

## Highlights minutes May 2005

**Lecture Topic:- Why Empowerment of Citizens & Police is Necessary.**

**Beat 1,2 Villages- Maana Camp, Banarsi, Dharampura, Nakti, Baroda.**

**No. of Police Officer Present:- none.**

Problem & issues raised by CLGs and villager:-

**Baroda Village:** The CLGs of Baroda village told that police are not taking proper action against the unsocial and notorious elements of the village that are creating a nuisance (terror would mean extreme activities) here.

The CLGs and villagers raised their voices, although in the corner not in public, against the misuse of power and breaking of law & order by the village Panchayat Secretary.

### **Comments**

In this meeting since people were quite annoyed with the working of the previous Panchayat in its 10-year tenure, the bad law and order conditions. Due to the actions of the previous village Panchayat Secretary, they came out with a huge number of complaints, of which many were outside the aspect and concept of Community Policing. The drunken people added to the chaos and noise at the meeting.

At the end of the discussion on the issue of 'problems of immediate attention' of Beat-I & II, only the CLG members & villagers of Baroda raised problems. Around 6:40pm, I started the participative lecture on the topic " why empowerment of citizen and police is necessary ". However, I was not able to complete it due to the continuous raising of problems, questions and useless arguments by drunkards.

The villagers and CLG members raised a strong complaint against their village (Baroda) Panchayat Secretary. They told me that he has been in this post for the last 10 years and in all this time he has continuously abused his powers for corrupt activities, physically assaulting the villagers and building political links . They also were not satisfied with the police, (as told by one HC of Mana P.S.) as they haven't taken strong action over the complaint against him. A fight had taken place between the villagers & the Secretary, probably with the son of one CLG member of Baroda village in which there was a counter complaint was also filled. This incidence took place in the month of February. Although the Sarpanch during the meeting was against the Panchayat Secretary but I was later told by some CLGs that he is with him. So it is not so easy to understand the village politics.

The Police hesitation in taking action against the Panchayat Secretary is mainly due to all the above incidences and the majority of Satnami's (SC) people in the village who could lobby against the police.

**Lecture Topic:- Panchayati Raj-I.**

**Beat Villages Covered (five):- Maana Camp, Banarsi, Dharampura, Nakti, Baroda**

### ***The Session:***

PRIA was introduced initially - followed by introductions by all the participants. . The topic “Understanding the concept of local self-governance ” was discussed. It was done in a participatory mode, however here people were not able to participate a lot at the beginning due to lack of knowledge. Some of the basic questions of Panchayati Raj were asked by Mr Srinivas to the participants and then were elaborated - what is local self-governance, why Panchayati Raj is called local self-governance, how many levels of government exist in India, why there was a need to make the Panchayati Raj Act- 1993, as well why the legally authorisation of Panchayat has done.

Then the topic “Functions, powers and duties of Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayat ” was discussed for about 30 min. Here the CLG’s & the Panchayat (except those from Mana Camp) seem to have a very low knowledge about ‘Gram Sabha’, so they were asking for detailed explanations. A lack of knowledge was found among the ‘Panch’ and CLG members. Also the duties of ‘Gram Panchayat’ and the duties & rights of the villagers in ‘Gram Sabha’ were discussed.

After that the topic “Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayat meetings” was discussed for about 40 min. Here the difference between meetings of Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayat was elaborated and the different conditions and compulsory meetings of Gram Sabha and its constituent’s elements were explained to the participants. As CLG members & Panch want to know more about special ‘Gram Sabha’ meetings so this was also elaborated in detail

### **Comments**

The women CLG members of Baroda for the first time took active participation.

Here as seems from the questions asked and the queries, we found that the CLGs & Panchayat members of Beat-I & II have low knowledge regarding Panchayati Raj and that’s why there is more corruption & mal-administration in the Panchayat. I came to know that the village Banarsi, Baroda & Nakti is one the most ignorant, backward and filled with caste related politics, and so the Panchayat members were misusing all the resources and funds for the last 10 years.

From the debate & conversation it seems that the CLGs & Panchayat members are together for the development of village and there is a good coordination between them. But the Police personnel were not taking much interest here (one of the reasons for lack of interest was the absence of a fan in the room, so the police personnel were going outside frequently for cooler air.

### **Lecture Topic Panchayati Raj-I.**

**Beat Villages Covered (Seven): - Maana Basti, Maana Colony, Bhatgaon, Boriakala, Doomartarai, Dhaneli, Tameri.**

In the starting, we told them that in order to put the issues, problems & views of the CLG & Panchayat members, as well the Police personnel of Mana P.S. and to form a better coordination between all the villages under it, we are planning to publish a monthly magazine of some pages in which any one can put their views & concern and this will be funded by our organisation and all the publishing cost will be born by us.

**Lecture Topic:- Panchayati Raj-II.****Beat Villages Covered (five):- Mana Camp, Banarsi Dharampura, Nakti, Baroda*****The session***

The session began with the topic “*Understanding the concept of local self-governance and the Salient features of the Constitution (Seventy Third Amendment) Act, 1992 and the Chhattisgarh Panchayat Raj Adhiniyam 1993.*” The session was conducted in lecture cum participatory mode. The participants were told the reason behind the adoption of Panchayati Raj by 73<sup>rd</sup> amendment act and how this mechanism of self-governance will be beneficial for the villagers. Various aspects of the duties of the villagers towards Gram Sabha and strategies of community mobilisation were also emphasised along with the rights of the villagers. This whole topic was discussed for about an hour.

Then the topic roles of Citizens (especially women and marginalized sections) vis-à-vis Panchayat and the Tax imposed by Panchayat was discussed. Here special emphasis was given on the role of citizens in the Gram Sabha and development of village, the building up of consensus and unity in community resources and mobilisation. Participants were also told the ways and means by which the Panchayat can strengthen its financial and other resources. Regarding the women’s issue the lecture focused on common problems faced by women in order to make them understand that their problems would be not solved if they don’t take active participation in the Panchayat & Gram Sabha.

**Comments**

The Sarpanch of venue village Nakti asked us to suggest ways to build the consensus & motivate for voluntarily community service. We told him to organize meetings in every ward with the Panch and the residents in order to make them understand the issue as well to motivate them for their active participation and then organize the special Gram Sabha meeting for this purpose.

Nakti is a disturbed village due to the caste politics and mining control disputes along with many other Panchayat related problems. As this phenomenon is known to CHRI through extensive interaction with villagers. Hence in order to tackle the problems it was felt necessary to aware the public on Panchayati Raj.

After the meeting Sarpanch of Nakti was pleased as the CLG, Panch and other villagers were ready to resolve some of the disputed issues, and also some of the misunderstanding and lack of coordination was cleared. The Sarpanch was obliged to CHRI for the meeting and shared that much more needs to be done to solve the issues.