

For Kolkata DBSS the planning orientation was done with the DBSS staff and few community people in Pally Unayan Samiti on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of April 2008.

### **Background of DBSS**

- DBSS is working in 3 operational area – Thakdhari /Keastopur with 10 villages and 2 community enablers. Takurpukur with 15 villages and 2 community enabler and Chuchura with 5 villages and one community enabler.
- DBSS is working on the issue of livelihood and food security
- DBSS has very strong SHG groups, which are federated
- DBSS has develop a PO called the Samaj Kalyan Samiti

### **My Preliminary Observation of the participants**

The involvement of the community was mainly from two operational Area of DBSS ie Kestopur/Thakdhari at one side with 10 villages and Takurpukur on the other with 15 villages. The other operation area which is Chuchura ( Hugli district) consisting of 5 villages there was no representation from the community

In Kestopur area where both the community enablers are female it was found that out of 3 participants from the community two were female and one male

In Thakdhari where both the enablers were male the representatives were also male but out of the 4 representatives 3 were youth and one was above the age group of 50 year

### **How the process started**

Why have they come to this meeting? Was the first question asked to the participant? Most of them shared that they have come to know about DBSS work, only of them could say that they have come for the planning process

The definition of planning was the next question asked to them, some said for them planning is to set agenda, to prepare a yojna, to move towards future , to dream about the future. While dotting down all these points the participants were asked as what is required for a planning. The participants shared that they require to know the following

- Their position-as where they are in terms of the issues, and theme
- The perspective in relation to vision and mission
- They should also find out the limitations of the last plan and the gaps

These preliminary questions set the tone of the orientation. To take the process further a group task was given to the participants. They were asked to write down the activities and the major impact they had in the last two and a half years in terms of the followings

- issues they have address
- The Peoples Organization
- Gender
- CME

The participants were divided into 3 groups - 2 groups' area wise and one group staff wise

Once the group work was completed the 3 group presented their findings

Observations from group work

- The community members presentations were mostly focus on the SHGs and the activities and achievements surrounding the SHGs
- The community members could articulate the training that they have received from DBSS, but was not able to say how they have utilized the training
- There was a reference about the gram unnayan samiti the DBSS peoples organization
- The 2 groups from the community could also say some of the problems that could be addressed like PDS, water problem alcoholism.
- The staff could say about the activities they had under the issues they could list the name and the number of trainings that was conducted and how many were given training. But once again the impact of the training was not there
- From the staff 's presentation also the tackling the issue was not found. It felt like DBSS was helping the community to solve some problems. The overall understanding to reduce the impact of the issue was not felt.

The perspective on Issues

First of all I asked them about the issue they are focusing on. Not surprisingly they said its livelihood and food security. To which I asked about the focus area that they have under livelihood and food security. It was difficult for them to articulate about the focus area most of the them talked about schemes like PDS, MDM, IAY but was not able to pick up the collective issue of the area. To facilitate the discussion further I asked a very pertinent question

Please mention about one or two problems of the area in connection with food security and livelihood, which you are involved which is affecting all the 16,000

communities that you are involved with. They could at one share about 3 major problem

- Water pollution
- Unemployment- migration ( seasonal)
- Lack of implementation of the govt facilities and schemes to the poor
- Political and party pressure

After they were able to express the problem, it was asked to them if they are been able to do sufficient interventions programmatically to tackle these problems. Have they been able to convert the problem to an issue and issue to a movement?

The perspective behind the issue was shared to them, which emphasised that while addressing the issue **“the community would have access and control over the livelihood resources”**, but most of their activities are limited to trainings and awareness. At the impact level one could not capture whether in true sense there has been any success in even accessing leave alone control.

We tried to collective define **access** in terms of skills ( dakshata ) and ability (Sakhamata) and **control** more in terms of having decision making power over it or ability to assert rights.

There was a relaization that training has to be used to develop and enhance skill and there is a requirement of converting a problem to an issue and scaling it up

#### Synthesis on issue

In order to set the future agenda on issue and capture the ideas of the participants a group work was given to them. The participants from the reference area was divided into two groups and they were asked to give a 5 point agenda that they want to implement for the next 3 years planning on the issue. The same task was given to the staff but they were asked to do it individually.

#### *Following are the agenda for the next 3 years plan on issue*

- Issue has to be village and area centric and it should be affecting the common people, based on livelihood and food security. It has to be owed by all and it has to be gender balanced.
- Mass base has to be created on the basis of issue
- Issue has to be rights centric
- Problem need to be converted to an issue
- Issue based leadership needs to be developed
- Networking is required for the issue
- Database on issue
- Legal aid information on issue
- Training and awareness needs to be converted to skills which will help in access and control

*Interestingly after they developed the agenda the group was given a task to develop a story out of all the points that came out of the agenda. The story should have an introduction, a body and content and a conclusion. The purpose of giving this task was to develop a process on the issue as well as a rationale .*

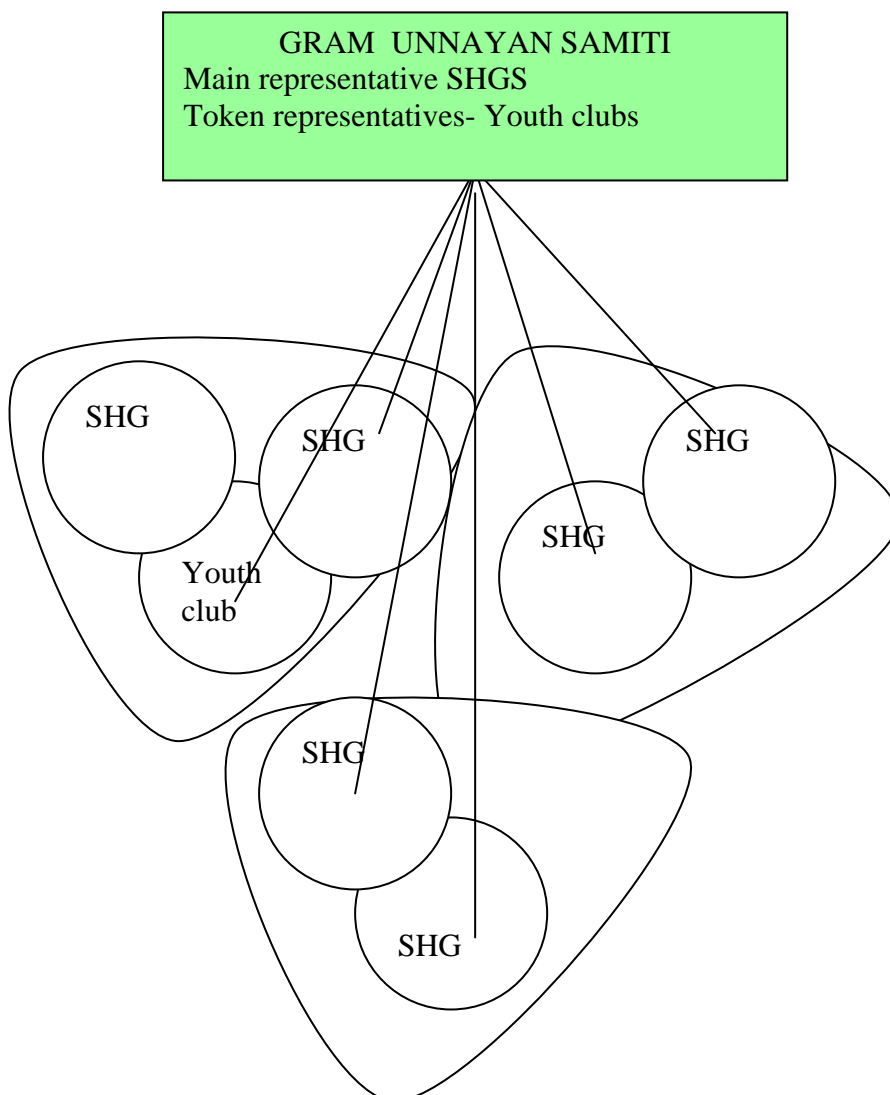
The task was very successful and the compilation came up very well

The process for Peoples Organization

Preliminary inference on Peoples Organization

- Presently has 2 sub unit of PO one in Thakurpukur area and the other in kestopur area comprising of 15 and 10 villages respectively.

The structure of PO as graphically represented by the staff



- Representation – SHGs – 90% female, youth 8% and rest are the traditional leaders of the villages like teachers , ex service man, panchayat members, social worker ect.
- Criterion of selection –not clearly defined mostly through selection
- Membership fees- not taken and membership is exclusive limited mostly with women
- There is a mass base of about 400 in one unit and 250 in the other unit. Each PO has a governing body which consist of 21 members

#### How to strengthen PO

It was asked to the participants that if the issue was livelihood and food security and under it there are problems of implementation of schemes, failure in delivery mechanism of government, political pressure and unemployment, how strong is the peoples organization to tackle the issues.

#### Sharing of the definition of PO

The definition of PO stated that PO should be issue based, having an ideology, with inclusive membership, collective leadership and beyond geographical boundaries. So the DBSS was asked whether the PO that they have stated fulfil this definition in terms of membership, selection criterion, representation and functions.

Once again the participants from the reference area were divided into two groups and they were asked to give a 5 point agenda that they want to implement for the next 3 years planning on the Peoples Organization. The same task was given to the staff but they were asked to do it individually.

#### ***Following are the agenda on PO***

- Inclusive in terms of representation special attention would be taken in terms of gender balance, religion and caste wise balance
- Collective leadership
- Membership has to be issue base
- Increase membership
- Have membership fees
- Identify leaders
- Develop constitution / rules and regulation
- Linkages laterally and vertically
- Network
- Have ample data and information on the issues
- Will have the skills to advocate

***The group was asked to write a story based on the agenda which will help then to synchronize / prioritize the process and also build a rationale***

The process on CME

Firstly I tried to understand the type of work that has taken place under CME. The main activities were mostly on selection of 6 pastorate out of which presently functional connection is only with 4 pastorate .

- Some aware has taken place on human trafficking in one pastorate
- Church leaders have been identified and
- Some capacity building has been given on food security /SS Scheme and Leadership
- Slum areas have been identified

The perspective of CME was shared to the participants

The CME model talks about congregation in solidarity with the poor where the congregation will identify the problem with the poor and solve it with them

It was shared that the CME has three process of selection and each process has a model

Process of selection	Model	Perspective
Congregation which are selected within the reference area	Congregations as CHANGE AGENT	The congregation are a part and parcel of the community and they work as a salt and leaven
Congregation who are near the reference area but not involved with the DBSS work	Building Neighbourhood community	Congregation who will come forward and take initiative to build the neighbourhood
Congregation outside the reference area	Congregation in solidarity with the poor	Congregation who will work as advocated or champions to advocated the issues of the reference areas

The process of Identifying -----Equipping -----Supporting was shared with them

- First the DBSS were asked to re-look at the identified congregation mostly the process of selection. With the identified congregation they must identify

potential and receptive leaders and then the issues as per the process of selection.

- Once the receptive leaders are identified their skills and capacity needs to be developed for that the second step of equipping is required
- Lastly the leaders and the congregation need to develop some supporting programmes to strengthen the models.

The participants were divided into 3 groups, one worked on congregation as change agent, the other as building neighbourhood communities and the third as congregation in solidarity with the poor

While setting up the agenda for planning following information came from the participants

### ***Congregations as Change agents***

- Conceptual clarity and perspective development related to role of the church in mission engagement
- Choosing receptive leaders
- Skill development of the leaders
- Identifying the problems
- Data collection
- Networking and linkages between the congregations

### ***Building Neighbourhood Communities***

- Conceptual clarity and perspective development for the congregations
- Knowing the neighbourhood community
- Networking
- Issue identification and analysis
- Data collection of the community and analysis
- Inter church networking

### ***Solidarity with Poor***

- Identification of receptive leaders
- Understanding and analysing the issues of the reference area
- Perspective development
- Skill and Knowledge development
- Advocacy and networking

***Once again the group was asked to write a story based on the agenda which will help them to synchronize / prioritize the process and also build a rationale***

## The process for Gender

### The background

Gender programmes for DBSS Kolkata are mostly related to SHG programmes, either SHG meeting or developing SHGs into federation. One activity has been undertaken to strengthen the PRI initiatives for women and there has been some gender sensitive awareness programme but mostly of women

For DBSS Kolkata gender is predominately a women's issue and not a issue involving both men and women and the power relation between them.

To make the DBSS reflect and ponder on it the evaluation comment on gender was shared where it was clearly stated by the evaluator that for SBSS gender has mostly been related to women issue and not a human issue. Lot of efforts needs to be put to make gender both men and women's issue

### The perspective of gender

It was shared that for SBSS the perspective of gender is mainstreaming gender concerns at all level and for it the interventions are the following

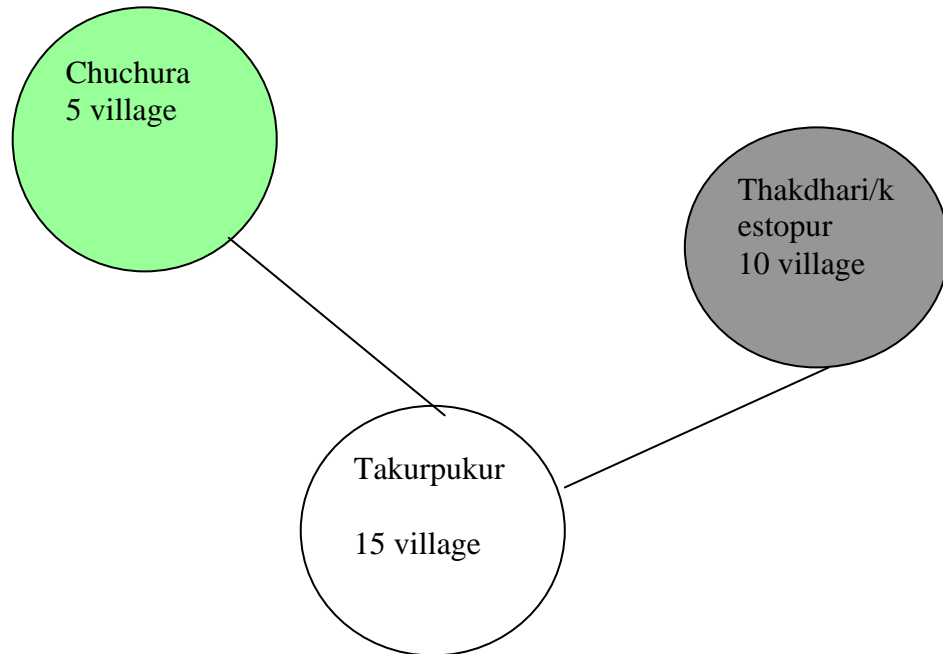
- Including gender in PME  
Capacity building of the community on gender sensitivity and gender balance
- Facilitating not only economic empowerment but also political empowerment through women's group who can be a part of federation /PO
- Incorporating gender in issue- livelihood and gender, land and gender, dalit exclusion and gender, tribal identity and gender. Therefore advocating gender concerns
- Promoting women's leadership in overall mission of church

The participants were asked to reflect on this perspective and the process of gender and then give reflection on their present position related to gender. Almost all of them agreed that they have not been able to focus on gender mainstreaming and were mostly focused on SHGs and women. which this realization they set the agenda on gender for the next 3 years

### *Agenda for gender*

- Gender sensitivity should start from the preliminary level- family-community-organization
- Mainstreaming of gender at staff and organizational level
- In decision making process both male and female needs to be taken into consideration
- Gender must be linked with issues ( livelihood and Land)
- Economic development programmes should be strengthen from individual initiatives to collective/ corporate initiatives
- GENDER component should in included in PME
- Gender and PO

Highlighting the area converge



DBSS has 3 areas in 3 districts

- Chuchura- Hugli district
- Takurpukur in 24pgs S
- Kestopur / Thakdhari consist both villages from 24 Pgs N and S

- There is a confusion whether the DBSS is working in revenue village or ward or Para made as villages as per their convenience. For example one revenue village like narayantala has been converted into 3 village like narayantala one , two and three
- The distance between each area would be about 40 km

The problem of having a very scattered area coverage was reflected to them by using a graphical presentation . there was a realization but it was stated that it's a policy matter and needs to be discussed with the DBSS board

Closing stage

At the end the DBSS was suggested to take this process further to the community. The facilitation should consist of cross mixed team . the facilitation needs to be done with the community people including both men and women. It was suggested to them to give the tentative dated so that some one form SBSS if available can join them in the process

Only after community meeting the plan would be taken up in DBSS for compiling. The compilation should be completed within 2<sup>nd</sup> week of May and by 10<sup>th</sup> it should

reach SBSS. The process ended with an evaluation where each participant was asked about their learning's and about the process

#### The Facilitation

Tried to take the role of mirroring and synthesising

Tried to use the following tools

- Graphic presentations
- Story writing
- Group work and group presentation
- Question answer
- Evaluation

Tried to use a participatory approach and less directive and gave input only by posing questions to them