

# NEWSLETTER

MOVING AHEAD  
**COLLECTIVE  
ACTION IS  
THE KEY**

P2



MF BOARD MEETS  
**TO REVIEW  
PROGRESS**

P4



PROFILE  
**JOSEPH  
JAMES**

P5



## MF IDENTIFIES **LEAD ORGANIZATIONS**

*Collectives to play key role in implementation of programmes*

Indore: Madhyanchal Forum has identified lead organisations to expand its footprints to more states. The implementation of programmes will begin from March 2019. Each lead organisation will function through collectives of organisations to carry the process forward. These new areas have been added to the list of existing six states where the research studies were conducted on the issues such as sustainable agriculture, nutrition, impact of climate change on people living in regions of higher Himalayas, forest conservation, and socio-economic conditions of certain poor and marginalised communities.

The lead organisations will work on the thematic areas identified by MF and chalk out their strategies and objectives around the learnings from the research

studies in six states-Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. The focus will be on building new collectives and networks to ensure deeper engagements with the communities and address the challenges they face. The idea is to make the civil society space more visible and reach out to regions which hitherto remained untouched by people centric development models.

The major component of the implementation phase will be campaigns and engagements with the communities to enhance outreach of collectives and networks. This will be supported by institutional, capacity and leadership building in the interventions regions.

**Sustainable  
Agriculture**

**Forest Conservation**

**Climate Smart  
Drought Proofing**

**Youth and Women  
Leadership**

**Capacity Building**

**Nutrition**

**Rights and Entitlements**



**Dr Indira Naidu**  
President  
Madhyanchal Forum

# MOVING AHEAD COLLECTIVE ACTION IS THE KEY



**H**istory has it that the most of the successful social movements have the element of collectivism which in simple terms means that the bigger the gamut of understanding, the greater the chances of turning efforts into success or attaining goals. Collectivism gives impetus to sustainability and ownership and helps build the foundation for an egalitarian society.

It is with this spirit that Madhyanchal Forum has been working since its inception and is moving ahead with a clear and decisive understanding that promoting collective

initiatives and collaborative actions is the key to addressing the challenges faced by the poor and the excluded. Civil society organisations need to strengthen their engagement with the poor through shared or joint strategies. The past experiences have shown that strategies woven around individualistic approaches have had limited impact. In this backdrop, forming collectives of the marginalized and the excluded and enabling them to gain the much needed institutional and individual capacities to lead and sustain their struggles, thus, becomes all the more significant. It is

also vital for them to reclaim their space for dignified life. This calls for people owned and people centred processes. All MF initiatives operational on ground are in sync with this belief. While these interventions focus on the above understanding, they simultaneously strengthen thematic areas through institutions of reference communities.

In Bastar, Kanker and Dantewada districts of Chhattisgarh, the interventions are focused on community owned and community led conservation and preservation of common forest resources (CFR). This will help forest dwellers reclaim ownership of the forest. The process is led by collective intent and aims at strengthening collectives and creating local leadership.

Similar resolve is visible

in other states too. In Ambedkar Nagar, Faizabad, Jaunpur, Varanasi, Pratapgarh, Sonbhadra, Banda, Kusinagar, Jhansi, Sahjanpur districts of Uttar Pradesh and Nalanda, Sekhpura, Nawada, Gaya, Jahanabad districts in Bihar, the efforts are on to improve the lot of Musahar, Nut and other most excluded communities by enabling them to access their entitlements and rights.

In Jhabua, Dhar, Badwani, Khargoun, Indore (Malwa Area), Indore (Ghat Section), Alirajpur, Ratlam, Mandso, Vidisa districts of MP, MF is working extensively for promotion of organic farming by the small and marginal farmers roping in landless labourers in the process of empowerment. Along with this, effort is also on building state-wide

campaign on nutrition and preservation/promotion of food sovereignty of vulnerable tribal communities in Dhar, Barwani, East Nimar (Khandwa), Betul, Jhabua, Sheopur districts. This would soon be expanded to national level. In Punjab, MF is planning to launch mass awareness programmes on sustainable agriculture.

As far as the Rajasthan is concerned, three climatic zones (East, Western and North) have been chosen for promotion of sustainable livelihoods through improvement in agriculture and allied practices and climate smart drought resilient model in the deserts of Jaisalmer is underway.

In the Mountain states of Himachal, Uttarakhand and Jammu & Kashmir (Leh-Ladakh region), MF activities are centered on the impact of climate

change in higher Himalayas. Focus here is on mitigation, adaptation and addressing policy issues. The issues related to space for civil society action form a major thrust area across intervention states. Planning for other states is in progress.

The common thread that binds all MF intervention is collectives which provide the major plank for achievement of its objectives. MF sees all these interventions in an integrated perspective through engagement with the most vulnerable of these groups at various levels. These collectives shall also directly contribute to strengthening voluntary action, democracy and addressing the issue of shrinking space for civil society action.



# MF BOARD MEETS TO REVIEW PROGRESS, FOCUSES ON COLLECTIVES

**I**ndore: Madhyanchal Forum board members reviewed and approved the new proposals beginning March 2019 heralding the next phase of activities following the completion of research studies in six states and subsequent regional, district and state level consultations. The members also took stock of the existing programmes in process since October 2018 along with the expenditure done on these interventions.



The meeting was chaired by Dr. Indira Naidu, President, Madhyanchal Forum. This was also an occasion for the board to push the process of due diligence of the lead partners in new states- J&K, Punjab and Bihar. The proposals submitted by them were also reviewed. The future strategic

direction for ongoing and upcoming programmes was discussed in great detail. Also presented in the meeting was MF evaluation report and its role in carrying forward the mission by Mr Joseph James, Treasurer, MF.

The members unanimously agreed that there was need to work through

collectives, strengthen existing network and promote new credible networks.

The board members expressed their interest to visit MF's intervention areas in different states to understand and learn different models. The members also explored the possibility of holding the

future board meetings in rotation at different locations keeping one day for exposure visit.

The policy documents of Madhyanchal Forum were presented and approved by the board members after deliberations.

**H**is 33- year long journey covering the whole spectrum of major social issues ranging from tribal rights to peace initiatives to conflict and disaster risk management to humanitarian support to leadership building to anchoring national level Peoples' Forum speaks for his enormous contribution to civil society in India and the South Asia.

For Mr Joseph James who is MSc in a Disaster

Management and holds a P.G diploma in Rural Management, the journey started with a Delhi based organization CASA which has pan-India footprints; working with zeal on planning, monitoring and evaluation as a project officer. Here, he was closely associated with his organization's partnership programmes and direct programmes, Food Support For Community Mobilization (FSCM), Disaster Risk

Reduction (DRR) programmes, climate change, Local Capacity for Peace (LCP) which is an initiatives in South Asia based on Do No Harm (DNH) principle and peace building.

He contributed a lot to institution and capacity building working intensely with the poor and the marginalized, especially in tribal regions of the country. Despite all his achievements, Mr James still takes pride in being called a trainer and continues to look for opportunities to be engaged with youth leadership training which he believes has been instrumental of change and sustainability. That's why 'fields' remains his first choice though his peers believe that his forte is Project Monitoring and Evaluation (PME).

He played a major role in building regional, district and national level platforms for institutional learning process as part of capacity building. This resulted in creation of social capital through networks of peoples' and voluntary organizations and other prime stakeholders to carry forward their rights and entitlement issues at micro, meso and macro level. He has been pro-actively involved with advocacy initiatives related to issues of livelihood and food security( including right to food), land and forest right and the issues concerning tribal, dalit, women and other excluded sections of the society.

The watershed moments of his career include anchoring the

process of National People's Forum (NPF) which is a national level platform of more than 300 people's organizations representing from 20 states level people's forums North Eastern states. The Common issues are identified and addressed at the National Level by NPF. Apart from this, he supervised the secretariat of Local Capacities for Peace Project which is based on 'Do No Harm' principle. The secretariat has members from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and India. He is imparting training to ensure conflict sensitive PME process within his own organization and also to the member organizations and their staff at South Asia network level. In addition to that, he facilitated studies and learning on pilot projects related to working for effective interventions in conflict situations such as water based conflict in Rajasthan, ethnic conflict in North East India and Chhattisgarh etc. He has been active in designing modules for youth leadership and capacity building of youth around development and conflict analysis.

Mr James has been a trainer and evaluator of different peace building processes .He initiated research studies on various issues for policies advocacy for MNREGA, PDS, Baiga Tribes in Chhattisgarh, helped develop LCP Trainers Manual for South Asia LCP Network Developed a Financial Operating Manual for programme staff to monitor financial governance system at partners as well as community level along with programme for effective and optimum use of resources.

# Joseph James

## Treasurer Madhyanchal Forum

Profile



# SPANDAN OBSERVES INTERNATIONAL MOTHER LANGUAGE DAY



**K**handva: MF partner Spandan Samaj Seva Samiti, which has been campaigning to protect tribal languages and dialects for quite some time, observed International Mother Language Day on February 21. In a workshop presided over by Spandan chief functionary Ms Seema Prakash, several prominent personalities expressed concern over tribal languages and dialects which are on the verge of extinction.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Sandeep Bhatt of Makhan Lal Chaturvedi University said

that extinction of these languages and dialects has caused irreparable damage to the rich heritage of the tribal community and the country. He emphasized on the learning of multiple languages by the children.

Media fellow Sumit Awasthy said that the situation had forced the children learn in the language other than their

mother tongue, thereby weakening their learning skills. He reminded the gathering how the sustained campaign by Spandan mobilized public opinion which led to introduction of teaching material in Korku and Nimari languages in the schools.

Anita Pillay informed the audience how similar efforts are being made by

Humad community in Rajasthan to keep their dialect 'Pan' alive. Nimeesh Bhansali of All India Radio Khandva also expressed his views.