reference areas of DBSSs are vast, with villages scattered and far-flung. To be in touch with the grassroots and to monitor the people's problems pose problems of mobility for programme staff. The women community organisers, in particular, expressed the need for (motorized) two-wheelers for being mobile. The community organisers felt that they could be more effective if two community organisers are posted within one or maximum two panchayats. The mandate of community organisers to cover 750 families appears to have lost its relevance with the rights-based approach. In several instances, for example, issue-based work – be it a small rally or a campaign - has enlarged their constituency base to include families outside the reference groups. However, programme effectiveness could improve if the reference villages/clusters are contiguous as it would then increase the bargaining power of the people. In this context it must be mentioned that there is much scope to empower the community organisers to take SBSS-DBSS' agenda forward.

XIII

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Legal Status of Implementing Entities

The programme is implemented by 23 Diocese through DBSS. The Diocese is registered as societies/trusts with a governing council headed by a chairman. Almost all Dioceses are registered under Foreign Contribution Act and have an FC number except the Diocese of Pune, Phulbani, Durgapur and Marathwada. None of the DBSS visited have drawn any by-laws and constitution for effective functioning and administrative discipline as provided in the MOU between the CNI-SBSS and the DBSS. In case of Durgapur Diocese, the MOU has not even been signed. Dioceses have been regular in complying with applicable statutory requirements, except in case of Durgapur Diocese the income tax return has not been submitted since last several years. All the DBSS have an executive committee for programme implementation and monitoring that meets regularly and has well documented minutes. The progress is also monitored in the quarterly meetings of the Board of the DBSS.

A. Finance Management at the Diocesan Board Level

Adequacy of the books of accounts

The DBSS's maintain separate books of account for the foreign contribution receipts and expenses. A separate cash and bank book and salary register is maintained. The books are properly maintained on Cash Basis. The transactions are adequately supported by vouchers and supporting bills, which are properly authorised and sanctioned. Separate records are maintained for local contributions (LC), which are received in kind. These are maintained based on the certificates received from the VDCs. A monthly receipt and payment account is prepared.

A fixed assets inventory register is maintained but a fixed assets register is not maintained. The concept of an annual physical verification of assets is still to be initiated, whereby the physical quantities and that of the accounting records need to be reviewed to ascertain any variations.

Bank accounts are operated under joint signatures of the secretary and treasurer of the DBSS, while the cheque book is in the custody of the accounts department. The expenses are verified and approved by the co-ordinator. The bank account is reconciled on a monthly basis.

The books are maintained manually. The accounting function should be computerised by using available accounting and financial software e.g. Tally.

In all the seven diocese the funds are advanced to community organizers activity-wise. The community organizers provide a statement of account along with the vouchers signed by the secretary and the treasurer of the ALC or the VDC on a monthly basis to the DBSS.

The DBSS that receive funds from the Central Office (HO), Delhi send a monthly expenditure report to the Zonal office. However, the reports are not received regularly. A six-monthly audit report is also sent to the Zonal Office.

The account keeping and recording was generally satisfactory for the level of operations in respect of CNI-SBSS funds, though there is need to continually reiterate accounting principles and practices. Some of the exceptions that were noticed are the following:

- i. advance register is not maintained and advances are recorded on rough sheets as a result it is not possible to ascertain the total outstanding advance at any given point of time; and the books of account are not updated regularly; the advances are not shown in the cash book as a result the cash book balance does not tally with the cash in hand.
- ii. the cash in hand is not periodically verified. The details of a cash count undertaken, if any, was not available.
- iii. in one of the dioceses, covering vouchers were not prepared, the supporting documents used as vouchers were not maintained in sequence and were not numbered. The entries in the cash book were not being checked, as a result there were discrepancies e.g. an entry for Rs. 21,356.00 was entered as Rs. 22,356.00 and there was no record or explanation for the variation in the cash balance; there were no bills for Rs. 2,100.00 paid towards hire of bedding, for Rs. 5,868.50 towards review expenses, for Rs. 200.00 paid towards hospitality and Rs. 3,450.00 paid for hire of a tempo traveller. The bank book had not been totalled for six months and the bank account had not been reconciled. Drafts issued by the DBSS were recorded both as receipts and payments and as a result the balance reflected in the bank book was not correct. The closing balance as per the books of account of one of the bank accounts as on 31st March 2003 was Rs. 102,856.18 whereas the balance reflected in the audited statement of account was Rs. 106,090.40. Some of the entries in the ledger for the previous year ended on 31st March 2003 were in pencil.
- iv. at times the P.F. challan details do not tally with the salary register and books of account.

At present the vouchers and books of account of the Phulbani Diocese are maintained by the Ranchi Zonal Office of SBSS and form part of the books of account of the zonal office. Since this is a separate DBSS it is important that the books of account should be distinct and separate from that of the zonal office

Systems for budgeting and planning

Broad guidelines are provided by the Synod for the formulation of plans and budgets. SBSS policy in recent times has been to concentrate on the rights based approach. The plans at the DBSS level relate to the following activities:

- i. People's Organisation and Empowerment Programmes (POE)
- ii. Organisational Management (OM)
- iii. Congregational Action & Participation (CAP)
- iv. Social Economic Empowerment (SEE)
- v. Programme Administration (PA)

The planning process commences at the village level, which concentrates on two components i.e. POE and SEE, which account for 14.78% and 8.08% of the total

budget. The SEE component has not seen much implementation and the thrust has been on People's Organisation and Empowerment Programmes (POE), which is 14.78% of the total budget. The planning for this component is initiated broadly by three primary committees, viz. Mahila (Women's) Development Committee, Yuva (Youth) Development Committee and the Marginal Farmers Committee. Generally two to four members from each of these committees are elected as representatives on the Gram Vikas (Village Development) Committee, which consists only of these representatives. Representatives from each of the primary committees place their problems and concerns at the Gram Vikas Committee (GVC) and seek to have them addressed. These are prioritised by the GVC and based on this the plan is finalised and sent to the Cluster Committee. Under the rights based approach the programmes are implemented through the clusters.

The Cluster Committee identifies the common problems of all the villages, prioritises the programmes, clarifies various concepts and objectives and determines the budgets for the various components. The meetings and initiatives are facilitated by the concerned DBSS. This is the main planning body of the primary stakeholders.

The budget is then placed before the Area Committee, which comprises of village representatives from each cluster, DBSS board representatives and SBSS Zonal Office members. The cluster budgets are consolidated and this committee finalises the budget for the POE and SEE components, which is submitted to the DBSS. However in some areas the Area Committee is not very effective since the main planning and budgeting exercise is undertaken at the cluster level. The area committee is an intermediate forum between the clusters and the DBSS Board.

At the DBSS the budgets for three components i.e. Organisational Management, Congregational Action and Participation and Programme Administration are prepared and finalised, which account for 48.53% of the total budget. The plans and budgets from the village clusters are consolidated as per SBSS norms and reviewed. The budget is approved by the DBSS Board and submitted to the SBSS central office for final approval and release of funds.

Though the emphasis is on a rights based approach, yet the congregation has been given a very minimal role in budgeting and planning of the 'Congregational Action and Participation Programme' component, which essentially should be entirely planned and budgeted by the congregation. This component accounts for 4% of the total budget.

The programme has approved a three year budget, which is broken down into annual budgets. Each Diocese has back up details of the programme components, which are to be implemented over three years. Despite this half yearly plans and budgets are prepared and approved rather than addressing only changes or re-allocations from the original plan. Accordingly about four to five months valuable time is spent only in planning, which would otherwise be totally available for programme implementation. Further this has also delayed release of programme funds by about a month at the start of each half-year.

The half yearly planning exercise appears to have narrowed the implementation focus whereby there is under-utilisation of key programme components, which could vary from 20% (under POE) to 100% (under SEE). Evidence of any comprehensive diocese development plan and objective was not available and it can be said that such a plan had not been created. A rights based approach based on agitations has its own limitations and cannot be seen to be self sustaining over a period of time in the absence of capacities being built of the local population and that of the congregation and the development of 'champions' in identified fields. Organisational

management, which accounts for salaries to community organisers has witnessed only 46% utilisation of financial resources as against the envisaged 66% at the end of 31st March 2003.

The planning exercise under the POE component, which has been the focus area is driven by the demands of the local communities. In the absence of critical awareness of what can be demanded or accessed from the central and state government schemes the planning exercise does strive to achieve the bigger goals envisaged in the log-frame. The access of the people and community organisers has been restricted to the 'Block Development Officer' and in minimal cases the access has been to the District Collector or local Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) or Member of Parliament (MP). Under the panchayat system it is important that the District Planning Officer (DPO) and the District Collector be accessed continuously so that the various centrally planned and state plan schemes are accessed. Details of the various government schemes accessible and the methodology for accessing such schemes were not available with the programme co-ordinators or the community organisers.

The educational qualifications of the community organisers are in many cases restricted to having passed class 9 or lower and in few cases they have passed high school or their graduation. There is no compulsion or plan for ensuring that their educational qualification is enhanced, within a prescribed time frame. In the absence of suitable educational qualifications (no matter what may be their ground experience), this remains a restricting factor in building a vision, in terms of direction, the creation and sustaining of such plans, which is essentially bottom-up in the key area of 'People's Organisations and Empowerment'.

Effectiveness of the Internal Control System at the DBSS & field level

A 'Working Manual of Financial Procedures' has been developed by CNI-SBSS, which addresses all the key issues in accounting and internal control in a simple manner. Simultaneously CNI - SBSS has institutionalised the posts 'Finance Monitoring Associate' at each of its four zonal offices, who are expected to review the financial transactions with each DBSS within their zone. A system of half yearly audit as per terms of the programme agreement with the funding partners is also in place. Half yearly cash flow requirements are submitted to the central office by each DBSS, which are reviewed before any funds are released.

At the field level i.e. village and cluster levels at both Chotanagpur and Agra Diocese the motivators had ensured that proper books of accounts had been maintained. The clusters had separate bank accounts and there was general awareness of the expenditure that had been incurred within the village or cluster.

However the motivators were not aware or not very sure of the paln outlay for the year. Further plans approved at the cluster or area committee level were normally reduced by amounts that could go upto 40% to 50% at the Central / Synod level. The reasons for such reductions were not always forthcoming.

Despite the institutionalising of the monitoring process, there have been serious gaps in the internal control mechanisms. There have been instances of use of project funds for activities that have not been provided for in the budget, in case of Nagpur (to the extent of Rs. 58 lacs, since 1996, which is equivalent to 10% of the annual budget under the current phase), Mumbai and Diocese of Eastern Himalayas. Some of the gaps noted were; the vouchers are prepared and payments are made

by the office assistant only; the expenditure vouchers are signed only by the DBSS Coordinator and the Office Assistant; the expenses are not authorized and vouchers signed by any office bearer of the Diocese; the monthly expenditure statements are not drawn from the books of account. Discrepancies in payments have been pointed out by the Finance Monitoring Associates in case of Diocese of Kolkotta, Diocese of Eastern Himalayas and Durgapur. In some cases advances are not settled for a long period of time, subsequent advance is given without settlement of the previous outstanding advance. Inconsistencies have been observed in the audit reports submitted by the Diocese particularly in case of Nagpur and Diocese of Eastern Himalayas. There is no mechanism of establishing physical and financial linkages. The DBSS bank accounts are not reconciled. The internal controls at the field level are adequate.

Similarly lax internal controls have existed at the Agra DBSS in the past and in the Amritsar DBSS. Many of the DBSS delay in sending their expense statements to the zone and the central office. Further effective follow up on queries raised by Finance Monitoring Associates and by the Finance Department at the Central Office was found to be lacking. In another instance a motorcycle was purchased on 28 June 2003 however the bill and copy of the registration book had not been given to the concerned accounts department. In yet another case a printer had been purchased for Rs. 4,472.00 without appropriate approval.

The internal monitoring and review mechanism within the DBSS is not high lighting major variations between budgets and actual implementation and the corrective measures required. The physical achievements are not linked with the financial expenditure incurred at any of the DBSS visited.

A critical aspect that is inhibiting effective internal control at the DBSS level is in not having empowered and qualified personnel to not only raise issues relating to effective monitoring, transparency and accountability but to ensure that these concerns are addressed and suitable follow up action is taken.

Fund transfers to the DBSS and the field

Funds are released by the HO, New Delhi to the FCRA Bank account of the Diocese. The Diocese transfers the project funds to the link accounts of the DBSS. The Zonal Office gives the funds to Diocese that does not have a FCRA account as advance. In case of Kolkotta Diocese there is no link account and funds are transferred in cash as and when requisitioned by the DBSS. There have been instances of delayed release of funds by the Diocese to the bank accounts of DBSS and in some cases full amounts are not transferred causing problems in reconciliation. The HO releases funds to Diocese based on six monthly cash flow statements that are drawn from the DBSS budgets and the receipt of the six-monthly audit report. The flow of funds has been smooth. However, the Diocese, at any given point of time hold funds that are much more in excess of the requirements of the DBSS because of six monthly fund releases.

The funds are advanced by the DBSS to the community organizers in cash in case of the DBSS, visited. The community organizers provide the funds either to ALC or to the VDCs. There are no bank accounts at the ALC, CLC or VDCs, except in the case of Kolkotta DBSS, which has bank accounts at the VDCs. However, the funds are still transferred through the community organizers in cash. The main reason for cash transfer is to avoid delays in availability of funds at the village level. There is no concept of eligible and ineligible expenditure.

The Chairman of the Diocese and or treasurer of Diocese and the DBSS Coordinator jointly operates the bank account of the DBSS. There have been instances when the project expenditures have been held up because of non-availability of the Diocese office bearers.

The transfer of funds to the field is to be seen in view of the fact that the activity is related to the rights based approach wherein the fund requirement at the field is very minimal. One meeting at a cluster level costs about Rs. 1,900.00. However if a major rally is organised then the cost involved is about Rs. 50,000.00 to about Rs. 200,000.00. In most of these cases the transfer of funds is by making cash advances. However where the clusters have bank accounts then at times the fund is transferred to their bank account and a statement of account is obtained.

Since the Socio-economic Empowerment component has witnessed only 13% utilisation of the total budget the transfer or accessibility to programme funds has been minimal. There is virtually no transfer of funds to the congregation under the 'Congregational Action & Participation' component though 41% of the total budget has been utilised.

Where a DBSS has a FCRA registration then funds are released directly to it by the CNI Head Office.

Appropriateness of Budgets for the Activities Implemented

The appropriateness of budgets at the DBSS level can be seen from the deployment of programme funds towards programme activity over a two year period ended 31st March 2003, as per the following details:

(Rupees Lacs)					
Diocesan Development Plan	Total Budget	Proportionate Budget	Actual Deployment Upto 31/3/03	Percent of Proportionate Budget Accessed	Percent of Total Budget Accessed
P.O.E.	247.72	165.15	218.30	132%	88%
S.E.E.	135.52	90.35	17.30	19%	13%
O.M.	471.24	314.16	216.52	69%	46%
C.A.P.	69.96	46.64	28.83	62%	41%
Prog. Admn.	272.14	181.42	110.71	61%	41%
Total	1196.58	797.72	591.66	74%	49%

As seen from the above the deployment of funds is restricted to 74% of the proportionate budget. The deployment of funds in four programme components (other than POE) is only 59%. This does not imply that the funds made available are sufficient or excessive, but it raises the following three critical issues:

- i. Do the DBSS have the capacity to effectively implement the Rural Development Programme as originally envisaged in the plan document?
- ii. Do the DBSS have empowered staff to translate the vision into reality?
- iii. In case of a change in plan vision why were the budget allocations not realigned with the new thought process?

In order to assess the above, we look at the average annual deployment of funds in the 23 dioceses (keeping out any spikes), which is the following:

(Rs. Lacs)

Diocesan Development Plan	Amount Accessed upto 31/3/03
P.O.E.	4.74
S.E.E.	0.38
O.M.	4.70
C.A.P.	0.63
Prog. Admn.	2.41
Total	12.86

The average expenditure is Rs. 12.86 lacs per diocese, with the key area of People's Organisations & Empowerment (POE) having a utilisation of only Rs. 4.74 lacs per year, which is very low. Congregational Action & Participation the utilisation is only Rs. 63,000.00 per year. In considering the quantum of government funds accessed, which is the end result and is different from the means, which is the amount deployed from the project. Further there have been no government funds accessed for the C.A.P. component, while the Socio Economic Empowerment component to P.O.E. is only 1:0.8, whereas there should be a relative ratio of 2:1 or say 3:1 or else the implementation is too one-sided at the cost of other effective components of "Building Communities of Resistance and Hope".

A major component under Organisational Management is Programme Facilitation / Monitoring, which includes salary payment to the Community Organisers / Motivators. The component forms about 66.89% of the OM budget but the actual utilisation on an average is about 57% of the allocated budget. The Community Organisers / Motivators do not get any gratuity on completion of the contract. A part of the available budget could be considered for setting up a gratuity fund at the central office, whereby this field staff becomes entitled to gratuity if they complete the three years in the project or on the termination of the project. Any staff not completing three years would not be entitled to gratuity. This would go to strengthen the rights based approach.

The programme administration budget varies from 21% to 32% of the a diocese's total budget, whereas in the overall plan budget it is 16%. CAP on the other hand forms 4.17% of the total budget of which only 62% has been utilised accordingly this could lead to disempowerment of the congregation, rather than creating a strong and vibrant congregation.

Accordingly budgets need to be rationalised to give the programme a balanced focus, the capacities of the DBSS need to be strengthened urgently to enhance service delivery and ensure that they are empowered to address rights based issues both in an external and an internal environment but with appropriate and timely internal control mechanisms.

Compliance with legal regulations

The recent past has witnessed Indian Income tax laws witnessing many changes with regard to the applicability to charitable institutions and the stringent nature of the laws. The diocese generally were found to be not complying with the provisions for deduction of income tax at source. Some of the accountants were not aware of the legal requirement in this regard. Accordingly payments had been made in contravention of deduction of income tax at source.

Some of the DBSS are registered separately but are not registered under the Income Tax Act 1961 as charitable institutions and do not file the mandatory income tax return. They also do not have the mandatory permanent account number for tax purposes and the tax deduction at source number.

In the case of one DBSS that has more than one FCRA registration, the FCRA Balance Sheet, Receipt & Payment Account and FCRA return had been incorrectly prepared i.e. it was incorporating the accounts of the other FCRA registrations under its main FCRA registration and hence there was duplication besides reporting the designated FCRA bank accounts of the others in its own FCRA return and Balance Sheet.

Where the DBSS do not have an FCRA registration e.g. in the case of the Agra DBSS, the funds are transferred by the central office of SBSS to the Diocese, which is a separate entity from the DBSS. The diocese then transfers the funds to a separate DBSS bank account e.g. Agra and Ranchi. Agra DBSS has a separate FCRA bank account, which has recently been transferred to Agra after seeking prior permission from MHA and funds should now be released directly to the DBSS.

Capacities of the DBSS accountants have been found to be lacking in terms of legal requirements.

Budgetary control procedures

The budgets are prepared for three years. The three yearly budgets are broken down into yearly budgets. The DBSS along with the Zonal Offices engages in a very extensive six monthly budget exercise. The budgeting follows a bottom to top approach for the POE component and to some extent the SEE component. The yearly budget provides broad guidelines for actual implementation, which is carried out based on the six monthly review of the programme implementation progress. Based on the budgets a cash flow for six months is drawn that provide the basis for release of funds by the HO. The six monthly budget exercise is counter productive and requires four months of preparation and grounding time. There is no mechanism of comparing budget vs actual expenditures of the DBSS and it's monitoring by the Zonal Office.

Programme implementation is not proactively linked to financial deployment as a result there is expected to be under-utilisation funds in the current phase unless major initiatives are undertaken within the next six months or an extension is sought for addressing programme implementation concerns.

Funds reaching the local communities level

There was general satisfaction about the flow of funds to the local communities. Field visits to project areas of Nagpur, Mumbai, Kolkotta were made. Interactions with the beneficiaries reflected that the programme has made a very positive impact. The community organizers appeared sincere and dedicated. The beneficiaries gave

a positive feedback about the programme and the programme staff. The beneficiaries insisted that some of the programmes should be targeted towards enhancing skills relating to their respective areas of earning their livelihood.

The interaction with the community organisers for the Agra, Amritsar and Chotanagpur DBSS also revealed that they were proud of their work in the field and reflected sincerity and eager to address the needs of the local communities. There was a need to address education and community health as drivers for people's organisation and empowerment through the socio-economic empowerment component.

B. Finance Management at the Synodical Board Level

Adequacy of Books of Account

SBSS is a society registered under the Society Registration Act of 1860. SBSS functions through its Head Office (HO) at New Delhi and four Zones. SBSS is registered under FCRA and has a FC bank account. SBSS have been regular in complying with applicable statutory requirements. SBSS is headed by the Finance Manager in accounts and finance. At present SBSS is not implementing any other programme.

The books of account are computerised and maintained on cash basis. The books of account and other records maintained at the SBSS are: vouchers, cashbook; ledger and an advance register for CNI-SBSS funds. Appropriate back up is not taken of the computerised data, which indeed is very risky. The Zonal office maintains a imprest account and prepares monthly statements of expenditures that are sent to SBSS along with original vouchers. The expenditures incurred at the Zone are incorporated in the books of account of the SBSS. However, books of account are not maintained Zone-wise as a result it is not possible to ascertain expenditures incurred by the each zone. The six monthly consolidated audit report and a narrative report is sent to the donor agencies. The account keeping and recording is satisfactory for current level of operations.

The accounts staff at SBSS consist of a team of Finance Manager, Accountant and Assistant. The books of account at the Zonal Office are maintained by the Office Secretary. The account and finance staff capacities at SBSS for current level of operation are adequate. The staff job responsibilities and key action areas have not been defined at SBSS as well as at the Zonal Office. This causes avoidable overlapping of authority.

Systems for Budgeting and Planning

The budgeting and planning is initiated at the zonal level with the zones making their recommendations. This is followed up with planning workshops at the central office with all the zonal staff. At present the central office has accessed the service of an external resource person to facilitate the entire planning and budgeting exercise. The workshop is to be followed up with visits by the Programme co-ordinator and the external resource person to each zone for finalising the budgets. The entire responsibility for the planning and budgeting vests with the Programme Co-ordinator.

The Chief Co-ordinator is not however backed by a think-tank and he does not have access to a sounding board for formulating new strategies and in facilitating the planning and budgeting exercise. The planning is essentially historically based.

Internal Control Systems

Within the SBSS adequate internal control mechanisms exist. However the linkage of the SBSS with the DBSS is primarily based on the visit reports of the Finance Monitoring Associate (FMA) of the Zonal Office. Points raised by the FMA are taken up with the respective DBSS, however, as no penalties for defaults by DBSS have been instituted, there has not been a very encouraging response to initiate rectification action by the DBSS and intimate the same to the Zone or SBSS. The progress of the project is also reviewed in the quarterly meetings of the Executive Committee of the SBSS, However, financial performance does not form part of this review.

Each zone has a financial monitoring associate however there are no guidelines as to the frequency of financial monitoring of the DBSS. It is largely left to the initiatives of the respective FMA. The FMA's are very junior and not able to exercise an accompaniment and monitoring role. The qualification and technical knowledge of the FMAs are not commensurate with the role that they are expected to play. The financial monitoring in one of the zone's has been inadequate, with no financial monitoring being undertaken in two dioceses for the last 18 months and another two dioceses for 12 months. The FMA monitoring was undertaken just prior to the financial review but no reports were available for these visits.

The monitoring reports do not specify the depth and extent of the review and whether the findings have been shared with the DBSS co-ordinator and the accounts personnel and what follow-up action has been taken.

There is too much stress on transaction control, which primarily focuses on bookkeeping and not on financial management. There is a need to move towards a more facilitation role in programme implementation with balanced internal controls in place.

The SBSS has a tripartite agreement with the auditors and a six monthly audit is conducted. The audit report does not provide any information regarding the financial management in spite of the fact that the same is provided in the agreement. There is no selection criterion for the auditors.

Budgetary Controls, cash flows and management of advances

The budgets are prepared for three years. The three yearly budgets are broken down into yearly budgets. The budgeting follows a bottom to top approach. The budgets are moderately monitored. The Zonal expenditures are budgeted in the budget of the CNI-SBSS. The zones have no concept of exercising budgetary controls due to lack of separate Zone-wise budgets. There is no mechanism to establish physical and financial linkages as also comparing budget vs actual expenditures.

The zonal offices do not prepare a consolidated zonal budget of all the DBSS within their zone. Accordingly it cannot be ascertained as to how much money is being allocated to a particular sub-component within the zone and for the project as a whole e.g. zone allocation and CNI allocation towards Mass Rallies or skill development trainings etc. These details are restricted to individual DBSS only.

Within the zone the chairmen's of the respective DBSS do not meet to review the progress and to direct the implementation of the project. A point of such convergence is required.

The cash flow mechanisms are adequate and funds do move to the zones and DBSS smoothly. Advances are also settled at regular intervals though this was a matter of concern in the previous years.

Adequacies of Budgets

The appropriateness of budgets at the SBSS level can be said to be adequate for the capacities that exist within the system. There is need to strengthen the secretariat. The finance function should be raised to a higher level by having a Finance Director, who would be responsible for financial management. Similarly the FMAs should be more senior persons and have just two persons based at the Central Office rather than at the zones. This will require additional financial support.

The project has a component for 'Capacity Building' and another for 'Staff Development', these need to be defined and a suitable budget for 'Staff Empowerment' needs to be created, which should facilitate an enhanced body of dynamic personnel as drivers of the project "Towards Building Communities of Resistance and Hope". Congregational action and participation needs to be also addressed at the SBSS level rather than leaving to the DBSS.

Management of fixed assets

The assets are well documented and can be easily identified. However, there have been gaps in incurring capital expenditures at SBSS. There is no mechanism to periodically confirm the physical existence of assets at the Zones and the DBSS.

The Case of Nagpur Diocese

- The Finance Monitoring Associate in his reports of June 2001 read with July 2000; February 2001; reported several discrepancies relating to booking of expenditure without appropriate support; use of project funds for unrelated activities; improper maintenance of books of account; excess expenditure. However, no action was initiated by SBSS, which in reflects SBSS attitude towards 'value for money'
- The Nagpur Diocese claimed that it had incurred Rs. 22.00 lacs from other programmes to carry out SBSS project implementation and asked for reimbursement of the amount;
- CNI-SBSS refuted the claim and further enquired about the sources of these funds;
- The Nagpur Diocese submitted unqualified reports for 2000-01 by its auditors;
- CNI-SBSS instituted an investigative audit by its auditors M/s. Ray & Ray on October 2, 2001;
- In January 2002 the auditors submitted their report and reported large irregularities by the Programme Coordinator relating to transfer of project funds; wrong booking of expenditures; disbursement of lesser amount of salaries; payments to non-existing beneficiaries and programme participants; non-compliance of statutory regulations; instances of diversion of funds; irregularities in accounting and book keeping; siphoning-off of funds; and several other irregularities.
- The then Coordinator accepted that there were diversion of funds and other irregularities in the records (financial and administrative);
- The total impact from the financial year 1996-97 to 2000-01, as pointed out in the audit report, approximately works out to be Rs. 58 lacs;
- The Nagpur Diocese also constituted a team to conduct an impact evaluation study at both the field areas: Tumsar; and Aheri;
- Several staff members testified before the team for being sexually abused and harassed at the hands of the two Programme Organizer and the Programme Coordinator;
- The field office in-charge of Tumsar shared that the field office was mainly used for immoral practices (Evidence- used condoms found in office).;
- Cases of exploitation of inmates of hostel being run by the field office were also highlighted;
- The Evaluation team discovered a lot of irregularities and recommended suspension of the project and the two community organizers and the Coordinator;
- The Diocese acted on the recommendations of the Evaluation team.

XIV

Concluding Observations

While there is much potential to consolidate the gains made, CNI-SBSS has many challenges to address.

1. To take forward their agenda in the next phase, the SBSS-DBSSs has also started exploring the possibility of integrating a number of volunteers in the various pastorates. This is a positive step towards integrating its development initiatives within the context of congregational engagement and further the owning processes. However, it is critical that this builds on the expertise and sensitivities of the current SBSS/DBSS staff.
2. Planning a sustainable consolidation plan for the ongoing efforts is yet another agenda. The SBSS-DBSSs plan to capture opportunities to consolidate the gains made until now must involve concerted efforts to overcome the existing lacunae in the programme. The positive impact such as the gains made by women should be encouraged and sustained. Several course corrections have to be made, be it building competencies of human resources, developing a vibrant leadership or strengthening the institutional processes.
3. In the final analysis, CNI-SBSS-DBSSs combine has to take stock of the gains made, opportunities missed and its vast potential to take its development agenda forward. It is crucial that SBSS-DBSSs positions/structures itself professionally in terms of perspectives. It must take concrete steps to empower its personnel, enhance its human resources and re-vitalise the leadership potential within. Apart from the many course corrections recommended in this report, CNI-SBSS-DBSSs has to evolve a vibrant participatory planning process that increases its autonomy vis-à-vis the church realities in order to make the programme really powerful and path breaking

Annexures

Annexure – 1 (Tables 1-12)

The following data refers to the period: March 2001- October 2003

Table 1: Peoples' Organisations: Zonal Profile

Zones	Village Development. Committee	Cluster Committee
Central	231	39
Eastern	332	39
North East	134	29
Northern	226	37
Total	923	144

Source: SBSS Central Office

Table 2: DBSS, Area, Cluster, Village Committee: Registration Profile

Zones	Registered DBSS	Registered cluster/village/area committee
Central	1	NA
Eastern	2	2
North East	1	1
Northern	2	22
Total	6	25

NA: Not Available

Source: SBSS Central Office

Table 3: SBSS – Core Achievements (by Zone)

Central Zone:

- The diocese of Nagpur has mobilised mass opinion on issuing of the BPL cards to those who fall below the property line. They prepared a Nukad team comprised of the local youth- and organised them effectively to generate mass support on the BPL issue.
- In Nagpur reference area, the Panchayat has been made part of the people struggle and the relationship became strong and complementary.
- In Kolhapur, through persistent struggle people could get gairan land in two villages.
- In Kolhapur pressure was brought on the Government to undertake a revised survey for BPL cards.
- In Jabalpur diocese, people united themselves to collectively appeal for their problems. Due to these collective efforts, peoples' organisations could pressurise the Government to change the corrupted Panchayat members in two villages.
- In the diocese of Marathawada, mass awareness was created on the issue of Gairan lands. The people organised for mass rally and government now recognises the collective strength of the people
- In Gujarat, people's organisations have demanded their land from forest department and moved the court for justice.

Eastern Zone:

- In Sambalpur, growing participation of people in Palli Sabha (Gramsabha) has created adequate pressure on government to channelise government schemes regularly for the benefit of the community.
- Orientation provided by ASHA has helped proper functioning of PRIs in the area.
- In Chottanagpur there is a strong people's organisation. There is also a high degree of unity among the villagers to courageously resist and agitate corruption and injustice.
- People have acquired strength and courage to stand before the government officials and challenge them. There is considerable reduction in the harassment by government officials.

- In Cuttack, 37 members from reference areas got elected to the panchayats.
- The formation of co-operatives has eliminated the middlemen and the community could get 30% price rise for their agricultural products.
- The women groups have become powerful and they think illiteracy is not a barrier to assert their rights.
- In Phulbani, the formation of Anchlik Sikshan Committee resulted in the mobilisation of mass support for demanding effective functioning of the government schools. Regular presence of teachers has improved the education process and attendance.
- The reference communities have become increasingly aware of their rights over land and fair price for minor agriculture produces.

North East Zone

- 63 % families in Barrackpore have been able to come out of the clutches of the moneylenders from exploitation. They are now capable of generating income by their efforts and save.
- 137 women have encouraged their husbands to give up bad habits like Satta, gambling and be more responsible towards their families.
- Women's decision making process has considerably enhanced. Cases of wife beating have reduced considerably, in the diocese of Barrackpore.
- There is active participation of both male and female in gram sansad meetings.
- Literacy has gone up. 45% of women can write and maintain records of their works. There is equality in wages of both men and men. Creation of fund in 22 VDC from profits shared by the beneficiaries.
- Co-operative farming was done by the farmers in 40 bighas of land in 2 clusters of the diocese of North Eastern Zone.
- Women now raise voices against unequal wages and sexual harassment & rapes.
- The people form organisations to gain strength for more independence and resource mobilisation.
- In middle Assam area, people are increasingly coming together to go on dharnas & rallies and raise their demands and rights directly to the concern authorities.
- 142 SHG groups have formed federations and have acquired an identity to fight for socio-political justice.
- In Kolkota, women groups are able to bring back the Thadari cluster under their own possessions.
- Collective struggles and pressure have resulted in sanctioning of 15 ponds. Roads are constructed.
- Equal wages of Rs.62/- have been acquired for both men and women.
- Collective participation to address local issues has become prominent.
- There is considerable increase in political participation.
- In Durgpaur, there is now collective awareness on water issues that they are struggling with, resulting in the formation o people's collectives. These collectives are now successfully participating in rallies and dharans to demand facilities from the government.

Northern Zone

- The DBSS, Agra started a primary school for children of the snake charmer community in Nagla Mott. This school provides not only education but also equality for the children who were discriminated on the ground of caste.
- 70% women in the SHGs (DBSS, Agra) could acquire a sense of self-identity due to their participation in economic activities. This helped them to expend their role and participation in the community. They now actively participate in the social and political activities at the local level.
- In Rudrapur and Khusrai, people have a sense of unity, which is demonstrated in the way they collectively raise their voice against various forms of injustice.
- The villagers of Bhudhra struggled collectively to get common benefits to their village. They succeeded in getting a school and link roads.
- In Jalkesar cluster, the people after being trained on moonga moti (making of beads) have collectively started to produce and sell them. These gave them financial security even during severe drought.
- Village level committees demanded their rights to make their society registered.
- In Surajpura cluster under Rajasthan diocese the people took initiatives to mobilise resources for a school building and water supply.

- People of Manda cluster now send their children to regular schools and initiated economic programme for girls. Setting up a sewing training center has given opportunities for few the young girls to gain a sense of recognition.
- In the diocese of Bhopal. the people registered their names in the block office to monitor and check migration of labourers, and fight against exploitation.
- Ban Suraksha Samitis were formed at each villa level, to protect environment. They have planted thousands of trees.

Source: SBSS HQ: Delhi (Collated by the Zonal Staff)

Table 4: Community Study Centres (started in 2000)

Zone	CSCs	Enrollment
Central	27	1,497
Eastern	32	1,241
North East	15	750
Northern	None	None
Total	74	3488

Source: SBSS Central Office

Table 5: SBSS – DBSS: Gender Profile

SBSS	Co-ordinator		Programme Associate		Finance Monitoring		Office Secretary	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Central office	2			1	3			3
Central Zone	1		3	1	1		1	
Eastern	1		1	1	1			1
North Eastern	1		2	1	1		1	
Northern		1	2	1	1		1	
Total	5	1	8	5	7		3	4

DBSS	Co-ordinator		Community Organiser		Office Secretary		Programme Organiser	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Central	1		39	20	6	1	7	1
Eastern	1		33	20	3	2	4	
North East	1		32	14	1	3	5	
Northern	1		43	16	7		6	
Total	4		147	70	17	6	22	1

Source: SBSS-Central Office

Table 6: SHGs: A Profile

Zone	SHGs	Membership	Savings	Loans received from Banks/Financial institutions
Central	145	2071	7,09,936.00	16,44,600.00
Eastern	235	3455	807172.00	11,65,000.00
North East	450	5939	1643057.00	7,91,900.00
Northern	91	1351	763507.00	11,54,000.00
Total	919	12,816	39,23,672.00	47,52,500.00

Source: SBSS Central Office

Table 7: Panchayat Raj Institutions in Reference Area: A Profile

Zone	Candidate: Supported/motivated		Elected	Lost
	Male	Female		
Central	125	59	69	45
Eastern	370		37	201
North East	82	53	75	60
Northern	270		257	13
Total	847	112	438	319

Source: SBSS Central Office

Table 8: People's Contribution and Resource Mobilisation

Zone	Rupees
Central	47,15,457.00
Eastern	1,35,00,237.00
North East	27,41,386.00
Northern	30,69,826.00
Total	2,40,26,906.00

Source: SBSS Central Office

Table 9: Campaign/Rallies/Demonstration: 2001- 2003**Central Zone**

Diocese	Cause	Participants	Outcome
Gujarat	Insufficient drinking water at Berdi village	NA	Two hand-pumps were installed
Kolhapur	Dalit cause	NA	30 ha. gairan land allotted to 1162 families in 5 villages 7000, registered under BPL
Nagpur	Land patta Displacement Ration card	NA	Land patta for 3 people 90% of the villagers received BPL card and.
Jabalpur	Wage discrimination	NA	The labourers were paid their rightful wages of Rs 50/- as per government rules.
Marathwada	To acquire Gairan land Threats to agricultural land Galpera	2000 out of which 427 are women	Deputy Tehsildar agreed to look into the matter of Galpera and assured that there will be no disturbances to the agricultural land

North Eastern Zone

Diocese	Cause	Participants	Outcome
Sambalpur	Denial of Insurance policy For mass awareness on resistance to construction of Dams	89	Enrolment of farmers RCIP 02/93. Inspire leaders of to resist construction of Dam at Magurbada, Bolangir
Cuttack	Corruption, wages, land rights, food security	NA	The Govt. assures to fulfil their demands.
Chotanagpur	Corruption, bribery, railway facilities.	NA	NA
Phulbani	Land patta Irregular Govt. functionaries Appointment of teachers	1500	Preparation of list of landless villagers, 5 teachers appointed, 2 Doctors were appointed in the health dept. Order for construction of roads. Supervision of public works to be done by SHG members

Eastern Zone

Diocese	Cause	Participants	Outcome
Barrackpore	Electrification Construction of roads Police arrest	125 145 40	Electrified & electric pole installed Repair roads Police set free innocent people
Durgapur	Education Justice	25	Regular teachers Parents send their children to school Women attend non-formal school at night. Equal wages For both men & women Sanctioned tube well for the people
Eastern Himalaya	Electrification Communal harmony Irrigation facility	136 500 300 160	Assurance from Chief Engineer by Nov.'03 Peace committee formed Co-operation and support from district administration. 7 km canal sanctioned for digging

	School building Sanitary facility	50	School building sanctioned for four classrooms. 22 toilet sanctioned.
Kolkata	Protest against war on Iraq. Tube well repairing Village electrification	140 60 70	Awareness generated Tube well repaired Verification done by concerned department.
North East India	Women atrocities & Against middlemen Corruption in office and blocks	600 600	BDO and local administration agreed to co-operate with clusters in future Cluster committee has been recognised by Block office

Northern Zone

DBSS	Cause	Participants	Outcome
Agra	Education for girl child Safe drinking water, link road, land licence & drought relief.	1000 2000	60% girl children enrolled Link road constructed 49 got land licence 80 farmers got 20 kgs of wheat as draught relief.
Amritsar	Church Property Environmental degradation and Contamination of water Rights of girl child. Education Rights for landless agricultural labourers in the border area	5000	State machineries became aware of issues related to Church, cases against the Church were reduced (dismissed). Movement for plantation for trees Movement for cleaning drains and burning polythene bags Education of women on issue of foeticide and infanticides. Leadership training centre has been established Sangharsh committee formed. Case of landless labourers in border area was referred to the Chief Secretary.
Bhopal	Preservation of forest Migration Jal, Jungle and Jamin Forest identification	NA	Distribution of plants for plantation Registration of migrant labourers 50 wells deepening initiated by panchayat Intrusion of forest land is reduced Formation of forest preservation.

Source: SBSS Central Office (unedited)

**Table 10: Capacity Building Programmes: 2001-2003 (Common to All Zones)
Staff Capacitation**

Category	Subject/purpose	No. of Participants
Co-ordinator	Perspective building on CSC	NA
Programme Organiser	- do -	NA
CSC Facilitator	- do -	NA
Co-ordinator	Developing Conceptual & Strategic uniformity	NA
Programme Associate	Development management	NA
DBSS Co-ordinator	Fund management	NA
Office assistant	-do-	NA
Co-ordinator	HRD	43
Community organiser	- do -	NA
Community Organiser	Micro- Finance	1
SBSS Core staff	Perspective orientation on urban intervention	25
Programme Associates	Advance in Micro Finance	1
Programme Associate	Women and rehabilitation	1
Programme Associates	Violence against Women	1
All Diocesan Co-ordinator	Personality and Programme management	20
Programme associates	Leadership training	1
Programme Associates	People centred media advocacy	1
Co-ordinator	Fund management & resources mobilisation	29
Finance management associate	-do-	NA
Office assistant	- do -	NA

Women

Category	Duration	Subject
SHG members	2-5 days	SHG management and formation of women's collective
Mahila mandal members	2-7 days	Small scale income generation activities
Member mahilka mandals	2-3 days	Participation in the political activities eg PRI
Members mahilka mandals	2-5 days	Legal aid
Members Mahila Mandals	2-5 days	Managing mahila mandal meetings, record keeping and accounts keeping
Members of Mahila mandals	2-5 days	PMES
Members mahila mandals	2-15 days	Skill building (tailoring etc and other crafts)
Members mahila mandals	2-7 days	Community health and nutrition

Farmers & Landless labourer

Category	Duration	Subject
Farmers.	2-5 days	Making and use of organic manure
Landless labourers	2-5 days	Land rights & alternative livelihood
Farmers	1-15 days	Watershed management.
Farmers	2-5 days	Use of appropriate technology

Youth

Category	Duration	Subject

Youth mandal/committee	2-5 days	Leadership building
Youth committee members	2-5 days	Management of records and documents
Youth committee members	2-5 days	Mobilising resources
Youth committee	2-5 days	Entrepreneurship

Note: The above nature of training & capacity building was provided to the community members during the last one and half year.

Source: SBSS

Table 11: Networking – A profile

Eastern Zone

Networking partners	Issues
FOTAP	Tribal Issues
LOK MANCH	Tribal issues
JOHAR	Jal, Jungle, Jamin
NEEDS	Land rights
Jana Vikas	Farmers rights
Adivasi Vikas Manch	Tribal rights
PREM	Education
ADHAR	
Sabuj Biplaba, Bolangir	Environment

Source: SBSS. *Note:* NA for other Zones

Table 12: Co-operative Societies: A Profile

Eastern Zone (In the Cuttack diocese only)

Number	Member
Deulkoni (Registered)	
Kendupada (Registration in process)	Presently direct membership for registration is 10 each. But in each area entire community is a member of the Co-operative.
Gopalpur -do-	
New Golabandha -do-	
Ashrayapur -do-	
Bhaliaguda -do-	

Source: SBSS-Central Office

Annexure 2: Terms of Reference

Church of North India **Synodical Board of Social Services.**

Background information, evaluation objectives and terms of reference for the external evaluator.

Background of CNI-SBSS.

The Synodical Board of Social services (SBSS) is the wing of the Church of North India, to address the social concerns. The SBSS was given the mandate in 1978 by the Church and since then it has engaged itself dedicatedly in the field of mission. This the 25th years of its journey with people. The SBSS' policy & programme are governed by a Board, appointed every three-year, by the Synod of CNI. The focus of the SBSS work is to facilitate empowerment of the marginalized and deprived section of the society, in the rural areas. The reference people are Indigenous and Dalits. These people always forced into the brink of survival due to various reasons. The reasons are historical, social, cultural, economic and political and also religious. The development model used by SBSS is People centered development process leading to empowerment of powerless and vulnerable groups of the society. The approach presently adopted is Right based approach. The work is done mainly through bringing awareness, educating on socio-political and cultural issues and skill building to understand to and analyze the issues, community based organization, creating alternative source of livelihood. Organizing the community enabling their access, restore the control over the resources. And protect the available resources within their reach. Engaged in mobilization of government facilities through demonstration and demand. Participating in the larger advocacy initiatives to voice their opinion on major issues. Promoting Alliance building with other NGOs.

To reach to present stage of development organization SBSS has passed through number of stages over last 25 years. Even the development model SBSS believed and practiced also subjected to change as the development understanding under went changes every decade.

Being a church based organization it has its limitation. In spite of the limitation and being placed in a pluralistic context, SBSS has always looked forward and progressive looking in its ideology and theology. This opportunity to maintain challenging identity is the uniqueness of SBSS, though it is church based development wing.

Now SBSS is involves more than 2500 villages' spread all over the northern Indian states. The Diocesan Board of Social Services implement the work, while SBSS does facilitation in Planning, equipping the implementing bodies (DBSS), monitoring, evaluation, capacity building, fund and other resource mobilization for the programmatic and logistic support. There are 24 dioceses participating in these endeavors. Each of the DBSS has an average of 13-member team. Some dioceses have more. The team is consistently equipped to participate in the development initiatives with the grass root communities. Now SBSS has more than 300 staff working in various functional and operational levels. The Central Office is located in the CNI Bhawan, New Delhi, India. SBSS has four zonal offices. Located at Agra ,Nagpur, Durgapur and Ranchi. These are zonal offices.

They look after the day-to-day facilitation. The zonal office has one Zonal Coordinator. Assisted by Programmes Associates and One Finance Monitoring Associates.

All the planning evolves from the community level based on the issues identified by the community. The planning also incorporates the congregational level activities.

The proposed evaluation is planned to see the effectiveness of CNI-SBSS as a organization at the community and congregational level.

Objective of the Evaluation:

- To assess the relevance of the SBSS vision and mission, in the life and context of Indian realities.

- To assess the quality and the qualitative as well as the quantitative impact of the programmatic activities of SBSS and its compatibility to its goals and objectives.
- To assess and review the role-played by CNI-SBSS and the Diocesan Board Social Services the implementing constituencies in promoting participatory value premises and helping them to respond to the larger issues, confronting their existence.
- To assess the organizational management capacity of CNI-SBSS, in relation to its structure, functional and operational effectiveness.
- To assess and review the procedure and effectiveness of present mode of governance and role of SBSS board and executive committee.
- To assess effectiveness of the Finance and Fund Management capacity in relation to the evolved system, procedures, transparency and accountability.
- To assess and review the role of Resource sharing partners role in strengthening the effectiveness of CNI-SBSS.

Term of References.

1. Organizational Perspective, system, structure and direction.

- How are the policies and programmes linked up with the vision, mission and thrust?
- To study the relevance of vision and mission of CNI-SBSS. How far these vision and mission have been relevant in addressing the need of the society and in particular the reference community?
- How does the CNI-SBSS have positioned itself dialogically and theologically?
- How the policy and programme of SBSS have relevance in compare to the vision and mission and ideological and theological position of SBSS?
- How the evolved structures have been functionally effective in translating the mission and objective?
- How effective is the internal communication system? The MIS system and its effectiveness?
- To assess the relation/linkages of the headquarter and the zonal offices as well as the DBSS?
- How the linkages with the DBSS the implementing constituency have productive and result oriented. How effectively the DBSS is able to empower the stakeholders?
- To assess effectiveness of the internal decision making procedures?

2. Perception of Development Relevance.

- a. How does the SBSS is sensitive to the social-political-cultural contexts. How it position itself to the globalizations and its impact on the community.
- b. How far it has prepared itself to address the geo-specific issues and effectively address the same.
- c. How far SBSS has been able to conceptualize the development paradigm on the changing realities.

3. Programmatic Intervention, relevance and achievements.

- a. Assessing the relevance quality, impact of the SBSS programmes in relation to the agreed objectives.
- b. Assessing the effectiveness of the tools and methodology used in PME.
- c. Study the community level resources mobilization, the capabilities and access to control over the resources.
- d. Extent of people's participation in the planning, Monitoring implementation and evaluation.
- e. The effectiveness of the present staff structure in optimum realization of the programme.

- f. To assess the effectiveness of the human resource management including staff welfare schemes.

4. Gender Status.

- a. To assess to what extent the gender policy is implemented at the conceptual, programmatic, structural and procedural levels.
- b. How far the women's participation in community level is ensured.
- c. How the women at have equal place in the entire programmatic implementation and management level.
- d. How the women's in community have bee able to take part in the decision making process at the local self-governance level.

5. Environmental Impact.

- a. How the organization and the reference communities have addressed the environmental crises?
- b. Whether the entire programme planned have eco-justice kept in mind?
- c. What are the initiatives for eco-sustainability?

6. Advocacy and Lobbies.

- a. To assess the organizational initiatives in advocacy and lobbying.
- b. To assess the effectiveness of such initiatives at the community level.
- c. To assess the initiative taken t\by the organization at the larger national issues.

7. Congregational Participation.

- a. To assess how the congregational have been aware of the mission of the church?
- b. To assess how the congregation have responded in their local areas and their support for the DBSS activities in their local areas.
- c. What is the effectiveness of congregational initiatives?

8. Organizational Goal Accomplishment and relevance of the main focus:

- a. How the whole programme and various activities have been helpful in building the communities of resistance and hope, and to resist and fight against the oppressive and exploitative structures.
- b. To what extent various struggles that have emerged at the community level have desired impact on the larger communities around.

9. Finance Management.

9.1 At the Synodical Board level.

- To assess the adequacy of books of accounts.
- To assess the systems in place for budgeting and planning.
- To assess the effectiveness of the internal control system.
- To review the financial management system with regard to budgetary control, cash flow, management of advances etc.
- To assess whether the budgets are appropriate for the activities implemented.
- To assess in how far the systems comply to legal laws.
- To review the management of fixed assets.

9.2 At the Diocesan Board level.

- To assess the adequacy of books of accounts.
- To assess the systems in place for budgeting and planning.
- To assess the effectiveness of the internal control system at the field level.
- To review the mode of fund transfers to the field
- To assess whether the budgets are appropriate for the activities implemented.
- To assess the compliance to legal regulations.
- To review the budgetary control procedures.
- To assess the amount of funds that reach the local communities level.

10. Conclusions and recommendations

Based on the findings of the evaluation specific conclusions and recommendations will be developed by the team for each of the a.m. questions and points for assessment.

11. Methodology

The evaluation will be carried out through

- field visits and meetings with various community based groups in Dioceses still to be specified.
 - discussions with Diocesan management and staff.
 - discussions with Zonal offices management and staff.
 - Meetings with the head office board, management and staff
 - Study of activity reports, documents, correspondence and publications.
 - Study of documentation of the 25 years review process.
 - Study of self evaluation of CNI-SBSS in 1999/2000.
 - Study of contract documents of Bread for the World, Christian Aid, EED/EZE and ICCO.

12. Time Frame

The evaluation will take place approx. between September 1 and October 3, 2003. It will comprise 25 (wo)mandays per team member and approx. 30 days for the team leader. The evaluation will require approx. 5 days for preparation, approx. 15 days for field visits and discussions at head office and approx. 5 days for team meetings and report writing.

The evaluation team will decide about the specific methodology required and the distribution of (wo)mandays required for the various parts of the evaluation process.

13. Team Composition

Still to be finalized and team leader to be selected.

14. Reporting and Follow up

The evaluation will begin with a briefing session of the team members and the persons concerned in CNI-SBSS and the zonal offices. The evaluation process will close with a debriefing session in which the findings, conclusions and recommendations presented. Thereafter the draft evaluation report will be shared with CNI-SBSS for comments. These will be taken into consideration and will be annexed. The final report will be shared with CNI-SBSS and the donor consortium latest by November 6, 2003. It should not be longer than 50 pages and contain the following:

- introduction including aims and objectives as well as ToR.
- Analysis of the effectiveness and relevance of the programme management and implementation
- Analysis of the appropriateness of the organizational structure
- Analysis of the effectiveness of the financial management
- Conclusions and recommendations referring to the a.m. specific points and questions
- Executive summary

Annexure 3: Methodological Note on Organisational Self-Analysis Instrument

The instrument was prepared by Mr. Josantony Joseph after field visits in three of the four zones and included visits to the Central Delhi office, one Zonal office, interviews of a few bishops and Board Members, staff at five DBSS offices, and a number of villages where various DBSSs are working. The instrument was also given for comments to the Programme Co-ordinator (Rev. Jena) and two others of the evaluation team before it was finalised.

The instrument consisted of a series of statements (totally 143 in number) which were BASED on the comments made by different persons who were interviewed. These statements covered a number of "themes" and the respondents were expected to mark their agreement or disagreement by a "tick mark (☐)". However, when the instrument was actually administered, the statements on various themes were jumbled up. In the next annexure of this report, however, these statements have been put back under their different "themes" to help the reader in using the results for his/her own analysis. Consequently if a particular statement falls under more than one theme, then that statement would be included under both themes. Thus the appendix includes an instrument with 151 statements, rather than 143, since some statements have come in more than one place (e.g. 115 and 122)

The instrument was administered in 3 zones by different members of the evaluation team. The total number of respondents were 69, and this included

- 33 from the Northern Zone + Delhi HQ (combined),
- 26 from the Central Zone, and
- 10 from the Eastern Zone

Respondents were expected to answer anonymously, but were requested (if they were willing) to indicate

- a) whether he/she was a Bishop/ordained person/layperson, and
- b) the person's post.

Almost nobody responded to the first choice (Bishop/ordained/lay) while 19 out of 69 respondents also did not indicate their post. The remaining 50 respondents included

- a) 10 Board Members
- b) 1 Programme Co-ordinator (Delhi HQ)
- c) 2 Zonal Co-ordinators
- d) 12 DBSS Co-ordinators (including one Project-in-charge)
- e) 7 Programme Associates (Zonal Level)
- f) 8 Programme Organisers (including 2 Community Organisers)
- g) 10 Administrative and Finance staff

The instrument included in the appendix however, includes only the total scores, of all the respondents put together.

Annexure 4: Organisation Self-Diagnosis Instrument with Scores
(prepared by Josantony Joseph)

Please see Excell file attached

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