

# Towards A Learning Movement

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## ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROCESS AN APPRAISAL



SYNODICAL BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES  
CHURCH OF NORTH INDIA



“*Spirit of the Lord is on me  
He has anointed me  
To tell the good news to poor people  
He has sent me to announce freedom for prisoners  
He has sent me so that the blind will see again  
He wants me to free those who are beaten down  
And he has sent me to announce the year  
When he will set his people free.*”

- LUKE 4: 18

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*Learning Appraisal was facilitated by Dr. Uma Ramaswamy*

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## List of Abbreviations

CNI	Church of North India
CASA	Churches Auxiliary for Social Action
CFC	Collective Forms of Cooperation
CME	Church Mission Engagement
CNI-RCSA	Church of North India-Resource Center for Social Action
DM:	Disaster Mitigation
DBSS	Diocesan Board of Social Services
DPV	Dalit Vikas Parishad
FCFC	Forum of Collective Form of Cooperation
GB	Governing Body
GF	Group Facilitator
ICCO	Inter Church Organization for Development Cooperation
KoG	Kingdom of God
MASS	Maanav Adhikar Sangharsh Samiti
LAN	Lobbying Advocacy and Networking
FMSF	Financial Management Service Foundation
CRM	Cost Reimbursement Model
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
PM	People's Movement
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PR	Programme Resource
PF	Programme Facilitation
PS	Programme Support
PRT	Programme Resource Team
PESA	Panchayat in Extended Scheduled Area
PME	Planning Monitoring Evaluation
PRI	Panchayat Raj Institutions
SBSS	Synodical Board of Social Services
SEDP	Socio Economic Development Programme Extension under Scheduled Area
SHG	Self-Help Group
PO	Peoples' Organization
UNDP	United Nation Development Programme

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## Acknowledgement

We extend our thanks to Bishop PSP. Raju, Chairperson, SBSS for giving his time, despite his busy schedules. Bishop Malakar went out of his way to be with us during our interactions with DBSS staff and we thank him.

We place our deep appreciation to Dr. Shailendra Awale for initiating the 'Learning Appraisal'. He was keen that the 'Learning Appraisal' should go beyond mere stock taking and address futuristic aspects of SBSS.

We would like to thank the Coordinators of DBSSs – Dilip Singh (Kolkata), Ajay Sardar (Barrackpore), Ajay Singh (Patna) and Rev. Kasab (Marathwada) for giving us their time to discuss the ongoing trends and issues. We extend our thanks for their cooperation and hospitality. We also thank all the field staff of DBSSs for their time and inputs.

We thank the staff of SBSS in the two CNI-RCSAs – Kolkata and Pune for sharing their views and hospitality. Above all, we place our warm thanks to the community members who participated in our dialogue with much interest and hope.

The team of 'Learning Appraisal' comprised of Daniel B. Das, Coordinator of SEDP, Amritsar, Subro Prakash Tudu, Coordinator of Eastern Himalayas, Amita Khalko, Coordinator of Programme Resource, Asha Nanda Tandy, Coordinator of Programme Facilitation, Moni Byapari, Group Facilitator of PME and Uma Ramaswamy, the external facilitator. Lolati Toppo (GF) and Deepak Singh (GF) shared their experience, which has added value to the document. John S Kumar's note on Development Communications gave us relevant inputs on what the desk should be doing. As we went through the 'Learning Appraisal', we cohered as a team and there was much cross learning. The 'Learning Appraisal' was completed at one go and therefore was intense as we travelled from Barrackpore, Kolkata and Patna in eastern India to Marathwada and Pune in western India. We do hope that the suggestions and recommendations of the 'Learning Appraisal' are taken forward for sustaining the mission of Christ.

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## Foreword

### Towards a learning movement...

Learning is a continuous process and key value for any organization that would like to impact its environment. Failures of sustaining of such values may obliterate relevance of an organization distancing itself from the communities.

Following the recommendations of an external evaluation held in 2003-04, SBSS-DBSS partners challenged them to implement the recommendations and transform the organization, undergo organizational change and renewal process. It resulted in transforming CNI SBSS enhancing its core values and strengthening its character as an accountable, perspective based, vision driven and impact oriented learning organization. Backed by political theology, its perspective embeds a rights-based approach. This calls for “movement-building” as a core strategy towards ensuring transformative justice.

To progress towards this goal, CNI SBSS had to ensure that its spirit of accompaniment in its actions is ably supported with a clarity in its conceptual understanding. At the same time it could not afford to be remain static, SBSS as an organization has to grow as ‘a learning movement working towards building movement’.

While ‘concluding’ the organizational change process, a learning appraisal was undertaken involving DBSS partners to assess the change, its relevance and character. The process was accompanied by external facilitator and SBSS staff. The purpose was to introduce changes in organizational life and to build a culture of learning and growing. I am very grateful to the Rt Rev PSP Raju, Chairman and members of the Board for support and guidance. We thank resource sharing agencies, EED, BfW, CA and ICCO for not only triggering but supporting us throughout the organizational change and development process. DBSS partners were very kind and supportive and we gratefully acknowledge their role. I am very proud of SBSS team; you were always willing to learn and unlearn! I am sure the learning would benefit not only to the Church and faith based organizations, but also for all those actors involved in social transformation ensuring peace and justice in community. I am sure the process continues hereafter..

*Those who trust in the Lord will receive new strength. They will fly high as eagles. They will run and not get tired. They will walk and not grow weak.*

Isaiah 40:31

**Dr Shailendra Awale**  
*Chief Coordinator and Secretary*

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# Executive summary

## Learning Appraisal

Following the recommendations of an external evaluation held in 2003-2004, SBSS-DBSSs partnership has challenged itself to undergo an organizational change and renewal process. This 'Learning Appraisal' attempts to journey through the changes that have been initiated in organizational structures, systems and their interplay with rights perspectives during the 16-month preparatory phase.

## New ways of seeing and thinking

The 16-month preparatory phase was replete with dialogues, activities and major consultations, which made the staff of SBSS and DBSS, explore possibilities for change. Staffs who were in the forefront – creating action captured opportunities to be on the learning path. The Chief Coordinator, himself new to the environs of SBSS-DBSS, made special efforts to bring collegiality among the staff, provoking them to think differently, closely interacting, and accompanying them in all the organizational restructuring processes. This style of functioning vitalized pockets of SBSS-DBSS to new ways of seeing and thinking.

The ten-year perspective plan, backed by political theology embeds a rights-based framework that gives strategic thrust to rights to livelihood, land, tribal identity and social exclusion with the crosscutting themes of gender, Church mission engagement (CME) and lobbying advocacy and networking (LAN). SBSS has made concerted efforts to transform itself from an image of funding agency/post office to being a resource-sharing partner. 'Working with partners is the core strategy of SBSS in which, the emphasis will be given to partnership cooperation, partnership development and partnership enhancement.'<sup>1</sup>All this implied a paradigm shift from generalized intervention to issue-specific thematic interventions.

## Governance

Two enabling events for good governance occurred at the conclusion of the preparatory phase and beginning of the new Strategic Action Plan (October 2005 to September 2008). In December 2005, a new Governing Board was constituted. The

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1. See, The Perspective document of CNI-SBSS Resistance and Hope, (2005), Perspective and Programme Plan: 2005-2015.

present Treasurer is a woman, which has set a model. The chairperson of SBSS, Bishop S.P. Raju has a background in development, which adds value to the governance of SBSS. There is also a good representation of educationists on the Board of SBSS. More importantly, the constitution of CNI-SBSS was amended which made the Chief Coordinator to be Secretary of the Board with requisite powers. Again, the Chief Coordinator of SBSS (as ex-officio Secretary) now on the Boards of other Ministries of CNI gives him scope to take SBSS's perspectives to the work of these Ministries. In turn, the SBSS Board has representation from other CNI Ministries. With right leadership, these changes could pave the way for creating synergy between the various Ministries for larger level initiatives.

To strengthen mutuality of partnership and promote transparency, SBSS has promoted a few good practices. These include sharing minutes of the Executive Committee meetings; correspondence between donors and SBSS with RCSA; creating spaces for the core staff of SBSS to interface with the Governing Body during Board meetings and Consortium Partners; giving opportunities to DBSS' Coordinators to take initiatives in the preparation of critical documents such as MoU, Audit Agreement etc.

## Organizational Restructuring

The organizational restructuring of SBSS underpins principles of thematic/specialist, non-hierarchical ways of functioning towards resource sharing partnership with DBSS. During the interim phase, the entire organizational restructuring of SBSS also went through several experimental processes. The present organizational structure of SBSS embodies three major streams of functionality – Programme Resource, Programme Facilitation and Programme Support.

To promote team-based functioning, the staffs are now given multiple roles that crosscut Programme Resource and Programme Facilitation. The multiple roles and multi-tasking has to an extent leveled hierarchies and given scope for team-building processes while this has brought certain competencies, it has also blurred functional boundaries.

SBSS has also shifted from its earlier grant approach to cost-reimbursement model, which allows for optimal use of funds and has found wide acceptance.

The DBSSs have been restructured too. The staff of DBSS underwent an appraisal by the DBSS Board and the SBSS team facilitated the process, external facilitators also participated in a few DBSS. This resulted in demotion of some staff, transfer of a few staff and retrenchment of staff strength. The earlier structure of generalized functions of the DBSS staff is now remodeled to give programmatic/strategic focus to Gender, LAN and CME. This functional focus has given enthusiasm to the staff. However, internalization of perspectives and new roles would have to deepen with programmatic interventions.

The earlier four Zonal Offices are has taken a new role and identity into CNIResource Centre For Social Action with strategic focus on 'Livelihood and

Food Security' (Agra), 'Land Rights and Dalit Studies' (Pune), 'Action Research on Livelihood and Food Security' (Kolkata) and 'Indigenous Rights and Tribal Concerns' (Ranchi). The purpose of these CNI-RCSAs is to emerge as resource centres/hubs for the various DBSSs and eventually for the universe of Church of North India. The CNI-RCSAs are very new but potent with opportunities to bring synergies between various stakeholders and emerge as vibrant hubs.

There is much dialogue within the portals of CNI-SBSS on the need to strengthen their dialogue with their funding partners. There is also a growing thinking that funding partners too should come forward to familiarize themselves with the ongoing trends in their reference areas and the challenges that SBSS-DBSSs encounter with their stakeholders.



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## Context and Approach

Having completed the 16-month preparatory phase, SBSS is currently engaged in a three-year 'Strategic Action Plan – Let Justice Roll', that embeds a rights-based development approach. SBSS has planned a 'Learning Appraisal' (LA) to take stock of the changes that have been initiated in organisational structures and systems and their interplay with rights perspectives. (See, Annexure1) The Learning Appraisal has been facilitated by an external professional along with a few core staff of SBSS and two DBSS Coordinators from Eastern Himalayas and SEDP, Amritsar. The LA adopted the following participatory methods.

### Initial Preparation

An initial meeting in October, 2005 was held where the idea of 'Learning Appraisal' was conceived. Dr. Shailendra Awale, Chief Coordinator of SBSS, Amita Khalko, Manjari and Moni Byapari were present in this meeting. Based on the discussions, Amita Khalko, Coordinator, Resource Team developed a concept note on 'Learning Appraisal', which was circulated to the staff of SBSS. Subsequently, another meeting was held in November, 2005 to develop the objectives of the 'Learning Appraisal'. The Chief Coordinator, Dr. Shailendra Awale, Dr. Uma Ramaswamy (External facilitator), Amita Khalko, Programme Resource Coordinator, Asha Nanda Tandy, Coordinator, Programme Facilitation, Rev. James P. DBSS Coordinator, Chotanagpur, Manjari, Associate Coordinator participated in this meeting.

In December 2005, the 'Learning Appraisal' team met the Coordinators of select DBSSs whose operational areas were being visited to share the objectives of the 'Learning Appraisal.' At the start of 'Learning Appraisal' on 8 January, 2006, a second round of discussion among the participating team was held in Kolkata, facilitated by the Chief Coordinator,

### Focussed Group and Individual Discussions

The team engaged in interaction with the Chairperson of SBSS, Bishop PSP. Raju. The discussion with him was insightful as he shared some of his experiences in development work in the state of Andhra Pradesh and his vision to take SBSS forward.

Bishop B. Malakar of Barrackpore spent nearly half a day with team. He is not only closely involved with DBSS's work but has taken care of several needs of the staff. Such as providing housing within the Diocese for several of the DBSS's staff. The positive energy in this Diocese is quite visible indeed.

Discussions with the staff of DBSSs of Kolkata, Barrackpore, Patna and

Marathwada enriched the process. It brought focus not only on the positive shifts that are underway but also the issues that need to be addressed to strengthen the change processes.

The team visited CNI-Resource Centres for Social Action (CNI-RCSAS) in Kolkata and Pune for dialogue. We also held discussions with a few staff of the CNI-RCSAs from Ranchi. The CNI-RCSAs are still very new and therefore, our interactions focussed on their future directions. Indeed these centres have much potential to emerge as creative resource hubs.(See Annexure 9)

## Literature Review and Collation of Data

For analysis, the team collected relevant data on issue-based work, SHGs, profile of training undertaken, data on DBSS restructuring and other relevant information. Besides, the team perused relevant reports that were prepared during the preparatory phase (See Annexure 8)

## Field Visits

Visit to Altabaria, in Barrackpore Diocese and interactions with a group of vibrant women members of SHGs. Our interactions with these women were made more colourful by a skit that they presented on stereotypical relationship between a newly married couple and their parents.

Visit to Krishna Rampur in Barrackpore (24 Paraganas South) to interact with the youth and SHG groups. This group also presented an excellent skit on alcoholism, a major issue in the area.

Visit to Sagarbhanga in Taljhari, Diocese of Patna, where we were welcomed with customary tribal tradition of washing visitors' feet, which was embarrassing for us. We interacted with SHG group, the village Pradhan and a few youth leaders.

Visit to a village in the Sahebgunj district, Diocese of Patna where we were welcomed by a large gathering of tribals with traditional dance and washing the feet of visitors. The villagers were celebrating the annual harvesting season with much festivity and celebration. We interacted with SHG members and village elders, especially on the issue of Gram Sabhas under PESA. They bemoaned that despite many petitions, no government official has visited them. Most of them were unaware of the many schemes that they could access from the Supreme Court ruling.

Visited villages Keligaon, Ujjainpuri, Nilajgaon. We also went to see Gairan lands and held focused group discussions with members of SHGs and Gairan families. The discussions with JK Gaikwad, an active member of MASS was informative on the struggles that Gairan families are going to retain the lands they are cultivating.

## Case Studies

We captured our field experiences through three case studies (See Annexure 1).

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## Recommendations

### Taking Forward the Organisational Development Processes

The following are the salient recommendations that have stemmed from the 'Learning Appraisal'. The LA has also made several other suggestions in the report, which are not included here.

#### Rights Based Development

The SBSS staff went through a major exercise to articulate a ten-year perspective plan, which gives strategic emphasis to issues of livelihood and food security, land rights, identity and social exclusion. These themes stem out of SBSS-DBSSs' initiatives and learning in the four regions of northern India. The focal groups of SBSS are dalits, adivasis, women, children and congregations. Three crosscutting themes of Gender, Church-Mission Engagement and Public Advocacy (networking, lobbying for implementation and policy change) run through programme initiatives. While these rights-based perspectives have been developed and gone through several efforts at internalization, programmatic initiatives should translate and deepen these perspectives at all partners' levels, especially at the community level. Several strategies could be adopted.

#### Strengthening Collaborative Ways of Working

Organisational restructuring has resulted in leveling of hierarchies to an extent and promotion of teamwork within SBSS. However, the leadership and the core staff of SBSS should take forward the organisational development processes to strengthen collaborative ways of working within SBSS and more importantly with their partners.

To promote the model of resource sharing partnership and Collective Forms of Cooperation (CFC), SBSS should adopt the principle of accompaniment for programme/ partnership governance. Therefore, the existing monitoring visits of Programme Associates should eventually give place to accompanying visits, preferably for two to three times in a year. This accompaniment should be for a period of 4-5 days with well-defined agenda. Essentially, accompaniment should be demand driven and provide spaces for mutual learning. With this, each Programme Associate (AP) should be given charge of four to five DBSSs wherever needed the staff of Programme Resource Team (PRT) could accompany them. The existing programme monitoring should be done through the formats and guiding

frameworks. However, the Team Leaders, GFs, Coordinators of Programme Resource and Programme Facilitation should be engaged in gene strategies in developing resource.

Against the backdrop of resource sharing partnership and collective forms of cooperation, the theme of PME should progress towards promoting a culture of accompaniment. While a few beginnings are underway in this regard, several strategic steps have to be evolved to deepen this process. It is advisable that both the Coordinators of Programme Resource Team and Programme Facilitation Team be given a three-year term (project cycle) with yearly appraisals to take the various initiatives towards tangible outcomes.

The PRT should be responsible to capture the praxis at the grassroots and develop context specific strategies at micro and macro level. Towards this, they should visit the fields to understand the ongoing process at least two times through a planned process. Wherever possible, they should get associated with innovative/action research projects of the CNI-RCSAs.

Currently, most of the GF have given thematic focus to the regions where they are located. To extend their expert support to all the regions, organisational and programmatic strategies have to be developed. Again organizational support from the four regional centres for certain functional areas such as PME and LAN would have to be strengthened for programme effectiveness. The Disaster Management (DM) unit would have to promote context specific group support too.

The role of Team Leaders (TL) calls for clarification. As CNI-RCSAs grow, the TL would have larger roles of strengthening the coordination and facilitation. To take forward the thematic interventions in the four CNI-RCSAs, the Team Leaders and the staff of Resource and Facilitation streams would have to work in tandem for impactful interventions. Wherever possible, the Team Leaders should not take on administrative roles.<sup>2</sup>

The existing working groups are in different states of functionality. The three working groups of Livelihood, Land Rights and Dalit Studies and Tribal Identity may be discontinued. In their place, the CNI-RCSAs should now develop context specific working groups.

Cross-functional working groups on LAN, Gender and CME should continue to function. The Development Communication desk should enhance its role to create consolidated database on the three themes of Livelihoods, Land Rights, Dalit Studies and Tribal Identity, analyse trends to support the Programme Resource Team.

## Strengthening CNI-RCSAs

The CNI-RCSAs have much potential to emerge as dialoguing, information, networking, and knowledge building centers/hubs. Each of the CNI-RCSAs should

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2. This would imply redefining the role of Team Leader. Where the TL is doubling the role of Programme Associates due to lack of staff, innovative strategies have to be developed.

identify relevant theme/s for an independent action research project. These projects could/should be done in coordination of select DBSSs. Funds could be raised from SBSS, Dioceses, para-statal organizations or external donors. Through this process, a lot of linking and synergy would take place between the various stakeholders.

While there have been efforts to update database, consolidation of database, trends have to be an ongoing exercise to bring dynamic/changing situation into focus. The four RCSA's have to evolve criteria/ guiding frameworks to assess DBSSs, POs and issue-based initiatives. Without this, the totality of interventions and their impact is bound to be lost-which is so essential for forward strategies.

While Action Research is suitable term for CNI-RCSA in Kolkata, the theme of livelihood and food security is not appropriate and may be replaced by 'Action Research – Rights-Based Development.' This needs a debate within SBSS.

### Partnering with DBSSs

SBSS has a significant role to enhance the competencies of its implementing partners – the DBSSs. While DBSSs are organically linked to the dioceses, they too need to vitalise their leadership styles, structures and systems. The constitutions, bylaws of the DBSSs and MoU should govern the DBSSs.

In the last two years, a few DBSSs have endeavoured to register themselves. For meaningful partnership, SBSS-DBSS should make concerted efforts to have all the DBSSs registered and promote responsible autonomy in DBSS's functioning. (See Annexure 5) To promote good governance, DBSS should be appraised once in two years and if need be, by external professionals. DBSSs, in turn should go through learning appraisal (internal) once a year.

There is a need and potential to facilitate inter-DBSSs networking. To begin with, this could start in each of the regional centers. Such networking would result in much exposure and dialogue through a planned process.

There are a few crosscutting themes, which can be the common agenda of all the Dioceses. For example, the right to information and PRI could bring areas for rallying between the DBSSs.

### Internal Dialogue on People's Organisations and Movement

For the SBSS-DBSS, a critical question that repeatedly surfaced in the past and continues to surface is whether the church structure and leadership have perspectives and commitment to nurture and hold movements and people's organizations? Different models of people's organizations and movements emerge up in the wake of rights-based initiatives. In their success, the issue-based work has also given visibility and recognition to congregational leadership. Where a few DBSSs have facilitated vibrant movement, strong leadership has emerged within its staff. Having received a mandate from Synod to nurture POs and PMs whereby we could explicitly move with the struggles of the people. CNI-SBSS is happy to have

the guiding words of the Moderator of CNI which is “a collective participation towards a realization of full human potential, the Kingdom of God (KoG), ipso-facto postulates a stand against social discrimination, powerlessness and material disadvantage”. This means to nurture POs PMs the Church and Church leadership will assure commitment and create appropriate mechanism to move with people’s movements and struggles on the identified issues and cross-cutting themes.

## Standing in front of the Mirror: Reflections of Staff

The following section captures the thoughts/reflections of the staff on their journey during the preparatory phase.

“The 16-month interim phase was a period of struggle to see the translation of concepts that we were developing. The simplification of concepts was also my struggle. Now I am able to see the process of how?”

“All of us were at different levels of understanding. To develop a common understanding is a big challenge. We must continue the process of dialogue and for this we have to sit with the DBSSs to cross-learn and disseminate ideas.”

“We have experienced dictatorial ways of SBSS in the past. Now they know that they have to take the DBSS as co-travellers. They now come as helpers and not dictators.”

“There was much discontent in me. We were engaged in many tribal struggles. Knowingly or unknowingly, we were taking the process – often falling and pulling ourselves up to move on. The mission and vision were not getting transferred. I do hope that now with the vision that is being articulated, we can achieve some results. This is possible if the present leadership sustains.”

“In our area, we were spontaneously working on rights issues. When I came to this region, I neither knew the area nor the language. I legged around and learnt while working. Now I have the passion to do any kind of work.”

“The church thinks that we are separate. Often, we are unable to convince them that we are working for similar cause. Lack of support from DBSSs’ Governing Board is constantly pulling us down.”

“The process has given us a direction and hope. I feel encouraged. I would like to see that SBSS gets a prominent national identity. I would like to be part of the process.”

“During the last 16 months there was lot of *manthan* (churning). We felt a little bit liberated. Earlier, we were constrained by limited frameworks, which were driven by budgets, and we now feel that we can go outside of these frameworks.”

“We feel a difference. Earlier, we never internalized the project objectives and goals. Now, I feel we are better focussed. For example, when we working on the issue of mortgaged lands, we never realized we were ensuring the rights of people to lands. Between SBSS and DBSS, we have begun to talk on equal terms and signs of partnership are surfacing.”

“We were challenged, especially by the multiple roles, which forced us to invest

and learn. There was a lot of creativity. For some, the journey was too fast and some managed to cope. We were given opportunities and our motivation levels have grown.”

“Certain linking between DBSSs has taken place. In a few DBSSs, the resources of other DBSS were used.”

“Our Chief Coordinator delegated responsibilities and was accessible to the staff. He never said ‘no’ to me. I might have made mistakes, but I was never questioned nor discouraged. His leadership was suggestive, often innovative and altogether facilitative. For the new structures and systems that we were positioning, this way of functioning was needed.”

“The change that has happened is appropriate. DBSS should be registered, get other resources and not be dependent on one source. The sacking of the five staff in our DBSS is unfortunate but had to happen.”

“The preparatory phase been a great challenge in building a team. By the end of the phase, we could carry out many tasks given to us. But positing of a few staff in some positions is not quite appropriate and is demotivating to a few of us.”

“I have been part of several rights struggles. Wherever I have been transferred which was quite often, I have taken my passion to continue issue-based work forward. I see hope even in small struggles.”

“We made a daring move. SBSS has moved into a different level. Some of the staff is experimenting with change and some are still studying the documents we have produced. But our implementers (DBSSs) are slow to move. We have to continue to question. Some of us need bargaining space within the structure which often takes on upper hand.”

“We could not complete the programme plan because of time and fund constraints, I am dissatisfied with me. However, the capacities of the staff have improved.”

“I am very excited. I never thought that we would do all this. If we put all the pieces together, I see that we have gone beyond our expectations and hope. There is still a lot of work with DBSSs. Systems and processes have to be fine tuned further to ensure a sustained change. If the committed staff is sufficiently challenged, they can take the process forward. The change process has come to a meaningful conclusion.”

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## CNI-SBSS: The Background

SBSS began its journey as one of the Ministries of Church of North India and worked through different institutions of CNI. It was in 1978, that SBSS was given mandate to work with Diocesan Board of Social Services. During its 25 years of development interventions, SBSS went through various historical consultations, which redefined its vision and mission. In 2003, while SBSS celebrated two and half decades of its Ministry, it also went through a deep reflection on its experiences and challenges. The external evaluation of SBSS in 2003 recommended a preparatory phase to reposition itself to the changing development context and evolve a strategic focus towards rights-based development.

Following the recommendations of the external evaluation, SBSS went through an organizational renewal. On hindsight, one could say that SBSS challenged itself to go through this change process, often not knowing where this initiative would take them. Although the 16-month journey had its hiccups, it was a core group that held a positive outlook, which took the process forward.

### Initiating Change Process in SBSS

A confluence of several factors enabled the change process. First, the outgoing Chief Coordinator, Rev. Probal Dutta was succeeded by Dr. Shailendra Awale with a background in development. While there were thorny areas to be sorted out to make SBSS relevant, the leadership decided to take the initiative forward.

Initially, SBSS had to contend with low levels of staff motivation with a few senior staff leaving the organization. Alongside there was an interim restructuring of a few top-level positions. At the same time, there was considerable pressure on the staff to fulfill the objectives of the preparatory phase, which included developing rights perspectives, and positioning appropriate structures and systems. More importantly, the change process had to address shifting the traditional mindsets in the organisation to new ways of thinking and working. Changing deeply set/calcified mindsets does not happen quickly and is a gradual process.

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# Positioning Rights-Based Perspectives

## Steps towards a New Paradigm

The upper most tasks of SBSS during the interim phase was to revisit its perspectives, get educated on the changing development trends in their operational areas and explore possible shifts in their perspectives and strategies. The first step that SBSS took was to classify the various issues/themes that were being addressed in all the Dioceses, cluster them and bring them under a strategic framework which now includes – rights to *livelihood and food security, rights to land, identity and social exclusion with the cross-cutting themes of Gender, CME and LAN* (See Annexure 3). A theological perspective also backs the ten-year Perspective Plan document.<sup>3</sup> Alongside, the reference groups are now defined as Dalits, Tribals, women, children and congregations. Another salient thinking within SBSS was to shift their image of being a funding agency/post office to a resource-sharing partner. SBSS had also to reconsider its earlier tradition of giving extensive general training at all levels – SBSS, DBSS and communities, which was both expensive and often not result-oriented. All this implied a paradigm shift from generalized intervention to issue-specific thematic interventions. The preparatory phase went through several processes to first of position the redefined approach and to internalize the new paradigm.

In September 2004, SBSS organised Manthan<sup>4</sup> – an annual conclave of all the stakeholders to discuss the evolving perspective for wider consensus.<sup>5</sup> Notably, the SBSS staff facilitated the entire event. The Manthan had a few unique features. It was designed to deepen the perspective framework through testimonies from the grassroots, inputs from the external experts and participative workshops. It was during Manthan that SBSS also flagged the cost-reimbursement model. This came as major departure from the earlier grant approach.

Six working groups were formed on livelihood, land rights, identity and social exclusion, CME, gender and LAN to deepen the staff perspectives through dialogue with experts and exposure to relevant organizations.

In November 2004, the SBSS Executive<sup>6</sup> took a decision to rename the four zonal offices into Resource Centers (CNI-RCSA).

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3 See, Dr. Soumen Das et.al, 2004-2005, Theological Perspective of Rights Based Approach.

4 The word Manthan in Hindi means churning.

5 The participants included the CNI Synod executives, the Chairpersons of DBSS, SBSS's Board members, other office bearers of CNI Synod, representatives of DBSS Board members, DBSS Coordinators, FMSF and SBSS staff.

6 The Executive Committee comprises of the Chairperson of the GB, the Secretary, Treasurer, Chief Coordinator and invitees from the Board.

In December, 2004, a small team of SBSS staff undertook a pilot visit to two fields in Nagpur and Kolhapur. This provided a basis for preparing a guiding framework to capture the emerging issues, concerns and perspectives in the 24 Dioceses through cross-functional teams of SBSS staff, a few DBSS Coordinators and members of DBSSs' Governing Boards. Subsequently each Diocese prepared field reports, which were later shared in two regional consultations, held in Goa (27-28) February and in Kolkata (8-9th of March). The singular objective of this entire exercise was once again to gain clarity and shared understanding.

Based on the various events and learnings, a decade-long draft perspective was prepared which was presented in the Consortium Partners meet in April, 2005. The draft perspective was translated into eight regional languages and once again sent back to the DBSSs and community institutions. Simultaneously, project proposals were prepared too.

On 23rd June 2005, the Perspective Plan was placed in the CNI-Synod for their endorsement.

## Ongoing Trends

At one level, internalizing such a radically different perspective does not happen overnight. Even so, it is important to keep track of the processes that are enabling or limiting the passage of this perspective.

Currently, three trends are visible. Those who have been closely associated with perspective development process do hold the vision of this approach. But this is a small group – within SBSS and DBSS and has the potential and responsibility to transfer their understanding and insights not only to other staff but to the operational areas.

The positioning of the staff in SBSS and DBSS along the thematic lines has given spaces for the programmatic perspectives to evolve contextually. The Programme Team of SBSS has a responsible role to facilitate the internalization of perspective in the years to come. While their role as accompaniers is self defined with organisational support, this facilitation has to be done with informed perspectives and more importantly reflected in the field.

Several programmatic variants are in operation in the operational areas, which need to be analysed for strategic interventions. The first is continuing processes in generalized interventions with inadequate linkages towards integrated development. The second is issue or struggle based initiatives, some of which have plateaued, but have now to embed development dimensions in their struggles. The third is the development-based interventions without the rights dimensions. For example, several SHGs would come under this category. The question that calls for dialogue is – what strategic combinations are required to drive programmatic interventions? Altogether, the rights-based development perspective of SBSS is not only appropriate and if taken forward with sensitivity could bring far reaching impact.

## Summing Up

The perspective plan gives strategic importance to building issue-based movements and people's organizations through a learning process. However, programmatically, the rights-based approach is strategically routed through the strategic themes mentioned above.<sup>7</sup>

It is pertinent to mention that issue-based initiatives/struggles have been taking place with a different complexion in a few dioceses. Characteristically, these struggles were not a planned process and did not get documented. Again, due to inadequate strategic focus these issue-based initiatives got diluted.

Advocating the rights based text calls for people-centred orientation. Within the SBSS-DBSS context, this implies a great deal of unlearning and addressing issues holistically, evolving innovative ways of working in teams and seeing the linkages between macro trends and micro-processes.



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7. See, Resistance an Hope – SBSS Programme and Perspective Plan

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# Organisational Restructuring

## Putting Together Effective Structures and Systems

In its endeavour at restructuring, SBSS went through a lot of experiment to ensure an appropriate merge with the emerging ten-year perspective of SBSS. It is worthwhile to capture the core processes/steps that SBSS went through.

Initially, the earlier model of Zonal Coordination through Coordinators was replaced with rotative Team Leadership (June 2004). Simultaneously, three Associate Coordinators were appointed to take charge of the three crosscutting themes of Church Mission Engagement, Gender and Lobbying, Advocacy and Networking (May, 2004). This structural arrangement, which continued for 10 months, surfaced learnings on both the capacity of incumbents and positional relevance of Associate Coordinators. Soon, two streams of functionaries were positioned – the Team Leaders whose positions are rotatory and the Associate Coordinators who continued with their charge of crosscutting themes.

Another intervention was the setting up of six working groups (livelihood, land rights, identity, gender, LAN and CME). These working groups have not been fully functional (However, a spin of the working groups is capacities that a few members have gained)?

In March 2005, the staff underwent an appraisal along the lines of appreciative enquiry in April 2005.<sup>8</sup> This was a novel experience for the staff, which allowed for open dialogue on the strengths and limitations of the staff and potential for growth. The results of the appreciative enquiry were placed in the SBSS governing board. A major outcome of all this was further fine-tuning the organizational structure.

Another landmark in restructuring process was the consultation in Pune (August 2005) to review and finalize the structure before the conclusion of the preparatory phase. This consultation was innovative in that the SBSS staffs were asked to finalise the structure and systems in the light of the 16-month experience. This consultation gave spaces to openly give feed back on the change process, leadership styles and the challenges ahead. A small committee was set up to finalise the new structure, which met in Delhi. Once again, the recommendations of this committee placed in the board for endorsement. (See Organogram).

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8 A concept note was prepared by Dr. Shailendra Awale on appreciative enquiry. 'The basic element of the process is to be effective than merely concentrating on the output. It places high priority on human capital and considers this as an important basis for the growth of the team and organisation.' (See the Note on Appreciative Enquiry). Going by the staff accounts, the appraisal began with the appraisal of the Chief Coordinator, which made the process open.

## Positioning Three Functional Streams

The organisational restructuring of SBSS underpins principles of thematic/specialist, non-hierarchical ways of functioning towards resource sharing partnership with DBSSs. The present organizational structure of SBSS embodies three major streams of functionality – Programme Resource, Programme Facilitation and Programme Support. (See Annexure 7). The first stream comprising of the Coordinator of Resource Team, Associate Coordinator and Group Facilitators – Livelihood, Gender, PME, CME, LAN, Tribal Identity, Disaster Mitigation, Development Communications, and Finance Management are the strategic group that builds resources in terms of perspectives, concepts, strategies, prepare programme proposals and above all take forward SBSS's Perspective and Action Plan. While the functional base of this team is SBSS, head quarters, their operational base is within the CNI-Resource Centre for Social Action.

The second stream is the Programme Facilitation team, comprising of the Coordinator of Programme Facilitation, the Team Leaders and Programme Associates. This group is based in the CNI-Resource Centre for Social Action and gives accompaniment services.

The third is the Programme Support Team comprising of Coordinator of Programme Support, Finance and Resource Manager, Finance Associate and the support staff.

The underlying principle of the new organizational of SBSS-DBSS is team-based. Various reporting systems and communication systems have been introduced. Uniform formats for reporting at all levels have been developed. Both programmatic and finance monitoring tools have been developed. New technologies in communication have enhanced communication systems. The SBSS has introduced organizational e-mail at the central, regional and DBSS level. Use of computers has been a useful addition to the work culture of SBSS. The central office in Delhi has been renovated with open spaces to promote collegiality.

During the preparatory phase, SBSS has also created ten desks/departments – Finance, Livelihood, Land Rights and Dalit Studies, Tribal Identity, Disaster Mitigation, Peace Initiatives, Gender, CME, LAN and PME.

## Analysis of Roles, Responsibility and Coordination

Significantly, the staff of Programme Resource Team (PRT) has been given multiple roles. Except Coordinator, the rest of the PRT has additional role facilitation as Programme Associates. The Associate Coordinator is in charge of CME also gives accompaniment services to the Diocese as Programme Associate. All the Group Facilitators, apart from their subject-specific roles are also giving accompaniment services to one or two Dioceses as Programme Associates.

At one level, these multiple roles have strengthened and widened the responsibilities and the capacities of the staff and increased their workload.

However, by taking on both Programme Resource and Facilitation roles, the Programme Resource Team are continuously shifting their organizational positions and reporting systems. More importantly, this shifting of roles has not been horizontal but stepping into positions of different functional streams that are viewed by some as being lower in the hierarchy.

The PFT too has multiple roles. Interestingly, the Coordinator of Programme Facilitation is also a Team Leader of one of the Regional Resource Centre and additionally gives accompaniment service to two Dioceses. Although the position of Coordinator of Programme Facilitation is rotative and drawn from Team Leaders, their original position is that of Programme Associates. The TL of the four CNI-Resource Centres for Social Action also give accompanying services to two Dioceses. Finally, there are PA who give accompaniment services to the Dioceses and are members the six Working Groups. The question that needs to be dialogued is – how has this hopping of roles affected the performance and motivation of the staff?

The role of Team Leaders – as leaders/coordinators of CNI-RCSAs and Diocesan facilitators would have to be revised. In the years to come, the TL would have to engage in facilitation of larger level interventions in the region alongside giving coordination support to CNI-RCSAs.

The new organizational structures and systems are still in a nascent stage and require maturing. At SBSS level, the interface between the Coordinators of the Resource Team and Programme Facilitation Team requires clarity and coordination. A central coordination committee could be explored to bring requisite linkages. Similarly, the coordination between the GF and the TL in the four Resource Centres needs to be enhanced. The shifting of roles from being a member of Resource Team to Facilitation Team has not found required acceptance in both the quarters.

Not all staff of DBSSs have internalised the three functional streams of SBSS. One expects better understanding of the functionality of these structures, once the pace of programmes picks up.

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# Governance

## Initial Enabler

While the external evaluation recommended an organisational development process, credit goes to the outgoing governing body, which validated the recommendation and signalled the change process. Two external consultants were invited to accompany the OD process.<sup>9</sup>

## Enabling Values for Good Governance

Coincidentally, two enabling events for good governance occurred at the conclusion of the preparatory phase and beginning of the new Strategic Action Plan (October 2005 to September 2008). The first was the formation of a new governing Board in December 2005 with a sizeable representation from educational institutions, women and invitees from the civil society organizations. The Chairman, Bishop PSP Raju has a background in development and also chairs the Ministries of Disaster Mitigation and Management within CNI and related institutions, which adds value to the governance of SBSS.

More importantly, the CNI-SBSS constitution was amended during the preparatory phase, which made the Chief Coordinator to be Secretary of the Board with comprehensive powers. The Synod Executive meeting held in February, 2005 decided on the functional representation of the Secretary of SBSS (as ex-officio Secretary) on the Boards of other Ministries of CNI. In turn, the SBSS Board also has representation from other CNI Ministries. With right leadership guidance, these changes could pave the way for creating synergies between the various Ministries and larger level initiatives.

To strengthen mutuality of partnership and promote transparency, SBSS has promoted a few good practices. These include sharing minutes of the Executive Committee meetings, correspondence between donors and SBSS with CNI-RCSAs, creating space for the Team Leaders to interface with the SBSS's Governing Body during Board meetings, giving space to DBSS Coordinators to take initiatives in the preparation of critical documents such as *Perspective Building and Evaluation with Agreement of Cooperation* and *Audit Agreement*.

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9 Dr. Uma Ramaswamy and Mr. Ray Kancharla were invited as accompaniers for the OD process.

## SBSS and DBSS Interface

A major endeavour of the leadership, in particular the Chief Coordinator during the entire preparatory phase has been to spread the message that 'SBSS and DBSS are resource sharing partners'. While this was powerfully articulated in the very first consultation – Manthan 2004), it was further reinforced in the two regional consultations held in Goa (28-29 February, 2005) and Kolkata (8-9 March, 2005).<sup>10</sup> To reinforce their stance, SBSS made concerted efforts to involve DBSSs, Diocesan leadership and Bishops in various consultations to develop perspectives. To promote an accountable partnership and functional effectiveness, three institutional practices have come into operation.

SBSS has entered into a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with all the DBSSs in October 2005. Unlike before, the drafting of MoU was done in participatory way – under the coordination of DBSS Coordinator (Sandeep Ronald) and participation of select Coordinators from the four resource centers, the Team Leaders and Group Facilitator Finance and the Finance Manager of SBSS. The MoU clearly spells out the fund allocation, cost-reimbursement practice, monitoring of programmes and finance, selection of the staff, withdrawal strategies etc.

## Restructuring DBSSs

The DBSSs have been restructured too. The staff of DBSS underwent an appraisal by the DBSS Board facilitated by SBSS. This resulted in demotion of some staff, transfer of a few staff and a few being to put down their papers (Annexure 5). During the preparatory phase, the DBSS staffs were given need-based and specialized training. (See Annexure). The earlier structure of generalized functions of the DBSS staff is now remodeled to include thematic functions. In addition to programmatic roles, three staffs are now given charge of Gender, LAN and CME. Several of the DBSS staff has undergone need-based training in PRA, PRI, and Gender that has enhanced their skills and perspectives (See Annexure 6). Again, the community organizers are now given additional responsibilities. With the delegation of specialized functions, the Coordinator has been freed from a lot of implementation work that he was earlier burdened with. However, Coordinators who have all along been closely involved in implementation have also to learn to delegate and reposition their roles. With clear demarcation of roles and responsibilities, the staff claims that they have become more focused and responsible. Many also talked about the challenge of translating the thematic perspectives at the grassroots. Internalisation of new roles of the staff will grow with programmatic implementation.

There is wide consensus on the positive implications of this new arrangement.

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10 Significantly, all the stakeholders – representatives from the communities and DBSS, Bishops, Board Members of SBSS and DBSS's, external resource persons and a few pastors and lay leaders were present in these consultations.

These thematic roles have also given them a direct functional link with the SBSS Resource Team. If this link is nurtured with professionalism, the concept of resource sharing partnership has chances of maturing.

The interface between CNI-RCSAs and DBSSs is still to mature. The DBSSs should have a big role/stake in translating the mission of CNI-RCSAs.

DBSSs are integral parts of the Dioceses and therefore function under the auspices and authority of the Bishops, who are also the Chairpersons of the Governing Boards of the DBSSs. Where the Bishops have owned the DBSSs and given requisite support, DBSSs have optimised their organisational functioning. However, not all DBSSs enjoy a cohering relationship with Bishops and Diocesan leadership.

The issue of registration of DBSSs to promote functional autonomy. Currently, 9 of the DBSSs are registered. With registration, DBSSs are given recognition in local administration, which allows them to access development schemes and access funds from various quarters. While registration of DBSSs does not deny their linkages and partnership with the Dioceses, it gives requisite autonomy for DBSSs to take their development mandate. (See Annexure 5)

### **Cost- Re-Imbursement Model (CRM)**

The introduction of CRM aims at deconstructing the earlier grants approach of SBSS to one of 'just in time' reimbursement of funds. The CRM embodies several positive features. Each of the DBSSs are given custody of what is called 'seed money' which is equivalent of two months of DBSS's programme and administrative expense along with a buffer of 10% at the beginning of the financial year. This 'seed money' is expected to be utilised for the last two months of the financial year. Alongside, based on the monthly financial reports by each of the DBSSs, funds are disbursed by SBSS. There is wide acceptance of this model, as it does not encourage locking up of capital, optimal use of funds and transparency.

There is now reallocation of unutilized funds between Dioceses. This has brought about flexibility in fund use and optimal utilization of funds.

However, the risk in this model relates to the 'seed money', which if not given on time or refilled could cause serious repercussions, as has been the case in a few instances. This can be demotivating.

### **Dialoguing with the Consortium Partners**

A critical dialogue that SBSS had to take forward was with its Consortium Partners. The Round Table discussion held in 8 April, 2005 took a departure in that for the first time, select staff of SBSS actively participated. However, the Round Table discussion with Consortium Partners in April 2005, difficult, as it was raised critical issues relating to the deliverables of the preparatory phase and more importantly donor support. While the withdrawal of ICCO from partnership has been a loss to

SBSS, one should mention that SBSS took the loss of a longstanding partnership with equanimity. Nonetheless, SBSS has a major task of raising the gap in its resource base. The loss of ICCO's partnership and organizational and programmatic lacunae that went unattended in the earlier years has put a burden on the present leadership. The story of SBSS also raises a larger dialogue relating to partners, governance in development initiatives!

There is much dialogue within the portals of CNI-SBSS on the need to strengthen their dialogue with their funding partners. There is also a growing thinking that funding partners too should come forward to familiarise themselves with the ongoing trends in their reference areas and the challenges that SBSS-DBSSs encounter with their stakeholders.



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## Organisational motivation

The 16-month preparatory phase was replete with dialogues, activities and major consultations, which made both the staff of SBSS and DBSS to be on the move. While not all were in the forefront creating action, those who captured opportunities to be on the learning path gained competencies and upbeat mood. A few created spaces to empower themselves. The Chief Coordinator made special efforts to bring interconnectedness, team spirit, scholasticism among the staff, provoking them to think differently, closely interacting and accompanying them in all the processes and visiting the field areas. This style of functioning vitalized pockets of SBSS-DBSS to new ways of seeing and thinking.

The new structure offered multiple roles and spaces for learning but also increased the workload for some. The staff appraisals at the SBSS and DBSS level were levelling exercises which on the one hand acknowledged the contribution of those and given recognition to their resource but also put others on a self-reflection mode on the opportunities they have missed or their incapacity to perform. At the same time, the strategic framework indeed put the staff on a professional path.

The new structure has created spaces for professional growth. There was a conscious effort to develop and promote the existing staff to higher positions of responsibility.

To enhance the leadership potential within SBSS and DBSS (Coordinators), most of the staff went through human labs of behavioural sciences. Most of the staff returned with improved facilitation skill, deep personal reflections, process oriented intervention and insights on how to negotiate the conscious and unconscious processes and mindsets in wider society

While the salary structure went for revision during the preparatory phase, the new scales were affected after the new phase. The new staff benefitted with a good start in their pay package. Altogether, the response to the salary revision has been positive.

A major departure of the preparatory phase relates to self-definitions of roles and responsibilities in given positions. This practice has given a certain amount of flexibility in functionality.

The SBSS personnel policy is revised, taking relevant inputs from the staff. The new policy has addressed gender issues in sexual discrimination in the work place and spells out practices such as ban on intoxicants and smoking in the work place. Furthermore, it has given emphasis to be closely associated with the local congregations.

A new staff policy relates to employment whereby the staffs are now on yearly contracts with six-monthly appraisals. While this is a good practice, this policy has

also demotivated some segments of the staff, especially at the DBSS level.

At one level, the three programme streams of SBSS have given spaces for professional growth of the staff. While positional empowerment is one side of career pathing, the staff – those in leadership positions should be sufficiently empowered for functional effectiveness. Equally, those in leadership positions should gain competencies to hold the power to take the organizational vision meaningfully forward.

Lack of ownership by the Governing Boards of some DBSSs and Bishops continues to dip motivation levels.



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## CNI-Resource Centres for Social Action

### Regional Centres: Spaces for New Initiatives

The earlier four Zonal Offices are now converted into CNI-Resource Centre For Social Action with strategic focus on livelihood and food security (Agra), land rights and dalit studies (Pune), action research on livelihood and food security (Kolkata) and indigenous rights and tribal concerns (Ranchi). Two of the CNI-Centre For Social Action has shifted their location to be strategically connected. The earlier Zonal Office, which was located in Durgapur, is now shifted to Kolkata (June, 2005) and is housed in St. Stephens mission compound, which is within the easy reach of the two Dioceses of Kolkata and Barrackpore. Again, the Zonal office in Nagpur is now shifted to Pune and has an independent office. The purpose of these CNI-RCSAs is to emerge as resource centres/hubs for the various DBSSs and eventually for the universe of Church of North India. However, the CNI-RCSAs have only begun to function with their new identity from the month of October. Currently, the three teams of PR, PF and PS – comprising of Associate Coordinator, Group Facilitator, Team Leader, Programme and Finance Associate and office support staff, represent the CNI-RCSAs.

First of all, the CNI-RCSAs are still in the incubation phase. Although located in four regional areas, the operational areas of the CNI-RCSAs are the 20 Dioceses.<sup>11</sup> Most of the CNI-RCSAs have either developed or in the process of finalising the concept papers. Being new, the CNI-RCSAs are involved in accompanying activities. A few have organised training programmes.

While the CNI-RCSAs are envisaged as all regional centers, the existing initiatives have given focus to intra-regional issues. This trend would continue for a while. The only CNI-RCSA that has scope to reach other CNI-RCSAs is the Action Research Centre in Kolkata. Another concomitant trend is seen in the convergence of initiatives by GFs with those of the CNI-RCSAs, which has brought certain vibrancy to CNI-RCSAs. Being new, the existing roles of the GF and the Team Leader should be better coordinated and for this, the role internalization of these positions has to deepen.

While the CNI-RCSAs are potent with opportunities, they need to develop both short and long term strategies. To be vibrant hubs and take their agenda forward, we suggest the following.

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11 Programme activities have been discontinued in four dioceses – *Jabalpur, Nasik, Gujarat and Pune*. However, there efforts course correct for revival of two DBSSs.

- To bring synergies between the various stakeholders, the CNI-RCSAs could think of various ways of promoting a dialogue and discourse on grassroots issues, movements, campaigns and innovative models that are emerging. Several innovative steps could be planned.
- During the calendar year, the Coordinators of DBSSs, Bishops, interested pastors, activists from civil society organizations and movements should be invited to share their experiences and ideas. A critical mass of such discourses should be planned.
- To bring the voices of the communities, critical actors from the reference communities should be given sufficient space for sharing their concerns, experiences to enrich the dialogue process.

As an information centre, the CNI-RCSAs should build a knowledge base for advocacy and research.

- Create a database on relevant networks, civil society organizations, training institutions, resource persons to respond to the needs of DBSSs.
- Collate issue-based data and people's organization to capture and analyse the ongoing trends. This will provide strategic inputs for programme and event planning.
- Process documentation of projects and programmes should be an ongoing activity.
- It would be worthwhile to collate and document several rights or issue-based struggles that a few of the DBSSs have undergone in the past. This would enhance institutional memory and bring pointers for the future.
- The CNI-RCSA in Ranchi has plans to promote a legal cell, as the tribals have a host of issues that need to be dealt through the due process of law. However, owing to the busy schedules of the preparatory phase, this is pending. A few other initiatives that are under discussion relate to encouraging the tribals to set up grain and seed banks for food security.

With 20 DBSS as its partners, SBSS is defining itself as Collective Forms of Cooperation (CFC). With this background, each of the CNI-RCSAs should make concerted efforts for inter-DBSS networking to promote solidarity. This would provide shared platforms for addressing development issues and larger level initiatives through advocacy.

Each of the CNI-RCSAs could/should promote independent innovative projects on relevant/core issue in the operational areas. These projects should underpin the perspectives of SBSS-DBSS, demonstrate models and above all aim to bring connectivities/synergies between the relevant stakeholders. These projects should get the support of DBSSs in terms of person in power and if need be, resource support. Funds for these projects could either come from SBSS or other stakeholders such as Dioceses, educational institutions and even corporate

organisations. We suggest the following issues that can be taken up in each of these centers.<sup>12</sup>

- In CNI-RCSA in Kolkata, an innovative action project on Self-Help Groups could be taken up with clear objectives of promoting *Mahila Adhikar* on the one hand and strengthening the ongoing entrepreneurial base of the SHGs. The ongoing trends in the SHGs in northern and eastern regions reveal two strong trends. The first is graduation of several members of SHGs into income generation and entrepreneurial activities, which need to be supported to strengthen household and hamlet economies. The savings and credit programme has been articulated in a rights perspective in that while the capacitation of the members to save and engage in credit activities is the process in empowerment, mainstreaming the SHGs efforts to get credit and other services of the wider institutions is in the realm of rights. The second is the growing rights struggles that women are engaged in on various issues. For example, encouraging women to contest in elections and enter local governance through Gram Sabhas (tribal) and PRIs is an empowering process that ends in issue-based struggles. Support to this path would lead the SHGs towards a movement in Mahila Adhikar.
- The CNI-RCSA in Ranchi could think of an innovative project on revival or restoration of tribal culture. We are referring to tribal folklore, dialects, proverbs, and medicine, which are fast disappearing. Innovative ways of involving tribal elders, women, youth and NGO activists could be planned to design and implement this project.
- The CNI-RCSA in Agra has a strategic focus on livelihood and food security. In the past, some of the DBSSs, in particular the SEDP in Amritsar have successfully promoted people's movements.<sup>13</sup> Issues of migration, particularly among the Bhils (tribal) have become salient area of interventions in Bhopal. One of the initiatives in Bhopal relates to encouraging the seasonal migrants to enlist themselves in a local register. In Agra, core issues of the reference group are child labour and land. In Rajasthan, a salient initiative relates to regularization of public distribution system. Across all the DBSSs, a general initiative relates to awareness on PRIs and motivating the reference groups to contest elections and join the local governance. The large presence of reference communities, working under exploitative conditions and with poor wages (less than the minimum wages) is in the informal sector in the various Dioceses. The CNI-RCSA, Agra should identify a salient issue with potential for larger level

12 These ideas have been generated through our interactions with Group Facilitator and staff of CNI-RCSAs.

13 The *palledars* – labourers in the grain markets were organised into a powerful movement against the *thekedars* (contractors) The SEDP has promoted and registered 19 people's organizations. It is pertinent to mention that SEDP has also promoted *Awaz-e-Awaam*, an advocacy cell comprising SEDP workers and other civil society organizations. (See Annexure)

impact for an action research project.

- The CNI-RCSA, Pune has given a strong focus on land rights and Dalit studies. Currently, strong issue-based struggles and movements are underway in three DBSSs (Nagpur, Kolhapur and Marathwada). There are many opportunities to develop action research projects on leadership development and movement building in this CNI-RCSA.



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## Strategic Themes of SBSS-DBSSs

### CNI-RCSA, Pune: Land Rights and Dalit Studies

For the landless and especially the Dalits and other backward groups, who have been oppressed for so long – getting small pieces of even barren land (*Gairan* - grazing land) to become a '*krishi*' is to gain a cherished social status. 'They are the real *krishi* as they have slogged on the lands all their lives.' In real terms, access and ownership of two to five acres of barren land might give two to three months of income but the rest of the year these landless families have to pursue their livelihoods as wage or migrant workers in the unorganized sector. Issue-based work on land rights highlights that it is only through the spirit of collectivism and collective bargaining that the landless can realize their social identity. The experience of two vibrant issue-based movements on *Gairaan* lands in Kolhapur and Marathwada reveals that while issues come and go... organizing oppressed communities through movements is emotive as it raises hope and nurtures the dreams that people have cherished in their hearts.

For the SBSS-DBSS, a critical question that repeatedly surfaced in the past and continues to surface is whether the church structure and leadership have perspectives and commitment to nurture and hold movements and people's organizations? Different models of people's organizations and movements surface in the wake of rights-based initiatives. In their success, this issue-based work has also given visibility and recognition to congregational leadership. Where DBSSs have facilitated vibrant movement, strong leadership has emerged within the staff, as in the case of Kolhapur. The organizational praxis of facilitating and at times leading these movements has also raised tricky issues of the ownership of the Church in the highs and lows of these movements. With rights-based approach, SBSS-DBSSs would have to not only to promote dialogue and discourse within its portals but also evolve their stances and policies on people's organizations and issue-based movements.<sup>14</sup> The DBSS and SBSS have no other option but to subscribe to people's movements and people's organizations.

A broad objective and a dream of the desk on Land Rights and Dalit Studies are to promote state-wise movement to access land for 10000 landless families in each of the five Dioceses. We bring below a few initiatives of the desk on Land Rights and Dalit Studies and that of the CNI-RCSA, Pune, which have merged at several points during the preparatory phase.

- The CNI-RCSA, Pune has been debating about research, which in the context of movement relates to collating data, analysis and capturing trends. While the advocacy work is being done by the DBSSs, this CNI-

RCSA could get into research, documentation and publication. The CNI-RCSA has held PRA exercises in the villages and collated data. (October –November).

- There are plans to network with 25-30 land rights organizations and form a regional forum on land rights.
- Another function of the GF and the CNI-RCSA has also been accompaniment services.
- The CNI-RCSA has also been engaged in restructuring of the staff and giving training on thematic roles like gender, land rights, LAN, CME and livelihood. Each of the staff is given targets of holding 500 Gairan families and this has increased their workload. The list of Gairan families has increased too.
- Accompaniment to build the moral capacities and morale of the ongoing movements in the DBSSs of Kolhapur, Nagpur and Marathwada.
- Out of 8 Dioceses in the central region, 4 DBSSs had to be closed down and the services of the staff terminated. Of these 4, there are efforts to revive two of them. In Jalna, which now has a new field office in the Marathwada DBSS, all the five staff have be retrenched after a staff appraisal. SBSS staff has to give considerable time and effort in mentoring, conflict management between the stakeholders, issues related to retrenchment of staff and leadership issues and holding their morale.

### CNI-RCSA, Ranchi: Tribal Identity and Social Exclusion

The overarching theme of tribal identity and social exclusion is to restore the depletion of resources, indigenous systems and the knowledge base of the tribals. The PESA under the Fifth Schedule has given a wide space for the self-rule of the tribals. While the implementation of PESA has surfaced several bureaucratic and political hurdles, in recent times, the Supreme Court has also mandated the state government to implement 9 schemes to alleviate and empower the tribal communities. SBSS-DBSSs have a lot of scope to promote Gram Sabhas and address issues of women's empowerment through SHGs/Mahila Adhikar Manch in their reference areas. The theme of Tribal Identity is currently held by one GF. The CNI-RCSA in Ranchi, which has facilitated a few initiatives, facilitating a few initiatives to support the theme of tribal identity. Some of the initiatives of the GF and CNI-RCSA are listed here.

- Developed perspectives and concept paper on tribal identity.
- Brought together activists and DBSSs staff to dialogue on tribal issues. This has brought much learning for the staff of CNI-RCSA, Ranchi.
- Provided resource support to the pre-Synod Consultation on Tribal issues.
- Meetings with the Coordinators of five DBSSs on the new restructured roles, responsibilities and coordination.
- Listing of forest villages and collation of data on relocation of two tribal

groups – *Sauras* and *Kuis*, issues relating to wild life sanctuary in Phulbani. Also collated data on Pos and Gram Sabhas.

- Involved all the Dioceses in eastern region for interactions on tribal concerns.
- The DBSSs staffs were given training on tribal and dalit rights in the Indian Social Institute Delhi.
- Planned for a legal cell for addressing tribal issues.
- Developed and disseminated visual information through pamphlets and posters on Draft Tribal Policy and forest laws.

### Pointers for Future

- Along with the CNI-RCSA, Ranchi, the GF should develop a tribal gender policy.
- Since the issue of jal, jungal and jameen has a large canvas, the CNI-RCSA should network through a planned process. A network of all the DBSSs in the eastern region for advocacy on relevant aspects of jal, jungle and jameen.
- Collection of issue-based data should be an ongoing exercise.
- It would be worthwhile to document and publish the experiences of issue-based struggles in some of the DBSSs (for example, the DBBS, Patna, to begin with).

### CNI-RCSA, Kolkata: Action Research on Livelihood and Food Security

The CNI-RCSA on Action Research, based in Kolkata was the earlier Zonal Office situated in Durgapur and is now strategically located in the premises of St. Stephens's compound. While action research is suitable term for this center, the theme of livelihood and food security should be replaced by Rights-Based Development. The GF on PME and LAN is based in this CNI-RCSA. In many ways both the functions of PME and LAN are well located here to take action research on rights-based development forward.

Against the backdrop of resource sharing partnership and collective forms of cooperation, the theme of PME should progress towards promoting a culture of accompaniment. While a few beginnings in accompaniment have begun in SBSS-DBSS partnership, both the concept and strategy have to be internalized. Briefly, accompaniment should be viewed as journey of in partnership. This requires empathetic sensitivity at one level but more importantly a professional orientation on the part of all stakeholders to perform and deliver.

Until now, the CNI-RCSA in Kolkata has developed a conceptual approach for strategic interventions. While under the PME and LAN, several initiatives have been taken (see Section on PME and LAN); our discussions with the staff looked at future directions. This centre should have a much larger re-organisation sweep to deepen the Rights-based development conceptually and strategically in its praxis.

## Pointers for Future

- Documentation of the past and present initiatives on issue-based movement and peoples organizations for learning and publishing
- Undertaking independent action research projects and raise funds.
- Develop context-specific policies for the partners through participatory processes.
- Build knowledge base on various issues – collation of context specific data, indicators for accompaniment and bringing linkages between PME and LAN.

## CNI-RCSA, Agra – Livelihood and Food Security

The GF on livelihood is positioned in the CNI-RCSA, Agra. A few initiatives and plans for the CNI-RCSA include the following.

- A concept note on livelihood and food security has been prepared. The DBSSs staffs have been given orientation on the perspectives.
- Developed monitoring tools on livelihood issues.
- Spade work to start a documentation center. The objective is to collate data and analyse trends at the grass roots.
- Collation of data on various laws and also study of the different approaches on livelihoods.

## Pointers for Future

- Should deepen and translate SBSS' strategic focus on livelihood and food security through innovative initiatives.
- Should analyse gender concerns in food security and develop policies for strategic action. This should be done in close collaboration with respective DBSSs.
- Should document ongoing and even past (illustrative) experiences for benchmarking

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## Cross Cutting Themes

### Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation (PME)

Essentially PME should focus on programme governance and accompanying practices. Taking the suggestions of the meeting of the consortium partners, the PME desk was formed in June 2005 with a Group Facilitator, based in CNI-RCSA, Kolkata. Until now, the following processes were taken forward.

- Designing and organizing training programmes on monitoring for all the three CNI-RCSAs – Kolkata, Ranchi and Agra. Based on these programmes, standardized formats, programme ledgers, indicators to map the processes were developed.
- The PME desk also gave substantial support for developing the concept paper for the Action Research Centre in Kolkata. (November and December, 2005)
- Developed criteria for the selection of staff at SBSS and DBSS. This took a great deal of time as the entire positions roles and responsibilities were drafted afresh.
- The PME desk has undertaken a full-fledged exercise in PRA in the Barrackpore Diocese. An outcome of this is the expertise that the DBSS has gained in PRA. Interestingly, the Bishop of Barrackpore has recommended the Coordinator of Barrackpore DBSS to carry forward this exercise in different pastorates.
- The Group Facilitator, PME has been involved in an evaluation of one Christian organization engaged in disaster mitigation.
- Excepting for support in a couple of Dioceses (Barrackpore, Eastern Himalayas), the PME desk is functioning in isolation. To strengthen the PME desk, one staff member in each of the CNI-RCSAs should hold a supportive PME function.
- It is important to draw attention to the differing nature of facilitation of the resource team and the programme facilitation team. When it comes to Programme facilitation, the role of accompaniment should be given top priority. It is the PME desk, which has to develop context specific concepts, strategies and indicators for accompaniment.

### Pointers for Future

- PME desk would gain by getting involved in the action research projects of CNI-RCSA, Kolkata.

- With the support of the desk on Development Communications, develop dynamic frameworks for data collection.
- Develop long-term perspective for PME and accompaniment

## Gender

Women are a major focal group of SBSS-DBSS and therefore gender is taken as a crosscutting theme in the perspective plan. In the past, women development was seen in the context of mother and child, health and non-formal education. Since the nineties, the promotion of SHGs has given a new dimension to women's empowerment. There are altogether ... SHGs and ... Federations in the operational areas of SBSS-DBSSs, of which three fourths are in the CNI-RCSA, Kolkata region. (See Annexure) The tribal women are predominant segment in these SHGs. Another notable trend is rights struggles that some of these SHGs have promoted. There are now two registered women's groups – Purbanchal Nari Jagriti Sanghatan (NorthEast) and Anchali Adikar Samiti More importantly, one of the federations has been converted into a Mahila Bank (Assam). During the last decade, women have contested in the panchayat elections and entered the local governance. Consciously or otherwise, there is a social capital of women who could be further supported to take women and gender empowerment forward.

SBSS has also made efforts to promote women leadership in the pastorates and Dioceses. The following steps were undertaken under gender initiatives.

- Two members of gender team went for training in Vistar in Bangalore, who in turn organised training programmes – one each in CNI-RCSAs of Agra, Ranchi for the gender teams in SBSS and DBSS. And a select staff from this group and members of DBSSs Boards were given further training by Jagori in Delhi.
- The gender desk formulated a concept and strategic framework on gender. Currently, a gender policy is being evolved.

## Pointers for Future

While the gender desk has a three-member team at the SBSS level, it has the support of the gender staff in each of the DBSSs, which has created an inter-institutional link to reach out to the grassroots communities. With this background, several initiatives could be promoted.

- Participatively prepare a five-year perspective and a gender policy.
- Using the existing resources, pilot projects could be planned for alternative models.
- Case studies for model setting and cross learning could be planned
- Mainstreaming gender in the thematic areas of livelihood, identity and social exclusion and land rights.

- With PME, the gender desk should develop indicators – quantitative and qualitative for gender.
- Disaggregated data with regard to gender in issue-based work.

### Church Mission Engagement

Being an integral part of CNI, SBSS has always given special focus on the involvement of congregation and church leadership. Earlier, this agenda was held under 'Congregations Action and Participation'. Programmatically this theme was addressed through training, workshops, consultation and retreats. This theme was underwent a strategic shift in the perspective plan when the thrust is now on participation and involvement of congregations to be in solidarity with the reference groups. The objective is that in the final analysis the congregations would analyse and identify the concerns and problems of the focal groups. During the preparatory phase, a separate desk was positioned to take forward this mission under CME. The CME desk undertook the following interventions.

- Prepared a concept note on CME, which was circulated to the SBSS staff (August 2004), which was integrated into the perspective plan. Subsequently, a strategy paper and 11 training modules for the different stakeholders (DBSS Board member, members of pastorate committees, DBSS and SBSS staff) were developed.
- Collated CME related data across all Dioceses (See Annexure)
- An internship programme was designed and coordinated by the CME desk for the fourth year students of Bishops College, a theological seminary in Kolkata. The internship programme aims at mission praxis for the students and help SBSS to enhance their theological base. The objective of the first phase was orientation, followed by field exposure in the Dioceses in the second phase. The third phase ends (being held in the last week of January, 2006), with a consultation at the Bishops College for sharing their dissertation to take the dialogue forward.
- In selected Diocese (Sambalpur, Barrackpore, Agra, Rajasthan, Lucknow) a few pastors and lay leaders were given orientation on CME.

### Lobbying Advocacy and Networking

Lobbying, advocacy and networking is a major strategy and a cross cutting theme of rights-based initiatives. In its journey of building peoples organization, SBSS has demonstrated very strong people's movements at the community level viz. the Manav Adhikar Sangharsh Samiti (MASS), Marathwara, Dalit Samaj Vikas Parishad (DSVP), Kolhapur, and Purbanchal Nari Jagriti Sangathan, North East (See Annexure). A few DBSSs have established strong networking organization such as the Awaz-e-Awaan – in Amritsar, which have started to influence the policy. There is much potential for SBSS to strengthen its initiatives through LAN.

During the preparatory phase, the LAN desk developed a perspective and strategic framework on LAN. The LAN desk views itself as part of the larger network of Forum for Collective Form of Cooperation (FCFC) and has taken up a project to prepare a normative framework on the issue of governance for FCFC partners.

### Pointers for Future

- Since advocacy has evolved into a key strategy for realizing rights, the LAN desk is expected to provide expertise in planning, developing and managing campaigns.
- The LAN desk in partnership with DBSS and POs would develop a required performa and the procedure for information collection – indexing, assessing capacities of different PO's
- The LAN desk should accompany planning, monitoring and documenting campaign process.
- Coordination and networking among the DBSS and other CNI related institutions would be another major task of this desk.

### Disaster Mitigation and Management

During the preparatory phase, two major disasters – Tsunami and a major earthquake in Kashmir have ravaged the lives of the communities, especially the marginalised in India. Again the Marathwada and Kolhapur experienced sudden floods, which engulfed several villages, and a large number of families had to be temporarily rehabilitated. SBSS, quick response to these disasters include the following.

- Distribution of relief material in the remote areas in Uri district (Kashmir), where by military accounts no NGOs have reached.
- Distribution of relief material in Car Nicobar in the first week of the disaster.
- Distribution of relief and relocation of flood victims in Kolhapur and Marathwada in the eastern region.
- Networking with other NGOs.

### Development Communications

Earnest efforts to update and consolidate database across the Dioceses began during the mid-course of preparatory phase and continue to be an ongoing effort. Three types of database are being collated. (See Annexure 4)

- Indexing of village profiles: While this is an important component in database, not all the staff have given the importance that it deserves

- Building issue-based data: Issue based work has grown in a several Dioceses. Collation of issue-based data has to be both qualitative and quantitative and more importantly dynamic. Currently, the responsibility of collation of issue-based data in all the Dioceses is given to respective Group Facilitators. This has become a difficult task, as the sweep of all the dioceses is broad indeed. Again the data itself is not being analysed for capturing trends and developing strategies through concept development and action plans. The resource centres should begin to reposit the issue-related data for knowledge building. Clear mandates have to be given to concerned staff.

Notably, SBSS has a desk on development communication and is being handled by a Group Facilitator. Apart from bringing out on-line news bulletin (Development News Update-Fortnightly), in house staff news (Co-Traveler), News magazine (Abhivyakti) and Annual Report, The GF of Development Communication extended support to Perspective and Programme Plan (Resistance Hope 2005-2015) and Policy document on Development and Justice of SBSS and preparation of the proposal for the new phase (Let Justice Roll 2005-2008). In addition to this DC brought out a visual report on the relief work in A&N Islands, took up a research under the rubric “Does Aid Aid?” on relief and rehabilitation in Tsunami affected areas of Tamil Nadu (draft available). While the GF has capacities and much potential, his role needs to be directed to consolidate database, capture trends and give value-added support to Chief Coordinator and Programme Resource Team. With the growing work of SBSS, the Development Communications Desk would need additional support.

### Pointers for Future

The GF, Development Communications has articulated rather well the tasks that this desk should take forward.<sup>15</sup>

- Documenting recording how people (victims) reflect upon the problem, critique, communicate, find solutions and transform their own world. This is a process to be carried out with a team of representative of the community, DBSS and SBSS Staff.
- With in Church and its institutions and congregations – as the rigor, meticulousness, passion to know the social issues and seek remedies to them is not up to the expected level, it is vital on the part of DC to get support to the mandate of building communities of resistance and hope given by the Church.
- With state and civil society groups – at this level the communication strategy is two-pronged; one tuned to put pressure on the government to protect the rights of the people and second, a communication strategy which is good enough to network with other civil society groups. Advocacy campaigns are the strategy.

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15 Concept note prepared by John Suresh Kumar, GF, Development Communications.

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## Annexure 1: Case Studies

### Case Study 1: DBSS, Diocese of Patna

#### ***I. Jal, Jungle & Jameen***

The DBSS under Patna Diocese is now under the state of Jharkhand, which was formed in 2000. With rich natural resource base and a predominant tribal population, the state of Jharkhand has woken up to many issues that have drained the traditional economy and polity of the tribals. While the introduction of self-rule under PESA has raised the aspirations of the tribals to strengthen their gram sabhas, several bureaucratic hurdles and party politics are undermining its smooth passage. Paradoxically, the Panchayat elections have not been held since 1978 and all development schemes are routed through the Block and Zilla administration. Going by various accounts, the newly demarcated areas along the Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRI) have unsettled the traditional villages, undermining the Gram Sabhas and scheduled areas under PESA.

In recent times, the central government is engaged in the demarcation of the blocks, which is redefining the tribal villages. In the process, the boundaries of customary tribal panchayats are either getting scattered or relocated. With this process the chances of PESA under the Fifth Schedule could be undermined. Over the decades, several processes have undermined the livelihoods of tribals. While the tribals have land titles (Parcha), they lease out these lands for negligible amounts. The forests have been depleted both by the mafia and by the tribals for their own use. In more recent time, the notification of 35 villages for coal mining in Jharkhand has come under tribal protest. There is much potential to address the issue of tribal identity in the 91 villages of Chota Nagpur Diocese and 103 villages (60 old and 40 new) in the Diocese of Patna.

The DBSS, Patna Diocese began its work with Santals and Dalits in one block in 1991 with a coordinator and one motivator. The operational area of DBSS now has enlarged to cover 4 blocks and 60 villages. The DBSS has also withdrawn its work with the Pahadias and Maltos in the hilly areas of Taljori due to the strong entry of an evangelical group – Friends Missionaries Prayer Bands. Because of Naxal resurgence, the work of DBSS got stalled for nearly 7 years but only to pick up again. Before the formation of the state of Jharkhand in 2000, this DBSS was facilitating and engaged in few issue-based struggles life wage struggle by the Dalits in stone crushing and rampant exploitation of Mahajans (money lenders). The theme of ‘Jal, Jungle, Jameen’ figured in their work. In more recent times, using the PESA, the DBSS has promoted 4-5 Gram Sabhas. The issue of land is being taken up through the Gram Sabhas. While the DBSS went on rights work in the nineties,

it has also begun to focus on development work. -went through people's participatory plan to address food security issues through grain banks and community farming. The DBSS is also networking with CASA, Sona Santhal Samaj (Roman Catholic Organisation) and Majhi Pargana Sardar Sangh (a traditional tribal network). The DBSS has promoted 46 SHGs and one issue-based group called Adivasi Adhikar Morcha.

### **The impact of restructuring process within SBSS-DBSS?**

- The staff's roles have been defined on thematic a line which has not only given a strategic focus in their roles and responsibilities but allows for direct interface with SBSS. While this promotes the partnership principle, it should not undermine the organizational governance of DBSS.
- Our visits to the field are much more focused now.' We should now focus on how to make the thematic focus more relevant in the field. The earlier programmatic structures have lost their relevance.
- The earlier compartmentalized functioning between SBSS and DBSS is beginning to change.
- For partnership to grow, the DBSS has to register which is not being encouraged by the governing Board.
- Role of the Coordinator: 'The capacitation in the group has lessened my work. I now want to promote issue-based tribal movement.'
- Cost-reimbursement and financial management: The concept is very good as it gives much flexibility. But without constant inflow in the seed money, the cost-reimbursement model is risky.

### **Field Visit to Village Sankarbanga**

Visited a large homestead of Santhal family with 8 households. Two members of this family are members of the same SHG. We interacted with a few members of SHGs and the Pradhan of the village along with a few men. The members of this SHG have leased two bighas of land to cultivate paddy and pulses. Under SJYS, the SHGs have got a loan Rs.25000 thousand and a subsidy of Rs.10000. Interestingly, the group has lent the subsidy of Rs.10000 at 4% per month but has not utilized the loan. Our discussion focused on how they need to utilize the loan for productive use and the risk of the group ending up with paying interest on locked up money and ending with losses.

Another issue that came up for discussion is the repair of a road, which developed a big pit in front of the Church. While the Block administration allowed for repair of the road (because of DBSS imitative), the Pradhan gave the repair work to a contractor that ended in a factional fight and even a murder. After several interventions, the work has now come back to the Pradhan who now hopes that the repair work will be done under his guidance.

With informed facilitation and accompaniment, there is much that this DBSS can achieve in their operational areas. The Perspective Plan should ride on both

development and rights perspectives for meaningful outcomes.

There should be planned networking between the DBSS under Patna Diocese and DBSS under Chotanagpur Diocese. This will bring much synergy on tribal identity and exclusion. Women's participation continues to be minimal in Gram Sabhas even though they are dynamic actors in the household economy – collecting forest produce, fuel, and working in the agricultural fields. SHGs should be capacitated to strengthen women's role in Gram Sabhas. It may be worthwhile to start farmers groups, which could strengthen the development focus in the operational areas. This could also increase the participation of men. DBSS plans to promote Gram Sabhas in all the villages that they are working.

In consultation with CNI-RCSA, Ranchi, this DBSS could start small action projects. It would be worthwhile to document the rights work that this DBSS has undertaken in the past.

## Case Study 2: DBSS, Diocese of Marathwada

The Diocese of Marathwada was earlier part of Nasik Diocese under the dynamic leadership of Bishop George Ninan who promoted several projects such as the ICDP, Jalna Technical School for Dalit Children etc under the umbrella of Nasik Diocesan Society for Holistic Development (NDSHD). In 1999, the Diocesan Council formed the DBSS and for one year there was no Coordinator. Paradoxically, while all the projects of NDSHD was brought under Marathwada Diocese for a short two-month period, but had to be soon closed as the staff of NDSHD who were managing these projects went back to NDSHD. The present Coordinator, Rev. Kasab was appointed as the Coordinator with one Programme Organiser and 5 Community Organiser.

Currently, the Marathwada DBSS is working in 97 villages in Jalna and Aurangabad, comprising of 5 clusters each. Interestingly, neither the Diocese nor the DBSS are registered bodies. During a very short time, this DBSS has raised rights-based initiatives for the occupation and ownership of barren grazing lands known as Gairan. The history of Gairan lands dates back to the sixties when Dr. Ambedkar called upon Dalits to leave their degrading occupations and take up occupations that have social acceptability. Overtime, enabling Government Orders (GOs) encouraged not only the Dalits but also other marginalised communities to occupy Gairan lands. The latest GO stipulates those households, which have been cultivating Gairan lands before 1990, could claim to ownership. But getting ownership of Gairan lands is full of hurdles for the marginalised communities as they are made to go through harassment and bureaucratic hurdles. To cultivate and own Gairan lands inevitably implies a police complaint where declarations of having cultivated the Gairan lands have to be made – a proof of ownership and inspections of standing crops by the authority which is often done deliberately in the month of April, by which time crops are harvested. Getting title deeds is yet another major effort which for the uninformed farmer (often women) could be

quite traumatic. Often forest officials and others destroy the crops on Gairan lands (which is a proof of their ownership), leaving the families distraught and powerless. A positive aspect of the GO is that title deeds are given in the joint names of husband and wife.

The DBSSs, Marathwada has supported around of 1300 families to access common grazing lands and now each of these households has two to five acres land. A major outcome of these struggles is the establishment of a people's organization – Manav Adhikar Sangharsh Samithi (MASS), which has over the years led several morchas, gave petitions for getting land entitlements. A few SHGs were formed with the objective of integrating gender issues and participation of women in MASS. The DBSS has also promoted a few small initiatives on BPL, water and local self-governance. 19 people were motivated to contest, out of which 3 men and 3 women were elected. The MASS, which has consciously not been registered, has a membership of around 5000 families. The organizational structure has general body comprising of 125 representatives and an Executive Body of 25 members drawn from the general body. There is a membership subscription of Rs.2. An Advisory Committee has been set up comprising of members from civil society organizations. As a matter of policy, the present Coordinator who was the founding member of MASS has withdrawn from his position. However, one of the staff continues to be Vice-President of MASS. A major objective of MASS is not only to get ownership and title deeds but also address issue of community development.

The Marathwada DBSS underwent a staff appraisal in Jalna and Auragabad. This appraisal resulted in the removal of all the five staff working in Jalna for their lack of commitment and their unwillingness to stay in the field areas, which was critical for movement-based work. However, the appraisal committee gave an option to the staff to prove themselves as voluntary workers for three months. Consequently, SBSS has temporarily withdrawn its operations in Jalna. However, the field itself offers a lot of potential for taking forward the work of MASS.

### **Field Visits**

Visited Keligaon village where there are 17 Gairan families. During our interactions, several bemoaned that on a regular basis their standing crops are destroyed, most of the time at night by landlords and other miscreants. The tearful rendering of an elderly woman whose crops on the land that she toiled day and night were destroyed touched us. 'I am ready to die for my land', she wailed.

Also visited Nilajgaon and held discussions with 10 to 12 Gairan holders. There are 43 Gairan families holding 150 acres of Gairan land in this village. There is an ongoing struggle of these families to protect their crops and the lands. What is the process in getting cultivating rights and entitlements to the land? 'As a first step we have to get arrested, get accused through Panchanama so that our names are enlisted with information on how long we have been cultivating. We have then to send petition to the Tehshildar for crop survey, which is yet another proof. Often the officials visit the fields in summer months when the crops have been cut and

there is no proof of standing crop. Our struggles are full of uncertainty. In my father's case, the forest officials came to destroy our crop but we fought against the officials. Now there is no open conflict but there is always a fear of our crops being burnt and land taken away', observes Gaikwad an active farmer in promoting organic farming practices. What has been the response of the villages? 'The villagers are happy that I am getting an income from my lands and I am not interfering with their lands.'

### **Changes in DBSS during the preparatory phase**

The 16-month period witnessed the growth of MASS into people's movement. The new roles and capacitation on strategic themes has given them a new positions and status. But this has also increased their work. However, the realization of these themes at the grassroots will take time. Also, the praxis of these themes with proper facilitation should bring inter linkages between the various themes.

While there is a database, the DBSSs should have a dynamic trend analysis for strategic interventions.

Keeping the background of Kolhapur DBSSs experience, the present Vice President should only be an accompanier but should not take on official positions in MASS.

The field office in Jalna is new and after an appraisal, the entire earlier field staff has been terminated which has brought SBSS under flak. As the operational field in Jalna has much potential for interventions, the DBSS has clear plans to continue their linkage with the communities in Jalna through regular visits.

Expectations from the CNI-RCSA, Pune? 'We want to accompany in our struggles and given capacities where necessary.'

### **Case Study 3: DBSS, Diocese of Barrackpore**

The DBSS Barrackpore was formed in 1994 and presently is working in the 3 district of 24 Parganas (North) and (South). The operational field has 92 villages (old and new) in 10 clusters with a predominant population of the Dalits, women and children. The office of the DBSS is located in the Bishop's residential premises. Following a staff appraisal, the positions of DBSS's staff have been redefined along thematic lines. Going by the new service rules, the staffs are given one-year appointment with 6 monthly appraisals. Besides the Coordinator, the DBSS has 9 community enablers, one issue facilitator and one office assistant.

Our interactions with the staff were made vibrant by the presence of Bishop Malakkar who was with us during the entire discussions along with the staff. Ajay Sardar, having graduated from Motivator to Programme Facilitator, to Coordinator has high acceptance in the field and exhibits committed level which is further enhanced by the fact that he is a native of one of the villages in Barrackpore.

The salient interventions by the Barrackpore DBSS include awareness building on Panchayat Raj, dissemination of information and accessing government

schemes, promotion of children's education and regularising the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) which often does not reach the poorest of the poor. A major initiative of the DBSS is the promotion of 153 SHGs. We noticed two trends in the SHGs during our interactions. One relates to several tiny enterprises that women are engaged in. Women said that these small enterprises in fisheries, broilers etc have helped in improving their income. These existing enterprises appear to have scope for upgradation for further growth. A few of the SHGs are also addressing a few village level issues, including rampant alcoholism. SBSS-DBSS has begun to bring the SHGs under the umbrella of Mahila Adhikar Manch. One such Adhikar Manch has already been formed in the name of Devipur Shantimoy Mohila Samity.

### **Impact of the preparatory phase**

Our perspectives have changed. The various consultations and interactions we had with the SBSS staff have helped us to look at the field issues differently.

We have been given training on PRI, PRA, RBA, P.O and SHGs. Some of us have special themes to take care of which we have begun to understand. The team spirit among the staff has grown.

The staff talked about the new roles that they have been given? Has the role of the Coordinator changed too? While Ajay Saradar talks about the new roles that the staff now have, he too should reflect on the new role that he has to take on?

But the Cost reimbursement model would be helped only, if it is implemented with proper time-schedules and monitoring.

### **Field visits**

We visited two villages (Rama Krishnapur and Altaberia) of DBSS, Barrackpore. Women and children with much warmth greeted us, and our discussions revolved around the issues and concerns of the village and women and the changes they have experienced in their lives. Most of the women that we interacted with work as daily wagers, earning small wages of Rs.30 a day. Men, in contrast get Rs.60 a day. During non-agricultural season, these women go to Kolkata where they work as construction workers or take up domestic service. Women talked about increased levels of confidence and the habit of regularly savings through their SHGs. These SHGs have also given them opportunities to come together and share their personal problems and now they feel that they have broken their earlier 'four wall existence and bondage.' Nearly everyone present said that they have spent their savings for the welfare of their children – clothing and especially education. With poor education in public schools, private tuition becomes necessary and women said that a lot of their savings goes towards children's tuition fees, books etc.

What have been other improvements in their lives? They clothe better, eat better. A few talked about eating more fish, meat and eggs now than they did before. One of the women said that that she continues to eat the traditional rice-meal without which she couldn't work in the agricultural fields. Despite the many

changes that women talked about in their lives, paradoxically the issue of men's drinking and alcoholisms looms large in their lives.

**Pointers for Future**

- There is much potential to strengthen the SHGs both in the field of enterprise development and empowering them to take on several rights issues that is burdening women's lives and the village economy.
- The SHGs would have to be exposed to other experiences.

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## Annexure 2: A Note on Learning Appraisal

### Where are we? A Learning Appraisal of CNI SBSS

#### **Introduction**

“Appraisal” is a synonym for review, assessment, evaluation etc., whereas “Learning” is imparting knowledge, educating and building organizational culture together. Collectively, it is a process of review/ assessment or evaluation contributing to enhance knowledge or education and setting enlightened culture. Learning Appraisal (LA) is more process oriented, not only measuring our task with some yardstick – rather taking those learning into practice. This is revealing as well as learning exercise.

Sixteen-months have been a period of preparatory phase introducing appropriate changes in the structure, system, process and approach of SBSS. External evaluation and review recommendations by and large guided us to rethink our approach towards issues confronting in grass root community. Systematic micro and macro analysis has enabled us in strategizing our thought process into three crosscutting theme and core issues. And accordingly we have reviewed our own existence in terms of roles and responsibility towards the church and community at large. One of the major objectives of this period was to prepare the 3 years participatory project proposal and also to develop a decade-long perspective, involving all stakeholders. In the whole process, 2 external experts accompanied us in our concerted effort and enabled us to emerge as a resource group.

While facing the new phase, organization demands to look back again to review the status of the above intervention and course correction. This will be a foundation to rebuild our values and character and commit ourselves for decade long struggle.

#### **Purpose**

As the name suggests, preparatory phase assigned with certain task and organization was expected to fulfill that task before launching the new program phase. Organization has invested sixteen-month in equipping and preparing to face the challenge ahead. Therefore it is necessary to dissect our own efforts and assess our learning, their appropriateness and areas of improvement, if any.

As said earlier, learning appraisal is not something like assessment rather analytical study that enhances potential of individuals and to what extent it has contributed for growth of the organizational and its enhanced collective strength.

As we are beginning not only 3 years new program phase, but also 10 years

perspective plan, LA would provide us a required platform and foundation. So LA should enable us to assess the implications and compulsions arising out of the perspective plan.

**What would we like to get**

- To identify areas of improvement in observance with 10 years perspective.
- To assess the organizational strength in terms of system and capacity.

**How would we like to reach?****At organizational level**

- Organization is known by its system and capacity. Clear indication of evaluation finding was on specific changes in structure, system and process to enhance organizational capacity, to identify new approaches and method. To achieve this objective intensive discussion including all the stakeholder was done and appropriate changes has been made accordingly. By studying and analyzing the available instrument we will be aware that how far we have reached the goal.

**Analysis could be done on the following areas**

- Organizational structure that how functional and flexible it is?
- Available System to execute certain tasks.
- Capacity to handle the Issue and concern.

**At Perspective level**

- Perspective would determine and define our aspired goal and in long run what value we added. It sets the destination and helps in planning out strategy. Perspective is a good indicator to measure the organizational growth and organizational growth is determined by the impact that organization has brought on its environment internal and external. If we could influence thinking and perspective for pro poor development, SBSS would surely be benefited from the community and its resources. We have come across perspective building at three levels i.e. programme perspective, organizational perspective and institutional perspective, which could be analyze during this process.

**At Motivation level**

- Organization is not brick and mortar, but the people, their calling, conviction and capacity. So with sensitivity one should feel the people's concern their motivation. Motivated people add extra input in overall organizational thrust. Structure and system are tools to achieve the goal whereas motivated person is a living resource and laboratory where ideas germinate and yield result. Therefore this aspect of human resource needs to be studied that would decide growth and direction (purpose and meaning) to the organization.

### **Let us begin**

- This is a collective process involving all the stakeholders and facilitated by external experts. Focused-group discussion, discussion with individuals and a couple of field visits would help us collect the required information and also would benefit the group and individuals. Documents prepared earlier will be studied to collect information on individual response and contribution towards organizational change process. Twenty days of interactive process will be conducted at different level. At the first stage SBSS staff and selective DBSS coordinator will be called for interaction that will be followed by field visit and interaction with community people and DBSS staff.

### **Who will do it?**

- The Coordinator, Program Resource Team will Coordinate all efforts and ensure smooth sailing with support of external accompanier, whenever required. Two staff members each from SBSS and DBSS would support her. TL and GF would provide necessary support. If required, direction from the CC would be sought to bring synergy in action.
- The report would be presented to CC by the end of February 2006. The same would be discussed with SBSS and DBSS meeting. Further the report would be strengthened and enriched. We would like to share this with Resource Sharing Agencies (RSA) at the RT meeting to be held in 2006.

*Prepared by Amita Khalkho,*

*Coordinator, Program Resource Team and Group Facilitator, Gender Justice*

### **Brief Reflection on Learning Appraisal**

At the end of the Learning Appraisal, The LA Team captured a few reflections of the team members.

- This learning appraisal was a good exposure to sharpen my vision and strengthen my work.
- The process was enriching and gives opportunity to learn and share our knowledge. To enhance perspectives and knowledge, these exercises should be done at the DBSSs' and community level too.
- Sharpened my vision and given a wider perspective.
- Learnt certain skills. I can now relate better perspectives with programmatic interventions.
- This process really gave space to understand, to dialogue and debate on the change process.
- We came as a team, which gave certain moral support and faith in what we were doing.
- I feel grateful to be part of the process. The process was very flexible which gave space for learning. We had developed concepts and we tried to relate the concepts with the decision-making process. Let us make these concepts more practical to ensure that it is practiced at the Dioceses.
- I was not part of the entire process, which gives a feeling that I have missed an opportunity. I now see that there is always scope for corrections. The whole process is very futuristic and value added.

## Annexure 3: Classification of Issues and Strategic Focus

CNI Resource Centres for Action	Diocese	Issues and Strategic Focus
Livelihood and Food Security	5	<p><b>Eastern Himalayas:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Land rights issues, giving emphasize on the ownership of land and possession of land patta.</li> <li>● Livelihood issue – focusing on regularizing the PDS and ensuring BPL card distribution. Also mobilizing women for equal wages.</li> <li>● Restoration of tribal culture.</li> </ul> <p><b>North Eastern India:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Land rights issue – addressing problems of land mortgage. Livelihood concerns are mainly focussing on women &amp; income generating activities.</li> </ul> <p><b>Barrackpore:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Income generation through entrepreneurship development; ensuring EGS and representation in PRIs</li> </ul> <p><b>Durgapur:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensuring proper utilization of land by providing irrigation facilities.</li> </ul> <p><b>Kolkata:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Focus on right to food.</li> </ul>
Tribal Identity and Indigenous Rights	5	<p><b>Chotanagpur:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Restoring tribal identity – revival of Gram Sabhas and traditional local governance.</li> </ul> <p><b>Cuttack:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Focus on land rights – analyzing forest policy that denies tribal’s access to MFP ; also addressing</li> </ul>

livelihood issues related to BPL card.

**Patna:**

- Addressing land rights by questioning mushrooming of stone quarries. Using PESA to revive tribal Gram Sabhas.

**Phulbani:**

- Land rights related to land entitlement and enlistment of village in government list.

**Sambalpur:**

- Displacement of tribals due to lower suktel project. Focus on regularization of BPL cards.
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## Annexure 4: Need-based Capacities given to DBSSs' Staff

Capacity Given	Diocese	No of Staff
PRA	13	34
RBA	15	44
PME	13	43
Gender Sensitivity	12	30
LAN	17	28
Child Rights	1	2
PRI	10	40
BPL	10	40
TOT on SHGs	5	35
POs and SHGs	10	40
Financial Facilitation	10	10
PESA	1	1

## Annexure 5: A profile of DBSSs Staff and Registration Status

<b>CNI Centres For Social Action</b>	<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Registered /not registered</b>	<b>Staff strength</b>	<b>Staff Retrenched</b>
Livelihood and Food Security: Agra	Amritsar	Registered	25	2
	Agra	Registered	11	nil
	Lucknow	Not Registered	08	nil
	Bhopal	Registered	13	nil
	Rajasthan	Registered	11	nil
	Delhi	Not Registered	07	nil
Action Research on Livelihood and Food Security	Kolkata	Not registered	10	nil
	Barrack pore	Registered	12	01
	North East India	Registered	13	nil
	Eastern Himalayas	Not Registered	15	nil
	Durgapur	Not Registered	08	nil
Tribal Identity and Indigenous Rights	Chotanagpur	Registered	19	nil
	Patna	Not Registered	13	nil
	Phulbani	Not registered		nil
	Sambalpur	Registered		02
	Cuttack	Not Registered	11	nil
Land Rights and Dalit Studies	Marathwada	Registered	08	05
	Mumbai	Not Registered	08	nil
	Nagpur	Registered	13	nil
	Kolhapur	Not registered	08	02

Note: Currently programme activities have been withdrawn from 4 DBSS – Jabalpur, Nasik, Gujarat and Pune.

## Annexure 6: Learning Appraisal Itinerary

<b>Date/Day</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Meeting with Individual/ Group/Community</b>	<b>Methodology</b>
8/01/06 Sun	• Kolkata	• Meeting with LA team • Discussion with the Chief Coordinator	Group interaction
9/01/06 Mon	• Kolkata, Diocesan office	• Meeting with DBSS staff Kolkata	Group interaction Focused group discussion
9/01/06 Mon	• Kolkata, diocesan office	• Meeting with SBSS Chairman, Rt. Rev. P. S. P. Raju	
9/01/06 Mon	• Kolkata,	• Meeting of the LA team with BMS house Chief Coordinator	
10/01/06 Tue	• RC, Barrackpore • Ramkrishnapur	• Meeting with the RC staff • Meeting with the SHG women of Ramkrishnapur	Group interaction
11/01/06 Wed	• DBSS office Barrackpore	• Meeting with the DBSS staff & Chairman Individual reflection	Group interaction
12/01/06 Thu	• Kolkata • Alabamian • Travel to Kalahari	• Meeting with Facilitation team • Meeting with SHG & youth group of Altaberia village	Individual reflection Group interaction
13/01/06 Fri	• DBSS Patna, Taljhari • Sagarbhanga	• Meeting with DBSS staff team • Meeting with SHG member	Group interaction Individual reflection
14/01/06 Sat	• Kohabora • Travel to Kolkata	• Meeting with community people	Group interaction
15/01/06 Sun	• Travel to Mumbai		
16/01/06 Mon	• DBSS, Marathwada field visit Jalna area the [Keligaon & Ujjainpuri] • Aurangabad, DBSS office	• Meeting with the community and Gairan Dharak • Meeting with the DBSS staff	Focused group discussion  Individual reflection & discussion
17/01/06 Tue	• DBSS Marathwada field visit Aurangabad	• Meeting with the community and the Gairan Dharak and visit to the area [Niljaj gaon]	Focused group discussion
18/01/06 Wed	• RC, Pune	• Meeting with RC staff	Discussion

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# Organogram

to be made

# Vision

"Where there is justice in the land, fields and forest every living being will dance and sing"

# Mission

In the spirit of service and sacrifice of Christ, CNI-SBSS would like to accompany DBSS and its partners to engage with the reference communities, so that they will develop the capacity (skills and assets) to negotiate with the policy makers and to realize their rights and emerge as an alternative political force. To move towards this direction, communities should be sensitized socially, politically, economically and culturally to organize themselves to claim their rights over livelihood means while protecting their identity.

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Learning Organisation is one which

- Thrives on change and transformation
- Encourages experimentation
- Communicates success and failure
- Facilitates learning from the surrounding environment (i.e. from communities and beneficiaries)
- Facilitates learning from staff training and group learning
- Rewards learning
- Promotes a sense of caring

## **CNI Resource Centre for Social Action on Livelihood and Food Security**

17, Chandra Palace  
Dholpur House, M.G. Road  
Agra - 282 001  
Ph/Fax: 0562-2253762

## **CNI Resource Centre for Social Action on Land Rights and Dalit Studies**

Flat No.1 Gokul Mahal  
Opp. Madhuban Hotel  
Dhole Patil Road, Sangamwadi  
Pune - 411 001  
Ph/Fax: 020-26053079

## **CNI Resource Centre for Social Action Research on Livelihood and Food Security**

St. Stephen Church Compound  
11, RBC Road, Dum Dum  
Kolkata - 700 028  
Ph/Fax: 033-25297866

## **CNI Resource Centre for Social Action on Tribal Identity and Indigenous Rights**

Diocesan Village, Eprata Apartment  
Flat No. A-01, Near Sirom Toli Chowk  
Old Hazari Bagh Road  
Ranchi - 834 001  
Ph/Fax: 0651-2461680

# SBSS – A learning movement!

"Learning" is imparting knowledge, educating and building organizational culture together. Collectively, it is a process of review/ assessment or evaluation contributing to enhance knowledge or education and setting enlightened culture.

Learning should also be a continuous process and a key value for any organization that would like to impact its environment. Failure in sustaining such value may obliterate the relevance of the organization and may even lead to distancing itself from the communities with whom they work. For SBSS an opportunity came on its way through a 16 month preparatory phase/organisational development process after the evaluation in 2004. SBSS utilized this opportunity to learn from its past, attempted to change its present course of action and plan for future most appropriately taking its strengths and weakness into consideration. This document tries to capture the change, its relevance and character of the organisation which tries not only to be an organisation but emerge as a learning movement.



## **SYNODICAL BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES CHURCH OF NORTH INDIA**

CNI Bhawan, 16, Pandit Pant Marg, New Delhi-110001  
Phone: 91-11-23718168, 23351727 Fax: 091-11-23712126  
Email: [cnisbss@nda.vsnl.net.in](mailto:cnisbss@nda.vsnl.net.in) Website: [www.cnisbss.org](http://www.cnisbss.org)