

## **Incorporating Evaluation Findings and Recommendations into Planning**

### **Introduction**

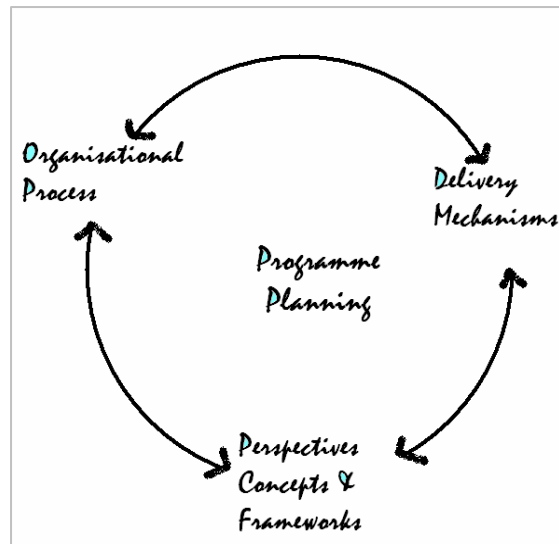
Following the recommendations made by external evaluation of SBSS-DBSSs held in 2008 (February – March), SBSS has gone through a process of self-reflection and brainstorming to explore how best to integrate the salient recommendations in its planning process. Subsequent to the evaluation, as a first step in their planning process, SBSS teams made planned visits to the DBSSs to interact with the reference communities and to be better informed about their constituencies. The SBSS' teams returned chastened with new learning and insights on how to take forward programmatic planning in the light of the findings of the evaluation report.

This was followed by two-day discussions (May 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of May, 2008) by a core team. The group based their discussions in the light of the major critique of the evaluation that SBSS-DBSSs initiatives should be based on - 'a fully constructed problem/contextual analysis and identification of location specific objectives.' More importantly, programme planning has to be disaggregated to make interventions specific to reference communities. Identical programmes cannot address context specific issues. All interventions have also to be assessed in a total context for sustainable impacts. Above all, programmatic planning and implementation would have to follow adaptive learning process approach. Respectively, the PME systems have to be dovetailed to this.

Dr. Shailendra Awale highlighted (rightly) that at one level SBSS has made several major shifts in its governance, organizational functioning and more importantly gaining a new identity within CNI and with other civil society organizations in the development sector. It is a pity that some of these significant shifts have not drawn the attention of the evaluators.

The planning and its process began actually where evaluation processes ended i.e. the point of reference for the planning process was the findings and recommendations (FR) and how to incorporate them so that the planning could move forward with adequate reflection and course correction. Once the evaluation got over as a task, SBSS went for an internal review. Almost all staff perused the document generally as well as with specificity. Discussion over the FR once again took place with RT partners. In this process the FR was crystallized into broad categories which demands further focus and retrospection from the team; like the question on how far the programme planning is participative and process-oriented; specific to the context and; it is internally driven. The assumption in fact was that there is much to be desired on SBSS' participative and process-oriented approach, contextualization of issues and concerns and making it as more and more as an internally driven process rather than externally driven one.

Having taken these important critiques, staffs in the subsequent discussions shared their views by asking fundamental question that if these are the concerns, then there is a need to reflect on the perspectives and concerns, delivery mechanism and organizational process to diffuse fragmentation in perspectives and compartmentalization of roles and responsibilities. For instance, we may have group facilitator for a particular issue or theme but this structural arrangement should neither send a message that, that particular GF is the sole owner of that issue nor restrict others from discussing on the issue.



“While reflecting on the perspectives, organizational process and systems and delivery mechanism, we should also keep it mind the shifts that SBSS could take seeing the needs of the community and the vision of SBSS over the last three years” said Dr. Awale (The shifts are given in the following page).

However, Dr. Shailendra drew attention to the fact that SBSS has to acknowledge that in its preoccupation with operationalisation of first phase - there has been a fragmentation and dilution in perspectives which is the fundamental driving force for the organisation. Group felt that along with other measures, robust systems should be constantly developed and renewed to sustain the interest, commitment and capacity of the staff. Interest and commitment of staff and partners of course cannot take place in vacuum as it has to be sustained by relevant and innovative systems in place which also helps in developing more clarity on shared understanding of perspectives.

**Organisational Process**

SBSS during the OD and in the subsequent days have attempted to rejuvenate itself through various organisational processes (OP) by creating an environment. The organisational processes are:

- Multi-tasking,
- Motivation
- Decision-making
- Appreciative-Enquiry
- Personal Experience
- Organizational Culture
  - Value Based
  - Collective working
- Induction process (personal vision)
- Championing individual causes

These are some of the organisational processes which SBSS has been experimenting with. Now with new planning process underway, it becomes increasingly important to ask the question - what is the learning for all SBSS staff and SBSS as an organisation. How these OP sustain the interest of the team, how each one is enjoying the team work, willing to be part of the team? Is every individual trying or willing to integrate the learning came out of these OP in their setting and in their systems at individual level and at a larger group level

The group briefly listed some of the radical shifts that SBSS made since the previous evaluation. It is important to mention that some of these shifts occurred during the last two years. While some of them which were planned at the beginning of the first phase and are in different stages of

implementation, a few evolved mid-way. More recently, new shifts are being planned and underway. The shifts are:

- Shift from single events to campaign mode interventions (how to make campaign as an important methodology with DBSS, FCFC and International organizations and institutions. In this process how SBSS can support campaigns at the DBSS level, undertake and be part of national level campaigns with FCFC partners and hold hand and express solidarity with international campaigns and movements).
- From being enabler to accompaniers.
- Moving and shifting from village level committees to CBOs and POs and planning towards movement building. (The 24 DBSSs are at different stages of evolution. This particular fact should be kept while processing the planning)
- Moving away from grant orientation to cost-reimbursement model
- More recently, developing strategies and initiatives to combine people-centered advocacy with state-level policy advocacy. This aims at expanding SBSS' constituency, bringing necessary changes in structures. The existing RCSAs are poised to become state level policy centres.
- Complementing people-centred advocacy with policy advocacy
- The CME has shifted its focus from diocese to congregation as change agents, building neighborhood communities and congregation communities and solidarity with the poor.
- Shifting from inward looking to outward orientation and expanding the organizational horizon.
- Inward looking to outward looking i.e. moving from the boundaries of diocese
- Linking financial governance with programmes
- The role of SBSS in places where the PO organisations have dared to embrace new challenges

As a learning organization, SBSS needs to continually renew itself and therefore the SBSS should locate its planning processes afresh within the context of the three parameters of:

- Revisiting the perspectives and strengthening them
- Deliverable Mechanisms and
- Organizational Processes.

### **Discussing the parameters for change**

To begin with the group addressed the planning process within the context of the following parameters, spelt under

- Revisiting the programme planning for course correction
- Review of (Existing) Systems and ways to strengthen them
- Perspective building and achieving clarity on concepts and frameworks and
- Organizational Processes.

### 1. Revisiting the programme planning for course correction

The programme planning starts with dioceses making their proposals at the first instance and they are also the prime accountability holders of what they propose to do during a phase. Once every diocese is through with its proposal it is send to SBSS. All the proposals broadly integrated at SBSS level and send as one proposal. After the approval of the proposal a large pan SBSS programme is designed. Precisely this was model followed in the last phase. Though it had its advantages, the evaluators critiqued by asking the fundamental question as how the programmes were implemented taking the specific context into consideration. (Though there was a plan to de-amalgamate the final proposal after the approval, it could not be done).

In this meeting, the group discussed the important steps that SBSS should take while undertaking the planning process. They are: *i) Understand, assess, analyze and programme needs/concerns/problems of the community ii) Constituency setting iii) Strategy iv) Expected outcomes v) Exit plan vi) Support required (a support includes both financial and accompaniment. In the accompaniment process, vii) SBSS should define its role in terms its commitment and partnership with DBSS, which may include: advocacy role, documentation, planning, networking, social analysis) and in terms of role beyond DBSS viii) Appraisal (the appraisal should be external and increment should be based on the recommendation of the appraisal)*

### 2. Strengthening (Existing) Systems

- Data Base
- PARAM
- MIS-Finance
- Reporting (simplifying the formats)

### 3. Perspective Building

Building perspectives through a common and collective process for a shared understanding on the concepts and position of the organisation helps in reaching the organisational goal effectively. In the current planning phase concerted effort needs to be taken to build perspectives collectively through i) programme planning ii) Karyasala (geo and issue specific) iii) Advocacy Documents iv) Lectures v) Scholarship vi) Exposure to campaigns/Movements vii) Video documentation viii) Street plays and through many other means which is left to the innovativeness of all in SBSS.

### 4. Delivery System

- Accompaniment services and role definition (at SBSS, DBSS, and beyond the boundaries of SBSS and DBSS)
- Staff Appraisal
- Documentation

- Newsletters, advocacy documents, case studies, experience
- Relevant, specific, objective-oriented, to strengthen perspectives and document the entire experience

### 5. Organizational Process

Organisational Process as explained in page 2 in the diagram as well as in the box needs to be re-looked in terms of what have done so far and what is the learning and how are we going to move ahead by applying in our setting and systems. (Refer page 2)

#### **Operationalising the concerns**

The question is how all these things could be conceptualized and incorporated as operational points in planning and identify which are those elements which should go through radical churning and shift so that the programme planning which is around the corner could be made more holistic and complementing<sup>1</sup>.

The reflection and broad classification on FR and shifts, if these have to be the points to begin or strengthen the planning process, then what are we supposed to do – the team deliberated that there should be some radical alteration in our thinking and conduct should be done at the earliest. The first and foremost exercise that we should do is to develop a shared understanding on perspectives, concepts and frameworks related to the issues and themes. It is not that SBSS is devoid of such elements but every opportunity should be taken and utilised to create platform where a missed group of SBSS thrash out on various issues and share collective vision on the chosen issue. This is the most important preamble and foundation on which the programme planning should be rested. Subsequently SBSS should

- Review and strengthen its role vis a vis with its interest, commitment and capacity
- Develop robust systems and organisational process (actually the group sounded out that the interest, commitment and capacity of the staff could not be created on vacuum but a healthy, progressive, and strong system should ensure that the interest, commitment and capacity of the staff is created and sustained)
- Focused attempts to build issue-based concepts
- Processing discourse and integrating them in planning and implementation

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<sup>1</sup> In fact during the last programme planning phase (LJR) guided and spearheaded by a perspective plan (PP). While extracting the LJR from the PP, there could have been a factor diluting the PP this had when retrospectively analyzed, looks like not complemented adequately by the perspectives and delivery system. Ideally, the perspective should be understood in terms of delivery systems and operationalised with dynamic organizational process. Even though we have developed this understanding whereby we have decided to complement programme planning with a dynamically complementing perspectives, delivery systems and organizational process, still the clarity on how to mainstream the cross-cutting themes like gender, people-centered advocacy and CME is the disturbing factor which remains to be solved.

- Integrating emerging issues and new vision for the same (for example in the earlier phase, though issues like climate change, disaster management and ecological conservation were thought of, still it was done with a minimum vision. Now it is important to develop them as independent issues and due consideration and programme focus should be given for the simple fact the decay of ecology, changing climate and increasing frequency of disasters have uprooted people and destroyed their life and assets. Secondly at a global level activism and development work on these issues are gaining momentum. So SBSS should keep itself relevant to the changing context and issues effectively)
- Gender Mainstreaming (in spite of some efforts, mainstreaming the concerns of the gender is yet to find a place in the programme planning. There is a great need to treat gender as an independent theme at the perspective level and mainstream it at the programme implementation level. At the field level, the issues of the gender and women should be discussed adequately so that it gets reflected in the programmes. For instance, if we are engaged in the proper implementation of NREGS, how to address the issue of women. Actually the scheme itself has listed out several features taking the aspirations as well as the problems of women. Like crèche, women caretaker for crèche, equal wages, distance lesser than 5 km for women, especially single women, medical aid etc. Now when we design our programme, we ensure that our campaigns and advocacy should monitor these components. A small team may go for 'gender tour' to understand women's issues in our own reference areas and how so far we have been trying to address them).

## APPENDIX

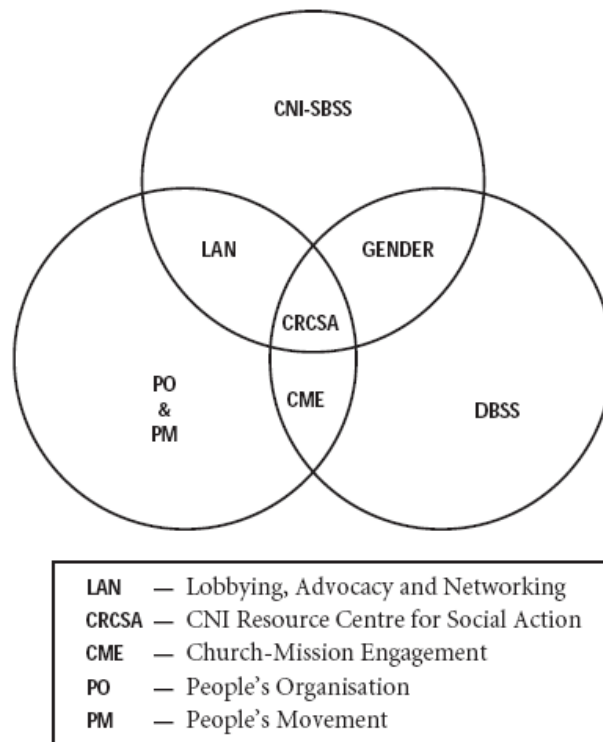
### 1. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

#### SBSS' relation with its Constituencies

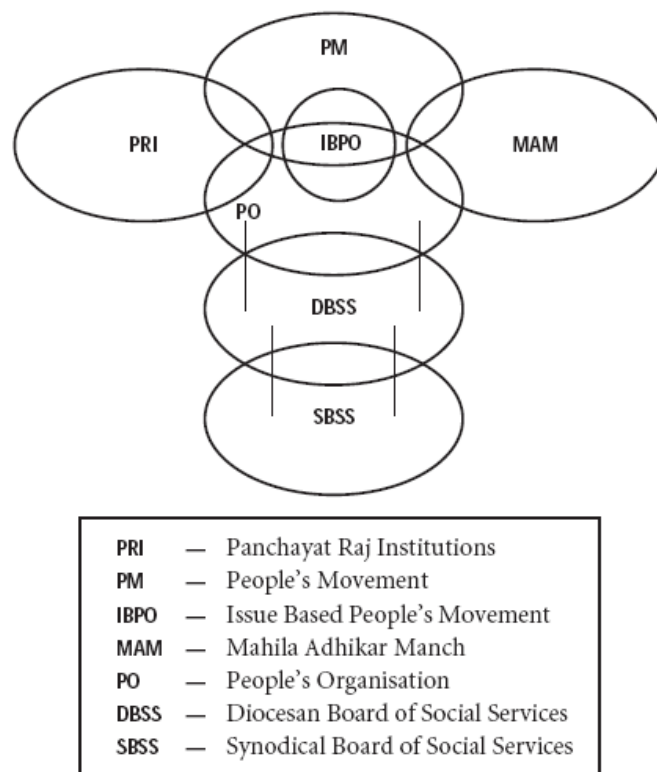


- Synodical Board of Social Services of Church of North India is an integral part of CNI-Synod.
- The Synodical Board is elected by CNI-Synod Ordinary Meeting once in 3 years.
- A few people from the Synodical Board forms the governing body as per the constitutional provision.
- The board appoints the Chief Functionary of SBSS to facilitate, monitor, promote and control the activities of SBSS.
- For community initiative SBSS comprises of 4 CNI-Resource Centres situated in Agra, Ranchi, Pune and Kolkata.

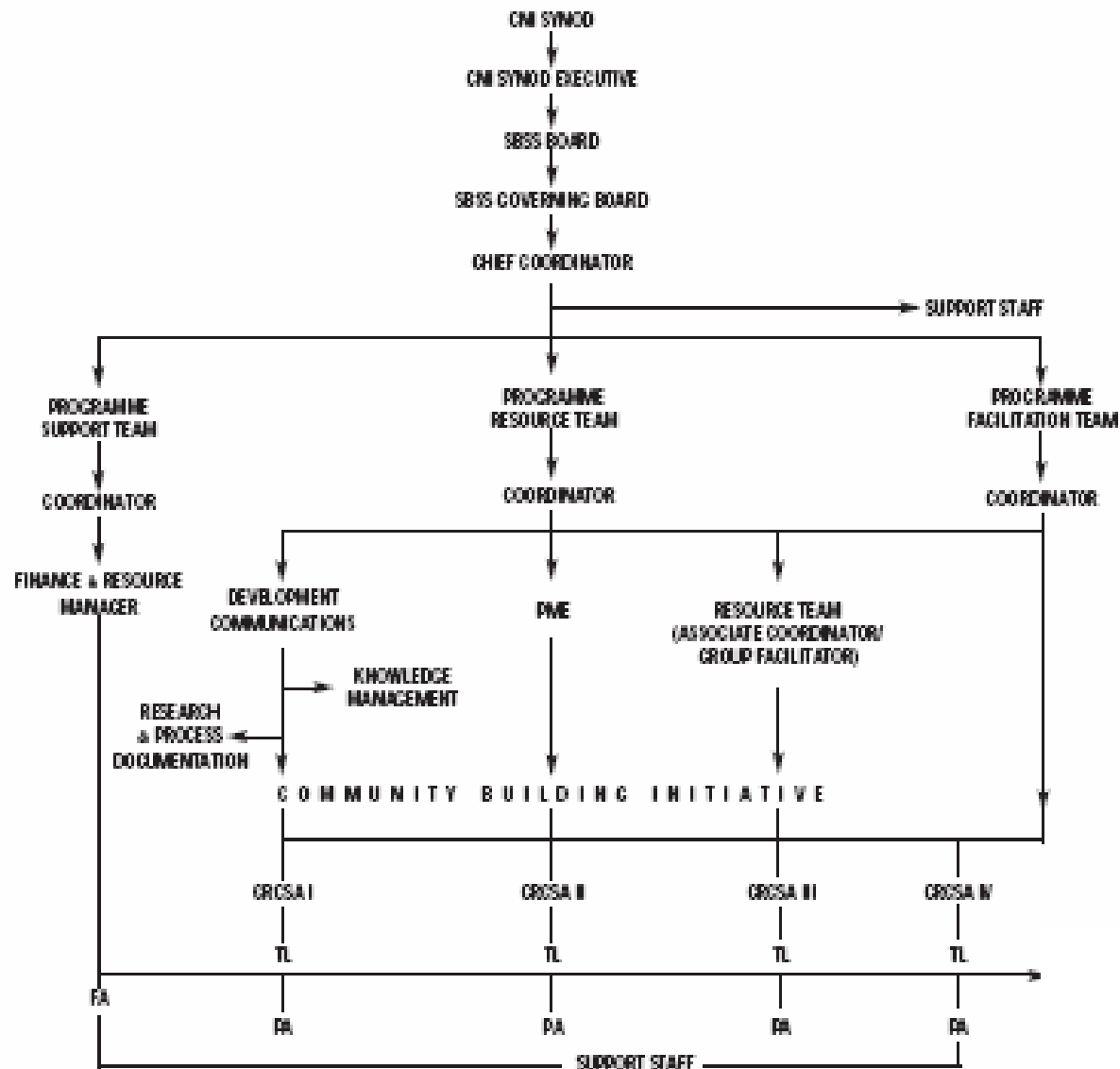
## Responsibility, Accountability and Communicati



## Making a difference in the community

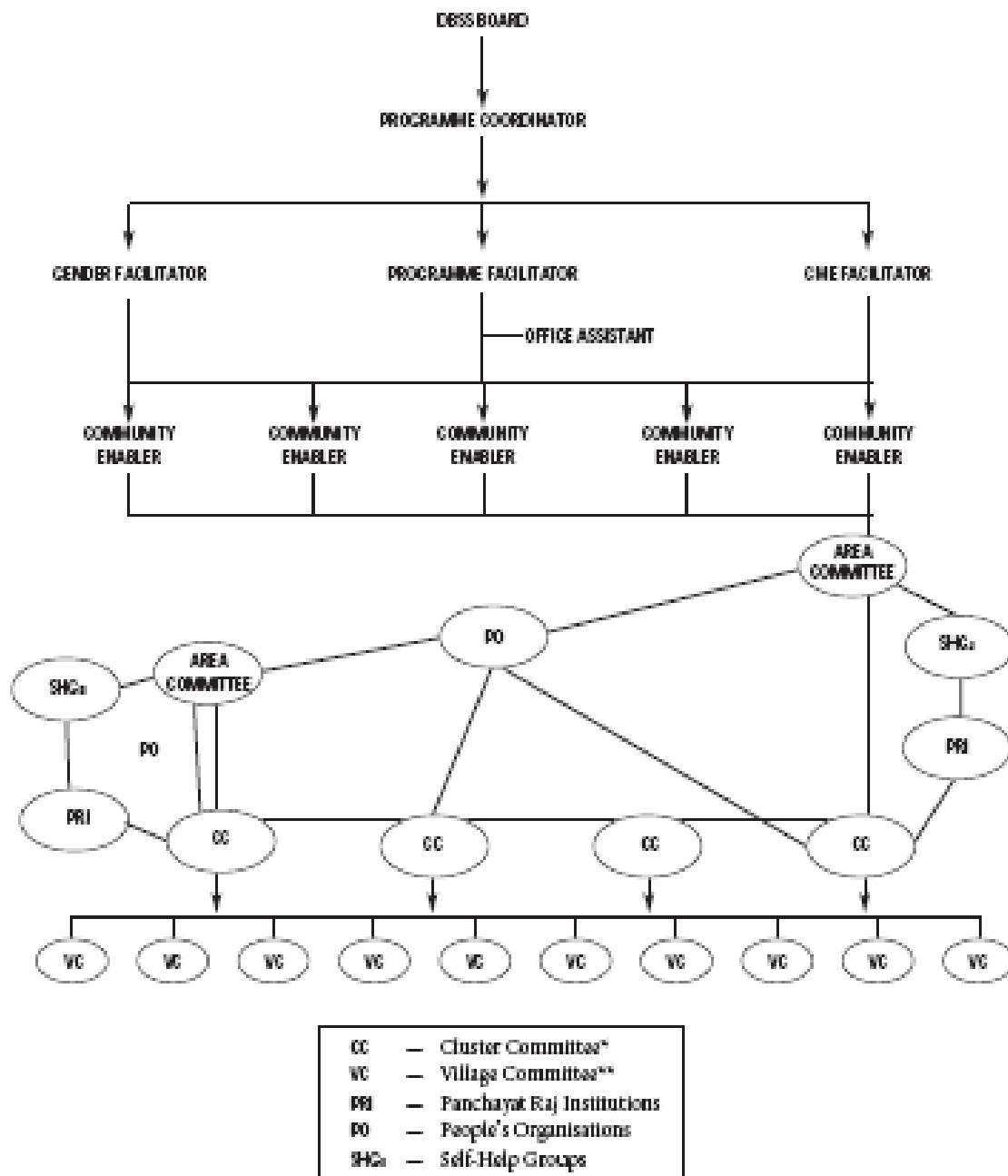


## Organisational Structure of SBSS



PNE	— Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation
TL	— Team Leader
PA	— Programme Associate
FA	— Finance Associate
GRCSA I	— CMI Resource Centre for Social Action on Land Rights and Dalit Studies
GRCSA II	— CMI Resource Centre for Social Action on Tribal Identity and Indigenous Rights
GRCSA III	— CMI Resource Centre for Social Action on Livelihood and Food Security
GRCSA IV	— CMI Resource Centre for Social Action Research on Livelihood and Food Security

## Organisational Structure at DBSS and Community



\*, \*\* For a common understanding the word 'committee' has been used. But in reality, they are not mere committees. They are transforming themselves into issue-based people's organisation (like *Kshetriya Adhikar Andolan*, *Prakhand Sangharsh Morcha* etc) *Dalit Samaj Vikas Parishad*, *Awaz-E-Awan*, *Purbanchal Nari Jagriti Sangharsh Samiti* and *Budh Ancha Sangram Parishad* and *Manav Adhikar Sangharsh Samiti* are some of the issued based movements which are already setting off waves of political mobilisation. With a renewed organisational structure, systems, and identity, SBSS considers them as source and energy of emerging people's movements.