

The image shows the cover of an annual report. It features a central orange-to-yellow gradient area with a wavy white border separating it from blue top and bottom sections. The text 'Annual Report' and '2008-2009' is centered in red.

Annual Report

2008-2009

INTRODUCTION

The year 2008-2009 marks a big occasion - the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). As one of the most important documents recognizing and protecting human rights for everyone all over the world, the UDHR was signed on December 10, 1948 by all member states of the United Nations. For India however, the period has been one of the most challenging ones in recent history. While the country continued to experience economic growth, the vast majority of its population, many of whom lived in rural areas, remained in poverty. Ensuring the rights of already marginalized communities, such as landless farmers and adivasi communities, who oppose exploitation of their land and other resources for industrial projects, was a major challenge throughout the year.

Members of Dalit communities in several states continued to face attacks and discrimination. Human rights defenders and advocates working on minority rights including rights of Dalits and adivasis in Chhattisgarh continued to face harassment, including arbitrary detention by state police. Nevertheless, the ongoing monitoring by local communities and human rights defenders ensured that National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) guaranteeing the rural poor a right to work for at least 100 days per year was implemented better in a few states.

It is in the above context that the variety of interventions taken by PAIRVI at various levels to protect and promote human rights during the year assumes importance. Focusing on improved information, knowledge and access to right to food and livelihood in eight (8) north and central states, namely, Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Delhi; PAIRVI continued to be dedicated towards improving the human rights conditions of the marginalized communities through enhancing advocacy capacities of grassroots organisations on human rights advocacy and monitoring.

The reporting period witnessed PAIRVI further consolidating on its experiences from the last phase and moving forward to transfer information and skills for ensuring accountability on the state. It engaged in capacity building and advocacy initiatives for right to food, forging programme collaborations and building relationships to further strengthen programme ownership with stakeholders. Conscious efforts were made to work with the states on human rights issues. In association with MP Human Rights Commission and NHRC, a two-day workshop on "Role of NGOs in Protection and Promotion of Human Rights" was organized in Bhopal. Intensive lobbying and advocacy were also undertaken to set up Human Rights Commissions in Bihar and Uttarakhand.

The core activities of PAIRVI during the year could broadly be described under four major sub-heads, namely, capacity building; human rights advocacy and monitoring; publications/ information support; and organizational matters & other activities.

CAPACITY BUILDING: IMPARTING KNOWLEDGE AND DEVELOPING SKILLS

In order to strengthen the effectiveness of human rights activists operating at grassroots level, PAIRVI continued to build their capacity through training workshops and case consultations. The focus during the year was on capacity building on rights based approach and utilization of rights based legislations, such as Right to Information (RTI) and National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) for their realization and imposing accountability on the government.

National Workshop on Advocacy

The five-day National Workshop on Advocacy was organized in Lucknow, U.P. on September 23-27, 2008. Attended by twenty-five (25) participants from eight states, the Workshop aimed at discussing advocacy competence and initiatives of the participants and exchanged knowledge, skills and advocacy strategies. It provided individual attention to all the participants through individual conferences to know their activities better and to provide them help in removing bottlenecks from their advocacy interventions. Advocacy with the policymakers, bureaucrats, judiciary and the media was discussed in the context of a variety of thematic interventions like right to food and livelihood, dalits, women, children, etc. Quasi-judicial mechanisms for access to justice also received equal attention to enable participants know and access them better.

The participants made a follow up plan for coming six months in their respective settings, and requested a follow up workshop to discuss lessons learnt during the period. In between both the workshops, the participants will be provided hands on support to implement their action plans.

Besides grassroots organizations, representatives from bigger organizations like CASA, CECOEDECON, IBTDA (Rajasthan), NEEDS (Jharkhand), Sathi (UP), and TDH were also invited to facilitate cross exchange of information and skills. Prominent resource persons included Prof. Balraj Chauhan (VC, Law University, UP), Justice Kamleshwar Nath (Transparency International), Mr. Vinoba Gautam (UNICEF), Mr. Indramani Raja (Editor, Nazar), Mr. Arvind Kumar (Action Aid).

State/ Regional Workshops

Four (4) state workshops and three (3) regional workshops were organized during the period. The focus of state workshops remained advocacy and rights based approach (RBA), right to food, NREGA and RTI. A brief description of the workshops follows:

Role of NGOs in promotion and protection of human rights

As an outcome of the initiative to empower grassroots organizations, for which meetings were held with the NHRC officials in the month of April, a state workshop was jointly organized by Pairvi and Madhya Pradesh Human Rights Commission on 1st & 2nd May

2008 at Hotel Lake View Ashok, Bhopal. The workshop witnessed participation of more than 60 human rights defenders from all over the state to foster improved partnership with MPHRC. The objective was to identify and encourage organizations working on various aspects of human rights to come together, understand their role in promotion and protection of human rights and collaborate with the Commission to strengthen its work in the state. Eminent personalities from state human rights commission and judges actively participated in the workshop. Participation of representatives from UNICEF, WFP, Action Aid and a few other international organizations made the process more meaningful.

State workshop on Right to Food at Jharkhand

A one-day workshop on Right to Food was organized on 21st July 2008 in association with CARE Jharkhand. It was attended by more than 50 NGO representatives and activists from all over the state. The objective was to discuss status of right to food in the state, bringing important issues in the light, and ways and means through which NGOs can help in monitoring the situation on right to food in the state. Hunger deaths in the state and poor condition of TPDS were also major issues in the workshop. Some of the prominent persons who took part in the deliberations included Mr. Balram (Advisor to the Supreme Court Commissioner on right to food), Mr. Gurjit Singh (BGVS), Prof. Ramesh Sharan (Ranchi University. and ex advisor to Supreme Court Commissioner), Mr. Sujit Ranjan and Mr. Sanjay (CARE), and Mr. Iqbal from PRI.

State workshop on RTI at Patna

On 28th July 2008, a one-day workshop on right to information was organized at Youth Hostel, Patna. Inaugurated by Dr. Shakeel Ahmed, Information Commissioner, Bihar, the workshop was attended by more than 60 organizations from 22 districts of Bihar.

“During two years of its existence, the Bihar Information Commission has achieved many milestones in making information available to people, but there are still some gaps in making information available at district and block levels. Efforts are on by the Commission to promote *suo motu* disclosure and it has even punished many public authorities for denying information” - Dr. Shakeel Ahmed, Information Commissioner, Bihar

Prominent speakers during the workshop included Dr. Shakeel Ahmed, Information Commissioner, Bihar; Mr. Ajay K Jha, Director, PAIRVI; Mr. Ashish Ranjan and Ms. Kamayani (People’s Right to Information Campaign, Bihar); Mr. Ramashray Pd. Singh, General Secretary, PUCL, Bihar; Mr. Pramod Singh, (VSSS), and Mr. Ranjan Singh (NIDAN). They all shared their experiences on the utilization of the Act.

Youth workshop on RTI in Uttarakhand

A two-day workshop on RTI involving youth was organized at YMCA, Bhimtal on 19th and 20th October 2008. Around 25 individuals and organizations from Bhimtal, Nainital, Bhowali and other adjoining areas participated in the workshop. The objective was to discuss the fundamentals of RTI in detail and share case studies on inspirational usage of RTI in Uttarakhand and elsewhere in the country. The participants were also shown two films on RTI which showed that how RTI can be used to bring about transparency in the government and make the government accountable to people. The participants' skill in drafting RTI applications on a number of issues were perfected through a number of exercises, case studies and discussions. Mr. P C Tiwary, (Advocate) from HRLN also shared his experience with the participants and exhorted them to use RTI for whatever cause they were working. A number of participants expressed their desire to organize similar workshops in their respective areas. As an output of the workshop, all the participants drafted and filed RTI applications with various departments in Uttarakhand. A follow up workshop was also proposed after three months to discuss the outcomes.

Regional workshop on NREGA and RTI

In association with Sarthi Sanstha, PAIRVI organized a one-day regional workshop at Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan on 23rd Jan 2008 on NREGA and Right to Information. The workshop was attended by 30 local activists and NGO representatives from Sikar, Churu, and Jhunjhunu. The objective of the workshop was to enable social advocates better utilize the right to information, especially in monitoring NREGP. The participants found the NREGA Primer developed by PAIRVI very useful. Some of the participant organizations have also volunteered to organize social audits of the programme in their respective Panchayats.

Regional workshop on NREGA in Bihar

A one-day regional workshop on NREGA was also organized at Parivar Vikas Sanstha, Jamui, Bihar. Around 30 organizations from adjoining districts participated in the workshop. The workshop discussed the NREGA in the context of right to food and livelihood and role of organizations in ensuring proper implementation of the Act. The participants expressed keenness to play a meaningful role in NREGA through monitoring and conducting social audit. They also planned a workshop on social audit involving more NGOs working in neighboring districts of Jharkhand. The workshop was co-organized by Parivar Vikas Sanstha, Lok Vikas Sanstha and PAIRVI.

TABLE-1: CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES IN 2008-09

S. N.	Activity	Date and venue	Partici-pants
1.	National Advocacy Workshop	Lucknow 23 rd to 27 th September 2008	25
2.	Role of NGOs in HR protection	Bhopal, 1 st and 2 nd May, 2008	60
3.	Bihar State Workshop on RTI	Patna, 28 th July, 2008	40
4.	Jharkhand State Workshop on Right to Food	Ranchi, 21 st July, 2008	40
5.	Uttarakhand State Workshop	Bhimtal, 19 th & 20 th Oct, 2008	25
6.	Regional Workshop on NREGA and RTI	Jhunjhunu, 18 th Jan 2009	40
7.	Regional Workshop on NREGA	Jamui, 11 th March, 2008	40
8.	Regional Workshop on NREGA	Deoghar, 23 rd July	
9.	Networking and Child Rights Workshop with TDH, Germany	Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh	22
10.	Advocacy Workshop with NIDC, Bihar	Madhubani	25
11.	Rights Based Approach and Right to Food, Livelihood and Health	Faizabad, Uttar Pradesh	25
12.	SAATHI Orientation Workshop		

Regional workshop at Deoghar, Jharkhand

PAIRVI organized a regional workshop at Deoghar on the request of the local organizations from 6 neighboring districts of Bihar and Jharkhand. More than 25 organizations from the area participated in the workshop which dwelt mainly around the concerns of right to food and NREGA. All the participants resolved to come together to bring more transparency and accountability in the NREGA in their respective areas.

TDH (Germany) workshop on advocacy and networking

TDH, Germany invited PAIRVI to facilitate a three-day workshop on advocacy and networking for child rights on (date) at Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. 22 TDH partners from working on the Child Labor Free villages were oriented towards concepts, approach and practices in networking and advocacy, child rights, right to food and livelihood and land rights.

NIDC workshop on advocacy

National Initiative for Development Cooperation, a network of organizations in North Bihar, invited Pairvi to facilitate a three-day workshop on advocacy for its member organizations on (date). Conducted at Gram Vikas Parishad, Madhubani, the workshop attracted participation of more than 25 organizations from 8 districts of Bihar. The occasion was also used to have a consultation on flood mitigation and provide case consultation to individual members.

SAATHI orientation workshop

The three-day workshop organized in (place) on (date) was a customized event for the orientation of SAATHI partners in Uttar Pradesh. These organisations have been working on right to food and livelihood, health and gender aspects and the workshop provided them with feedback as to how to mainstream RBA in their specific programme and locale.

Case Consultations: Operationalizing Theories of Advocacy

Case consultations have been important component of the capacity building efforts and are designed to provide hands on support to grassroots movements. Since the reporting period had a special focus on right to food and livelihood, PAIRVI's case consultations also reflected this central concern. Again, as the performance of NREGA had been particularly poor in Jharkhand and Bihar, a number of organizations were provided continuous hands on support on NREGA monitoring. NIDAN, Patna, along with a number of organizations working in Bihar on NREGA issues sought consultation on social audit as well. Similarly, Lok Vikas Sansthan, Jamui and a number of other organizations sought Pairvi's intervention on NREGA, RTI and other issues in Bihar and Jharkhand. As a result of case consultations, a network of organizations from 7 districts from Bihar and Jharkhand have come together to work collectively on the major concerns in their respective areas including NREGA, child and bonded labor, Musahar (SC) empowerment, hunger deaths, etc.

PAIRVI also intervened in flood and disaster management in Bihar. It is submitted that more than 1/3rd of Bihar is submerged every year since the last 60 years and the state government has failed to mitigate the impact of floods on people, their lives and property. This year a number of organizations from North Bihar, which is the prime locale for yearly floods, received capacity building on advocacy for improved disaster management and preparedness for floods.

Civil society organizations in Uttar Pradesh were provided consultation on intervening for enabling access of dalits to food, justice, and basic services. Organizations in Madhya Pradesh received assistance in mapping hunger and have recently conducted a snap survey along with PAIRVI on hunger deaths of children in 3 districts of the state (Sheopur, Satana and Sidhi).

HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCACY AND MONITORING: FACILITATING GRASSROOTS ACTIVISM

Human rights advocacy is at the core of PAIRVI programmes. Its basic mandate as a social change organization also lies in initiating the process of policy change,

strengthening human rights infrastructure in the country and setting up of state human rights commission in states where they do not exist. While the focus of rights advocacy and monitoring has been strengthening human rights infrastructure in the country, specific local/state human rights concerns have also been brought into discourse through a variety of measures. The main objective is to initiate discussion and action by various stakeholders on specific issues and achieve collective action for resolution of the issues.

Rights advocacy links grassroots and national campaigns by scaling up major issues at campaigns at state/district levels and bringing them into national consciousness. It seeks to draw the attention of the public and the policymakers towards the emerging and urgent issues resulting in the rights violations.

Strengthening Human Rights Infrastructure

Efforts towards strengthening human rights infrastructure in the country and making it more accessible, responsive and accountable to the people and victims of violations continued during the period under review. Engagements with National Human Rights Commission, State Human Rights Commissions and the resultant suggestions emanating from such processes have been widely appreciated by the NHRC and the SHRCs.

Engagement with State Human Rights Commission, Bihar

Post the formation of State Human Rights Commission in Bihar in December 2007, which incidentally was result of the sustained advocacy and lobbying efforts of PAIRVI and its local partners over the years, PAIRVI met with the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Bihar (entrusted with the responsibility of setting up the Commission) on July 24, 2008 for expeditious implementation of the notification. Recently Government appointed Justice S N Jha, Justice Rajendra Prasad and Mr. RR Prasad as the Chairperson and members of the Commission, respectively.

On October 20, 2008, PAIRVI met Justice S N Jha, Chairperson, SHRC, Bihar and briefed him about efforts of PAIRVI and local struggles in impressing upon the government the necessity of Human Rights Commission in the state. Justice Jha was also provided with an overview of human rights concerns in the state and the areas where the Commission can intervene effectively. Justice Jha said that he would formally join the Commission on 3rd November and expressed his keen desire to work in cooperation with NGOs like PAIRVI. PAIRVI invited him to be part of a Consultation (which it proposes to organize at Patna) outlining human rights issues and concerns in Bihar and challenges before the Commission. Justice Jha said that he would be happy to participate in such Consultation. However, the Commission needed some time to set

up basic infrastructure to make Commission functional and set the house on order. He also invited PAIRVI to meet him after he joins to finalize the date and carry on further discussions.

Lobbying for State Human Rights Commission in Uttarakhand

A delegation of civil society organizations led by PAIRVI met Mr. Parkash Pant, Minister for Parliamentary Affairs and Tourism in Uttarakhand on June 6, 2008. The Minister said that Uttarakhand government was conscious of the rights issues in the state and with the objective of maximum protection of human rights; the government had initiated a plan to completely decentralize the administration and the governance at the Panchayat level. He added that he was already in talks with the Chief Minister regarding the Human Rights Commission, as promised in the last public meeting organized by PAIRVI. He said that the Chief Minister seemed interested but he had been held back due to some urgent and important issues in the state. However, he assured that he would talk to him again at the earliest opportunity available. The delegation offered to organize a public meeting wherein members from other Human Rights Commissions would share how the State Commissions have contributed to human rights in their respective states. Mr. Prakash Pant said that he would speak to the Chief Minister and ask for his presence in the meeting. He assured the delegation to provide all possible help in coordinating to set up State Human Rights Commission in Uttarakhand. .

National Consultation on Effective Implementation of SC/ST Act

In association with a number of national and state level organizations, PAIRVI organized a two-day National Consultation on effective implementation of SC/ST Prevention of Atrocity Act on March 20-21, 2009 in New Delhi. The experience of implementation of SC ST Act has been a mixed bag in the country. While it has empowered the dalits to seek justice for discrimination and atrocity, its lethargic implementation has failed their aspirations. Most of the states have not put in place the infrastructure required to implement the Act. The discrimination against the dalits has continued unabated. The National Consultation brought about more than 50 organizations working with dalits on one platform to share their experiences, present testimonies and provide policy alternatives to make the Act more effective.

State and Regional Processes

The state and regional processes reflecting rights advocacy efforts of PAIRVI during the year are described below:

Fact finding on hunger deaths among tribal children in Madhya Pradesh

PAIRVI along with some local organizations conducted a fact finding on hunger deaths among tribal children in three districts of MP (Sheopur, Satana and Sidhi). These districts had witnessed many hunger deaths during the recent past and despite High Court's instructions no measures had been taken by the administration.

Encountering extreme apathy on the part of the administration, the fact finding team discovered that 7 children had died during a short period from 13th to 25th October 2008 in a single village in Sheopur district. Severe malnutrition was also noticed among the tribes of Sehariya, Kol, Mawasi and Baiga. It also predicted more hunger deaths if the situation did not improve substantially.

The fact finding team found that hunger deaths among tribal children in Madhya Pradesh were a reality. Accordingly, state government and district administration were alerted through personal communication and media. PAIRVI wishes to undertake snap studies with more tribes to bring out a comprehensive study on socio economic conditions of tribes in Madhya Pradesh.

State Consultation on proposed hydel power projects in Uttarakhand

In association with Aman, Uttarakhand and a number of other local organizations, a one-day Consultation was organized on proposed hydel power projects in Uttarakhand. More than 50 organizations and individuals from the state participated in the Consultation which brought out the fact that more than 200 proposed power projects were in various stages of implementation in the tiny state of Uttarakhand.

The proposed hydel power projects would displace substantial population from their habitat and also adversely affect their access to water, environment, land, etc. It was also shared that people who were displaced from various projects two decades back had not received compensation till date. Most of these projects are located in high seismic zone and even a small earthquake will wreak havoc on people, if the dams are built. Besides, these projects will also affect the natural course of rivers, which can have its own impact on the flora, fauna and lives of the people.

The most contentious issue which came up for discussion was that Uttarakhand government did not consider the dams in these projects as big dams according to the definition laid down by World Commission on Dams, and was flouting all the requirements to be complied with construction of these dams. The consultation generated debate amongst the environmentalists, civil society and the media. Two of

the proposed big dam projects were later kept on hold due to protest from several quarters.

TABLE-2: ADVOCACY AND LOBBYING ACTIVITIES IN 2008-09

S. N.	Event	Date and venue	Partici-pants
1.	State Consultation power projects	Srinagar, Uttarakhand 19 th April 2008	60
2	State consultation on dalit rights to food (UP)	Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh 28 th & 29 th August 2008	28
3	Regional consultation on response to floods (Bihar)	Madhubani, Bihar 27 th July, 2008	22
4	Regional consultation NREGA Jharkhand	Deoghar, Jharkhand, 23 rd July, 2008	30
5	Meeting with Uttarakhand government on SHRC	Dehradun, Uttarakhand 6 th June, 2008	—
6	Meeting with Speaker, legislative Assembly in Bihar	Patna, Bihar 24 th July 2008	—
7.	Meeting with Chairperson, Bihar State Human rights Commission	New Delhi 21 st Oct 2008	—
8.	Fact finding on hunger deaths in MP	MP, 18 th to 27 th Oct 2008	—
9.	Meeting with NCPDR on child rights in Madhya Pradesh	Delhi, 6 th November, 2008	
10.	State consultation on experiences and challenges in RTI	Raipur, Chhattisgarh 5 th December	45
11.	National Consultation on effective implementation of SC/ST Act	New Delhi March 20-21, 2009	50

State consultation on dalit rights to food and livelihood

PAIRVI organized a state consultation on dalits rights to food and livelihood in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh on August 28-29, 2008, which brought out startling facts related to discrimination against dalits in TPDS, NREGA, MDM, ICDS and other such programmes. Refusal of state to acknowledge and register discrimination against dalits under SC/ST Prevention of Atrocity Act was brought to the notice by a number of participants. They also agreed to take initiatives in their own areas and share the major findings of the Consultation with the concerned officials, partner organizations and stakeholders.

Other state/ regional processes/ consultations

As discussed earlier and also described in Table-2, other important state/ regional processes or consultations organized by PARVI during the year included regional consultation on status of NREGA in poorest districts of Jharkhand (Deoghar, July 23, 2008); regional consultation on floods in Bihar (Madhubani, July 27, 2008); and the

campaign on NREGA involving a group of 20 NGOs from 7 districts in Bihar and Jharkhand.

PUBLICATIONS/ INFORMATION SUPPORT

Focus on increased participation/ engagement of partners and stakeholders through timely and relevant information dissemination continued. With a view to improve communications/ information support, the following activities of PAIRVI were braced up during the year:

Website Updation: Apart from publishing various news and events concerning regular PAIRVI activities, the website continued to provide information on important developments on human rights and other relevant social issues in India.

Database: Database for information such as recent programmes, activities, media contacts, etc. was continuously strengthened and updated throughout the year.

PAIRVI Samvad: Regular information on recent developments in policy, law and judiciary, human rights and development issues were provided through PAIRVI Samvad and webzine, the quarterly newsletters of PAIRVI in Hindi and English.

Other Publications/ Reports: With the objective of enabling its partners and stakeholders to access information on latest developments in their respective areas of work and inform them about PAIRVI activities, a number of papers and monographs were published during the year a description of which is given as under:

Terminal Report of Phase 1 (2004-2007): The terminal report on “North India Initiative for promotion and protection of human rights” was prepared and submitted to ICCO, Netherlands and Misereor, Germany. The report documented the experience and various interventions undertaken over the period of three years of the project.

Annual Report (2007-2008) – Annual Report for the year 2007-08 was published both in English and Hindi and widely circulated to partner organizations and other stakeholders in the project states.

Report on the National Strategy Meet against SEZ: The report capturing the proceeding of the two day strategy meet was prepared by PAIRVI, along with an audio-visual report of the first day of the consultation, which was also shared with the partners and participants.

SEZ Newsletter: Two issues of SEZ newsletters were published (in association with Aseem Shrivastava) as a follow up of the National Consultation on SEZ.

Study on Dalits in UP: The need for the study came out as a result of PAIRVI interventions on rights of dalits in UP. The study looks objectively at the participation of dalits in the social and economic sphere in the state and status of their civil and political and economic social and cultural rights.

Discussion paper on Bio-fuels & GMOs: PAIRVI published two discussion papers on “Bio-fuels; environment, food safety and other concerns” and “Impact of GM crops on Poor Farmers in India” for the seminar on Bio-fuel & GMOs at the CopMop4 meeting.

Human Rights Manual: A human rights manual in Hindi was also published to serve the needs of human rights education for the trainers.

Calendar on communal harmony: A desk calendar on communal harmony to remind readers of the great protagonists of communal harmony in the country and follow their advice was also brought out during the year.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS & OTHER ACTIVITIES

Organizational Matters

Throughout the reporting period, PAIRVI endeavoured to revitalize itself to remain relevant to the new responsibilities and challenges. Some of the special efforts to keep intact the internal governance system comprised the following:

Review and strategic planning: In continuation with the review process of PAIRVI started last year, a strategic planning exercise was done in February 2009. Facilitated by Ms. Sathyasree Goswami from Context International India and conducted over two days at Sanskriti Kendra, New Delhi, the strategic planning team interacted with board members, PAIRVI team, partners and other stakeholders and set up a framework for PAIRVI’s functioning. It also delved in short-term and long-term objectives and provided guidelines on increasing visibility and ownership of the organization. An action plan was also prepared delineating the activities, human resources planning and financial planning for the next year.

Board meetings: The board meetings continued to take place at regular intervals (**dates**) to guide the organization on various issues.

HRD manual: PAIRVI finalized its HRD Manual which contains major principles of governance and administration, and regulates service conditions of staff members. Looking at the problems of the development sector in retaining staff, a few social security measures like gratuity and educational allowance for children were also initiated during the year.

Change in staff members: Two staff members, Ms. Padmapriya Sastry (Programme Coordinator) and Mr. Rampal (Accountant) relinquished their responsibilities at PAIRVI during the year. Two new Programme Coordinators, Mr. Rajneesh Srivastava and Ms. Tiamenla Jamir have joined. Mr. Prem Shankar Singh also joined as Accountant.

Other Activities

Climate change initiatives: The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Bangkok, April 1-4, 2008, provided an appropriate platform to PAIRVI for climate change initiatives. During the Convention, PAIRVI organized two workshops, namely, “Bio-fuels, environment, food security and other concerns” and “GMOs in India” which sought to bring to the attention of global audience the current situation pertaining to both these issues in India, and learn from participants from other countries about the initiatives and struggles in their respective countries.

PAIRVI believes that impact of climate change on human rights is the most understated fact in the human rights discourse in the country as well as globally. Climate change is going to have immense human consequences and would definitely result into violation of a number of human rights due to inadequate early warning systems and response mechanisms. The warning bells sounding in Asia countries of Bangladesh and Myanmar are loud enough to compel us to hear what is imminent. A preliminary assessment underlines that human rights approach to manage climate change and related aspects is critical.

The workshop on “Bio-fuels, environment, food security and other concerns” focused on the current status of agro-fuel (ethanol and bio-diesel) production, government programme to promote bio-fuel, its impact on farmers in India and concern of the civil society. It also brought before the global community the concerns that bio-fuels may not be as successful in reducing emission of GHG gases as they are supposed to as processing ethanol and Jatropha for bio-diesel involves release of CO₂. Another major concern with regard to bio-fuel promotion has been decreasing food security in various parts of the world as it increases price of staples, prevents poor people from switching over to cheaper staples and leaves less land for food production. It was also shared that in certain states in India, village commons and pastures were being encroached upon for agro-fuel cultivation. Around 30 participants from Brazil, Swaziland, UK, Oman,

Syria, USA, Friends of Earth Brazil and London), Belgium, Israel, Switzerland, Denmark attended the discussion and shared similar concerns of civil society in their own countries

The workshop on “GMOs in India” shared with international participants the current status of research, commercial production, regulatory mechanisms and civil society perspective on GMOs. A number of participants from other countries engaged in similar campaigns came together to explore joint campaigns to resist GMOs and form a common front.

FTN Asia Meeting: PAIRVI participated in FTN Asia Meeting held in August 2008 at Bangkok. The meeting was organized to share recent developments in food security scenario and discuss action plan for the FTN Asia. Organizations from India, Bangladesh, Thailand, and Philippines also participated in the two-day meeting in August 2008. The thematic focus of the meeting was the global food crisis and participants shared experiences from their own countries. A number of activities were identified, which all the participants will carry out within the next two years.

Monitoring of International Financial Institutions (IFIs): PAIRVI continued monitoring programmes, policies and activities of IFIs at local, national and regional levels. During the four-day Convention of the Asia Pacific Research Network held in Bangalore, it played a key role in organizing a panel discussion on “Privatization of basic social services; environment, health, mental health related aspects”. The Convention was a congregation of NGOs from 16 Asian countries who are engaged in resisting globalization, liberalization and privatization. It discussed and brought out the key role played by IFIs in the privatization of basic social services. A number of possibilities of linking up with organizations working in different part of Asia also emerged at the Convention.

Cross border trafficking: The Indo-Nepal Group consisting of a number of organizations from Uttarkhand in India and Nepal, conducted a number of activities in border areas to bring the issue of trafficking of children from Nepal to India in the cognizance of the administration and other stakeholders. PAIRVI supported this group through capacity building on legal instruments available on both sides of the border to curb the problem and also contributed to strengthening their campaign and bringing them in touch with other state, and national organizations working on the same issue.

Participation in Other Fora

Partnership Summit 2008: Organized by Confederation of India Industry, Ministry of Commerce and Government of Haryana from 16th – 18th January 2008 in Gurgaon, the theme of the Summit was “Emerging Consensus: Inclusive and Sustainable

Development". The discussion was centered around how the government and the corporate sector in collaboration with civil society can open up new avenues to generate new economic opportunities.

National Consultation on NREGA: Inaugurated by Mr. Raghuvansh Prasad Singh (Union Minister Rural Development), the two-day National Consultation on NREGA was held on 5th & 6th May'2008 at IIC, New Delhi. Some of the other speakers included Mr. B Yugandhar, Member, Planning Commission; Aruna Roy, MKSS; and Mr. K.S. Gopal, CSE.

4th Civil Society Review of the NCMP: The 4th Civil Society Review of the NCMP was organized by Wada Na Todo Abhiyan at IIC, New Delhi on 22nd and 23rd May 2008. The focus of the programme was mainly centered around the performance of three major government schemes, namely, National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and National Rural Health Mission.

Regulation of GMOs in India: Organized by Gene Campaign, the objective of the meeting was to inform and galvanize civil society opinion on changes introduced by the Government on regulation of GMOs. The Ministry of Environment and Forests had issued a notification on August 23, 2007, withdrawing existing regulatory oversight over the import of GE foods. With recent change in the regulatory procedures, fears have been expressed that the new notification would provide unrestricted entry to untested foods of dubious origin, especially since the imported GE food does not have to be labeled.

Aid Effectiveness Meeting: The meeting was in the context of "Paris Declaration on Aid effectiveness" supported by World Bank and many bilateral donors. Organized by SANSAD, PRIA and Reality of Aid Network, it expressed fear that the framework of the Declaration was structured like a corporate document and it had not considered consultation with civil society important.