

# **Annual Report**

**2008 – 2009**

## **CHETANA SOCIETY**

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## **Introduction**

*Chetana* was established in 1996 by eminent writers and journalists who are sensitive to social problems and needs. The mission is to increase the awareness levels of the people in order to respond to the problems arising out of environmental degradation. Informed people would respond appropriately towards an environmental movement, action, policy intervention and governmental initiatives. *Chetana* has been trying to fulfill the existing gap of information in Telugu which is not available for the people on local issues.

Main objective of *Chetana* Society is to build awareness, consciousness, knowledge, skills and capacities of poor people, especially targeting women, children and youth. It believes that the success of this objective depends on the understanding of the aspirations of the poor. This requires the involvement and participation of the local people, and their representatives.

The basic approach of *Chetana* has been to spread awareness, and promote discussions and dialogue. *Chetana* believes environment and development problems can be approached in a stage-by-stage process, wherein the emphasis would be on taking care of the interests of each of the sections of the society involved. *Chetana* is working mainly in Rangareddy, Hyderabad, and Medak districts of Andhra Pradesh. However, it does not limit its work to these areas alone.

*Chetana* has initiated activities like Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) programme, enlisting women involvement in FP methods programme, sex education, campaign against early marriages with government support. It has conducted health camps for ANC services, immunization, brain fever, AIDS awareness camps, baseline data survey for family health protection. As part of Campaign against child labour, meetings were conducted in Kutbullapur mandal of Rangareddy district.

*Chetana* is associated with the efforts of several individuals who have redeemed themselves in promoting the larger interests of the society. It has been working on

environmental issues in Andhra Pradesh and in Hyderabad. In these campaigns, individuals from different walks of life are continuously supporting it: lawyers, doctors, academics, journalists, teachers, etc. It relies also on a strong network of youth, who are poised to set the direction of social change.

Personnel presently associated with *Chetana* have been working on environment and development issues in Andhra Pradesh through various activities and initiatives. Due to them, this organization has enormous experience on issues of pollution and people's struggles associated with industrial pollution.

It is dedicated to the concept of sustainable development. *Chetana* aims to motivate people to organize efforts, which promote environmental preservation, ecological conservation and alternative models of development.

*Chetana* recognised the need to develop awareness and knowledge on agricultural issues for Indian farmers, especially women and disadvantaged sections. Farmers need to be exposed to wider issues, which would enable the Indian society to understand the changing scenarios and the range of choices being developed across the world. Most of the small and marginal farmers are not aware of the implications of policies and decisions, and also the fluctuations in the markets. Market knowledge of these sections has to be improved in order to empower them intellectually to respond to the need for their opinions and decisions.

Similarly, it has been working on understanding the Textile chain of production, especially related to cotton. In this chain, *Chetana* is working on documenting information related to poor handloom weavers and develop a framework for their development.

Over years, *Chetana* has defined its priorities in the following areas:

- ✦ Environmental Pollution and Urban problems
- ✦ Sustainable and equitable development
- ✦ Public Health
- ✦ Promotion of environment-friendly methods and technologies

*Chetana* has also initiated a major programme on handloom sector, which has two distinct approaches: research and policy advocacy, and facilitating production by SHG-led weavers.

*Chetana* has been working on information development and information dissemination on handloom weavers. It has brought out few publications related to women, budgets, cotton, markets, etc., including a regular newsletter. These publications are disseminated to the weavers, civil society and policy makers through workshops, meetings and directly. All these activities are coordinated from an office based in Chirala, a major handloom cluster town.

*Chetana* has also facilitated the formation of Self-Help Groups of weavers. These SHGs are given training and capacity building in designs, dyeing, book keeping, etc. SHGs also do production with the support of *Chetana*. SHGs manage their common funds, and help member weavers to earn income through production. This activity intended to reduce poverty among the weavers is mainly concentrated in Nalgonda district, in various villages, near Choutuppal and Pochampally. ***Handloom weavers have been facing problems in accessing capital, raw materials and skills in responding to market needs. This programme is intended to strengthen them in markets, and also to help them in developing their own institutional capacities, that would take them into a position of control and continuous production.***

*Chetana* work on handloom sector is well appreciated by various people and associations. It also works in collaboration with a number of societies, associations, NGOs and forums, in furthering its programme objectives. Government officials are involved in most of its activities.

In the last few years, *Chetana* has organized a few workshops and meetings, brought out publications, organized training programmes, facilitated discussions and debate, supported handloom production and held discussions with government officials on the future of handloom weavers.

Handloom sector, being a traditional industry, has numerous problems which impact on the sector's abilities and capacities. The strands of each of the impinging factors

are intertwined, and deep. In recent years, weavers have been facing crisis – they are not getting work and proper compensation. While many analysts blame the government policies for this situation, there is no denial that there are other factors even. Fundamental among them is the improper response of the handloom sector to the modern, dynamic markets.

The issue of appropriate institutional models for promoting sustainable livelihoods among the poor and the marginalized is being continuously discussed. However, there are not many such initiatives among the handloom weavers.

The Cotton Textile supply Chain programme, supported by Oxfam and implemented by Chetana Society, has provided a range of inputs to weavers in Nalgonda by organizing them and training them on improving designs and consistent weave along with dyeing for fast colours. Efforts to market are going on. Meanwhile, weavers have been involved in market-linked production.

The institutional mechanisms set up are groups for production and the Handlooms Trading Company (HTC) – Chenetha Colour Weaves Private Limited for marketing, with a middle level institution (MACS) which could provide necessary services to the weavers. The family is addressed as a unit here. About 28 handloom production groups (HPGs) in 11 villages with 280 households are organized. A challenge facing the programme is how to create effective cooperatives different from the existing failed cooperatives set up by the government of AP.

Apart from capacity building programmes, Chetana Society has been trying to build the confidence of handloom weaver's families and production groups and MACS level leaders. A long term objective of these confidence building processes is to create a sustainable institutional model. With this, a second Annual convention is being proposed for the Handloom weavers families.

## **PROJECT REPORT: Enhancing Power in Markets of the Poor Engaged in Cotton-Textile Supply Chain**

### **Summary**

The programme has provided a range of inputs to weavers in Nalgonda by organizing them and training them on improving designs and consistent weave along with dyeing for fast colours. Efforts to market are going on. Meanwhile, weavers have been involved in some sample production and production. This could not give any substantial income to weavers as yet.

The institutional mechanisms set up are groups for production and the Handlooms Trading Company (HTC) – Chenetha Colour Weaves Private Limited for marketing, with a middle level institutional gap which could provide necessary services to the weavers. The family is addressed as a unit while the government Indira Kranthi Patham programme has organized women as separate SHGs and is providing them leadership and other trainings. A challenge facing the programme is how to create effective cooperatives different from the existing failed cooperatives set up by the government of AP.

Policy advocacy to recognize handlooms as competitive products with a market and to set suitable policy directions is being pursued. Chetana Society's (CS) efforts are focused on providing research-based authentic information to the weavers' community and political parties who have traditionally organized them. Advocacy efforts need to be strengthened at the national level and perhaps internationally, along with building grassroots organisation of weavers for advocacy.

Key issues include commensurate wages to weavers, continuous work and continuous orders, credit access, collective buying of provisions and raw materials, clarity on institutions, forming MACS, in-depth gender analysis, diversity of produce and therefore, large membership base for collectivisation, community designers, avoiding work with master weavers/existing cooperatives, revisiting the CCW business plan and CCW accountability to the community. For Advocacy, the key issues include core resource groups across the state to disseminate reliable information to weavers, a compelling argument in favour of the handlooms, and grassroots advocacy by the women and youth.

CS plans to scale-up in and around the existing area to 1000 weavers (100 groups) in 65-70 villages working on Pochampally-style Ikkat weave in 3 years. To achieve scale, the key aspects that need to be considered at the community-end include fair wages/piece-rate prices, continuous orders and continuous work for the weavers, skilling the weavers to produce changing consumer/ market preferences, increasing interaction with consumers, reducing the drudgery of women in pre-loom processes, realising the need to work with a number of clusters across, community designers and resource persons for weaver-to-weaver learning, institutional network with robust systems and processes and portfolio of markets. For other areas, the programme/CCW needs to identify other partners for organizing weavers into production groups and

MACS. To achieve scale, effort also will be to make a self-sufficient unit at the MACS level and replicate such units.

At one end of the spectrum, low-cost low-volume ginning and spinning units (Ms. Uzamma's effort) offer possibility to work on the entire chain and get fair returns. Recent efforts of GoAP (Handlooms) to establish SAMISTI outlets and tie-ups with hotels indicate some scaling-up possibility.

For Advocacy, critical need at the community end is the grassroots advocacy with new apolitical women and youth leadership from weaving community to fight their battles. Further, it has to take on the role of organizing the poor weavers around their rights, including working with master weavers, shops etc.

## **Background**

In Nalgonda District, there are different clusters of Handloom Production with different products. However, the most prominent and dominant Handloom production are the Ikkat varieties. In the reporting period, there have been some intense changes such as decline in investment on Ikkat production, rise in Silk and Cotton Yarn Prices, and decline in institutional finance for production through cooperatives.

As a result, work for Handloom Weavers became lesser and lesser, including migration of Handloom Weavers to Hyderabad and other places in search of alternative livelihoods and incomes. Some weavers became push cart sellers in growing urban town of Choutuppal. Some had to sell their properties to get relief from growing debts. Unfortunately, because the project is in nascent stage, weavers who are participating in the project could not be insulated from such changes. In Siripuram, migration of members of two groups is almost complete. In most other groups, in different Villages, some weaver families also migrated. Some returned later, because of problems in getting odd jobs and lack of proper and appropriate employment opportunities.

In recent months of September and October, a few suicides and starvation deaths were reported. However, because of low incomes, proper nutritious food is not being taken by many of the families. With lower wages, they are straining themselves to increase incomes by increasing their working hours. Cumulatively, the anxiety and continuous tension is taking a toll on their health. Old people, women and children are getting affected.

This is the context in which this project is working. Ofcourse, the last six months, suddenly a spurt in the demand for handloom sarees has increased. Opinions vary on the cause of such rise in demand. In any case, it becomes important that market solutions needs to be found to these challenges.

## **Activities**

S. no	Event	Dates/Period	Purpose	Output
1.	Gender Training	1s November, 2008	Orientation on Gender	Understanding Gender Policy in

		Hyderabad		the Project
2.	Gender Training	9 <sup>th</sup> and 10 <sup>th</sup> Feb Choutuppal and Koyyalgudem	Monitoring on Implementation of Gender Policy	Participation of women increased among women
3.	Market Exposure	31 <sup>th</sup> Jan Kakinada, Uppada, Chebrolu	Understand the Market, Costing and Rejections	Improved Knowledge on Costing and Market
4.	Market Exposure	12 <sup>th</sup> Dec and 13 <sup>th</sup> Dec Chirala	Exposure to Weavers on Market and on Costing	Improved Knowledge of Weavers on Costing, Market, Design Change, Quality and increased Confidence
5.	Market Exposure Visit	19 <sup>th</sup> to 20 <sup>th</sup> Nov, Chirala	To know the Weaver and Market Conditions	Improved Clarity
6.	Exposure Visit (Design)	24 <sup>th</sup> and 25 <sup>th</sup> Dec, Chirala	Understand the Weavers in Design development and change in design	Improved clarity on change in design. Graph design Trainings Planned for HPG's
7.	Production Exposure visit	8 <sup>th</sup> April to 14 <sup>th</sup> April Bihar (ECO TASSAR)	To Know the Process of Production and How Profits are made	Gained Knowledge on Production Process and Unity among Groups
8.	Assessment of Skills and Willingness	Dec 2008,	Information based on production planning	50 Weavers have been identified for CCW Production
9.	Eye Camp	20 <sup>th</sup> Jan, Field Office	To Enhance Healthy Relationship among Chetana Society and Weavers	HPG Members got benefited and proposed to promote Health Camps
10.	Village Survey	Nov 2008 to April 2009	Identifying Poor Handloom Weavers	12 to 15 Families were Identified per Village
11.	Village Level Awareness Meetings	Nov 2008 – April 2009	Orientation on Project	14 Groups formed
12.	IB Trainings for HPG's and MACS	Nov 2008 – April 2009	Increasing Awareness on Project Process	High Awareness
13.	C. B Trainings for Staff	Nov 2008 – April 2009	Increasing Improvement on Project	Became Confident in Handling HPG's
14.	Monthly Meetings of HPG's and MACS	Nov 2008 – April 2009	Discussions on Production, Group Building Processes, Group Transactions and Project Issues	Progress through Participation and Discussion
15.	Book Keeping	Dec 2009 – April 2009	Training HPG Members on	Trained to Update Group Records

			Maintaining Group Records	
16.	B.D.P Training	Dec 2009 – April 2009	Orientation of HPG Members on Business Development	Gained Knowledge to Plan on Business
17.	Working capital grants – MCF	April 2009	Disbursement of M.C.F towards working capital for production	Rs. 3,00,000 Grant given
18.	Graph Design Training	Jan 2009, April 2009	To improve Design Skill in HPG Members	Gained Knowledge in Design Development
19.	Annual Convention	23 <sup>rd</sup> March 2009	To improve Unity among HPG's, To have Coordination and Competition among HPG Members	
20.	Meeting with Bankers	27 April 2009, Hyderabad	To Develop a Friendly Relationship among Bankers and Group Leaders	Enabled knowledge on How and Why to carry out Bank transactions

### Strategies

- Adoption of “Production First” strategy to improve the confidence of weavers
- Usage of traditions to motivate women weavers to meet and discuss their issues
- Establishment of active communication channels with all the stakeholders
- Prior planning of all activities

### Challenges

- Some orders were there, but the weavers were not satisfied with the wages. Weavers had a serious charge against CCW that it is not giving them even market wages and is exploiting them.
- CCW-centric project activities
- Staff capacities at the field level - recruitment and induction of new staff, attrition in the central office
- Establishment of institutional transaction map between CCW and MACs
- Allocation of shares to MACs, as per the share capital investment

### Work in Progress

- Increasing number of production cycles, as per “Production First” Strategy
- Increasing the participation of weavers in CCW production
- Consolidation of existing groups
- Formation of new groups

### In Summary

- There are 35 Groups with Bank Accounts, 3 groups were Migrated and One got stuckup.
- Trainings for Staff and Weavers were organised.
- Exposure Visit to Chirala with 300 HPG Members.
- Three Exposure Visit for Staff to Jharkand, Chirala and Kakinada were organised
- 84 Group Meetings were conducted with 860 Members.
- Every month Chetana Society Staff organizes a monthly plan and a Review Meeting.
- 8 Macs Meetings with 79 Leaders, and Two CCW Directors were held.
- Eye Camp was held, 185 HPG Members were checked and provided with spectaculs.
- Members were happy with the eye camp and made a proposal to organize a General Health camp.
- Annual Convention was held and 253 Members participated.
- Bankers Meeting was conducted.
- Village level awareness meetings were held.
- Under Skill Development Dyeing Trainings, Graph Design Trainings were given.

#### Trainings held for the HPG's

Trainings	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April
Institution Building	4		2		2	
Capacity building	2		2			
Business Development Plan		7	9	2	7	4
Book Keeping		4	9		2	5
Graph Design			3			4 (2 Days)

#### Outcomes and Impact

- Identified more 59 Weavers and convinced them to participate in group and CCW Production.
- Ten new groups formed – Badravathi (S. Lingotam), Shivaji (Choutuppal), Uma Maheshwara (Ankireddygudem), Mastyagiri Laxmi Narasimha swamy (Velvarty), Markendeya (Mandra), Balaji (Mandra), Sri ragavendra (Mandollagudem), Sai baba (Ramannapet), Amaravathi (Thumalagudem), Sri mallikarjunaswamy (Choutuppal), Sri viajayalaxmi (Valigonda).
  - Six more groups are in process of formation.
  - Increased women participation
  - Attendance in Group meetings has increased.
  - After Market Awareness and Exposure Visit, many weavers came forward to work on New Designs.
  - Increased participation level of Weavers in all Activities.
  - Relations with other Organisations has increased.
  - Weavers are coming forward to form themselves into Groups, voluntarily and willingly indicating growing confidence in the project.

### **Consolidated Project Information**

1. No. of villages surveyed in 2005-07	22
2. Total number of identified families	2,778
3. Total number of looms	3,298
4. Independent weavers (with own house and looms)	1,733
5. Families working through Master Weavers	315

### **HPG Information**

1. Total number of HPGs doing savings	17
2. Total savings in 17 HPGs	Rs.1,60,395.00
3. Total interest earned	Rs.70,200
4. No. of HPGs with LSF	9
5. No. of LSF beneficiaries	157
6. LSF disbursed	Rs.2,77,000
7. LSF-used for CCW sample development	Rs.1,23,000
8. Total LSF disbursed	Rs.4,00,000
9. No. of HPGs with MSF	9
10. No. of MSF beneficiaries	62
11. MSF disbursed	Rs.5,49,000
12. HPGs that accessed bank loans	4
13. Total Loans raised	Rs.1,70,000

### **Ratnam MAC Information**

1. Formation day:	20 <sup>th</sup> June, 2007
2. Mandals covered	Ramannapet, Valigudem, Atamkur (M)
3. Villages	Siripuram, Vellanki, Velwarthy and Pallerla
4. Member groups	4
5. No. families as members	40
6. Per family membership fee	Rs.800

7. Equity	Rs.8,000
8. Emergency fund	Rs.19,500
9. Families that received LSF	48
10. LSF amount	Rs.1,21,000
11. Total MSF	Rs.6,80,000
12. MSF disbursed	Rs.2,59,500
13. Share investment in CCW	Rs.2,30,000
14. Share investment through production	Rs.1,97,500

### **Chitiki MAC Information**

1. Formation day:	20 <sup>th</sup> July, 2007
2. Mandals covered	Pochampalli, Narayanapuram, Choutuppall
3. Villages	Pochampalli, Narayanapuram, Koyyalagudem, S. Lingotam
4. Member groups	4
5. No. families as members	35
6. Per family membership fee	Rs.700
7. Equity	Rs.7,000
9. Families that received LSF	38
10. LSF amount	Rs.1,56,000
11. Total MSF	Rs.5,50,000
12. MSF disbursed	Rs.2,90,000
13. Share investment in CCW	Rs.3,39,500
14. Share investment through production	Rs.2,500