



Centre for Social Equity and Inclusion

Making growth just and inclusive

**PARTNERING CIVIL SOCIETY
ORGANISATIONS OF THE MARGINALISED**

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Executive Summary

The Centre for Social Equity and Inclusion (CSEI) undertook an in-depth study of 135 civil society organizations (CSOs) led by Adivasi, Dalit and Muslim women and men in seven states of India, that is, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, which was supported by UNDP. The study analyzed the context, leadership, organizational make-up, and engagement of organizations led by the marginalized communities (MC-led CSOs) in an attempt to map their current and potential roles in promoting development within their communities, and making growth just and inclusive, which is important for deepening both development and democracy. Given the historical and deep-seated social exclusion that these communities have had to face with the resultant poverty, low human development indicators and low participation in decision-making forums, civil society organizations led by people from the same communities can play a vital role in their development even in the worst-off sub-groups and remote unreached areas. The study also attempts to initiate a dialogue to develop strategies for bringing together leaders of the CSOs and other development stakeholders, including the government, in ensuring the adequate participation of these organizations in the task of promoting inclusive development. The study was undertaken to create visibility on the development engagement and harness the available potential of CSOs from the marginalized communities, to address their capacity needs and recommend strategies for enhancing their stakes with the state and other development agencies.

The preliminary scanning of MC-led CSOs in each of the seven states was done by utilizing the available secondary information of the existing NGOs' network lists, personal visits and snowballing techniques to identify about 950 MC-led CSOs. This list was then narrowed down to reflect the population/gender distribution and diverse activities undertaken by these CSOs in the seven states. Field investigators collected data through 'structured interviews' with the chief functionaries (CFs) from September 2010 to January 2011. A total of 20 CSOs were studied from each state except Chhattisgarh, where 15 were studied. In May 2011, the findings were shared in a one-day consultation with NGOs/INGOs and UN agencies along with personal testimonies by the CFs, elaborating the barriers and constraints and chalking out the way forward. Similar processes are expected to be taken forward with the Planning Commission and the national and state governments too.

It is evident that these CSO leaders have personally overcome tremendous barriers from their families, communities, the larger society and even the State in accessing education and coming forward to work for their communities. They have been role models for other young people. Regardless of the other apprehensions about their abilities to manage programmes, they have a unique reach to, and connection with, their respective communities. A more inclusive framework for development interventions will thus help the civil society sector in strengthening democracy and reaching development benefits to the excluded and marginalized communities.

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ACRONYMS

AIDMAM- All India Dalit Mahila Adhikar Manch
AIDS- Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
APL- Above Poverty Line
BAMCEF- Backward and Minority Communities Employees' Federation
BDVS- Bihar Dalit Vikas Samiti
BGVS- Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti
BM- Board Member
BMMA- Bhartiya Muslim Mahila Andolan
BPL- Below Poverty Line
BSACS- Bihar State Aids Control Society
BSP- Bahujan Samaj Party
CAPART- Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology
CASA- Church's Auxiliary for Social Action
CBOs- Community Based Organizations
CDR- Centre for Dalit Rights
CEO- Chief Executive officer
CERD- Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination
CEDAW- Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CF- Chief Functionary
CSPSA- Chhattisgarh Special Public Security Act
CMM- Chhattisgarh Mukti Morcha
CRC- Convention on the Rights of the Child
CREJ- Campaign for Right to Education, Jharkhand
CRY- Child Rights and You
CSEI- Centre for Social Equity and Inclusion
CSO- Civil Society Organization
CSR- Corporate Social Responsibility
CSW- Commercial Sex Worker
CWS- Centre for World Solidarity
CWSN- Centre for World Solidarity Network
DAG- Dalit Action Group
DDA- Delhi Development Authority
DF- Dalit Foundation
DGP- Director General of Police
DHRM- Dalit Human Rights Monitoring
DM- District Magistrate
DRDA- District Rural Development Agency
DV Act- Domestic Violence Act
FCRA- Foreign Contribution Regulation Act
FIR- First Information Report
FRA -Forest Rights Act
FRCs- Forest Rights Committees
FYP- Financial Year Planning
HHI- Household Industry

HIV- Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HRD- Human Resource Development
ICCPR- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICERD- International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination
ICDS- Integrated Child Development Services
IGP- Income Generation Programme
INGOs- International Nongovernmental Organizations
IPAP- INGO Partnership Agreement Programme
ISI- Indian Social Institute
JJB- Juvenile Justice Board
JSY- Janani Suraksha Yojana
OBC- Other Backward Classes
OTELP- Odisha Tribal Empowerment Livelihood Project
MBA- Masters in Business Administration
MC- Marginalized Community
MC CSO- Marginalized Community led Civil Society Organization
MDG- Millennium Development Goals
MDM- Mid-Day Meal
MNC- Multinational Corporation
MNREGA- Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
MFP- Minor Forest Produce
MPSACS- Madhya Pradesh States Aids Control Society
MSW- Masters in Social Work
MTA- Mid-term Assessment
NACDOR- National Confederation of Dalit Organizations
NAWO- National Alliance of Women
NBJK- Nav Bharat Jagriti Kendra
NCC- National Cadet Corps
NCDHR- National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights
NCLP- National Child Labor Project
NCSJPD- Network of Civil Society for Justice, Peace and Development
NDF- National Dalit Federation
NET- Network for Empowerment and Transformation
NEUPA- National University of Educational Planning and Administration
NFDW- National Federation of Dalit Women
NFE -Non Formal Education
NFHS- National Family Health Survey
NGOs- Nongovernmental Organizations
NGO PS- NGO Partnership System
NRHM- National Rural Health Mission
NSS- National Sample Survey
NTFP- Non Timber Forest Product
NYK- Nehru Yuva Kendra
NYKS- Nehru Yuva Kendra Samiti
OHCHR- Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

OPD- Out Patient Department
PADI- People's Action for Development India
PACS- Poorest Area Civil Society Programme
PC PNDDT -Pre Conception and Pre Natal Diagnostic Techniques
PCR Act -Protection of Civil Right Act,1955
PDS -Public Distribution System
PESA- Pachayats Extension to Scheduled Areas
PHCs -Primary Health Centers
PIL -Public Interest Litigation
PRI -Panchayati Raj Institution
PTG -Primitive Tribe Group
PWD- People with Disability
PWDV Act- Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005
RCDRC- Raipur Churches Development and Relief Committee
RTE -Right to Education
RTF -Right to Food
RTI- Right to Information
SAN- South Asian Network
SC/ST (PoA) Act- Schedule Castes & Schedule Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act
SCSP- Schedule Caste Sub Plan
SCP- Special Component Plan
SEC- Social, Economic and Cultural Rights
SFDC- Solidarity for Development Communities
SGSY- Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana
SJSY- Shahari Jan Sahabhagi Yojana
SHGs- Self Help Groups
SSA- Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
SWC- Society for Weaker Sections
RBA- Rights Based Approach
READ- Rural Education and Development
TOT- Training of Trainer
TSP- Tribal Sub Plan
TI Project- Targeted Intervention
UN- United Nations
UDHR- Universal Declarations of Human Rights
UNDP- United Nations Development Programme
UNHDR- United Nations Human Development Report
UNICEF -United Nations Children's Fund
UPHSD -Uttar Pradesh Health System Development
UVPAN -Uttar Pradesh Voluntary Action Network
UPVHA- Uttar Pradesh Voluntary Health Association
UT- Union Territory
VANI- Voluntary Action Network India
VDC- Village Development Committees
WNTA- Wada Na Todo Abhiyan

WORLP- Western Orissa Rural Livelihood Programme
WPR- Work participation Rate
XISS- Xavier Institute of Social Service
XIDAS- Xavier Institute of Development Action and Studies

MAKING GROWTH JUST AND INCLUSIVE: PARTNERING CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS OF THE MARGINALIZED

INTRODUCTION

“India has entered the Eleventh Plan period with an impressive record of economic growth...A major weakness in the economy is that growth is not perceived as being sufficiently inclusive for many groups, especially the Scheduled Castes (SCs), the Scheduled Tribes (STs) and the minorities...The lack of inclusiveness is borne out by data on several dimensions of performance”.

11th FYP, Vol. 1, pg. 1

“Inclusive growth’ is thus seen as an instrument to ensure ‘social justice’ to Scheduled Castes and other similarly situated socially disadvantaged groups that are subjected to socio-economic disabilities, particularly those arising from untouchability and social exclusion.”

11th Plan Mid-term Appraisal, pg. 170

Given the unprecedented and high economic growth that has been consistently achieved in the country over the past decade¹, ensuring equity and inclusion by reaching development benefits to and expanding the development choices of the most marginalized communities has become even more important for the government and all development stakeholders. The Eleventh Five-Year Plan (XIth FYP) (2007–2012) has made ‘inclusive growth’ its core agenda. Civil society organizations (NGOs)² play a critical role in reaching the unreached, bringing in perspectives of the marginalized, monitoring impacts, ensuring accountability, and creating alternatives and innovations at the local, national and global levels. While a number of educated youth from the excluded social groups have promoted civil society organizations, they continue to remain invisible and marginalized, which also applies to their community situation in society at large. This study analyses the context, leadership, organizational make-up, and engagement of civil society organizations led by Adivasi, Dalit and Muslim women and men in seven states³ in an attempt to map their current and potential role in promoting development within their communities, and in making growth just and inclusive, which is imperative for promoting both development and democracy.

¹ The per annum growth rate of 7.7% achieved during the Tenth Five-Year Plan (Xth FYP) is reported to be unachieved during any other plan period. The Xth FYP period also saw an average per capita growth rate of 6.2% as compared to 3.5% during the IXth FYP period (11th FYP MTA, 2010).

² The term Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) is used co-terminus with Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) in this study.

³ The states are Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

CHAPTER 1

CONTEXT AND RATIONALE

“A participatory approach including the involvement of NGOs is crucial to any strategy for successful human development. The movement of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other self help organizations has gained considerable momentum and proven its effectiveness in enabling people to help themselves. They recognize that when people set their own goals, develop their own approaches and take their own decisions, human creativity and local problem solving skills are released and the resulting development is more likely to be more self-sustaining. A comprehensive policy for the participation of NGOs is essential for any viable strategy of human development.”⁴

UNHDR, 1990

This chapter analyses the human development indicators of the marginalized communities, the impact of the social exclusion they face, and the role of civil society organizations (CSOs) in development interventions. Strengthening marginalized community-led CSOs can become an important and pragmatic strategy for achieving just and inclusive development through equitable participation in the social development sector.

1. Marginalized Communities: Rights and Development

1.1 Marginalized Communities: Inequalities in Human Development Indicators

A large majority of the vulnerable and marginalized people in India belong to specific social groups such as Adivasi, Dalit and Muslim minorities, with women from these communities suffering many times more than their male counterparts. The Adivasi, Dalit and Minorities together constitute 43%⁵ of our population, and comprise SCs (16.2%), STs (8.2%), and Muslim and other minority communities (18.4%). While it is not right to say that there are no vulnerable and marginalized members in other social groups, it is true that members of these three sections of society suffer from additional vulnerabilities that the poor from other social groups do not suffer. The nature and extent of exclusion they endure on account of stereotyping, untouchability, discrimination, violence, and economic exploitation are unique in many ways. The victims of such exclusion face barriers from state officials, society and even development workers in accessing available, routine and even mandated services, opportunities or protection. This impact is reflected in their intergenerational poverty, invisibility, human rights violations and persistent inequalities in human development indicators between them and other social groups. The exclusions often amplify the adversities on women and more vulnerable sub-groups within these communities. Worse still, children become the unwitting bearers of such discrimination owing to the vulnerabilities of childhood.

⁴ Human Development Report, 19 90, UNDP

⁵ Census 2001, reported in 11th FYP MTA, chapter 8

Table 1.1 Human Development Indicators: A Comparison (2004-05)

Human Development Indicators	SC	ST	Muslim*	OC
Poverty—Percentage of Poor (rural)	36	46	33	21
Poverty—Percentage of Poor (urban)	38	35	44	21
Infant Mortality Rates (per 1000 live births), 2005-06 (NFHS 3)	66	62	52	49
Under-five Mortality, (2005-06 NFHS 3)	88	96	70	59
Percentage of children with anemia (2005-06, NFHS 3)	72	77	70	64
Percentage of self-employed cultivators	16	48	-	41
Percentage of wage labour—Rural	61	49	-	25
Percentage of casual labour—Urban	26	26	-	7
Value of assets per household in rupees (1992)	49,189	52,660	-	134,500
Literacy Rate—Rural, 2001	51	45	53	63
Literacy Rate—Urban, 2001	68	69	70	82
Total number of registered cases of atrocity and discrimination (1992-2001)	285,871	47,225		

Sources: Caste, Ethnic Group Inequality, 2000; Development Challenges in Extremist-affected Areas: Report of an Expert Group, pg. 4:

*Data is taken from “Social, Educational and Economic Status of the Muslim Communities: Report, Prime Minister’s High Level Committee, 2006; Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Other Castes (OCs)”.

In the context of the above mentioned inequalities, the 11th FYP chose to make ‘faster and inclusive growth’ its overarching frame.

1.2. Inclusive Growth in the 11th FYP (2007–2012): Promise and Performance

“Inclusion is not opening the wicket gate so that a few marginalized will enter and socialize with the mainstream, giving a semblance of inclusion. It involves opening the gate wide at its hinges to create a truly inclusive society”.

Young educated activist from Bihar

Given the growth rate of 7.74% per annum achieved in the Xth FYP (2002–2006), which was the highest ever achieved during any Plan period⁶, the 11th FYP (2007–2012) recognized the need to bring about a broad-based improvement in the living standards of the people and listed ‘Inclusive Growth’ as its core agenda.

“We also need to ensure that growth is widely spread so that its benefits, in terms of income and employment, are adequately shared by the poor and weaker sections of our society,

⁶ Xlth FYP Foreword.

*especially scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, other backward classes and minorities. For this to happen, growth should be inclusive in its broadest sense”*⁷

Recognizing that the disadvantaged groups, including SCs, STs and minorities had ‘benefited less than they should have’,⁸ the approach adopted in the Plan was to promote inclusiveness through: i) broad basing growth, and ii) implementing programmes to overcome specific deficiencies, for which 27 measurable indicators were identified in the critical areas of poverty reduction, healthcare, education, other essential services, and livelihood support. The concepts of ‘Effective Governance in the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)’ and ‘Financial Inclusion’ were also rightly recognized as being critical for ensuring inclusive growth and development. In order to facilitate better coordination of civil society engagement with the government, the Planning Commission initiated an NGO Partnership System (NGO PS).

The Mid-term Assessment in 2010, three years into the 11th FYP, reviewed the trends and patterns of inclusive growth, and reported:

*“... Much more needs to be done to ensure that socially disadvantaged groups take full advantage of India’s growth story... This calls for a three pronged strategy consisting of: i) social empowerment, ii) economic empowerment, and iii) social justice for removal of disparities and elimination of exploitation”*⁹ (MTA, p.170).

A review of the MTA report indicates that it has analyzed the constraints and limitations in infrastructure, and the capacity of duty-bearers and institutional limitations in considerable depth. The report, however, is inadequate in terms of analyzing the strategies adopted to build capacities, engage with citizens, particularly members of the marginalized communities, or to address their limitations and the barriers they face by engaging with institutions and duty bearers. The report also falls short in terms of not being able to dwell on the necessity of creating a larger public environment to promote participation and empowerment among the marginalized. To cite an example, the MTA identified two constraints in the functioning of the PRIs, viz. i) inadequate capacity of elected representatives and panchayat to perform their envisaged roles, and ii) the availability of limited manpower, infrastructure and resources for implementing their plans (MTA, p.49). Here, one needs to add a third and equally important dimension, namely the barriers and constraints confronting communities, particularly the marginalized sections, in their attempts to participate in the development process and to demand accountability from duty-bearers for the implementation of rights, entitlements and services.

There is an urgent need to devise strategies for strengthening the marginalized communities, thereby enabling them to effectively demand their share in and to benefit from the growth and development of the country. These imperatives do not seem to have been sufficiently highlighted in the MTA report.

⁷ XIth FYP Foreword.

⁸ XIth FYP Preface.

⁹ MTA, p.170.

There is also a need to review the basic assumptions of access, quality and outcomes of services, when a majority of the marginalized sections are unable to derive any meaningful benefit from these services. Further, the fact that among the marginalized, only a handful of children out of the 100 who enrolled in class 1 successfully completed class X despite general and special provisions, is a matter of concern and necessitates a serious appraisal of the entire education system in the country. Similarly, the high levels of malnutrition prevalent among the children of marginalized communities calls for a review of the existing childcare and nutrition programmes and the purported benefits they offer to these communities.

Table 1.2 School Dropout Rates by Social Groups, 2007-08

Social Group	Dropouts in classes 1-V	Dropouts in classes 1-VIII	Dropouts in classes 1-X
SC	31.9	52.6	68.1
ST	32.2	63.4	76.5
All	25.5	43.0	56.8

Source: Annual Report 2009-2010.¹⁰

1.3 Marginalized Communities are Rights-holders

India is committed to implementing a human-rights based approach to development through both its Constitution as well as by virtue of being a signatory to many international conventions. With its focus on people, on promoting equal opportunities and choices for all, and on recognizing the inherent dignity and worth of each individual without discrimination, the Constitution overturned the traditional caste-based hierarchical and discriminatory values and practices that were earlier prevalent in India. While underscoring every person's right to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural, and political development individually and collectively, the Constitution provides special compensatory and promotional measures to SCs and STs. Further laws have also stressed the need to ensure participation, empowerment, equity and accountability to vulnerable groups. At the global level, India is a signatory to many conventions including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). These conventions further reiterate the values of human dignity, equality and non-discrimination for any individual or group of people.

The rights-based approach does not accept any trade-off between rights and development, and seeks to identify who actually is vulnerable in a specific context, to check whether the benefits of development are fairly distributed among all the potential beneficiaries, and to

¹⁰ Annual Report 2009-2010, Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD), Government of India (GoI).

isolate those who are excluded and those who benefit from development processes. It is also important to note that this approach is opposed to reinforcing the existing power imbalances, while stressing participation in development. It stresses on the empowerment of local actors, while focusing on beneficiaries as the 'owners of rights and leaders of development'¹¹. The positive obligations inherent in the approach are to 'respect, fulfill and protect', and the negative obligation is to 'abstain from violating'. In this context, the marginalized communities in India deserve a special focus in development rights and participation for various reasons such as for their large numbers, for having suffered exclusion for generations, for continuing to face discrimination, for being the victims of human rights violations, and for having to endure economic exploitation.

1.4 Strengthening Democracy and Development

Any engagement with the marginalized communities highlights their concerns in terms of not being able to access information, social capital and services from the state. They are always looking for individuals and organizations who can help them access the benefits of growth and development. The increased enrolment of the children of the marginalized in schools, incidents of the marginalized falling prey to corruption while seeking services, their attempts to access private education and health services whenever they can afford to do so, and their active engagement in the electoral processes have to be recognized as part of their efforts to participate in and benefit from growth and development. On the other hand, their non-participation in many areas arises more from the constraints and barriers they regularly face, than from their disinterest or negligence.

Since development and democracy are the twin pillars that can promote their participation and bring them benefits, members of the marginalized communities are actively engaged in the electoral process. A study¹² of 2600 SC households across various urban poor habitations in Delhi showed that 90% of the families surveyed had voter ID cards and actively exercised their franchise, while only negligible numbers accessed other entitlements and provisions, including house *patta* (2%), housing (12%), Below the Poverty Line (BPL) cards (19%), Above the Poverty Line (APL) cards (30%), old age pensions (3%), and loans from the bank (0.4%). Thus, the marginalized communities are participating in the democratic political process. However, they are excluded from the democratic governance and development process when it comes to accessing rights and entitlements.

In view of all the efforts that have been invested in building institutional capacities and strengthening duty-bearers, it is time to focus on genuinely strengthening the rights-holders among the marginalized communities. This entails identifying their needs and issues through consultations, creating the necessary strategies to address those needs, investing in capacity building, supporting their institution-building, and promoting an interface between these communities and other stakeholders.

¹¹ Nowosad, O. 'A Human Rights Based Approach to Development: Strategies and Challenges', OHCHR.

¹² *Recasting Delhi: Towards Dalit Right to Life and Dignity*, NCDHR and others, 2011, (unpublished study).

In addition to more concrete measures of institutionalizing the capacity building programmes for MC-led CSOs and strengthening the voices of people from these communities, there is also a need to identify persons and institutions, primarily from within the communities themselves, who can handhold marginalized persons and journey with them in the process of empowerment and strengthening of civil society organizations from the marginalized.

2. Social Exclusion and Challenges of Inclusive Growth

2.1 Social Exclusion: Structure and Practice

The first step towards addressing the issue of exclusion is to recognize that our society is actually founded on the concept of social exclusion of large sections of people, and on privileging a few on the basis of a highly rigid social structure of caste. This social structure is not limited to the Hindu community alone, but is spread across the polity at large. Indian society is, in fact, characterized by a water-tight compartmentalization of residence, occupation, asset-holding, learning, socio-economic mobility, decision-making, privileges, and obligations, all of which have led to the creation of an elaborate set of social norms that continue to take precedence over Constitutional values, laws and rules. While some of these norms have been diluted over time, new glass ceilings have also emerged, particularly with regard to socio-economic mobility.

The literature on social exclusion identifies: i) exclusion based on identity, that is, primarily the beliefs and practices of the said community, which is particularly applicable in the case of SCs, STs and minority communities; ii) exclusion based on common characteristics such as gender, occupation and lifestyle, in addition to exclusion affecting people with disabilities; iii) geographic exclusion faced by communities residing in hard-to-reach areas, especially Adivasi communities in our society, who face disadvantages in accessing most services and provisions, and are also subjected to constant attempts to displace them from their natural position as custodians of rich natural resources; and iv) inclusion that is forced or on unequal terms. These categories do not represent a water-tight classification, nor are they intended to create a taxonomy on exclusion. However, the multiple and complex nature of exclusion and its intersectionality is rapidly gaining recognition. In this context, the renowned economist and Nobel laureate, Prof. Amartya Sen's exposition on the multiple nature of one's identity and the necessary freedom to assert one's identity based on one's choice and the potential of violence in singling out certain identities is relevant too¹³.

Exclusion can be: i) actively legislated-intentional, ii) passive-default. The intersectionality, multiple exclusion, and multi-dimensionality of exclusion have led people to try to understand and address the issue of exclusion. It needs to be recognized that persistent social exclusion also leads to self-exclusion among the excluded. It is important to keep in

¹³ Sen, A, '*Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny*'. Penguin Books, 2006.

mind that socially excluded communities are not homogenous, and that they, in turn, are disabled by other vectors of exclusion and sub-groups facing exclusion within each community. Irrespective of the nature of the exclusion and its causes, all forms of exclusion lead to identifiable negative impacts.

2.2. Negative Impacts of Social Exclusion

- 1. Barriers in social relationships:** Social exclusion of any form leads to segregation, seclusion, and attempts to ghettoize and create barriers in crossing boundaries and building social relationships. It limits social capital formation among the marginalized communities and prevents an understanding of the real issues faced by them .
- 2. Unequal access to development services:** The administration, by and large, reflects the prevalent hierarchy and rigid exclusionary mindset of the society. This often results in apathy, negligence, non-implementation and non-accountability of the duty-bearers who come from dominant communities towards marginalized sections. Consequently, intentionally or by default, development services do not reach the marginalized communities, while their own vulnerability and social exclusion often act as barriers in accessing these services too. The development challenges¹⁴ and inequalities among SCs, STs, Muslims and other communities noted earlier are the outcomes. The disproportionately high incidences of chronic poverty among historically marginalized groups such as SCs, STs and other socially disadvantaged groups has been proven through various studies¹⁵ and papers.¹⁶
- 3. Perpetration of violence:** The perpetration of violence against those below one's caste is sanctioned by the caste system. There are also pre-specified norms about the behavior, demands or aspirations of the marginalized communities. Any flouting of such norms by Adivasis and Dalits to secure their human rights and lawful entitlements are often met with resistance, and even violence, including from the representatives of the state¹⁷. In the case of Adivasis, most of the human rights violations against them occur in the context of the requisite services not reaching them and in efforts to displace them from their natural environment.
- 4. Additional adversities faced by Women:** Across social groups, patriarchy adds another layer of gender-based exclusion to other forms of exclusion and women face discrimination in many areas of life. These, however, vary significantly in accordance with the economic, social and ethnic backgrounds of the women.
- 5. Unwitting bearers of exclusion:** Children from the marginalized communities are not protected against exclusion and discrimination by social institutions for welfare and development. Instead, they are often introduced to exclusion in public institutions like

¹⁴ Report of an expert group to Planning Commission, 'Development challenges in extremist affected area', Government of India, 2008.

¹⁵ Mehta, A.K. and Shah,A. 'Chronic Poverty In India: Overview Study', Chronic Poverty Research Centre, 2001.

¹⁶ Krishna, A. , 'Characteristics and patterns of intergenerational poverty traps and escapes in rural north India', Working paper No. 189, Chronic Poverty Research Centre, 2011.

¹⁷ India Human Rights Report, 2009, Asian Centre for Human Rights (ACHR).

schools¹⁸. They are often victimized right from their schooling years¹⁹ and bear the brunt of exclusion even more than adults.

3. Civil Society Organizations of the Marginalized in India

3.1 Civil Society Organizations in India

According to some estimates, there are about 1.5 million civil society organizations in India, and one can be assured that many more operating in remote areas have not been recognized, registered or counted. Many of these NGOs would be those led by members of marginalized communities themselves, including Adivasis, Dalits or Muslims.

It is possible to trace the various phases in the evolution of civil society organizations in India as follows: i) early charity and welfare work; ii) the rise of national consciousness and community associations in the colonial period; iii) post-Independence community development and engagement with voluntary organizations; iv) advent of more formal arrangements for Government – non-government collaboration like the People’s Action for Development India (PADI) and later the Council for Advancement of People’s Action and Rural Technology (CAPART); and v) post-globalization discussions on the role and engagement of NGOs²⁰.

‘Civil society space’ needs to be considered as a critical space that performs the following three main functions²¹:

- i) Critiquing the reach and delivery of state provisions to the poor and marginalized communities,
- ii) Facilitating service delivery to the unreached populations and regions, and
- iii) Envisioning and working for societal transformations towards ensuring greater equality, liberty, fraternity and justice as enunciated in the Constitution.

In this context, it is imperative to acknowledge the existence of marginalized communities and their civil society organizations, and to establish collaborative linkages with them. When one analyses the established development indicators in the areas of education,

¹⁸ Sedwal, M. and Kamat, S. , *‘Education and Social Equity with a special focus on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Elementary Education’*, National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NEUPA), 2008

¹⁹ *‘Dalit Children in India’: Notes from a survey ‘Voices of Children of Manual Scavengers’ by the Indian human rights organization Navsarjan Trust and ‘Understanding Untouchability’*, Navsarjan and RFK Centre, July, 2007.

²⁰ These types of classifications are reflected in the works of a number of authors when they discuss the different phases of NGO work in India.

²¹ Amitabh Behar *Peoples’ Social Movement : An alternative perspective on forest management in India*; Overseas Development Institute, UK, December 2002.

nutrition, mortality rates of children and women, consumption expenditure and employment rates, the trajectory of development is beset with endemic pockets of deficits, growing inequalities and growing unrest. The marginalized communities seem to be paying the price for the development and economic growth of the eleven cycles of FYPs and sixty-three years of Independence. Thankfully, we have begun to track the story within the story, the inequalities within economic growth, and the under-development within the concept of shining India. These are primarily the stories of the Adivasis, the Dalits and the Muslims, and their children and women, who constitute 40% of our population.

3.2 Invisibility of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) from Marginalized Communities (MCs)

Given that CSOs by no means represent a homogenous group, their complexity and multiple realities and voices have now started to be recognized. However, these realities are even more complex, even within the more confined spaces of nations and sub-nations, and within communities and families, which compels us to study the various dimensions of these realities more minutely at both the macro and micro levels. Various reasons may be attributed to the invisibility of voluntary efforts on the part of the marginalized communities. It could be because these communities have somewhat differentiated agendas that are at divergence from the mainstream agendas.

The Dalit agendas, for instance, include ensuring social justice, equality and elimination of untouchability right from the time of the struggle for independence from colonial rule, while the Adivasi struggles were against the *dikus*²², which included both the British as well as the local zamindars, mahajans and money lenders. Thus, the mobilization and organization of marginalized communities had inherent complexities that did not naturally fit into the straight line narrative of colonial rule and the demand for the colonizers to leave India and give it freedom. Along with the fact that written narratives are not part of these communities, the existence of language barriers, cultural barriers and physical barriers precluded the task of bringing their narratives to the fore. They were, however, active and vibrant, and in fact, initial movements against the British can be traced to the Adivasi revolts.

The pertinent question that arises is: What is the history of these communities in terms of their contribution to the processes of development and empowerment within the country? The dominant narratives do not recognize their narratives, perhaps because these dominant narratives do not value their development, and may even be threatened by recognition of the latter. One is reminded of the saying, "Until the lions have their own historians, tales of the hunts shall always glorify the hunter"²³. Just as gender debates and the narratives of women, despite being different from the conventional narratives and even 'threatening', have begun to influence our perceptions and plans, similarly, it is important

²² A term used by Adivasis to denote outsiders including thieves.

²³ Nigerian proverb popular among the Igbo community.

to recognize and ensure that the narratives and agency of the marginalized are incorporated into our development space.

3.3. Patchy Sketch of Adivasi, Dalit and Muslim Engagement in Development and Empowerment

The word 'patchy' has been used to describe the engagement of the marginalized in the task of development and empowerment because this engagement is too complex to be adequately captured, the communities and their interventions are vast and defy classification, no systematic recorded materials are available, and a more thorough treatise on the matter is beyond the scope of this study.

1. Adivasi-led Organizations:

A continuous thread of exploitation of Adivasi communities, and the destruction of their way of life and resources can be observed from colonial times to the present. This was achieved through the promulgation of alien land tenure laws, the increasing reach of inimical political and commercial laws, the tapping of huge mineral resources, and the presence of dikus, whose interests are often termed as 'larger development interests'. The lack of proper implementation of the supportive laws, state provisions and services further alienates the Adivasi community. Human rights violations against them have become part of the common strategies of the State in its efforts to protect its own as well as corporate interests. Adivasi and non-Adivasi members, who support and speak up for Adivasi concerns and interests, are easily labeled as 'Naxalite' and State laws are used against them.²⁴

For various socio-economic reasons Adivasi women are additionally subjected to sexual exploitation, violence and patriarchal domination through the practice of witch hunting²⁵.

In this context, the protests of Adivasi communities, right from colonial times, have manifested in mass uprisings, some of which were local, while others spread further. The demand for independent states made by the Adivasis are also ostensibly part of the larger demands to protect their ways of life, identity, culture, and resources, with some demands, such as for a separate state of Jharkhand, going back to even the pre-Independence period. Mass organizing has been undertaken for the protection of forests (the 'Chipko movement), for the prevention of development projects that displace them, and for carrying out anti-mining and other similar protests. The core agenda of the Adivasis is to address the issues of displacement and migration, and to promote the right to land, water and forest under the *Jal-Jangal-Zameen* objective. A lot of work is also being done to ensure the proper implementation of the Forest Rights Act and Panchayat Extension in Scheduled Areas Act (PESA).

²⁴ 'Key witness in Adivasi killings becomes news material'- January 16, 2010 / The Hindu

²⁵ 'Superstition to Savagery –Women Accused of witchcraft Face Violence in Rural India', From The Washington Post, August 8,2005

The NGO process among the Adivasis is, however, more recent. Community-based organizations (CBOs) constitute the more prevalent structures that provide space for community leadership and mass membership. There is a growing recognition of the need for NGO structures to fit into and participate in the national and international development processes. The two do co-exist in most cases. While these organizations undertake work on national development indicators like education, healthcare and livelihood, they are additionally concerned with other factors like identity, language and culture, forest resources, and community constraints like alcoholism that may not exactly fit into the mainstream agenda.

2. Dalit-led Organizations

Efforts made since the period of Mahatma Phule and Dr Ambedkar through to the Durban Conference²⁶, in addition to more than sixty years of constant struggle by the Dalit movements, have not only succeeded in making caste-based discrimination and the oppression of Dalit communities by dominant castes a nationwide issue, but also highlighted it as a global human rights issue. Dalit organizations have for long been addressing issues from social and cultural paradigms in their fight against untouchability and discrimination, and have been demanding dignity and equality. Following the call given by Dr Ambedkar to educate, organize, and agitate, and leading the path through mass organizations, political movements and religious conversions, the major movements within the community have been building employees' associations like BAMCEF (Backward and Minority Communities Employees' Federation), the SC/ST employees associations, and Ambedkar youth associations, besides promoting political parties, with the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) being the most prominent among them. Mass organization by Dalits against violence and atrocities constitute a feature of several states. Many Dalit youth have also found the Left parties to be sympathetic to their cause, and comprise the cadre and masses in many of these parties.

As among the NGOs for other marginalized communities, NGOs led by Dalits are a more recent phenomenon and have been initiated by educated Dalit youth, who earlier worked with other development agencies. In addition, educated Christian Dalit youth have also found the development sector to be conducive to working with the community. These different processes have resulted in the setting up of a large number of Dalit-led CSOs across the country, with many of them boasting of a history that is older than that of Muslim- and Adivasi-led CSOs. Strong state and national networks have also been forged in the past decade. The prime focus of these organizations is to initiate action against violence, atrocities and human rights violations, besides ensuring civil and political rights. The SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act has played a prominent role in this process. The CSOs have also evolved relevant mechanisms for conducting fact-findings and undertaking legal interventions, besides holding the State accountable for protection under the Act. Issues concerning Dalit women and children issues have also emerged as separate

²⁶ Caste-based discrimination figured prominently in the World Conference against Racism held in Durban in 2001.

concerns in more recent years. Dalit-led CSOs have also been able to raise the development concerns regarding the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA), Right To Food (RTF), Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRI), Right to Information Act (RTI), Forest Rights Act (FRA), etc. in the context of their communities and as part of larger civil society forums.

3. Muslim-led Organizations

The partition of the country into India and Pakistan was a watershed experience for the Muslims in this country, even for those who decided to stay back in India. Until almost 2005, fighting discrimination and exclusion, and countering negative propaganda about their religion and its people, besides promoting unity within the community, took front stage for the Muslim community. Protecting the autonomy of the religion and its values was also paramount, with religious leaders taking the lead in this sphere. The Babri Masjid demolition (1992), the Mumbai riots (1993), and the Gujarat riots (2002), in addition to other communal riots in different parts of the country, increased the insecurity, issues of identity and threat perceptions on both (Muslim and Hindu) sides²⁷. The Sachar Committee Report²⁸, which was published in 2006, however, changed the environment by highlighting the social, educational and economic backwardness of the Muslim community, the systemic discrimination it faced and official prejudices prevalent against the community. This report worked to promote a civil society dialogue on these issues, thereby helping incorporate the community's issues into civil society discussions on development.

Interestingly, during the last five years, new leaders have emerged from within the community and are addressing the issue of the socio-economic backwardness of the community. A large number of educated youth, including women, have registered their NGOs working to mitigate the economic and educational deprivations faced by the community, besides also keeping an eye on the steps proposed by the government based on the recommendations of the Sachar Committee Report. A majority of the CSOs focus on Muslim women's rights, legal awareness issues, livelihood opportunities, education, healthcare, citizenship rights, access to development services, the expanding rights space, and enhancement of leadership skills, in addition to the primary challenge of fostering peace, resolving conflicts, and maintaining communal harmony at all costs. Muslim women have also come forward to question their religion and its practices in relation to women's human rights and are challenging both State and religious oppression. Further, they have also been focusing on the issue of domestic violence.

4. Need to Partner CSOs led by Adivasi, Dalit and Muslim Women and Men

The process of ensuring empowerment is not only long-winded, but also demands the active engagement of the members of marginalized communities themselves. This also lays the foundation for enabling individuals and groups to access their rights and negotiate their spaces in the larger society. While being largely dependent on the efforts of

²⁷ Pg 3,13 and 15 of Sachar Committee Report, November 2006.

²⁸ A report on the Socio-economic and Educational status of the Muslim community of India, prepared by the Sachar Committee in 2006.

individuals and communities, this process also requires a facilitative environment, which can be attained only through the support of institutions and individuals belonging to both the marginalized and non-marginalized communities. Given the fact that members of the marginalized communities have hitherto struggled to gain access to education and have been building organizations of their own, including civil society organizations, partnering them can promote the development/empowerment processes of their communities.

Good governance is synonymous with sound development management. Good governance “gives priority to the poor, advances the cause of women, sustains the environment, and creates needed opportunities for employment and other livelihoods” (UNDP, 1997). Without doubt, good governance entails the forging of partnerships with leaders from the marginalized communities, who can both represent as well as create and enhance public opinion towards solving some of the long pending issues confronting their communities.

The demographic dividend that can help in building a more robust India can be largely located among young people from the Adivasi, Dalit and minority communities, who hitherto have had the least opportunities to contribute to and benefit from development. Educated young people from these communities, including CSO leaders, are the key stakeholders here.

The expert group analyzing the issue of extremism²⁹ recognized the role of social inclusion, arriving at solutions to structural problems and discrimination, and providing adequate and equitable services as imperative measures to address the widespread discontent, unrest and extremism in the country. The group also recognized the ineffective application of ameliorative steps as a challenge to State authority, and the fact that these movements could help in finding solutions outside the system. There is a need to build mutually trusting relationships across marginalized communities, and with administration and civil society in order to effectively address these challenges.

While new programmes are being designed and implemented, their effectiveness and impact are less accounted for. There is hardly any evidence that these programmes take into account the deep-rooted and multiple exclusions of caste, ethnicity, religion, language, and difficult terrain that constitute barriers to their effective participation and the delivery of benefits to the target populations. Among these barriers are inadequate and negligible representation of the voices and needs of the marginalized during the inception and design stages of programmes, insufficient community mobilization in the absorption of programmes, an exhibition of apathy and neglect from the duty-bearers in the implementation of these programmes, and inadequate feedback and evaluations for improving the design of such programmes.

During the course of our in-depth study of 135 sample organizations led by members of the marginalized communities from seven states, it was found that a majority of those who lead these organizations were better educated than their peers and their personal experiences of discrimination and exclusion had spurred them on to take up development work. Furthermore, they had an extensive understanding of the needs and aspirations of

²⁹ Report of Expert Group, *Development Challenges in Extremist-affected areas*, Planning Commission, 2008.

their communities, they had gained five to ten years of experience in other development organizations, and continued their work under extremely stressful conditions and with limited or no resources. These organizations and their leaders reflected somewhat similar social and economic exclusions to those faced by their communities. As we explore and experiment with various ways and means to make growth inclusive, there can be no doubt that the strengthening of these leaders' engagement with their communities will enhance the informed participation of these communities in democracy and improve the reach of development programmes to them.

Our study also shows that there are many more educated young people and civil society organizations in the field, who are invisible, have a limited voice and insufficient access to the State and other development stakeholders. We extensively explored 947 organizations, out of which 135 were shortlisted for the purpose of the study (Annexure I Methodology).

In keeping with the rights-based approach, which underlines the need for the participation and engagement of the marginalized communities themselves in development interventions, this project is a focused effort to strengthen NGOs led by members from the marginalized communities. It is expected that efforts to build the capacities of these NGOs to engage in the design, planning, implementation and monitoring of development interventions would lead to the better integration of the perspectives and priorities of the communities themselves in these interventions, as also better outcomes for them in improving the overall growth and development of the country as a whole. The engagement of these CSOs thus comprises a critical ingredient for promoting sustainable and long-term inclusion in development interventions. In many ways, such a novel strategic intervention has not hitherto been attempted in such a focused manner.

Civil society organizations from these communities present an extensive and vibrant network of concerned actors in the most hard-to-reach areas and among hard-to-reach populations. Further, they are located within the same communities and at the same locations, and symbolize an important mechanism to sustain access to information and the engagement with these communities over time.

5. A Possible Framework to Track and Promote Inclusion.³⁰

Naming/Recognition	Representation	Participation	Affirmation	Equitable Accrual	Policy Strengthening
Recognizing Social Identities	Ensure representation in “Formal Spaces” : Commitment for selection, functioning, monitoring,	Recognize the barriers to participation	Identity/culture	Equity in programme accrual	Access to other stakeholders
Identifying causes of deprivation/inequality	Ensure representation in “Informal Spaces” consultations, brainstorming, casual relationships,	Articulation of issues	Contribution/participation	Building capacities of all	Facilitating analysis and advocacy
Assessing the scope and size of the issues/problems related to social exclusion	Proportion of representation: members in 'beneficiary' programmes, committees, monitoring bodies, decision- making, etc.	Engagement with the 'other'	Promotion of dignity and Respect in programme designing/ implementation/participation	Inclusion	Ability to mobilize support
Develop inclusive measures to address these problems/issues for achieving social equity	Nature of representation: concerns that they represent, representation from/in diverse locations and backgrounds, organizational structure, etc.	Solidarity from the 'other'	Promote Affirmative support in both public and private institutions	Add on effect or 'dead end'	Strengthen implementation and political will

³⁰ A Centre for Social Equity initiative in developing a frame of reference for building inclusive and equitable processes into the socio-economic polity.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

The following section describes the objectives of the study, its scope and intended purpose, and explains the methodology deployed for the data collection, analysis and the writing of this report. A detailed Methodology is given as Annexure VIII in Volume II of this report.

Theoretical Framework

Social equity and justice are major concerns for the government and social institutions working for the welfare of the society. It becomes even more imperative to implement these in India owing to its enormous population and social diversity, which often infringe upon the fundamental rights of social groups that are marginalized on the basis of caste, ethnicity, religion and other social indicators. In order to be fair to all, the democratic system in a country should provide equal opportunities to ensure the socio-economic and cultural development of *all* its constituents.

Civil society organizations represent a space for voicing the concerns of people, which are otherwise implicitly or explicitly over-ruled. Hence, it is essential to strengthen civil society organizations led by people from the excluded communities in the context of an equity and inclusion framework, and this forms the rationale for this study.

Hypothesis

Given the unprecedented and consistently high economic growth that has been achieved in India over the past decade, ensuring equity and inclusion by reaching development benefits to, and expanding the development choices of, the most marginalized communities has become an even more important concern not merely for the government, but also for all other development stakeholders. Civil society has recognizably been playing a critical role in reaching the unreached, promoting the voice of the marginalized, monitoring the impacts of development and creating alternatives and innovations at the local, national and global levels. Although several civil society organizations have been promoted by a number of educated youth from different marginalized social groups, they continue to remain invisible, somewhat like their status in the larger society. Thus, in order to ensure equitable growth and development, and facilitate the effective functioning of democracy, it is imperative to build partnerships and engage with the civil society organizations of the marginalized communities.

Research Design and Sample

Objectives of the Study:

1. To identify and analyze the different types of CSOs from the marginalized communities in various regions of the seven states under study, based on the nature of their work, outreach, leadership, networking, current engagement with government and development organizations, etc.;
2. To study the evolution of the CSOs, and their work patterns and engagements with various stakeholders (including networks, state and other development organizations) in order to develop a conceptual framework for understanding the:
 - Profile and nature of the development engagement of these CSOs;
 - Barriers that these CSOs face in engaging with the government and other development support organizations; and
 - Capacity building needs of CSOs from Marginalized Communities (MCs) in the context of social development.
3. To recommend strategies for facilitating collaborative interventions with the state and national governments; with international development agencies, and identify areas of convergence at all levels.

Identification of Sample and Data Collection

The identification of the sample was done through the following iterative processes:

- Consultation with national level CSOs led by MC leaders and experts;
- Information collection through interactions with various social groups in the seven states under study;
- Use of referral or chain methods of collecting information; and
- Selection of CSOs for the study.

Primary data was collected through structured interviews, wherein field investigators visited the selected organizations and conducted personal interviews with their chief functionaries.

Sample Size: A total of 135 organizations were studied as a representational sample of the CSOs led by marginalized community members. A total of twenty CSOs were studied from each of the six States of Uttar Pradesh (UP), Bihar, Madhya Pradesh (MP), Jharkhand, Rajasthan and Orissa, while in the case of Chhattisgarh, only fifteen CSOs were selected for the study.

Table 2.1: Study Sample

S. No	State	Adivasi- led CSOs	Dalit-led CSOs	Muslim- led CSOs	Total
1	Bihar	1	15	4	20
2	Chhattisgarh	9	5	1	15
3	Jharkhand	9	6	5	20
4	Madhya Pradesh	5	10	5	20
5	Odisha	8	9	3	20
6	Rajasthan	7	10	3	20
7	Uttar Pradesh	2	11	7	20
	Total	41	66	28	135

Workshops and Consultation

The preliminary data analysis was shared with all the investigators and researchers in order to conduct further analysis and produce different insights. This provided the researchers with an opportunity to explore in depth the trends and critical issues emerging from the data. Substantive qualitative insights and information were gained through this process. This was followed by regional consultations with the organizations under study. A national consultation was held in May 2011, bringing together the selected chief functionaries from all states with other NGOs, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and UN agencies, to share their findings and build future strategies. This report includes the study findings and the inputs from the various consultations.

Report Writing

The final report has been divided into two volumes: Volume I and Volume II.

Volume I has chapters on the Context and Rationale, Brief Methodology, Key Findings, and Conclusions and Recommendations.

Volume II has Annexures I –VII as seven State chapters, Annexure VIII as the Detailed Methodology, Annexure IX as the List of 135 MC CSOs studied, and Annexure X as the questionnaire designed for the study.

CHAPTER 3

KEY FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

As already mentioned, the study entailed a detailed analysis of 135 CSOs led by Adivasi, Dalit and Muslim women and men in the concerned seven states. It explored the background and motivation of the founder chief functionaries of the organizations, the organizational structure and systems, the areas and issues of interventions, and networking and advocacy efforts. The research team also studied the barriers and constraints faced by the members in undertaking the activities of their organizations and in engaging with the government and other development stakeholders, and the capacity issues of these individuals and their organizations. During the course of the study, extensive consultations were held at the state and regional levels to clarify and enhance the information collected. A national consultation was also held in May 2011 to bring the Chief Functionaries (CFs) and study findings before other NGOs, INGOs and UN agencies to create spaces for dialogue and build strategies for the way forward. The year-long process helped in developing a systematic understanding and analysis of these organizations. It re-affirmed the conviction that development efforts need to engage with these organizations and their leaders both as agents of change and for facilitating their decision-making. In this chapter, an attempt has been made to present the findings, while recognizing the difficulty in delineating every aspect of the processes entailed in the study and the experiences garnered thereof.

This section presents the key findings of the study under the following four sections: i) Profiles of the CFs; ii) Organization profiles; iii) Interventions and activities; and iv) Conclusion and recommendations.

1. Profiles of the Chief Functionaries

This section is concerned with the Adivasi, Dalit and Muslim women and men who took the initiative to set up NGOs and have been involved in community development work, primarily for their own and other marginalized communities. Analyzing their social backgrounds, educational qualifications, work experiences, their entry into the development sector, their motivation to set up NGOs and their personal experiences related to exclusion and marginalization is tantamount to entering territories that are named but unexplored, or encountering experiences that have been studied but not fully comprehended. In the course of the study, it was found that each of these leaders had a complex story which was a combination of struggle and inspiration. These leaders had travelled farther than contemporaries within their communities and spheres of operation, and more than anything else, were committed to bringing about 'change' for their people.

1.1 Leadership from Marginalized Communities in the Development Sector

A total of 135 CFs including 45 women and 90 men from the seven states were the subjects of the study. These included 41 (18 women and 23 men) Adivasis, 66 (15 women and 51 men) Dalits and 28 (12 women and 16 men) Muslims. Barring Chhattisgarh, 20 CFs were

studied from every state. All efforts were made to ensure diversity in the study sample, which covered diverse regions and also sub-groups within each social group, while keeping in mind the population of the social groups and sub-groups in the state. For example, the 20 CFs in Rajasthan, who were part of the sample, belonged to about 14 identifiable sub-groups. Further, conscious attempts were also made to identify and include women-led CSOs from every social group.

Table 3.1: Distribution of Chief Functionaries by Social Group, Gender and State

S. No	State	Adivasi		Dalit		Muslim		Total
		Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	
1	Bihar	0	1	2	13	3	1	20
2	Chhattisgarh	7	2	1	4	0	1	15
3	Jharkhand	8	1	2	4	2	3	20
4	Madhya Pradesh	1	4	4	6	1	4	20
5	Odisha	1	7	1	8	2	1	20
6	Rajasthan	1	6	1	9	2	1	20
7	Uttar Pradesh	0	2	4	7	2	5	20
	Total	18	23	15	51	12	16	135

It was interesting to find a greater proportion of organizations led by Adivasi and Muslim women in the study than those led by Dalit women, a trend that was in contrast to that pertaining to organizations led by men belonging to the corresponding social groups. In the states of Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, the Adivasi leaders were predominantly women, though this was not true of the states of Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and Rajasthan. Organizations led by Muslim women, on the other hand, represented all the states except Chhattisgarh, and their primary agenda was to focus on gender and women's issues. It was also found that organizations led by Adivasi and Dalit women were also focused on other community issues like FRA, PESA, skills development, etc., besides gender issues. There was a low representation of organizations led by Dalit women in all the states, including Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, despite the fact that the latter two states have sizeable Dalit populations and a long history of NGO work. The low proportion of organizations led by Dalit women could be due to the fact that educated Dalit women have availed of employment in CSOs led by Dalit men and other sectors of employment.³¹

³¹ 'Educated Dalit Urban Women', Findings from the unpublished study conducted by CSEI, 2010.

Table 3.2: Age Distribution of CFs

S No	Age Group (years)	Adivasi		Dalit		Muslim		Total
		Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	
1	25–30	2	5	1	5	1	1	15
2	31–35	3	4	3	11	6	2	29
3	36–40	6	6	6	12	1	3	34
4	41–45	5	3	1	8	1	3	21
5	46–50	2	3	3	7	1	6	22
6	51 and above	0	2	1	8	2	1	14
	Total	18	23	15	51	12	16	135

The CFs in Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand reported that there was added state surveillance on development workers from the Adivasi community, which created additional difficulties in their operations. It was also observed that Muslim women CFs were actively involved in bringing to the fore issues pertaining to Muslim women, in addition to undertaking other development work with Dalit and Muslim communities.

It was found that 73.3 per cent of the CFs' (that is, 99 out of a total of 135) were below 45 years of age. In view of their experience of 10–15 years in the development sector, it was obvious that they had started working in this sector at a considerably young age. More than half of the CFs, who were above 50 years of age, were male members of the Dalit community who had made a relatively early entry into the development sector in comparison to their other counterparts. 44.4 per cent of the women CFs were in the 36–45 year age group, while the men were more evenly distributed across all the age groups, indicating that women have generally entered the sector much later than men. In view of the barriers and constraints faced by the CFs, which are discussed later in the report, one also needs to acknowledge their perseverance and commitment to work for the betterment of society at large.

Case Story 1: Dalit Women

Suman (names in the case stories have been changed to protect the identity of the individuals) was a Dalit single woman who had to drop out of school to look after her siblings when her mother became disabled after suffering an accident at the construction site at which she worked. In 1984, Suman joined a leather factory, and when the management started retrenching workers, she led the workers to file a case against the management in the Lucknow high court and eventually won the case. Thereafter, she began to work on labour issues, a majority of which concerned members of the Dalit and Muslim communities. She came into contact with a Dalit organization, which encouraged her to start working independently. Following this advice, she initiated her own work in 1993 and since then, has been working on various issues including gender violence, discrimination, minimum wages, and workers' health, among other issues. During the course of her work, she also completed her post-graduation and acquired a diploma in leather management. Today, she is a well-recognized and respected leader in the community.

1.2 Forerunners and Pathfinders

Educational Qualifications: It was found that 66 per cent (90 out of 135) of the CFs had completed higher education, with most of them being graduates and above, including one PhD holder. An encouraging finding was that one-fourth of those CFs who had acquired higher education were women. A few of them even had qualifications like Masters in Business Administration (MBA) and Masters in Social Work (MSW). A small proportion of the CFs, that is 10.37 per cent (14 out of a total of 135) were matriculates or below in terms of educational qualification, and these leaders primarily belonged to Adivasi communities. Barring a few, most of the CFs had studied in government institutions. A majority of them were also first-generation learners. The CFs were clearly among the best educated people in both their regions and communities, and had thereby brought the highest possible human resources into the development sector in both communities and areas that were hard to reach.

Table 3.3: Highest Educational Qualifications of the CFs

S. No.	Educational Qualifications	Adivasi		Dalit		Muslim		Total
		Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	
1	Below Matriculation	2	2	0	0	0	0	4
2	Matriculation	2	5	1	2	0	0	10
3	Higher Secondary	8	5	4	11	2	1	31
4	Graduation	2	7	4	23	5	7	48
5	Post-graduation	4	3	6	15	4	7	39
6	PhD.	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
7	Missing	0	1	0	0	1	0	2
	Total	18	23	15	51	12	16	135

As per the data in the 2001 Census indicating that only 2.4 per cent and 3.6 per cent of the population aged 20 years and above were graduates among the Scheduled Castes (SCs)/Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Muslims respectively, the presence of these educated CFs from these communities in the development sector was a very significant finding in terms of reaching development to the marginalized communities. The fact that CFs opted work in the development sector despite having access to other employment opportunity under the aegis of reservations needs to be appreciated. The consolidation and building up of these available human resources constitutes a viable strategy for ensuring equity and inclusion in the country's current paradigm of high economic growth.

The Human Resource Development (HRD) Minister recently also expressed concern about the "alarmingly low percentage of enrolment rates" in higher education, hovering at around 13 per cent, which is 10 percentage points lower than the world average.³² It is also important for the marginalized communities and their children to have positive role models to look up to in the spheres of education, employment and socio-economic mobility. Presently, the marginalized communities lack the motivation to invest in education when educated youth from these communities are not able to find dignified occupations. Often their potential is not recognized due to discrimination, and they do not receive encouragement or support when they initiate relevant community development efforts. This scenario has also contributed to a dangerous mix of dissent and social discontent among these community members. The CFs belonging to the marginalized communities can thus be motivated and encouraged to become role models for the youth in their communities, and guide them onto the path of development and growth.

1.3 Work Experience

Number of Years and Nature of Work Experience: About half of the CFs in the sample, that is, 49 per cent (or 61 out of 135), had between 5 and 15 years of experience in the development sector. The other half, that is, 51 per cent (or 64 out of 135), had more than 15 years of experience. The women CFs had fewer years of experience as compared to their male counterparts.

The study showed that the CFs had acquired considerable field experience both by working with other organizations as well as within their own organizations. This experience was in the areas of community awareness building, organizing and building community-based organizations (CBOs), advocating for and monitoring the implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Forest Rights Act (FRA), and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act [SC/ST (PoA) Act]. They had also been quick to use the Right to Information (RTI) provisions in their work. Community awareness building, mobilizing, monitoring and advocacy thus signified the primary areas of competence among the CFs. After having set up their NGOs, they were also called upon to work on every aspect of building their organisations, including legal and administrative matters, programme coordination, networking and advocacy.

³² planningcommission.nic.in/plans/planrel/fiveyr/.../11th_vol2.pdf

Table 3.4: Total Number of Years of Work Experience of CFs in the Social Development Sector

S. No.	Years of Work Experience	Adivasi		Dalit		Muslim		Total
		Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	
1	5 years	0	4	2	9	3	2	20
2	6-10 years	2	6	4	11	1	2	26
3	11-15 years	6	1	1	8	4	5	25
4	16-20 years	4	4	5	13	2	4	32
5	21 and above	6	8	3	10	2	3	32
	Total	18	23	15	51	12	16	135

Their work experience in other NGOs reportedly did not provide the CFs with adequate information about setting up an NGO, available human and financial resources, project planning, managerial skills, financial skills, etc., which were essential in their current work and which also needed to be enhanced. They also reported difficulties in being able to carry out systematic work related to problem analysis, strategy building, resource raising, documenting and reporting, as these skills were rarely part of any curriculum and they lacked opportunities to acquire these skills, as a majority of them did not have any sustained resources for their work. Almost all their skills had been self-acquired during the course of their lives and work.

The younger CFs from the Dalit community, who had started their own NGOs, had more often than not worked with other Dalit-led organizations, while those from the Muslim and Adivasi communities had worked in NGOs led by members of dominant castes. This could be owing to the larger number and longer history of Dalit organizations than those led by Adivasis and Muslims, and also partly owing to social barriers, a fact that is also reflected in the composition of the board and team of the Dalit NGOs.

1.4 Varied nature of Discrimination faced

About 84 per cent (113 out of 135) of CFs reported facing discrimination and humiliation in their personal lives. This cut across gender, caste-untouchability, religion, and other identity-based issues, and often also occurred on multiple grounds. While a majority of the CFs had faced these situations during their schooling period, some of them also reported such experiences during their engagement in the development sector, which is a matter of serious concern. In states like Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, there were clear overtones of police surveillance and harassment too, that often led to threatening situations. Religion-based discrimination was reported by the Muslim CFs across the board. This was similarly the case for Dalit CFs from the Christian community in addition to caste-based discrimination, particularly in Odisha, where the Kandhamal incident had made headlines in the recent past.

Table 3.5: Varied nature of Discriminations faced

S. No.	Type of Discrimination Faced	Adivasi		Dalit		Muslim		Total
		Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	
1	Gender-based	10	3	9	7	9	1	39
2	Caste-based	14	14	12	49	5	8	102
3	Religion-based	10	6	6	26	5	13	66

Case Story 2: Religion-based Discrimination The following case story captures how discrimination based on religious identities limits one's opportunities to realize one's dreams and potential. **Irfan**, belonging to the Muslim community, recounted how he had faced humiliation at the hands of his Marathi music teacher in Kheragarh, who could not accept the fact that a Muslim male wanted to learn classical music. Later, when he applied for the post of music teacher in a college in Jagdalpur, he was not selected despite being the most qualified for the job among all the applicants. Even while studying music, he had to bear discrimination and humiliation at the hands of his teachers and peers simply because he was a Muslim man, as this was a rare occurrence in the field of music. In another incident, even though he was employed as a temporary announcer in Akashvani, he was not selected when the post was opened up for permanent recruitment despite his repeated good performance. He ultimately left his job to work in the social development sector.

1.5 Two Sides of the Language Coin

All the CFs expressed the wish to enhance their English language skills. Their skills in other technical areas like computer operations, the Internet, financial management, and project management were also limited and they were keen to augment them. On the other side of the language coin was their ability to communicate with and convince their communities in native languages (and most of them knew more than one local language), which others would find difficult to do. This in itself was a very valuable skill and goes unrecognized, while very few people outside the community invest any effort in acquiring local language skills.

1.6. Representation in Government Bodies

A small number of CFs who were interviewed during the study were members in various government bodies like the Panchayat social justice committees, the Shahari Jan Sahabhagi Yojana (SJSY), social welfare committees, the Juvenile Justice Board (JJB), Public Distribution System (PDS) committees, Protection of Women from Domestic Violence (PWDV) Act monitoring and vigilance committees, and health committees, among others. A

few were also members of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). However, the CFs claimed that these committees were, by and large, non-functional; nor was the administration interested in improving the system by trying to utilize the information and knowledge that these committee members could offer. This was a reflection on how formal spaces were being undermined and under-utilized, thereby creating a false image of transparency and accountability. While it could be said that the government recognized the work and expertise of these committee members, the situation still signified a lost opportunity in terms of the failure of the authorities to improve both the system and the outcomes for the communities.

Case Story 3—Nominal and Meaningless Participation

Abdul came from Bihar. He was recognized both for the work done by his organization and for the rapport he enjoyed with Muslims and other marginalized communities. The government made him a member of a number of government committees like the District Scholarship Distribution committee, the district monitoring and vigilance committee for preventing atrocities against SCs and STs, the child labor rescue team and the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) plan committee. Abdul, however, reported that none of the meetings of these committees were held regularly and that even if they were held, only a few formalities were performed on paper and the meetings were closed without any concrete outcomes or future plans.

1.7 Pathways of Leadership

Each one of the CFs had inspiring stories to tell of their struggle, perseverance and sense of achievement in overcoming the difficult contexts of their lives, which could motivate others in their communities. There certainly was a huge dearth of such information on these success stories that was needed to spur on both the younger and older generations.

The challenges faced by the different groups also differed from each other—for instance, for Dalits, the challenge was that of tackling discrimination and untouchability; for Adivasis, it was displacement and the lack of institutional mechanisms; for Muslim women, the main issue of contention was that of religious bonds. The women had to address additional family and community norms and barriers, but each of them had pursued diverse pathways to reach their current situation.

Stories of Courage and Inspiration

Case Story 4: Aaesha was a Muslim woman who had decided to remain single and had moved from secure corporate employment to take up work among the Dalit and Muslim communities. She was herself very conscious about the exploitation and gender issues faced by women. She had undertaken many innovative interventions, with the latest being her work on advocacy for the implementation of a new national level policy for single women. In her career spanning about 5-6 years, she had gained considerable recognition for her work.

Case Story 5: Rimil was a 35-year old single Adivasi woman from a middle class educated family, who was working for her community. She had completed her studies at the Xavier Institute of Social Service (XISS) and later her post-graduation in USA. After having worked as a young professional with The Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART) and other NGOs, she had started her own organization in 2003. Her decision to do something for her own community by working for the advancement of Adivasi culture and the education and health of Adivasi communities, and to contribute in governance as a PRI member, was highly encouraging and appreciable.

Anyone visiting the state of Madhya Pradesh (MP) to conduct any kind of research or enquiry on Adivasi issues is always advised to meet **Shyama** to gain a comprehensive understanding of these issues. He started his work in national campaigns for land rights and against displacement, which were led by general community members. He was convinced that the development issues of Adivasis needed to be more participatory and inclusive of the communities themselves and when this was not taken up by the existing national networks, he decided to take the initiative to set up a network of his own comprising young Adivasis who would work on development issues. He was an inspiration to many Adivasi youth and encouraged them to build their own CBOs. He also analyzed the health issues of Adivasis working in the glass industry, who were affected by silicosis, He then filed a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in the High Court on behalf of these people and won compensation for those affected by the disease.

Case Story 6: Promilla was the convener of one of two large Dalit networks in the state of Uttar Pradesh (UP). A post-graduate, she had started her career in an NGO working on environmental issues and had worked there for ten years. As a member of the Dalit community and realizing the need for adopting a different approach to address the issues of the marginalized communities, she started working independently on these issues in 2003. She also got in touch with other Dalit NGOs and collaborated with them to raise issues concerning Dalits such as those pertaining to caste-based atrocities and human rights violations.

2. Profiles of the Organizations

2.1 Motivation and Challenges in Setting up an NGO

(i) Reasons for starting their Own Organizations: About 88 per cent (that is, 113 out of 135) of the CFs reported that their individual and community experiences had motivated them to work in the development sector and to set up their independent NGOs. They pointed out that being educated and having had the opportunity to interface with the rest of society, they were more aware of the disadvantages faced by their communities and that the development sector had provided them with an opportunity to work for the development of their respective communities. Equally important was the finding that 60 per cent (or 83 out of 135) of the CFs belonging to the marginalized communities claimed that their personal experiences of facing overt discrimination and violence (based on gender, caste, ethnicity and/or religion) in their personal and/or professional lives had

motivated them to establish their own organizations to address these and other issues being faced by their communities.

Case Story 7: Opting to Work in the Social Development Sector

Rajat, who belonged to the Dalit community, was motivated to work against caste violence and discrimination after going through two harrowing personal experiences. In the first incident, his aunt with her one-year old baby had gone missing while she was on her way to her maternal home. After two days, she was found dead along with her baby in a well near her village. Enquiries revealed that she had been gang raped and then murdered, and her body along with that of her baby was dumped into the well. Despite their best efforts, his aunt's family could not get the case registered. In another incident that occurred in his life in a National Cadet Corps (NCC) camp during his graduation, other students badly beat up his friend, also from the Dalit community, for touching the vessel in which the food had been cooked. When he and his friend complained to the teacher about the incident, instead of helping them to seek redress, the teacher emphatically advised them to be careful in future and not to touch the vessel again! Both these incidents had a deep impact on his mind and acted as catalysts, motivating him to work for the development of his community.

For 55 per cent (or 75 out of 135) of the CFs, the motivation to start their own work came from their exposure as employees, primarily as field staff, with other NGOs, during which period they also acquired basic knowledge, experience and the confidence to start their independent ventures. Only 10 per cent of the CFs had entered the development sector and later established NGOs on the basis of their educational qualifications in sociology or social work. Interestingly, more CFs from the Muslim community had educational qualifications that related to development work than those from other communities.

(ii) History of Work: About 80 per cent (or 108 out of 135) of the CFs had worked with other development organizations before setting up their own NGOs, while about 7 per cent (9 out of 135) had set up NGOs without any previous experience of working in other NGOs. Another 13.3 per cent (18 out of 135) had given up other employment in the government or private sector to start their own work.

(iii) Challenges in Setting up Their Organizations: Some of the CFs reported that working with other organizations also posed constraints for them in their efforts to address some of the critical issues facing their communities like land encroachment, violence or exploitation. Often, the other organizations did not perceive and address these issues with the required sensitivity. In addition, these issues were not being addressed under the usual funded projects of the organizations in spite of the regular occurrence of such incidents against the marginalized communities. This had disappointed and frustrated them, and influenced their decision to set up their own organizations. They also reported facing discrimination and exclusion as far as promotions and the nature of work assigned to them in these NGOs were concerned, which also compelled them move out of these NGOs and start their own initiatives.

A few CFs also reported that NGO leaders from the general community often declined to support them when they started their own NGOs and when other resource agencies enquired about them (as they would with older and known organizations), these organizations did not give positive feedback about them or recommend them for financial support.

Case Story 8: Invisibility of MC CSOs

Chandni and Ramesh, both CFs of their organizations in UP and MP, reported how despite their persistent efforts and committed work in the field, they could not get access to funding organizations. When donor agencies enquired about organizations and new programmes, they always took the opinion of their old partners about the new/other organizations. These old partners never recommended organizations of the marginalized for financial and other forms of support.

The CFs also averred that the decision to give up more secure employment with an NGO or organization in another sector and to set up their own NGOs posed a major challenge. Not only did they lose the fairly regular income that they had earned from their employment in the erstwhile NGO, but they now had the added responsibility of finding the requisite human and financial resources to set up their NGOs, which was not an easy task given the limited social contacts they had outside their own communities. As first generation educated and employed members of their families, it was extremely difficult for them to give up their regular jobs and incomes, especially considering the fact that a majority of them were married. Their families also often did not understand their reasons for giving up stable jobs and steady incomes, which were difficult to come by in rural areas. These courageous individuals, however, took the bold step of striking out on their own despite the challenges and continued to struggle to balance family responsibilities while pursuing their ideals and carrying on their organizational work.

2.2 Difficulties in fulfilling Legal Compliances

About 87 per cent (that is, 117 out of 135) of the organizations in the study were registered under the Society Act (either 1886 or 1953), while the rest (13 per cent) were registered under the Trusts Act (1882). Further, 45 per cent (64 out of 135) of the organizations had registration under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA), while about 10 per cent (10 out of 135) had applied for it at the time of the study. The remaining 45 per cent (61 out of 135) of the organizations were either unaware of the procedures or were financially not capable of getting their organizations so registered. About 50 per cent (77 out of 135) had **12A** and 40 per cent (48 out of 135) organizations had **80G** certificates.

Discussions with the CFs individually and in group consultations highlighted the fact that, having understood the concept of NGO as a framework under which development work could be undertaken within their communities, they were keen to begin their work rather than getting embroiled in ensuring legal requirements. They usually started development work at their own native places by dealing with the pressing issues concerning their

communities and, therefore, getting their organizations registered and fulfilling the legal formalities were a lower priority for them.

While this perception understandably led to delays in getting the legal obligations fulfilled, the CFs also reported other difficulties in getting the registration and legal formalities done. Despite the fact that 80 per cent of them had worked with other NGOs, they did not know about the legal requirements; nor did they have any information or knowledge about the necessary documentation for the process. Given their limited social contacts outside their communities, they had little access to any kind of consultation or support in this regard. They also reported a major gap in information about resource organizations (both human and financial) and the procedures required to access them.

The CFs reported encountering further difficulties with the administration while trying to register their organizations and fulfill the legal requirements. The indifferent and uncooperative attitude of officials forced them to make many trips to government offices. The fact that they were located in interior areas and not at any district or state headquarters made travel costly and time-consuming, sometimes even forcing them to spend the night out in the open due to lack of resources to pay for lodging at the headquarters. Taking their board members to the offices entailed additional costs. They also did not have money to pay the 'commission' that was usually demanded for doing any work. Women found it even more difficult to engage with the officials, procure the necessary information and fulfil the requirements. In the absence of support from the family or elsewhere, both the women and men found the process to be extremely challenging.

Case Story 9: Challenges in Registration

Erina had filed for registering her organization under the name 'Maharani Durgavati Adivasi Samta Manch'. After fulfilling all the requirements and waiting for many months, when she finally went to the government office, she was categorically asked to change the name of her organization. The authorities did not think it desirable to have the name of an Adivasi woman leader for the organization and wanted a general name. After much deliberation and discussion with the officials, she agreed to change the name to 'Adivasi Samta Manch'. While the officers told her that they would send her the registered document by post, they did not keep their commitment and she received the document only after two years and repeated visits to the office.

2.3 Time Gap in Registering the Organizations

An interesting observation that emerged from the interviews and during the consultations was the unique approach adopted by the CFs in setting up their organizations, which was in marked contrast to the usual methods employed in the setting up of NGOs. One always heard about 'paper NGOs', implying organizations that existed legally but were not

functional on the ground. The experience of the CFs sampled in the study was quite the opposite. A majority of them had started work in their field with the concept of building NGOs, and were not initially concerned about registering their proposed organizations or fulfilling the necessary legal obligations to do so. This, along with the gaps in information and the hurdles they encountered in registering their organizations, led to a considerable time gap in the establishment of the latter, as can be seen in Table 3.6. While in simplistic terms some of these organizations may also be considered as ‘paper NGOs’ due to their lack of financial resources, consistent work, organized administrative set-up, proper documentation and visibility, their situation was indeed quite different from that of the others who had registered their NGOs and obtained FCRA registration, but made them functional only after receiving project funds. The NGOs set up by the CFs also posed a sharp contrast with the increasing trend of NGOs being sold away by those who had started them along with the complete documents. The CFs, on the other hand, had made their organizations as functional as possible on the ground, with or without funds, and were struggling to keep both their work and their organizations alive.

Table 3.6: Time Gaps in Registering CSOs

S No.	Time Gap between Starting Work and Registering an NGO	Adivasi	Dalit	Muslim	Total (per cent)
1.	Less than one year	17	19	11	47 (34.81%)
2.	One year	7	19	9	35 (25.93%)
3.	2–4 years	11	24	6	41 (30.37%)
4.	5 years and more	6	3	2	11 (8.15%)
5.	Missing	0	0	0	1 (0.74%)

2.4 Age of the Organizations

As per the findings of the study, 60 per cent (or 80 out of 135) of the organizations had been set up at the turn of the twenty-first century and were, therefore, aged 10 years or less. About 30 per cent (44 out of 135) of the organizations had been established 10–20 years ago and only 10 per cent (11 out of 135) had been established more than 20 years ago. While the NGO sector in the country emerged around the 1970s, the organizations of the marginalized in these states emerged almost 30 years later. The entry of people from the marginalized communities into the social development sector had a direct correlation to the larger socio-political movements in these communities, as well as their experiences with other organizations.

Table 3.7: Age of the Organizations

S. No.	Age of the Organizations	Adivasi		Dalit		Muslim		Total
		Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	
1	Less than 3 years	2	1	2	7	1	0	13
2	3-5 years	3	5	3	7	2	3	23
3	6-10 years	8	5	5	17	5	4	44
4	11-15 years	1	4	1	11	2	5	24
5	16-20 years	3	5	3	6	1	2	20
6	Above 20 years	1	3	1	3	1	2	11
	Total	18	23	15	51	12	16	135

2.5 Governance System

(i) Roles and Responsibilities of the Chief Functionary

Due to less diversification among the Marginalized Community led-Civil Society Organizations (MC-led CSOs), most of the responsibility descended on the CF in terms of the overall organizational management, planning, monitoring and evaluation of organizational work and staff, documentation, networking and liaising, advocacy, fund-raising and legal interventions pertaining to community issues with government departments, among other duties. It was also found that the organizations led by members from the marginalized communities were established as per the vision of the CFs. Most of these organizations were not developed or molded into a formalized office structure and systems, as greater focus was laid on the field activities and interventions with the communities and other stakeholders.

(ii) Board Membership

Community considerations:

- In the case of about 70 per cent (98 out of 135) of the organizations, a majority of the board members (BMs) were from the marginalized communities. However, some Muslim organizations had BMs from the general community (Hindu) as well.
- The representation of women in organizations led by men was nominal.
- A majority of the BMs in women-led organizations were women.

Decision-making positions among BMs:

- In Dalit-led organizations in the study, the positions of the Secretary and Treasurer were held by Dalits only.
- In Muslim-led organizations, key positions were held by both Muslims and dominant community members.

- Adivasi-led organizations in Rajasthan constituted an exception, as the decision-making positions were held by dominant community members.
- In about 30 per cent (41 out of 135) of the organizations, the BMs were also employees of the organization.
- In only about 15 per cent (20 out of 135) of the organizations, the BMs were employed in government offices/services.

Education and occupation of BMs:

- There are various observable trends in terms of the education levels and occupations of BMs. There is a direct correlation between the education levels of the CFs and the constituent BMs. Muslim-led organizations had a higher number of BMs with graduate and post-graduate qualifications. Rural-based organizations had a large number of BMs with lower levels of education and their occupations varied from agriculture-related work to small businesses. In Adivasi-led organizations, the BMs from the Adivasi and Dalit communities were educated mostly up to the higher secondary levels, while the members from the general community were graduates/post-graduates. This trend aligns with the literacy levels of the marginalized communities in their intervention areas.

Case Story 10: Biased Perceptions

Faraz was a Muslim from Rajasthan. When the CF tried to get the organization registered for the first time, all the board members were from the Muslim community. However, the officials did not agree to this and asked the CF to have a mix of Hindus and Muslims on the board. The officials categorically stated that such an arrangement was not acceptable as it could portray the organization as being 'non secular' and 'anti-national'. The CF was thus forced to appoint more Hindus in the governing board than Muslims.

The governance of the organization was highly localized, and the governing members primarily belonged to the same community, with their educational experiences and social connections being similar to those of the CF. In a majority of the cases, the CFs were found to be the most educated and with the widest social interface. The board members also doubled up as volunteers and staff, particularly where the organization had no financial resources. It is quite evident that the social development sector also operated in silos and there were not enough spaces wherein the dominant and marginalized communities could interface and collaborate with each other. Since the CF was the most educated and the best connected in most cases, the support s/he received from the BMs was more in the form of community support. The CF also single-handedly had to perform the tasks of strategizing and planning for the organization, as well as overseeing technical and legal matters.

Case Story 11: Challenges and Risks Faced by the CFs and BMs

UP04— There were also cases wherein some of the founder BMs had to pay a heavy price for raising contentious issues facing their communities. One of the founder members of the organization was even murdered when he took up land issues facing Dalit communities.

Od09— An Adivasi-led organization, Od09 launched its agenda by encouraging youth to participate in sports. However, recognizing the negative impact of liquor on their community members, the BMs started organizing people against liquor and came into confrontation with the liquor mafia. When the influence of the organization increased, the liquor mafia had the organization secretary murdered. The officials also refused to register the organization for a number of years, despite the best efforts of its functionaries.

2.6 Vision, Mission and Objectives

The vision, mission and objectives of the organizations reflected the constraints and concerns faced by their communities and covered a broad spectrum of issues. While the socio-economic development and empowerment of the marginalized communities was a common theme, the organizations also incorporated special needs of each of the communities in their agendas and addressed these issues either through service delivery activities or by acting as mediators between people and the State (and its provisions). While a majority of the organizations was primarily engaged only among their own community members, a few of them also worked with the other marginalized communities in the local area.

Adivasi-led organizations were actively engaged in awareness creation and lobbying for the implementation of the Forest Rights Act (FRA) and Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas Act (PESA). Through these measures, they supported communities in their struggle to access land rights and rights to forest produce. They were also actively engaged in strengthening Gram Sabhas under the PESA. In addition, like their Dalit-led counterparts, these organizations were actively engaged in campaigning for the implementation of RTF, MGNREGA and livelihood programmes.

Dalit-led organizations primarily focused on achieving socio-economic and political equality for their constituents by addressing issues such as discrimination against and atrocities perpetrated on Dalits, along with other social issues including education, health, child labour, livelihoods, and accessing of government entitlements through campaign and programmatic modes. The organizations were familiar with the SC/ST Act, and aimed at creating awareness and using legal mechanisms to deal with the violence suffered by members of their community. They also made efforts to increase peoples' participation through advocacy and policy-level changes in various Acts including the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Right to Information (RTI) and Right to Food (RTF), and to strengthen the Gram Sabhas. Offering support to people to enable them to access state programmes and provisions and their monitoring was a common activity in most of these organizations.

Muslim-led organizations usually worked with both the Muslim and Dalit communities, and aimed at achieving social equality and empowerment by addressing the issues of education, health, women's empowerment, livelihoods, women's rights, inequality and discrimination through a programme-based approach.

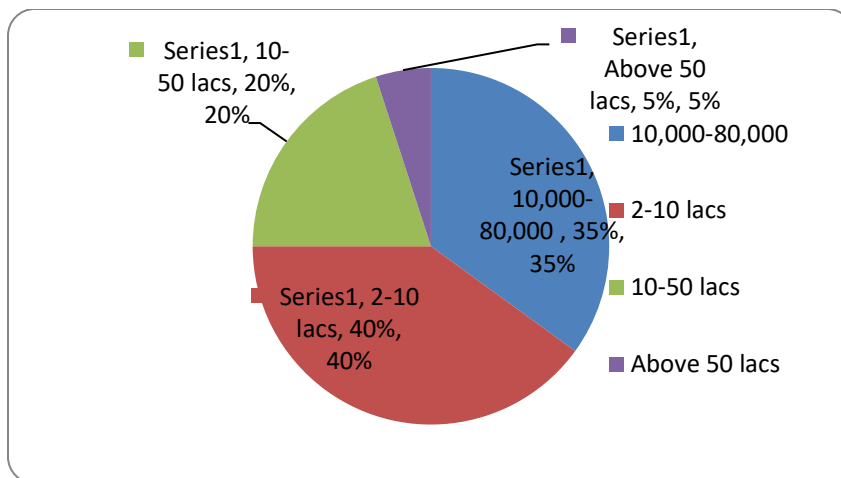
2.7. Office Set-up, Equipments and Management

The organizations had set up their offices and equipment on the basis of the available financial resources. While 80 per cent of them had very minimal basic office facilities comprising tables, chairs, and cupboards, 20 per cent had additional basic office equipment like one or two computers, mobile phones, bicycles, etc. About 50 per cent of the organizations functioned from small rented offices, while about 40 per cent functioned from the homes of the CF or other staff members. In keeping with the spread of the field area and the location of volunteers or team members, the organizations either rented the field offices or functioned from homes. About 10 per cent of the organizations had their own offices. Although 80 per cent (or 102 out of 135) maintained basic files and registers related to the programmes and staff management, record-keeping and documentation of the organization's activities was found to be one of the weakest areas in the organizations led by excluded community members, and thus a major area for capacity building. It was also observed that most of these organizations had not yet developed formalized office structures and systems, and laid more focus on field activities and interventions with communities and other stakeholders for addressing the issues concerning the community.

2.8 Extremely Limited Financial Resources

During the course of the study, it was also found that about 75 per cent of the organizations had no formal sources of funds or very minimal funds. In these organizations, by and large, only the CF devoted full time to the organization and its related activities, while the other board members and volunteers usually supported only special events and programmes. Community support or small network funds formed their basic support. A few were also able to access short-term small fellowship support. Extension of the Self-Help Group (SHG) programmes of the state also provided small financial support to some of them. Information on funding from those with less than Rs. 5 lac as the total operational funds is somewhat suspect, given the demands for minimal financial resources reported in audit statements to apply for FCRA registration. The following are some salient features regarding the fund-raising pattern observed among these organizations during 2009-2010, which are also depicted in Pie Chart 1:

1. Thirty-five per cent of the organizations were without programme funds and raised amount between Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 80,000 annually for occasional programmes, primarily for community/cultural celebrations.
2. Forty per cent of them raised Rs. 2-10 lacs for the financial year 2009-10.
3. Twenty per cent of them raised Rs. 10-50 lacs.
4. Five per cent of them raised above Rs. 50 lacs.



Pie Chart 1: Distribution of Funds for the Financial Year 2009-10

The sources of funding support among marginalized civil society organizations exhibited the following patterns:

- a) Organizations that received *comparatively small donations for a period of time* were found to have evolved organically over a given time period. In the absence of regular and adequate funds, organizations did not have full-time staff members or systems, and recognized their limitations in handling larger funds. Most organizations preferred to take recourse to smaller financial support over longer periods, which enabled them to establish their grassroots interventions and effective community involvement.
- b) *Fellowship support* was another important means of financial support accessed by some organizations. A small number of funding organizations followed a policy of providing fellowships ranging from one to three years either to the individual or to the organization, which constituted a significant source of support to these organisations. Even when individual fellowships were received, it was found that these were used for the organizational activities. In addition to the financial support, these funding organizations providing fellowships also provided human resources and organizational management support. Expanding such a mechanism with a special focus on MC-led CSOs and finetuning their operations to meet the needs of these organizations will go a long way in building partnerships.
- c) *Funding from government sources* constituted a minor source of financial support for these civil society organizations. During the financial year 2008-10, 127 project proposals were submitted by 71 out of the 135 organizations, and a small number of 32 proposals by 27 organizations were accepted for the grant of small government funds. This finding was particularly discouraging in view of the state's stated objectives of spreading growth to the marginalized communities and enhancing their participation in development. The educated youth from these communities and their

organizations were obvious agencies for such a purpose if one were to 'put the money where the mouth was'. Most of the MC-led CSOs were discouraged while engaging with the government due to the prevalence of widespread instances of corruption, nepotism and discrimination in selection procedures for accessing government programmes. However, irrespective of these drawbacks, the organizations recognized the importance of getting associated with government departments and accessing welfare programmes for their communities.

Case Story 12: Challenges in Implementing Government-funded Programmes

The experience of an Adivasi woman CF, Valina in Sundergarh district of Odisha reflected the number of problems she faced while trying to implement government-supported programmes. Firstly, the programme guidelines about the activities were not clear; nor were they clarified by the government staff despite repeated requests. No monitoring of the work was done and at the time of release of the programme funds, the allocated money was not paid. In another case, a certain percentage of the total funds was deducted as a commission, though the organization was asked to submit bills for the entire sum including the deducted commission. These experiences discouraged her from further engaging with the government.

- d) *Fund-raising from the community in terms of individual donations, membership fees, etc.* was another vital source of financial support for marginalized civil society organizations. Even if the organizations implemented some projects/programmes with the support of funding agencies, they still maintained their community support base through the execution of mass programmes like Dr. Ambedkar's birth anniversary, Adivasi cultural programmes, and celebration of important days for the community. The funds obtained from community members were, however, sporadic, and flowed in mostly at the time of celebrations, or were offered for addressing critical issues and did not help to build or take forward the agenda of the organization.
- e) *Fund support from INGOs:* During the financial years 2008–10, 218 project proposals were submitted by 87 out of the 135 organizations to INGOs. A total of 99 project proposals (in the form of small grants, fellowships, funds for programmes, etc.) by 60 organizations were accepted. Many of these small funds were distributed to various networks and were not offered to the individual organization. Very few INGOs made conscious efforts to support and engage with people from the marginalized communities, or to further democratize their own institutions by including members of the marginalized communities on staff. It is thus imperative to conduct a review in this matter.

Financial management: This was usually done by a part-time accountant with the involvement of the CF. Both manual as well as computerized systems were used for this purpose. About 80 per cent of the organizations had conducted audits regularly during the

previous years. However, financial management was identified as one of the key areas that needed strengthening.

Financial decision-making in the organization: In about 70 per cent of the organizations, the CF, along with the BMs, took decisions related to current and future financial matters.

2.9. Human Resource Challenges

All the organizations faced one or more of the following challenges pertaining to staff selection:

(i) Staffing: The organizations selected for the study had a minimum of three staff members/volunteers besides the CF. In a number of cases where the organization did not have access to regular funds, the team members were part-time employees and even worked on a voluntary basis. These organizations had office and field-based staff and volunteers from the community working with them, who were mostly recruited through references from the community. About 90 per cent (125 out of 135) of the organizations had staff members belonging to the marginalized communities and only a small number of them had staff members from the general communities. As funding was crucial for recruiting regular staff, the overall responsibility of running and staffing the organization fell on the CF.

(ii) Gender: In organizations headed by male CFs, women staff members were found to be largely working as field-level workers. The important tasks of office administration and programme coordination were taken up by male staff members. Male Muslim-headed organizations particularly found it difficult to recruit female staff members due to the non-secular attitudes prevalent in our society. Female-headed organizations also had a larger number of female workers and fewer male workers, who at times were not willing to work under female leadership due to the prevalent patriarchal mindset in the society.

(iii) General Hurdles: The following were some of the other obstacles related to staff recruitment faced by MC-led CSOs:

- Difficulties in obtaining staff with a good understanding of the issues concerning the excluded communities;
- The tendency of staff members to leave the organization to work with other organizations offering higher salaries after acquiring extensive training under their original employers;
- Lack of technical skills and of English language abilities among the staff;
- Difficulty in sourcing staff members from the marginalized communities for administrative and finance work in the office (especially in rural areas); and
- Unwillingness among people from outside to live and work in interior areas of each state.

Since human resources in the form of adequately trained and educated staff constitute the primary assets needed for sustaining and taking forward the work by the marginalized community-led organizations in the social development sector, these organizations were adversely affected by the above-mentioned problems and challenges. The lack of resource

organizations providing free training and capacity building programmes for staff members with a focus on the issues at stake for marginalized communities also hampered the latter's work and limited their opportunities for expansion and strategy building.

2.10 Building Capacities

Members from about 26 per cent (35 out of 135) of the organizations had not participated in any capacity building programme or workshop during the year 2009–10. This was largely due to the lack of funds available within the organization or the absence of alliances with other capacity building organizations. Members of the remaining organizations attended a minimum of one to a maximum of seven training workshops organized either by a funding organization, network partner and/or a resource organization. Interestingly, however, despite having limited opportunities for accessing training from outside, as many as 90 per cent (121 out of 135) of the organizations organized either internal capacity building workshops for their staff members or community level training programmes during the year 2009–10. Thus, it is evident that one of the core tasks engaged in by these organizations is extending information and training to their community members, despite they themselves not having access to adequate training opportunities. There is thus an obvious need for strengthening the capacities of these organizations and recognizing them as a national resource pool for facilitating the dissemination of information and development mediation at the community level. The areas in which this can be achieved are delineated below.

Identified Capacity Building Needs of Community: The CFs outlined the following as critical areas of work in which training needs to be imparted to community members for strengthening and building their capacities:

- Promoting community right to food security;
- Protection from police harassment;
- Addressing of the issue of domestic violence;
- Awareness of SC/ST (PoA) Act;
- Awareness of state services like health and education;
- State policy on water resources;
- Community rights and benefits from forest resources/mining/minor forest produce;
- Recognition and spread of Adivasi culture;
- Awareness of the Vth Schedule of the Constitution;
- Issues of migration and displacement;
- Information on Primitive Tribe Group (PTG) communities in the state;
- Awareness of the Right To Information Act;
- Awareness and monitoring of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act;
- Forests Right Act; and
- Right to Education.

Identified Capacity Building Needs of Organizations: The CFs suggested the following as important areas for training and capacity building as far as their organizations are concerned:

- Computer training;
- Skills to develop communication materials;
- Advocacy training;
- Need to acquire their own office space;
- Expansion of work to new geographical areas;
- Perspective building of staff members on issues of the marginalized;
- Capacity building on documenting and reporting;
- Training in office management and book keeping/accountancy;
- Awareness of different laws and policies;
- Building media advocacy skills;
- Information on funding agencies and methods to approach them;
- Proposal writing;
- Exposure visits to other organizations undertaking similar work;
- Establishing contacts with resource bodies and networks of mainstream communities; and
- Improving spoken and written English language skills.

3. Nature of Interventions and Strategies Adopted by the MC-led CSOs

The interventions by MC-led CSOs reflected an interface among four areas of opportunities, viz.: i) prevalent development concerns; ii) available government entitlements and provisions; iii) their own community issues; and iv) the CFs' own interests and capabilities, some of which were then selected depending on the opportunities available. Many times, there were trade-offs between what they thought were the most important issues and what opportunities came their way. It was found during the course of the study that while they were working on some issues through project support, the MC-led CSOs tried to address many concerns of the community with or without project support. Since they were part of the community and were recognized by the latter as leaders/resource persons, they were also constantly 'on call' for addressing the issues concerning the community. It was also found that one of the most relevant characteristics of these organizations was their ability to sense the pulse of the community in terms of its needs, aspirations and potential. They, however, regretted that often they were not able to fulfill these or work out the appropriate strategies for doing so, owing to the lack of financial or human resource support. Although the organizations did network among themselves to support each other in this process, they still had limited opportunities for growth and expansion.

Major Strategies and approaches adopted by MC-led CSOs:

These organizations adopted the following strategies to deal with the challenges and issues faced by them:

- Launching of awareness campaigns;
- Advocacy through mass mobilization;
- Imparting training to community members;
- Formation of SHGs and CBOs;
- Monitoring government schemes; and
- Implementation of government/NGO/INGO -supported programmes.

Table 3.8 provides a list of the diverse themes and activities that the CSOs were engaged in. It must however be kept in mind that there was a wide variation among the CSOs based on their resources and capacities. Nevertheless, the list provides an overview of the concerns and possible interventions wherein these CSOs can be engaged. In addition, it also opens up areas that are not currently of priority to supporting agencies and the State, but are still concerns of the communities, as in the case of peace and conflict resolution work initiated in Kandhamal, the rights of single women, facilitating children to cope with deficits in learning, promoting Adivasi culture and language, and promoting the Adivasis' struggles against many local industries that have been negatively impacting on Adivasis' lives.

Table 3.8: Diverse Activities of CSOs

Themes of Work	Adivasi-led CSOs	Dalit-led CSOs	Muslim-led CSOs
Dignity and Social Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Filed complaints against the forest officers who had threatened Adivasis and forced them to vacate their lands. * Held demonstrations and sent letters to different senior government authorities to take action against such forest officers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Fact finding and legal interventions in cases of perpetration of atrocities, discrimination and untouchability. * Awareness creation of the SC/ST (PoA) Act. * Monitoring cases of atrocities filed under the SC/ST (PoA) Act and bringing atrocity and untouchability cases to the attention of the media and the administration * Carrying out surveys in various districts to identify the number of bonded labourers for release and rehabilitation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Creating awareness about the need for education and protection of their rights among Muslim girls and women.
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Except in Jharkhand, conduction of awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Holding voter awareness campaigns during 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Encouraging women and youth

	<p>campaigns for promoting, monitoring and implementation of FRA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Assisting people in strengthening Gram Sabhas under PESA. * Promoting women's participation in governance. * Spreading awareness about the PESA Act. 	<p>panchayat and municipal elections to increase the participation of the Dalit community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Imparting training to elected representatives in PRIs. * Motivating Dalit women and youth to contest in panchayat elections. * Strengthening Gram Sabha and making them more Dalit- and women-friendly. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advocacy with elected representatives at the panchayat, parishad and block levels for better implementation of PRIs. 	<p>to contest in Panchayat elections.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Spreading awareness among the community members for facilitating better functioning of PRIs.
Livelihood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Promotion of traditional cropping rotation patterns and organic farming. * Promotion of small enterprises through SHGs. * Providing encouragement to artisans and promoting their work to link them with the concerned government departments. * Spreading awareness among and imparting training to farmers on the latest agricultural technologies. * Implementing programme for the promotion of watershed development activities, rainwater harvesting, irrigation and land development, crop and timber plantation, and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Monitoring of MGNREGA in Dalit-inhabited areas. * Assisting people in accessing job cards. * Formation of SHGs. * Awareness creation about land rights, settling of land disputes, and bringing issues to the notice of the administration. * Advocacy against land encroachment cases. * Devising and implementing awareness programmes on RTI and MGNREGA. * Intervening to ensure protection of housing land rights for the community. * Initiating campaigns and spreading awareness against consumption of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Providing livelihood- based training to Muslim women. * Facilitating activation of PDS centers. * Spreading awareness on Natural Resource Management, horticulture and forestry, vermi-compost, lac cultivation, organic farming, and fishery. * Advocacy with the state governments on the issue of fixing minimum wages for <i>beedi</i> (rolled tobacco

	<p>horticulture.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Promotion of skill development and vocational training, holding of workshops for designing and technical development in bamboo craft, embroidery, and crochet goods. 	<p>illicit liquor and alcoholism.</p>	<p>leaf) workers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Research on <i>beedi</i> workers.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Setting up of residential schools for migrant children and assisting them in pursuing higher education. * Establishing schools for bringing child labourers into the mainstream * Monitoring of Mid-day Meal Scheme (MDM). * Motivating parents to enroll their children in schools. * Conducting programmes on computer literacy. * Organizing vocational training programmes to promote employment for youth in conflict-prone areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Setting up education centers for girls. * Starting night schools for children of the Bheel (tribe) community. * Establishing schools under the National Child Labour Project (NCLP) for mainstreaming child labourers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encouraging drop-out children to go back to schools. * Starting school for deaf, dumb and visually challenged children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Establishing formal schools and tutorial and matriculation coaching centers for children and youth living in slums. * Organizing vocational training programmes for the youth. * Setting up computer literacy centers. * Motivating people to enroll girls in school.
Healthcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Promoting awareness on health-related schemes. * Monitoring of Primary Health Centers (PHCs). * Creating awareness on the importance of institutional delivery, vaccination, pre- and post-natal care. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Spreading awareness on female foeticide and infanticide. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Creating awareness on health rights and nutrition to reduce malnutrition, especially among children and women. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Creating awareness about need for healthcare among women in slums. * Promoting the concept of safe motherhood through

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Demanding the appointment of Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANMs) and Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) workers in villages. * Organizing awareness campaigns on water-borne diseases, especially in remote areas. * Providing people access to health services through private mobile medical vans. * Promoting traditional health practitioners' forum. * Training midwives from the tribal-dominated regions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Organizing health camps. * Monitoring of PHCs. * Spreading awareness on Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV and AIDS). 	<p>awareness campaigns.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Imparting training to ICDS workers. * Organizing campaign on HIV and AIDS. * Promoting awareness of the Pre-conception and Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (PC-PNDT) Act in clinics and nursing homes. * Monitoring clinics and nursing homes to stop the practice of female feticide and sex determination tests. * Monitoring cases of malnutrition among children and bringing such cases to the notice of the administration for further interventions.
Access to Government Entitlements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Creating awareness of different government-run schemes. * Assisting people in applying for availing of the schemes. * Monitoring the status and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Providing support to people with disabilities to access government provisions. * Creating awareness of different government-run schemes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Intervention with members of the community to enable them to obtain benefits from government schemes like Below the Poverty Line (BPL) cards,

	<p>implementation of all the schemes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Advocacy with panchayats and block officials for better implementation of schemes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Assisting people in applying for availing of the schemes. * Monitoring the status and implementation of the schemes. * Advocacy with panchayat and block officials for better implementation of schemes. 	<p>Pensions, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Providing leadership training to community representatives.
Women's Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Organizing and mobilizing women to protect their rights. * Building a knowledge base on women's rights. * Developing women's leadership skills. * Spreading awareness on eradication of the practice of witchcraft and violence against women. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Formation and strengthening of women's groups. * Providing training to women to better equip them for protecting their rights. * Building leadership skills among women through strengthening of PRIs and ensuring the participation of Dalit women in these organizations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Organizing workshops for adolescent girls and legal awareness camps for women. * Spreading awareness among Muslim women about their legal rights and training them to access these rights.
Peace, Conflict Resolution and Harmony building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Organizing community harmony workshops and meetings among SCs/STs/OBCs. * Holding meetings and campaigns for peace-building and rehabilitation of Adivasis after the Kandhamal violence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Undertaking peace-building efforts after the Kandhamal violence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Formation of Dalit-Muslim <i>Sanjha Manch</i> (Joint Forum of Dalits and Muslims). * Imparting training to promote peace and harmony. * Strengthening human rights defenders.
Promotion of Language, Tradition, Culture and Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Preparing and disseminating literature on local languages. ▪ Promoting the work of 	-	-

	local artisans.		
Displacement and Migration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Mobilizing Adivasis to their raise voice against the anti-people policies and Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) signed by the state governments in the name of development. * Highlighting the adverse effects of mining and the industrial policies followed by the states. * Organizing campaigns against anti-environment plants and industries. * Following up of cases filed against companies wherein hundreds of migrant labourers have been injured due to inadequate safety measures. * Rehabilitation of displaced Adivasis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Registration of migrants at panchayats. * Rehabilitation of trafficked women and children. * Setting up of short stay homes for trafficked women. 	-

As seen in Table 3.8, the CSOs engage in a variety of interventions, with most of them focusing on specific issues confronting their communities. Their work has not only helped create visibility on these issues, but has also supported their community members in availing of their rights and entitlements. Although the State has many provisions to support livelihoods, skills development, education and healthcare for marginalized communities, the gaps that often occur in reaching these services to the communities are filled by these organizations, which have come as rays of hope for the upliftment and development of the marginalized communities. One of the major strengths of the CSOs is, in fact, their knowledge of the community issues and the ability to pursue them consistently. Their ability to address the concerns and prime needs of their own communities with empathy also distinguishes these organizations of the marginalized from other CSOs.

4. Visibility of MC-led CSOs and Their Issues

As seen in the study, a number of civil society organizations led by the marginalized communities have evolved over the last two decades, particularly since the year 2000. Their efforts have served to highlight the perspectives and issues concerning the marginalized communities and to accord greater visibility to them so much so that some issues like those of Dalit human rights cannot be ignored any longer. However, many more issues still need to be brought to the forefront so that they are acknowledged by Indian society at large. Working towards this objective, these organizations are thus not only

struggling to win recognition from society, but also propelling the burning issues of excluded communities into the public domain to become subjects of wider discussion and debate. Recognizing that individual organizations have a limited reach, they have also built networks to ensure greater visibility and impact. These networks have provided the marginalized communities with a forum for ideological support, collective action, capacity building and resource-raising, while also enabling them to engage with other stakeholders. While a few CFs of the MC-led CSOs are also members of networks led by general community members, their leadership, perspectives and issues seem to acquire greater visibility and impact when they are networking within themselves. This networking has taken place at the following two levels:

- Networking among organizations, which includes:-
 - Networking among local organizations,
 - Networks aligned to state/national issue-based campaigns, and
 - Networks supported by funding organizations.
- Networking of community-based organizations (CBOs).

Collective Forums for Strategy and Visibility Building

(i) NGO Networks: All Dalit-led organizations were members of one or the other state or national level networks. They came together at the state level and a number of visible networks were found in the states. At the national level, the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR), National Confederation of Dalit Organizations (NACDOR), National Dalit Federation (NDF), National Federation of Dalit Women (NFDW) and the All India Dalit Mahila Adhikar Manch (AIDMAM) were among the better known organizations. Among the well known networks led by Muslim women's organizations was the Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan (BMMA), which provided a much-needed space to raise Muslim women's issues and worked for the Muslim women leaders themselves. Adivasi-led organizations were fewer in number and no network was found at the national level. There were smaller ones at the state level like the Adivasi Ekta Parishad, which was spread across the states of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat. In addition, a majority of these organizations were members of issue-based networks like the Right to Food network, networks on Right to Employment, Right to Information, Right to Education, and the Child Rights network, among others.

(ii) Community-based Organizations: The formation of CBOs was a common practice across all Adivasi-, Dalit- and Muslim-led organizations, and was particularly strong among Adivasi-led organizations.

(iii) Engagement with the State: The primary engagement of the collective forums with the State was to monitor state-level programmes and advocate for better implementation of various programmes like the PDS, MNREGA, ICDS and others pertaining to education and healthcare. About one-third of the organizations had received marginal support from the State to carry out service delivery programmes at some time or the other, though these were not long-term programmes and the cumbersome bureaucratic practices also acted as a deterrent for future engagements with the State.

(iv) Donor Agencies: The practice of long-term engagement with MC-led CSOs was not very common. While short-term support that was specific to a time-bound program had helped to create visibility for a few organizations, it did not ensure either the sustainability of the organizations or the addressing of the burning issues of the marginalized communities.

(v) Newsletters, magazines and other publications: initiated by a few organizations also acted as innovative ways, though sporadic, of reaching out to various stakeholders.

Advocacy was undertaken through mass mobilization by almost all the organizations. A few of them had also established issue-based forums and campaign networks at the district and state levels for advocacy purposes.

5. Need for Multi-stakeholder Strategies

In conclusion, it is relevant to review what the CFs bring to the development table. They bring the strength of their membership in the most marginalized and excluded communities, who are the focus and targets of our growth and development plan and strategy. The fact that they are integral parts of the community creates a different level of stakeholding. While various strategies are developed to reach out to these communities and regions, it is important to put these members in the driving seat for helping communities avail of the prospective benefits from these strategies. Their continuous presence, rapport and familiarity with the language provide them important opportunities and spaces to work for the development of their communities. The additional spaces created by women leaders to work for women's empowerment need special mention. As educated members, they represent an important interface between their communities, on one hand, and mainstream institutions and mechanisms, on the other. Interestingly, they seemed to have an innate rights frame emerging from their interventions, and also because they themselves have been victims of human rights violations, violence and discrimination.

As has already been seen, there are many areas where marginalized communities need support to enhance their work. However, many of these areas are more systemic than the individuals themselves. Not engaging with them has and can have serious negative fallouts. It would represent a missed opportunity for the State and development agencies if they fail to bring the know-how on what will work from these communities into the domain of development and growth. This would also foster dissatisfaction, desperation and dissent among the people. The gap between the two Indias (of the haves and have-nots) can be enormously costly and cannot be bridged without incorporating the knowledge and energies of 43 per cent of the country's population, which belongs to these communities. By all accounts, engaging with these leaders should be a non-negotiable task for the State and for society.

The building of CBOs was an important strategy adopted by many of these organizations, particularly the Adivasi-led organizations. Every NGO was seen to be promoting or linked to CBOs, big or small, which had been either promoted at the NGO level or built collectively at the network level. The members clearly felt that an NGO symbolized a necessary organizational structure and had the necessary legal framework to enable them to take up

development work, but the task of motivating people to participate in and lead the others was the prerogative of the CBOs, which thus became the platforms on which wider community issues were raised and redress demanded. The CSOs found the two structures to be complementary even when there were overlaps in terms of leadership and programmes.

Irrespective of all apprehensions about their abilities to manage programmes, write documents and articulate the agenda of the organizations they represent in mainstream society, one cannot neglect or undermine the reach and potential role of MC-led CSOs in the development of their communities. They have overcome tremendous barriers to reach the educational levels they have acquired, including open humiliation and discrimination in schools, neglect and diluted expectations, and also financial constraints inducing breaks in education, lack of guidance, and so on. Their continued presence within their communities and in remote areas is an added reflection of their commitment and should not be overlooked in any way. If properly engaged, they could become role models for other young people to follow.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Civil society in India can be recognized as the ‘fifth pillar’ of democracy after the Legislature, Executive, Judiciary and the Media. Its democratization is integral and essential for achieving the agenda of social justice and equity, which is the need of the hour. We cannot ignore and deliberately overlook the diverse nature of our society and limit our viewpoints to our immediate environment. Our magnanimity as individuals lies in our ability to understand, empathize and act so as to benefit all and harm none.

By failing to recognize the ‘Indian Nation’ as a conglomerate of various religious, caste and ethnic groups and further sub-groups within them, we have for long missed the opportunity to act for the greater good of humanity and ended up creating a system that benefits a few at the cost of many.

Despite their large populations running into millions, these communities are forced to live at the margins of a society that claims to be on the threshold of becoming a superpower. It is hoped that this study symbolizes a beginning towards not only fostering an understanding of the nature and needs of these civil society organizations, but also leading to the creation of policy and strategy interventions to engage with these organizations in protecting the rights and augmenting the development of the most marginalized people. Therefore, the CFs of these organizations are surely agents of change within their communities.

Through this study, the Centre for Social Equity and Inclusion (CSEI) had an invaluable opportunity to highlight the strengths of civil society organizations led by Adivasi, Dalit and Muslim women and men.

The following findings came to the fore during the study:

- **Discrimination is a continuing reality:** Of the 135 CFs, 102 reported caste/ethnicity-based discrimination, 66 highlighted religion-based discrimination and 39 pointed to gender-based discrimination, reflecting the widespread prevalence of discrimination on multiple counts. The development sector was not devoid of discrimination either. At the same time, it is important to note that 16 CFs did not report facing discrimination based on their identity, showing the possibility of a change in social attitudes, however small.
- **Institutional barriers prevent the formation of CSOs:** A majority of the CFs claimed that they faced institutional barriers while forming their CSOs and undertaking development work. Despite having put in many years of work in the sector, they had very little information on the process of registration and other legal compliance requirements. The authorities put up hurdles for registration regarding the name of the organization, board members, nature of work, etc., particularly in the case of members of the Muslim community. Even when these CSOs were set up by the affected

communities, they found it extremely difficult to register and work in conflict- or Naxal-affected areas, as they were subjected to constant surveillance and harassment by the police.

- **Issues concerning marginalized communities get marginal attention:** Many of the CFs reported that they had initiated their CSOs to address the discrimination and exclusion that they had experienced in their lives, and other foundational issues related to the marginalization of their communities. Their experience was that even when other NGOs worked with marginalized communities, they were hesitant to work on these critical issues or take them to the threshold level for influencing changes. While over 50 people were nominated as members of government committees, these bodies rarely functioned and even when they did, they did not pay attention to the issues and concerns of the marginalized communities. Even the general public environment did not support the raising and addressing of the particular problems of the marginalized communities and treated them as marginal and passing issues, despite the widespread prevalence and severity of the issues concerned.
- **Challenges of fund-raising, networking and advocacy:** Even after a decade of working in the sector, about 75 per cent of these organizations operated with no or small amounts of funds raised from the community, through fellowships, through network programmes or small government funds. The financial and organizational capability norms set by the government and donor organizations, which have been instituted without any consultation with these CSOs, have become default exclusionary processes for these organizations. The State, UN agencies and other development organizations do not have inclusive policies and practices for building NGO partnerships.

It was also found during the course of the study that a negligible number of MC-led CSOs were members of networks led by general caste members and even when the members reported that their leadership and equal partnership was not acceptable to the general caste members, these networks seldom took up core issues related to the excluded communities. Hence, networking within the particular identity group and building community-based organizations at the local and wider levels was a strategy adopted by these CSOs. Vertical linkages to national networks was also beginning to be formed which strengthened their confidence and local impact. While these CBOs and networks raised very critical issues of their respective communities, they struggled to sustain their efforts through personal contributions and minimum external support.

- **Exclusion within exclusion:** Exclusions within exclusions and the manner in which the dominant perceptions excluded various sections was brought out in many ways. In the state of Jharkhand, considered as a tribal state, the needs and concerns of Dalits were neglected and even when CSOs from Dalit community tried to take them up, they were marginalized on the pretext that the state is a tribal state and that only issues concerning the tribal community are most critical. One finds parallels in other states regarding more marginalized, smaller and less visible communities among the Dalits, Tribals and Muslims, wherein the dominant sections of these communities assume

leadership. Women leaders also face a considerable struggle to establish their identity and leadership in the sector. These perceptions and dynamics have resulted in their continued marginalization, which leads to an urgent need to accord due recognition to all sub-groups and their issues, and ensure their participation.

- **Difficulty in implementing government programmes:** While inclusive development has been prominently adopted as the requisite development approach and framework under the recent Five-year Plans, the State has recognized and forged partnerships with very few MC-led CSOs. This particularly hampers development work with the excluded communities wherever there are geographical, social, economic and cultural chasms between them and the other communities. These CSOs have not been consulted, nor have their contexts been kept in mind when the State evolves its financial and capability norms for NGO partnerships, *de facto* excluding them. The implementation of government programmes has become even more difficult than before owing to corruption, delays in the sanction and release of funds, lack of regular monitoring, and lack of commitment on the part of the administration to ensure that the excluded communities benefit from these programmes.

Recommendations and Way Forward

The following overarching recommendations can be suggested on the basis of the findings of the study and the prevalent situation on the ground:

Strengthening a rights-based approach: While the CSO work covered a wide spectrum of issues based on local contexts and the availability of support, their focus on rights promulgated by the State is clearly widespread and is reflected in their awareness, advocacy campaigns and monitoring on the rights and entitlements under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) [SC/ST (POA)] Act, the Domestic Violence (DV) Act, Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, Forest Rights Act (FRA), Right to Information (RTI) Act, and the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). They also engaged in forming women's self-help groups (SHGs), promoting micro enterprises, and boosting agriculture and skills development. Some work was also centered on building community pride, recognizing community icons and leaders, and celebrating community culture. Thus, strengthening rights and adopting a rights-based approach would help in supporting the concerns and issues of these communities and provided them with a natural and strong frame for engagement.

- **Strategic capabilities building:** The study and consultation identified capacity building needs in diverse areas that would strengthen the engagement of these organizations in terms of organizational development, personnel development, advocacy skills and strategies, systems building, and building linkages with local governance and State machinery. Supporting and strengthening community-based

organizations (CBOs) and networks and facilitating vertical linkages to national networks and resource organizations are also considered to be important. Limitations were reported in skills pertaining to computers and communication, English language, documentation and presentation, and financial management, which represented major areas of constraints in addition to the exclusion. The limited understanding of marginalized perspectives and issues among donor agencies and the State thus often acts as a barrier to the engagement of these organizations with them.

- **Perspective-building and detailing strategy on ‘exclusion-equity-inclusion’:** Creating an inclusive environment is important for addressing exclusion issues. Orientation and perspective-building on ‘exclusion-equity-inclusion’ for the state administration and policy makers as well as UN, INGO, networks and other development stakeholders are important for the development sector as a whole. The need to ensure diversity and to recruit staff from the excluded communities in UN agencies and INGOs has been identified as an important strategy to facilitate a better understanding of their issues and perspectives.

Specific Recommendations to various stakeholders

Concerted and collaborative efforts on the part of the State and civil society are essential to create a facilitative environment for the promotion of equitable participation and benefit-sharing by the excluded communities in the country’s democracy and growth. One of the most important avenues for achieving this objective is by strengthening the CSOs from these communities that operate in their geographical, linguistic and cultural contexts, and are engaged in development work. Given the isolation and exclusion of the CSOs themselves, the following recommendations have been made for the various stakeholders in the country’s development roadmap:

1. The Government:

- 1.1 The state and central governments should make policy-level amendments to ensure the equitable participation of CSOs from the marginalized communities while implementing various welfare and development programmes through NGOs, especially those designed to benefit marginalized communities.
- 1.2 The state and central governments need to develop frameworks and indicators to monitor the processes of ‘exclusion-equity-inclusion’ and the outcomes for marginalized communities in all their development interventions, and to expand the rights and entitlements framework.
- 1.3 There is a need to revise the criteria for Government-NGO partnerships in order to facilitate the inclusion of MC-led CSOs in this process by taking into account their financial and institutional capacities.

- 1.4 It is imperative to ensure the equitable and effective representation and participation of MC representatives in all government planning committees, review committees, and vigilance bodies for the purposes of bringing about accountability and transparency in governance and for facilitating the proper functioning of these committees.
- 1.5 Every government ministry/department that is undertaking programme planning and review should necessarily include an assessment of the impact (both negative and positive) of the respective plan on the vulnerable and marginalized communities.
- 1.6 There is a need to continue and enhance data disaggregation at all levels in all development programmes in order to facilitate an analysis of their impacts and an improvement in the benefits delivered to the vulnerable and marginalized communities.
- 1.7 Comprehensive legislation and rules must be adopted to effectively address the issue of discrimination against marginalized communities in development interventions.
- 1.8 Adequate security and support needs to be provided to MC-led CSOs working on contentious issues and in sensitive regions.

2. The Planning Commission

- 2.1 The Planning Commission should develop in detail an equity-inclusion framework in its development approach and in the course of designing all development programmes.
- 2.2 The PC must continue to expand spaces for the consultation and participation of CSOs, particularly those led by marginalized communities, in its planning and monitoring processes, and a beginning has already been made in this direction in the Twelfth Five-Year Plan.
- 2.3 There is a need for the Commission to create funds for capacity building and development of MC-led CSOs in order to enhance their agency and participation in promoting inclusive growth through the NGO Partnership System (NGO-PS).
- 2.4 The PC needs to engage with MC-led CSOs in monitoring flagship programmes as part of its regular review mechanism, in order to ensure that the constraints and barriers faced by the marginalized communities are identified and removed.
- 2.5 The Commission should continue to create opportunities for conducting advocacy and action research studies to improve Plan outcomes, particularly for the excluded and marginalized communities.

3. The UN and INGOs

- 3.1 The UN and INGOs need to develop and incorporate an 'equity-inclusion' framework while carrying out situation analyses, planning, designing, implementation and monitoring of development programmes.
- 3.2 They should create equitable opportunities for MC-led CSOs and their networks in order to enable them to become development partners in various interventions. The partnership criteria needs to be (re)designed keeping in view the rationale for engagement with MC-led CSOs, as also their strengths and limitations. The UN and INGOs operating within India should also promote equity and inclusion in their staffing at all levels and in their HR policies.
- 3.3 These international bodies must orient their own staff members and that of their partners towards understanding the perspectives of the marginalized communities and addressing issues of social exclusion. The UN and INGOs need to open spaces to support and strengthen MC-led CSOs; formulate fellowships/grants to these organizations and their networks; organize capacity building workshops to strategize equal outcomes; provide infrastructure development support; and facilitate organization development processes (OD).
- 3.4 The UN and INGOs should identify and categorize MC-led CSOs as resource support organizations for building sensitivity on marginalized communities, their perspectives and issues for promoting equity and inclusion in development interventions.
- 3.5 They should undertake and create opportunities at the national and global levels for conducting advocacy and action research studies to address the issue of social exclusion in development plans and interventions.

4. Research and Resource Organizations

- 4.1 Research organizations should proactively identify and include MC-led CSOs and their networks in strategies for providing research and resource support.
- 4.2 The 'equity-inclusion' lens needs to be incorporated into training and capacity building modules and programmes.
- 4.3 There is a need to create opportunities/undertake research and advocacy programmes in order to understand the issues of exclusion and track the impacts of development on excluded communities, while constantly expanding the agenda for inclusion.

- 4.4 Research and resource organizations must also actively contribute towards building knowledge on the practices of social exclusion based on caste, religion, ethnicity, gender or any other social criterion.

5. Networks/Forums (NGO or Issue-based)

5.1 State and national level networks should ensure the participation and leadership of members from the Adivasi, Dalit and Muslim communities, particularly women leaders (both NGO leaders and activists from the MCs).

5.2 The networks need to develop and incorporate the 'exclusion-equity-inclusion' framework for facilitating situation analysis, and approach and strategy building to address issues of development and protection of rights.

5.3 They must collaborate with MC-led CSOs and undertake national and global advocacy to address the problem of social exclusion and its negative impacts on marginalized communities.

6. Expressed/Identified Capacity Building Areas/Needs of MC-led CSOs from the Study

During the course of the study, the CFs came up with a veritable list of areas wherein capacity building is needed for the development of the MC led CSOs. These areas and the proposed agenda for each of them are delineated below.

6.1 Organizational Development

- Legal compliance and good organizational governance;
- Financial management, accounts and book-keeping;
- Documentation of field- and office-based activities;
- Project planning and implementation;
- Strategic planning;
- Support for basic office infrastructure; and
- Office management.

6.2 Personnel Development

- Proposal writing;
- Presentation skills;
- Fund-raising skills;

6.3 Rights/Issues

- Rights-based approach;
- Various Constitutional provisions for Adivasi, Dalit and Muslim communities;
- Government flagship programmes;
- The SC/ST (POA) Act;

- The Chhattisgarh Special Public Security Act (CFPSA);
- The FRA and PESA Acts;
- Land rights issues;
- Domestic violence and women's rights; and
- Training of PRI members from the marginalized communities.

6.4 Knowledge and Understanding of Government Systems and Their Functioning

This covers the three arms of the government including the Executive, the Judiciary and the Legislature, implying that members of the marginalized communities need to be educated about the functioning of all these three constituents of governance.

6.5 Advocacy

- Imparting of training on issue-based and media advocacy;
- Development of skills to engage with the government on raising issues pertinent to the marginalized communities and facilitating their participation in various activities; and
- Building sustainable community-based institutions for advocacy on their issues.

The above recommendations and suggestions indicate that the various stakeholders urgently need to re-orient their perspectives about inequalities, poverty, and exclusion from the lenses of caste, ethnicity and religion.

It is high time that the deep-rooted causes of inequality in various development sectors are seriously addressed through the implementation of practical and viable solutions.

Non-recognition and invisibility of marginalized civil society organizations is one of the core concerns discussed in this report. The analysis, which takes into account multiple levels of growth and various organizational aspects, reflects the participation of the marginalized community in the flagship programmes of the state and other development interventions by the non-marginalized CSOs, as also by bilateral and multilateral agencies. It would not be an exaggeration to state that 'inclusive development' can be achieved only by enhancing the participation of the marginalized community through their CSOs. Marginalized CSOs face multiple limitations in terms of their professional capacity being defined by the sector, but their skills of community organization and of addressing basic identity-based issues of exclusion and participation while being strongly rooted to the community are some of the strengths that can be supported and strengthened to enhance their participation in the social development sector.

The need for diversifying capacity building methods, training programmes and strengthening of the voices from marginalized communities for social equity are a few crucial conclusions arrived at through the analyses of these organizations.

The Centre for Social Equity and Inclusion (CSEI), established in 2009 in Delhi, India, focuses on promoting social equity for marginalized communities, particularly Dalit, Tribal, and Minority youth.

CSEI envisions a just, inclusive society where everyone has equal opportunities and capabilities to reach their potential. The organization has evolved through internal and external reflections, leading to three primary streams of work: the Youth Equity Forum (YEF), youth skill development and entrepreneurship, and social policy, research, and advocacy.

Key interventions include promoting Youth Equity Forums, which provide marginalized youth a platform for leadership and action. CSEI also initiated the Girls Learning and Leadership Program (GLLP) in 2020, which supports adolescent girls from marginalized communities through gender and social inclusion curricula, digital literacy, career guidance, and community building. The program has engaged over 2,500 girls and aims to build a girls collective.

CSEI further supports sexual and reproductive health education, facilitates citizen-generated data for marginalized communities, and partners with community-led organizations (CLOs) to drive transformative social change. Through research, collaboration with curriculum experts, and a focus on civic action, CSEI aims to evolve and empower youth to challenge social inequities continuously.

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