Dhaatri Trust- A Resource Centre for Women and Children worked for meeting the objectives of the Trust in the year 2012-13 on a number of activities, both independently and in collaboration with other partner NGO’s. As the main focus being on the rights of women and children, the activities undertaken during the year were in the areas of:

- Protecting the rights of children, particularly adivasi (ST) children in Andhra Pradesh
- Working for the empowerment of women and building linkages for strengthening the leadership of women, particularly among adivasi communities
- Providing financial help and support for marginalized women to assist them in their education, and basic survival

Activities:

I. Education:

1. Providing Institutional support to the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR):

Dhaatri Trust provided institutional support to the State Representative of the NCPCR on her mandate of monitoring the Right to Education Act (RTE) in the state of Andhra Pradesh. Continuing this support from the previous year, we provided assistance in undertaking public enquiries, fact finding, organizing public hearings, consultations and meetings with civil society groups, and in dialogue with the government on behalf of the Commission, on gaps in policy and programme implementation issues.

District level visits to schools and enquiries on complaints received by NCPCR:

The team of Dhaatri Trust accompanied the NCPCR representatives across several districts in the state for conducting these enquiries and organizing meetings. As State Representative, we provided institutional support for follow up on the cases and complaints received by the State Representative through a continuous dialogue with the departments concerned like the Education, Sarva Siksha Abhiyan, Tribal Welfare, Labour, Panchayat Raj, Women and Child Welfare, Agriculture, Municipal Administration and others, depending the nature of the cases received by the Commission. We conducted field enquiries by visiting several districts to review the complaints from parents, panchayat leaders, local NGOs and concerned community leaders. The complaints primarily related to violation of children’s rights in the context of the RTE Act that covered several issues like corporal punishment, lack of infrastructure facilities, poor quality of education, teacher absenteeism, demolition of schools, urban evictions resulting in children being out of school, non-implementation of entitlements by the concerned departments that relate to transport, books, uniforms, mid-day meals, etc. Complaints also related to children with special needs, girl children and children from minority communities. Many of the complaints were due to lack of monitoring and motivating to teachers and local level education personnel and their lack of understanding of the RTE Act, lack of availability of infrastructure and education material, non-utilisation of resources like computers, library books and laboratory equipment, and other administrative irregularities and oversight. In some of the districts, we conducted public
hearings by calling the concerned departments and government officials to respond to the complaints. In other districts we had follow up meetings and consultations with NGO networks to link administrative and civil society actions for strengthening RTE Act. We also participated in several state level government review meetings on RTE Act and to provide our recommendations to state action plans. The NCPCR members from New Delhi held state level review meetings with heads of departments and with the Chief Secretary.

2. **Community based activities for strengthening school education in the tribal areas:**

As a resource and support centre for Adivasi children’s education, we extended our knowledge and coordination on the RTE Act implementation in tribal areas of Andhra Pradesh. The Trust undertook collaborative work with other NGO’s like Sujana (East Godavari district) and Adivasi Mitra (Visakhapatnam district) which are working in the tribal and sub plan areas on protecting the rights of adivasi (tribal/ST) people. The Trust undertook community based documentation on the status of primary schools in two panchayats in Visakhapatnam district through collaborating with Adivasi Mitra and in two panchayats of East Godavari district through collaboration with Sujana. In order to strengthen the community vigilance and leadership in utilizing the entitlements given under the RTE Act, particularly in tribal areas where implementation is extremely poor, we have collaborated with these two organizations in conducting a series of awareness camps, workshops and meetings with community members. The formal role of the School Management Committees (SMCs) within the legal framework of the RTE Act was emphasized in these workshops by creating awareness on the specific roles and rights of the SMC’s in addressing the rights of their children within the school structures. We also organized these camps for village youth who can be involved at the community level in facilitating the active involvement of the SMC’s and particularly the women members.

The documentation through household surveys of the status of schools and children in villages that do not have primary schools has provided an opportunity to dialogue with the government, through using our role within the Commission. We have used this platform to lobby for the improvement in access and quality for hill-top children, for children to have access to both residential as well as regular primary schools. These discussions were taken up at the highest level in the state government following which a process of continuous monitoring and dialogue has been established to address the gaps in access, particularly for children from PTG communities and for girl children.

In order to take the above process forward, the Trust has partnered with Sir Ratan Tata Trust, Mumbai and facilitated a process of financial partnership for Adivasi Mitra with NEGFIRE (National Education Group for Innovation and Research in Education), New Delhi for a Tribal Education Programme to be implemented in Visakhapatnam district. Sir Ratan Tata Trust supported a community programme in Salugu panchayat of Visakhapatnam district for strengthening the participation of School Management Committees in order to improve the quality of primary education and to bring State accountability.

Dhaatri Resource Centre provided technical support to Adivasi Mitra by providing training, guidance and documentation support in implementation of the education programme for cultural expressions and improving the quality of primary education and bringing State accountability through community monitoring. The financial costs of implementing this programme was borne by Adivasi Mitra with support from NEGFIRE. The three-year programme is intended to mobilize tribal communities in using the entitlements under the RTE Act, and in strengthening adivasi traditional knowledge linkages with primary education within the class-room and outside. The project was implemented in 24 villages of
three panchayats involving 14 primary schools. Dhaatri worked with the team of Adivasi Mitra in the following main activities under both the projects:

Baseline Survey of children in 40 villages and follow up to ensure school drop outs were re-enrolled and retained in school: Using the State rules and entitlements under the RTE Act, we undertook an intensive household survey of children within the age group of 6-14 years in Hukumpeta and Paderu mandals. The survey identified more than 120 children who were either never enrolled or had dropped out of school in these panchayats. We also identified children with special needs whose entitlements are not being met and who suffer both in pedagogic and physical terms of child rights. Two villages being on the hill-top are completely left out of coverage as there is no school or teacher posted in these villages. Majority of the schools have very substandard functioning with high levels of teacher absenteeism.

The two main strategies adopted under the programme were

- Strengthening the role of the School Management Committees to demand for entitlements of their children under the Act; and
- Implementing a field resource programme for culturally contextual innovative education

This was possible through intensive field level activities like training of SMC members, facilitating them in conducting social audits of their respective schools, assisting them in representing complaints to the local and district administration and follow up at the state level with the Tribal Welfare, SSA, School Education departments. At the community level, SMCs’ capacities were built to participate in school level monthly meetings, to review school grants, class-room teaching, and other entitlements as per the Act. The year was mostly spent in this capacity building work of SMC’s and this brought a visible change in some of the primary schools due to active leadership of parents. They were able to bring pressure on teachers to improve their regularity, get entitlements like school uniforms, books, mid-day meals and sanction of school buildings. The SMCs played a proactive role in bringing children out of school into the class-room and retaining them in ashram schools and primary schools.

An education resource team worked in the primary schools on a daily basis by undertaking cultural and creative activities with children in order to motivate them to come to school and to connect their cultural knowledge with school learning. We trained the team of Adivasi Mitra in innovative activities in the class-room and outside. This year our team and the children in the primary schools did some wonderful activities in mapping their villages, their biodiversity around the village, collecting traditional seeds, making traditional houses and bird traps and other daily excitements of tribal village life. They worked hard to prepare themselves for a science congress at the panchayat level. As a result of these interventions, we could see modest achievements as in:

- SMCs in 30 primary schools were strengthened through our intervention
- A steady increase in number of parents and community members belonging to School Management Committees attending monthly meetings at the school level regularly and having a dialogue with the teachers on the RTE Act and school functioning
- Atleast 10-15 parents per village participated in weekly activities with children
- Atleast 5 Community elders from each village participated in education activities with children and youth on a regular basis
- Learning abilities assessment of 590 children in 14 schools conducted
- Almost all children enrolled in classes I-V, attending local primary schools
- Student performance in the 14 schools for 590 children completed on quarterly basis
- Details of student assessment provided separately
- 90 children re-admitted in ashram and residential schools
- Except 20 children, all have been retained in school
• Ensured that almost 900 children are in school
• Representations to government at mandal, district and state levels made from all 24 villages
• One public hearing organized by NCPCR attended by project team and representations made from 2 panchayats
• 2 schools, 2 satellite schools and vidya volunteers appointed in the two panchayats
• 6 school buildings sanctioned
• 4 new schools received mid-day meals
• 9 children with special needs helped in getting facilities in schools for retention
• Our education resource team documented 40 songs, 20 stories, local histories and idioms from elders with the help of children
• Children’s clubs formed in 14 villages
• Children’s projects on biodiversity mapping, seed collection, forest mapping, in 14 villages

Urban poor children and primary education:
In March the team also made a visit to Visakhapatnam slums on request from the local NGO, to follow up on the complaints with respect to slum demolitions that resulted in more than 300 children being thrown out of school and not having access to primary school facilities in the relocated colonies, in violation of the RTE Act. We made this visit on behalf of the Commission and following which a series of consultations with the district and state level officials have taken place to correct the violations.

II. Activities with Adivasi Women:

1. Community Forest rights and Adivasi Women:
The Trust initiated community level work in collaboration with Adivasi Mitra in Hukumpeta mandal of Visakhapatnam district. We have set up a community based field office in Kamayyapeta village in order to provide resource support to Adivasi Mitra in working with adivasi women on a number of issues concerning their land and forest rights. We have initiated a community forest rights activity where the women from three villages have initiated a community management and ownership rights work over their collective forest rights. In this process we are working with the women in identifying and following up with the forest department on the join claims to individual lands under the Forest Rights Act and for claiming their collective rights over community forest lands. We have organized a series of community level meetings together and through supporting the team of Adivasi Mitra who are working at the village level in planning and facilitation work with the women. This process was initiated in response to the problems expressed by the women in having access to their forests, and in the crisis over their firewood and NTFP (Non Timber Forest Produce) requirements. The process initiated is not only to bring entitlements to the community over their forest resources, but to also enable adivasi women to play a key role in participation and decision-making over their resources.

2. Strengthening the Rights of Women affected by Mining Projects:
The Trust is collaborating with Environics Trust, New Delhi in undertaking an international study on the impacts of extractive industry projects in South East Asia, on women and the gender concerns emerging from these impacts. Environics Trust provides the financial support to the programme and the team of Dhaatri and facilitating the actual conduct of the study in the three countries of Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. This consists of both secondary and primary level research and a series of consultations with
civil society groups in the region. A report of the research will be brought out by March 2013 as a collaborative initiative of Environics Trust and Dhaatri Resource Centre.

III. Providing Financial Assistance to support women from marginalized communities:

Humanitarian support to vulnerable women and women from marginalized communities;
The Trust is providing financial assistance through donations raised from well-wishers for women who are in vulnerable situations and young women who do not have the resources to pursue their higher education. In the year 2012-13 the Trust has supported two women, one of whom is affected by HIV/AIDS and another is a young adivasi student who is the first female ST student from the region to pursue Fine Arts at the university level. The Trust wishes to support these women till they are able to independently manage their own resources and in completion of the degree. We hope that we will be able to raise resources from well-wishers who can enable the Trust to continue this humanitarian support in future.

Activity Photos

A group of volunteers prepares a chart for their presentation on various types of local plants and their uses

Ms.Bhanumathi Kalluri talks to the volunteers about the RTE act on the first day of training

Teams present their charts on RTE and role of SMCs on the last day of training

The youth participants interact with a presentator the third day of training
VEV Youth Training 15th to 17th July - Kamayapeta

Volunteers on the first day of the three day training program

Volunteers taking part in a game during the training session

Volunteers write about the variety of soils they collected during a group activity on the second day of training

Mr. Krishna Rao starting an activity involving the Volunteers

Teams present their charts on RTE and role of SMCs: 17-07-2012
Meeting with SMC members, Lolangipadu

Meeting with SMC Rellamamidi

Monthly SMC meeting Chilakalagondi

Children from Salugu panchayat perform role play at Children’s Science Congress, Kamayyapeta

Children from Salugu panchayat at their stall in children’s science congress-seen in the picture are miniature models of oil extraction and seeds from which oil is extracted for cooking and medicinal use
Public Hearing on Right to Education Act conducted by NCPCR at Visakhapatnam on 12th July, 2012

News Clippings from various news papers

7/13/12

The Hindu : NATIONAL / ANDHRA PRADESH : NCPCR member visits Agency

Today's Paper » NATIONAL » ANDHRA PRADESH

Published: July 12, 2012 00:00 IST | Updated: July 12, 2012 04:50 IST

NCPCR member visits Agency

Special Correspondent

Member of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) Deepa Dixit visited some villages in the Visakha Agency on Wednesday to examine the implementation of the Right to Education Act.

She visited schools in some villages in Anantagiri, Araku Valley and Dumbriguda mandals. Ms. Dixit watched a Vidya Volunteer helping the children learn the alphabets through their native Kuyi language. Here she found that text books were not distributed to the pupils even after the academic year commenced and told the Project Officer of Rajiv Vidya Mission to make them available soon. She also wanted drinking water, power supply and toilets provided to the children. Ms. Dixit visited the upper primary school at Sovva and verified how the Panadi scheme was being implemented. The NCPCR Member found the facilities available at the girls residential high school at Kotha Baliguda in Araku Valley mandal satisfying. She received representations from villagers of Kasumaguda, Jeediguda and Devalvalasa villages for establishment of schools and anganwadis. State representative on implementation of REA Bhanumathi Kaluri, MEOS Ch. Ravindranath and Tripathi, Assistant Tribal Welfare Officer P.J.S.N. Patnaik accompanied Ms. Dixit.

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7/13/12

The Hindu : Today's Paper / NATIONAL : Child rights panel pulls up officials

Today's Paper » NATIONAL

Child rights panel pulls up officials

All ears: Jury members Dipsa Dixit, Justice B. Subhashan Reddy and Henri Thipagne at a public hearing conducted by NCPCR on RTE Act in Visakhapatnam on Thursday.-Photo: C. V. SUBRAHMANYAM

All deficiencies in infrastructure in the government-run schools in the State will be addressed by the end of the month, State Project Director Rajiv Vidya Mission (Sarva Siksha Abhiyan) V. Usha Rani said.

All children of school-going age would also be sent to school under the Right to Education Act, by the month end, she told the jury of the public hearing conducted by National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) here on Thursday.

The jury comprising former chairperson of State Human Rights Commission Justice B. Subhashan Reddy, member of NCPCR Dipsa Dixit and State Representative for NCPCR in Tamil Nadu on RTE Henri Thipagne, pulled up officials for their laxity in ensuring quality education to children. The officials are statutorily obligated to supply textbooks and uniforms to children in time under the RTE Act, Justice Reddy said.

The jury took up 16 cases, mostly from tribal Agency areas, on issues like lack of infrastructure, absent teachers and corporal punishment, among others. Justice Reddy took the officials to task for absence of basic facilities like toilets and drinking water. "Absence of proper functional toilets in schools is a violation of human rights and the officials can be punished for it," he said.

The officials have only up to March 31, 2013 to implement the provisions of the Act in toto.

More In: NATIONAL | Today's Paper
ఎమ్మెల్యే స్వరూపంలో ప్రతిభావంత మనం మాత్రమే నిర్ధారించచు. మీ మనము మన ముందు వస్తుంది. నా మనము వాసిద్ధం వాసిద్ధం ఉండటం ప్రతి ప్రతి బాధప్పతి ఉండాలి. శాకాహారంలో మనము మనము కూడా ఉండటం కావు. మీ మనము వాసిద్ధంలో మనము మనము ఉండటం ప్రతి ప్రతి బాధప్పతి ఉండాలి. స్యాయాంశంలో మనము మనము కూడా ఉండటం కావు. మీ మనము వాసిద్ధంలో మనము మనము ఉండటం ప్రతి ప్రతి బాధప్పతి ఉండాలి.

మనను ముందు వస్తుంది. మన మనము వాసిద్ధంలో మనము మనము ఉండటం ప్రతి ప్రతి బాధప్పతి ఉండాలి. స్యాయాంశంలో మనము మనము కూడా ఉండటం కావు. మీ మనము వాసిద్ధంలో మనము మనము ఉండటం ప్రతి ప్రతి బాధప్పతి ఉండాలి. స్యాయాంశంలో మనము మనము కూడా ఉండటం కావు. మీ మనము వాసిద్ధంలో మనము మనము ఉండటం ప్రతి ప్రతి బాధప్పతి ఉండాలి.

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