

An Effort to Foster Development

In the contemporary society, problems that people face are complex and Government has to undertake a wide gamut of development activities. In such a scenario, NGOs and Civil Society Organizations can act a strong support structure to the Government to facilitate effective delivery of services.

In the above mentioned context, the 'Nand and Jeet Khemka Foundation' collaborated with the European Union and Nidan to help Government in their gargantuan task. Bihar, one of the BIMARU states, which is a densely populated northern state has been selected for intervention as it is one of the backward regions in India, with very dismal social and economic statistics.

Amongst all the districts of Bihar, Bhagalpur, which is a BRGF district was selected, and 5 blocks namely Kahalgaon, Pirpanti, Shahkund, Jagdishpur and Sanhoulla have been selected for dedicated action.

The intervention has been introduced in Bhagalpur in a project mode titled 'Project Khemka RameshwarLal' or AIPAD (Action to Improve Public Scheme Access and Delivery) since January 2014.

The sole essence of the project is to ensure that the poor and the vulnerable sections of the select blocks of Bhagalpur can have equitable access to all the public schemes related to health, education and social security to enhance their wellbeing, with a special focus on improving delivery and accountability mechanisms.

In spite of the public schemes being well tailored, there has been a lot of problems on the implementation front. It's been noticed that most of the poor people are unaware about such schemes, hence they stay out of the ambit of these schemes.

AIPAD is unique because it:

1. Adopts participatory and collaborative approach.
2. Focusses on the entire community, including all vulnerable groups.
3. Involves wide range of stakeholders at village, block, district and state level.

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MESSAGE

I am happy to learn that Khemka Foundation with its local partner "NIDAN" is going to launch "Action to improve Public Scheme Access and Delivery" (AIPAD) project in Bhagalpur District on 18 November, 2014. I am sure that the project will assist in implementing the delivery mechanism of schemes and support the efforts of the state government.

Creating awareness about the Government schemes and improving their uptake among people is critical to their development and improved living standards. Empowering people who have their stakes involved and equipping them with necessary awareness and knowledge can bring about a paradigm shift in the current situation. It is extremely important to create successful models even if it is at a smaller administrative unit such as a District or Block. Such positive examples at the grassroots level can be instrumental in bringing about the desired impact. AIPAD is a good initiative in this direction.


I wish all the success to the project and launching of News Letter on this occasion.


(Anjani Kumar Singh)
Chief Secretary, Bihar.

"For holistic development of Bhagalpur, it's very important that reach of healthcare & education services is universalized and made accessible to everyone with a robust social security net which provides stability to the needy. The poor and the vulnerable sections need to be made aware about the benefits of Government schemes tailored for them and real development of the district will fructify only when we take the poor and marginalized along with us in the development process."

I am happy that Khemka Foundation with its Partner Nidan has launched its project Action To Improve Public Access and Delivery (AIPAD) in Bhagalpur. This initiative to work synergistically with communities and District Administration is a positive and forward looking step in this direction.

I wish them success on the occasion of their Project launch as well as for their first edition of the News letter.


(Dr. Birendra Prasad Yadav)
District Magistrate,
Bhagalpur.

Strengthening Education Environment and Accessibility

Education for all is the most important determinant of development. Providing mass education is a sine qua non for holistic development. Bihar, with 63.82%, has the lowest literacy rate in India. The 'Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan' and 'Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyaan' has led to significant improvement in elementary and secondary education, however much needs to be done.

According to our Baseline Survey, in the 5 selected blocks, proportion of children in the age group of 6-13 years enrolled in schools is quite high. But, there is little compliance by the schools to the RTE norms. Only 68% of the schools studied had separate toilets for boys and girls, 54.3% of the schools had a playground, 65.7% of the schools had a boundary wall/fencing around the school.

About 64% of the girls studying in classes 6-8 were unaware about the 'Mukhya Mantri Balika Poshak Yojana' and 70% of the girls were aware about the 'Mukhya Mantri Balika Cycle Yojana'. The figures suggest that even though impressive progress has been made in education in the state, a lot still needs to be done. Majority of the schools also provide Mid Day Meal to the poor students.

AIPAD will strive to secure 100% school enrolment rates in the 5 selected blocks. It will aim at improving sanitation conditions in the schools, with separate toilets for both boys and girls and potable drinking water. Effort will be made to ensure that nutritious food is served under the Mid Day Meal scheme.

Data sources: Census 2001-2011, Bihar State Government Online Portal, Baseline Survey



A Shiksha Mela was held in Lattipur Panchayat in Shakhund Block of Bhagalpur under the AIPAD project on September 18th 2014. The mela was conducted in collaboration with 8 Government schools involving the community's children as well as local PRI representatives. The community participated enthusiastically along with the Principals and teachers of the participating schools. The Mukhya of the Panchayat and other speakers emphasized on the importance of education and motivated the parents to enrol their children in the schools. The mela ended with many parents actively getting their children enrolled with schools within their catchments.



RTE Norm	Number of Schools complying	%
Base N: Total Number of Schools – 35		
At least one class room for every teacher	8	22.9
At least 1 office cum store room cum head teacher's room	23	65.7
Separate toilets for Boys and Girls	24	68.6
Safe and adequate drinking water facility to all children	34	97.1
A kitchen where mid-day meal is cooked in the school	28	80
Playground	19	54.3
Boundary wall or fencing	23	65.7

Compliance to RTE Norms by schools in the project area

Facilitating Healthcare for All

Healthcare accessibility and sanitation in rural India needs to be improved. Bihar has very grim health indicators and there is lack of knowledge about ante-natal, pre-natal and post-natal care among the communities in the rural areas.

Bhagalpur, one of the poorer districts in Bihar, has very poor health statistics. MMR in the district stands at 321 and IMR stands at 55, which is very high compared to the national and state average.

Our Baseline Survey in 5 selected blocks, reveals that 89% of women register their pregnancy with the AWW (Anganwadi Workers).

Access to Janani SurakshaYojana (JSY) has been a crucial determinant in increasing institutional delivery. Institutional delivery in the blocks stood at 68.2%. Access to and usage of toilet facilities is quite low with 78.2% of the respondents defecating in the open.

The key inhibitor in the Indian healthcare sector is inaccessibility of healthcare services. AIPAD will work towards increasing awareness about public health schemes amongst the poor, so that the poor can have access to affordable healthcare services. The effort will be to leverage the government health programs and engage with the system as collaborators.

Data sources: UNICEF Reports, Annual Health Survey, Water Aid Report, Census 2011, Bihar Government Online Portal.

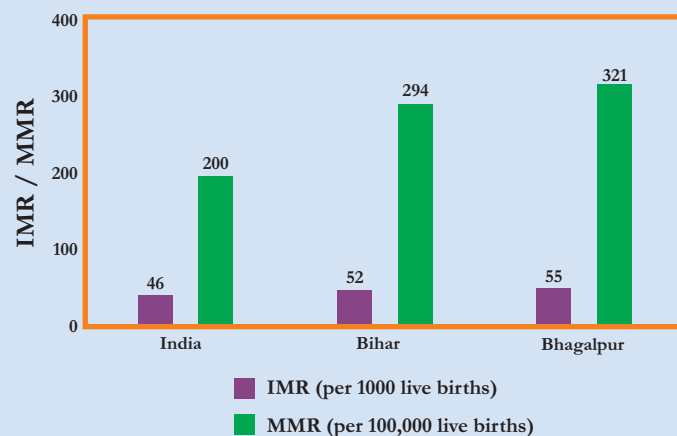


AWW distributing money for children's uniform in the ICDS centre

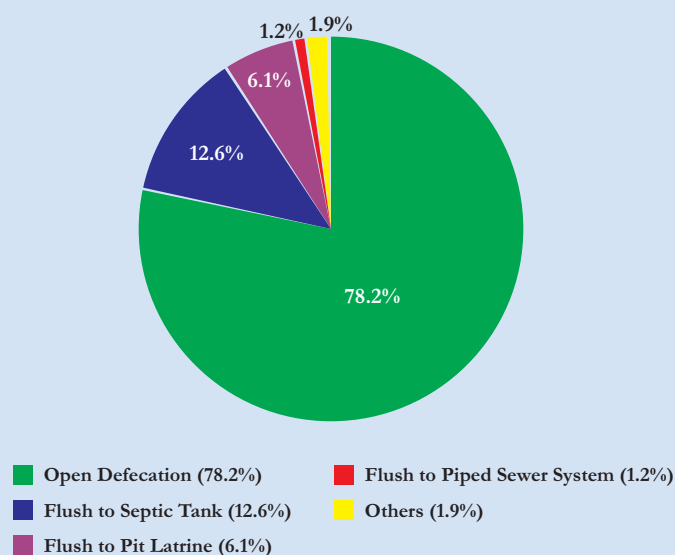
The CMO of Bhagalpur cited that there is considerable lack of awareness in the community about the Government's health schemes. By creating more awareness about the existing health-related schemes, more than half of the major diseases prevalent in the district can be dealt with effectively.

Our discussions with the ASHAs in the blocks have highlighted the fact that most of the people in the villages still do not understand the importance of health and hygiene. Open defecation is a menace in most of the villages.

Comparison of IMR and MMR
Source: Annual Health Survey



Type of Toilet Facility
Source: Baseline Survey



Widening the Social Security Net

India is constantly trying to tread on the path of development, and social security is an integral part of the development process. Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY), which provides cash-less health care to workers and the poor is a good effort by the Government.

Our Baseline Survey shows that the awareness about RSBY amongst women who delivered in the last 2 years is very low, only 6% women were enrolled under RSBY. Only 33.5% of the artisans were aware about the 'Bihar Shatabdi Asangathit Karyakshetra Kamgar Evam Shilpkar Suraksha Yojana', which provides insurance to the workers working in the unorganized sector. The level of awareness about old age pension schemes amongst the aged is quite high, but enrolment is very low. Awareness and enrolment amongst the widows about the widow pension scheme is quite low. Similar trend was found even for the disability pension scheme. This may be attributed to a wide range of causes, for instance rejection of applications.

India has gradually increased expenditure on social security as a percentage of GDP, but is quite low compared to countries like China, Malaysia, Sri Lanka etc. The monetary compensation that the aged, unemployed and the disabled get is very low to make any significant difference.

AIPAD aims at working towards increasing the awareness amongst the BPL families about the social security benefits that they are entitled to. It will also help the local administration in identification of beneficiaries which also is a big hurdle in successful implementation of the social security schemes.

Data sources : 67th, 68th Rounds of NSSO Survey, Baseline Survey



People who got Pension benefits with our FLW's help

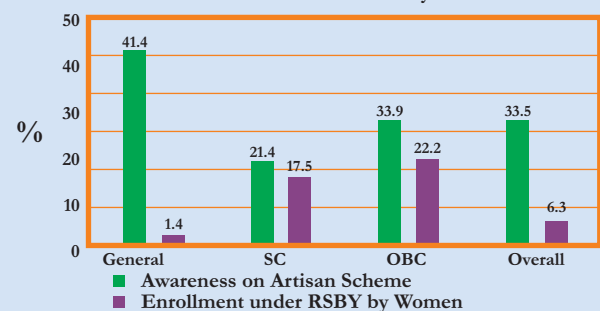
Facilitating the process of opening up bank accounts under PMJDY

AIPAD team has been making the community aware about the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), under which people can open a bank account with zero balance and avail the benefit of overdraft after successful operation of bank account for six months. Currently our team has been focusing on 9 panchayats namely: Rifatpur, Manikpur, Rajgaonraji (Pirpainti), Ogri, Bholsar (Kahalgaon), Baijani, Habibpur (Jagdishpur) and Amba, Kisanpur, Amkhorria (Shahkund). During the process, our team identified people who did not have a bank account, helped them in documentation process and connected them with the banks. The banks have been supportive in this endeavour, however lack of requisite staff and heavy work load of the banks proved to be a challenge.

The number of bank accounts that AIPAD has helped open till now are:

Block	Panchayat	Accounts Opened
Sahkund	Amba	428
Sahkund	Kishanpur & Amkhorriya	1146
Pirpainti	Rifaidpur	200
Pirpainti	Manikpur	185
Pirpainti	Rajgaonraji	310
Kahalgaon	Ogri	102
Kahalgaon	Bholsar	200
Jagdishpur	Baijani	225
Jagdishpur	Habibpur	247
Total		3043

Caste-Based Segregation of 'Awareness on Artisan Scheme' and 'Enrollment under RSBY by Women who delivered in the last 2 years'



Lending a helping hand:



Kurman Devi (30) residing in Bhakarpur Panchayat in Pirpanti, never anticipated the sudden death of her 38 year old husband Bhusan Sah who was a rickshaw puller. He supported his family of 6 with his meagre daily earnings. Both Bhusan and Kurman neither had any education nor a plot of land. After Bhusan's death, Kurman was left behind in a helpless state with her 4 children. Their abject poverty was such that Kurman did not even have money for her dead husband's cremation.

One of our FLWs, Khusboo Kumari who spreads awareness about government schemes in Pirpanti block, got a call from a desperate Kurman who was running from pillar to post to collect some money for the cremation. Khusboo informed her about the 'Kabir Antyeshti Yojana' under which she is entitled to get money for her dead husband's last rites. Kurman, with Khusboo's help got the money from the Panchayat Mukhiya and also issued Bhusan's death certificate. Khusboo apprised Kurman about the Shatabdi Yojana under which she can get monetary assistance as her husband was an informal worker. Kurman has completed the requisite documentation for the Shatabdi Yojana benefits with the help of our FLW, and is awaiting her cash assistance. With the money, she intends to start a small shop outside her house which will help her sustain herself and her children.

Stakeholders Speak

“Being from Kahalgaon and spending the first sixteen years of my life there, I feel a deep connect for the development of the region. AIPAD is an endeavour to ensure equitable access to welfare schemes and improved service delivery, particularly for marginalized populations by collectively working with the Government and the Panchayats. Our synergised efforts should be geared towards creating a model for an aware citizenry and accountable governance. It should hopefully serve as a constructive example that can be replicated throughout the country.”

-Mr. Nand Khemka, The Nand & Jeet Khemka Foundation

“Enabling people to access public schemes in a non-discriminatory way is a major challenge in India. Once accessibility improves in any scheme, it triggers desire for linkage with other schemes, encourages people to take actions and creates a positive environment to get what is due to them. AIPAD tries to create this enabling environment so that better programs with efficient implementation system can be created.”

-Mr. Arbind Singh, Nidan

Brightening up her life:

During one of the community meetings in Shyampur (Kahalgaon), a blind lady called Sanjo Devi (55) came up to our FLW Neelu Kumari, and narrated the troubles she faced in accessing the benefits she is entitled to under the Disability Pension Scheme. Sanjo Devi's husband and sons work as daily wage labours and they have been struggling to get the cash assistance under the pension scheme. Neelu immediately took Sanjo to the nearest PHC for issuing the disability certificate, and after receiving the certificate she helped Sanjo complete all the documentation to apply for the scheme. Today, Sanjo Devi is getting her regular benefits under the Bihar Nishakta Pension Yojana.



Training for AIPAD

The AIPAD training was held in Patna, which commenced on the 9th of June, and lasted 4 days, until the 12th of June. The training was attended by the Nidan team (Field Level Workers (FLWs), Project Coordinators (PCs) and management) along with NJKF and TNF teams. The purpose of the training programme was to educate the FLWs and the PCs about the purpose of AIPAD, the government schemes related to health, education and social security, reporting patterns, government and organizational structures and the field work action plan. There were group training activities, aimed at enabling the FLWs to think critically and boosting their capability to work amongst the rural communities.



To provide the training, experts were invited from various organizations including Ms. Nirmala Mishra from Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI). At the end of the training, a separate session for getting feedback from the FLWs and the PCs was also held to understand their concerns and requirements.



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Training Partner



THE NABHA FOUNDATION

Shiksha Calendar

A 'Shiksha Calendar' has been made by us to bring awareness about education schemes. It can be easily used in Anganwadis and Schools, which can become a handy tool to inform the people about the education schemes.



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