

# Poorest Areas Civil Society Programme (PACS)

Working with civil  
society to tackle  
social exclusion –  
a theory of change



# INTRODUCTION

---

The Poorest Areas Civil Society Programme (PACS) is an initiative of the UK government's Department for International Development. Under PACS, DFID is partnering with Indian civil society to help socially excluded people claim their rights and entitlements more effectively, so they receive a fairer share of India's development gains.

PACS, which is now in its second phase of implementation (2009–2014), is supporting the work of civil society organisations (CSOs) to promote inclusive policies, programmes and institutions at local, district and state levels in the areas of livelihoods and service delivery.

The programme was initiated in 2001 to support and strengthen civil society to help the poorest and most vulnerable in deprived districts in India to claim their rights.

Its first phase, which ended in 2008, focused on reaching all poor groups and tackling the general causes of poverty. It reached 19,500 villages in 94 remote rural districts and 143 urban settlements, and demonstrated considerable impact on the lives of the poor.

However, experience gained during the first phase of PACS showed clearly that the poor in India are not homogenous: certain categories of people are particularly marginalised. While the persistent poverty of these groups can be partly attributed to general causes that create deprivation among all poor people in India, there are specific factors that aggravate hardship among the socially excluded and make it harder for them to escape poverty.

The current phase of PACS covers 120 of the poorest districts across the seven Indian states of Bihar,

Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal – each of which has a high proportion of excluded people. It is aimed at reducing the welfare gap between socially excluded groups and the rest of the population and achieving gender equality.

This paper sets out the belief underpinning PACS that discrimination on the basis of social identity is a key cause of persistent poverty in India. It explains how social exclusion relates to poverty, and outlines the change process that the PACS programme is aiming to bring about by boosting the role of CSOs in fostering a more inclusive development process.

# SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Social exclusion as a concept has three distinguishable features. Firstly, it affects culturally defined social categories, with associated cultural perceptions, values and norms that shape social interaction. Secondly, it is embedded in social relations, as it is through social networks that groups are wholly or partially excluded from participation in society. Thirdly, social exclusion affects people's rights and entitlements, denying them the opportunities they need to have and maintain a universally acceptable standard of living and to fulfil their potential. Those who are excluded are not affected by a lack of resources 'just like' the rest of the poor, but face particular discrimination in the access to these resources.

Social exclusion inhibits people from interacting freely and productively with others and blocks their full participation in the economic, social, and political life of the community. Incomplete citizenship or denial of civil, political, and socio-economic rights are key factors contributing to impoverishment.<sup>1</sup>

Social exclusion occurs to different degrees, and can mean denial of access to employment, land, and social services, such as education and health, or selective inclusion with excluded groups receiving differential treatment, such as being required to pay different prices for goods and services and fees for public institutions.

In India, social exclusion revolves around institutions that discriminate against certain groups on the basis of identities such as caste, ethnicity, religion, gender and disability. Such groups include scheduled castes (SC); scheduled tribes (ST), nomadic tribes (NT) and de-notified tribes (DNT); other backward classes (OBC); religious minorities such as Muslims; women; and people with disabilities.

SC, ST and OBC account for approximately half of India's population. If other minority groups such as Muslims are added, this figure rises to 64 per cent. This increases to approximately three-quarters of the country's population if groups such as NT and DNT are added.

## Almost three-quarters of India's population belong to socially excluded groups and may suffer from one or several forms of discrimination<sup>2</sup>

The PACS programme is primarily concerned with women, SC, ST, Muslims and people with disabilities, which is not to deny the existence of discrimination against other population categories but simply reflects a need to focus. Each of these groups scores lower than the general population against a wide range of socio-economic indicators, both nationally and in the seven states in which PACS is active.

Social exclusion is also demonstrated by lower scores for socially excluded groups when controlling for factors such as occupational status or literacy status. This indicates that there are clearly group-specific factors that aggravate poverty among these groups. Discrimination has an undeniable impact on the poverty status of socially excluded people.

Unless social exclusion is addressed, India will fail to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). And if India doesn't meet the MDGs, nor will the world.

<sup>1</sup> World Bank, Equity and Development, World Development Report, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Thorat Amit, An Analysis of Regional Patterns and Determinants of Poverty across Social Groups in India, Ph.D. Thesis, Centre for Economic Studies and Planning, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, 2010.

## Comparison of development indicators for socially excluded groups and the general population

	ST	SC	Muslims	Women and girls	Other caste	All India average
<b>Under-five mortality rate</b>	95.7	88.1	70.0	79.2	59.2	74.3
<b>Infant mortality rate</b>	62.1	66.4	52.4	57.7	48.9	57
<b>Percentage of malnourished children under five years of age</b>	54.5	47.9	41.8	43.1	41.8	42.5
<b>Poverty rate (rural)</b>	47.6	36.8	29.3	N/A	22.7	28.3
<b>Literacy rate</b>	47.1	54.7	59.1	53.7	68.8	64.8

**Under-five mortality rate:** The probability of dying between birth and exactly five years of age, expressed per 1,000 live births. National Family Health Survey 3, 2005-2006, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.

**Infant mortality rate:** The probability of dying between birth and exactly one year of age, expressed per 1,000 live births. National Family Health Survey 3, 2005-2006, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.

**Children underweight (malnutrition):** The percentage of children under five years of age whose weight-for-age level is below minus two standard deviations from the median of the reference population (WHO new growth standards) are considered to be malnourished. National Family Health Survey 3, 2005-2006, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.

**Poverty rate:** The poverty rate used is the head-count ratio (HCR). The HCR is calculated on monthly consumption, not on the basis of income. In the Indian Government's 11th Five-Year Plan, people were considered poor if monthly consumption expenditure was below ₹356 per capita in rural areas and ₹539 per capita in urban areas. The poverty rate given in the table is for rural areas. Eleventh Five-Year Plan, 2007-2012, volume III, Planning Commission, Government of India.

**Literacy rate:** The number of people aged seven and above, who can both read and write with understanding in any language, expressed as a percentage of the total population in that age group. Census of India 2001, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.

# THE MECHANICS OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION – HOW DOES IT WORK?

In India, people who are excluded, unlike the rest of the poor, are disadvantaged by who they are. Social exclusion locks people out of the benefits of development, denying them choices and a voice to claim their rights. Social exclusion causes greater levels of poverty because excluded people face discrimination relating to resources and opportunities. They may be discriminated against in the market for jobs, goods and services and when trying to access rights and entitlements provided

for by law or public and/or private services. Sometimes exclusion is deliberate and explicit – for example, when people from a certain social background are denied access to a particular facility. Sometimes it can be implicit and unintentional, and is simply a result of people adhering to engrained norms and values, and established forms of social interaction.

People who face discrimination because of their social identity have often internalised the norms, values and perceptions assigned to their

identity. Indeed, they may exclude themselves in order to conform to expected forms of social behaviour or in fear of the repercussions of breaking with the norms. People may encounter multiple forms of exclusion if they face discrimination on the basis of more than one identity. For example, women, among all socially excluded people, are generally more discriminated against than men belonging to the same social categories.

## In the economic sphere, social exclusion operates in the following ways:

- Discrimination involving the denial of equal economic rights and entitlements to those from certain groups results in lack of ownership and access to income-earning assets, such as agricultural land, employment and other amenities. This induces lower income and higher poverty among these groups. An International Labour Organization (ILO) study, which included Orissa, indicated that SC face difficulties in buying or leasing agricultural land, and land-sale transactions generally remain within caste boundaries.<sup>3</sup>
- The adverse consequences of labour-market discrimination are obvious: limited employment opportunities (including the denial of jobs in certain work categories) result in higher unemployment and under-employment among groups facing discrimination. Employing individuals from excluded groups on lower than average wages is another contributing factor to continued poverty among these groups. A study based on an intensive survey of 555 villages in 11 states across India (including some PACS-targeted states) found that discrimination in the labour market results in exclusion from hiring and in lower wages.<sup>4</sup>
- The consequences of discrimination in other markets – such as limited access to credit, factor inputs, selective restrictions on sale of products, consumer goods and services, and differential treatment in terms of prices paid for purchase of capital goods, inputs and services – also contribute to the poverty of excluded groups.
- Restrictions on the purchase of inputs and services affect the scale, viability and profit of businesses owned and/or operated by socially excluded groups. Businesses dealing in goods and services are most likely to be adversely affected as a result of being owned by these groups. The purchase of such goods by higher castes/majority religious groups from low castes/minority groups is restricted due to notions of purity, pollution and stereotyping. The Orissa ILO study noted the restrictions as well as the consequences faced by lower castes when selling products such as milk and vegetables to people of higher castes. These restrictions reduce the volume of consumer goods sold and affect income generation and business profitability.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Thorat Sukhadeo, Mahamallik Motilal and Panth Ananth, Caste, Occupation and Labour Market Discrimination: A Study of Forms, Nature and Consequence in Rural India, ILO Study, 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Shah, Ghanshyam, Harsh Mander, Satish Deshpande and Amita Baviskar, Untouchability in Rural India, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2006.

<sup>5</sup> See note 3.

**One of the most important spheres within schools where exclusionary practices continue is the one concerned with water and food. Where 'running water' is not available in schools, and drinking water is stored in earthen pots, jars or served in glasses, Dalit children are likely to continue to face caste prejudices reflected in discriminatory practices such as not being allowed to take water by themselves**

*Indian Institute of Dalit Studies (IIDS)/UNICEF<sup>6</sup>*

**Discriminatory barriers also exist in accessing social services and other amenities – such as education, health services, food security schemes and housing. They lead to lower educational levels, and lower access to food and public housing.**

- i. Discrimination in schools may mean that children are denied access to education and skills development and/or are exposed to discriminatory practices in schools. Denial of access to education results in high illiteracy and low functional literacy, high drop-out rates, limited skills development and low human capital, in turn leading to poverty.
- ii. Discrimination in access to public and private health services may mean that people are denied admission to health centres and/

or subjected to discriminatory practices such as separate waiting lines, longer waiting times, discrimination in check-ups, and so on. Lack of access to medical services can affect people's health and can decrease their productivity and the number of days they are able to work. A study based on 17 districts in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh demonstrated the kinds of discrimination Dalit women face when trying to use government hospitals. Results showed they frequently received rude responses from staff and were refused medical treatment, meaning that many went untreated or accrued debt in order to pay for expensive private medical care.<sup>7</sup>

- iii. Discrimination in participation in village panchayats (local government systems) hinders people's involvement in decision-making processes, resulting in unequal treatment, particularly relating to the allocation of public funds for poverty-reduction programmes and the provision of civil amenities such as drinking water, electricity, drainage and public housing. There is evidence that in Madhya Pradesh and other states, the oppressive social structure based on caste does not allow Dalits, particularly women, to participate fully in the village panchayat.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Nambissan B. Geetha, Exclusion and Discrimination in Schools – Experiences of Dalit Children, Volume 01, Number 01, Working Paper Series, IIDS-UNICEF, 2009, p4.

<sup>7</sup> Acharya S, Experience of Discrimination and Social Exclusion in Health Care Utilization among Dalit Children, Volume 01, Number 02, IIDS-UNICEF Working Paper Series, 2010.

<sup>8</sup> Kumar N. and Rai M, Dalit Leadership in the Panchayats: A Comparative Study of Four States, Indian Institute of Dalit Studies and Rawat, Delhi, 2005.

## Socially excluded groups targeted by PACS

The PACS programme aims to benefit the following categories of socially excluded people

### Scheduled Castes

While the practice of 'untouchability' – under which Dalits face discrimination on the basis of their caste status – has been banned since India gained independence in 1947, in practice, many of the associated behaviours, norms and values persist.

This means that Dalits still often live apart from the rest of society, face discrimination when accessing services, receive poorer services, are barred from many occupations, receive lower pay, and encounter discrimination in the market place.

Although the terms Dalits and Scheduled Castes are often used interchangeably by the academic and development sectors, the latter denotes an official category that includes all Dalits, except those who have converted to religions other than Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism. Dalits belonging to Scheduled Castes make up

16 per cent of India's population, and this percentage is higher if we add those Dalits who have converted to other religions, such as Christianity or Islam.

The PACS programme recognises the emergence of social identities such as Dalit Christians and Dalit Muslims whose members also experience the practice of untouchability.

### Scheduled Tribes

Adivasis, or people belonging to Scheduled Tribes, face discrimination on the basis of their ethnicity. Adivasis, who make up eight per cent of India's population, often encounter additional development challenges because they live in remote areas, and often speak a different language. Those areas inhabited by tribal people tend to be forested and rich in natural and mineral resources, which in many cases has led to the displacement and exploitation of inhabitants.

Furthermore, negative stereotyping of tribal people is used to justify their exclusion from certain services and economic opportunities.

While people from nomadic tribes (NT), de-notified tribes (DNT) and primitive tribes may not always be listed under Scheduled Tribes, PACS recognises the exclusion faced by these groups and their struggles to have their plight recognised by government.

### People with disabilities

Exclusion reduces opportunities for people with disabilities. Discrimination against people with disabilities is based in part on cultural stereotypes, but also on misguided assumptions about the limitations that particular disabilities may impose. Services, government, markets and places of employment are, by and large, not equipped to enable the full participation of people with disabilities.

## Disability and poverty – is there a link?

**'Disability and poverty are intricately linked. Disability causes poverty and poverty exacerbates disability – people with disabilities are among the poorest and most vulnerable'**

*World Bank<sup>9</sup>*

<sup>9</sup> Bhambani Meenu and Voss Maj-Lis, The World Bank and Disability in South Asia: A Portfolio Review, World Bank, 2003, p2.

# AN END TO MANUAL SCAVENGING

## CASE STUDY



Photo credit: Safai Karmachari Andolan

Demolishing a dry latrine.

**Safai Karmachari Andolan (SKA) is a national movement working to liberate Dalit women from the inhumane job of clearing excrement and urine from dry latrines.**

These women are among India's safai karmachari or manual scavengers. Wearing nothing to protect themselves from the foul smell or risk of disease, these women are forced to live in dehumanising poverty and face daily humiliation and discrimination.

Manual scavenging is a humiliating occupation that is still commonplace despite a 1993 law prohibiting it. Since its formation in 1986, SKA has engaged in a protracted struggle that today has galvanised activists drawn from the safai karmachari communities across 18 states.

Following a long-running campaign, SKA and others have successfully influenced the ending of the practice in many Indian states. Now the movement seeks the full implementation of the law, going to court if necessary to ensure that states and districts comply.



## Muslims

Muslims in India (13 per cent of the population) also suffer discriminatory treatment and are denied opportunities, resulting in low scores against a broad range of socio-economic indicators. Social exclusion of Muslims is a phenomenon that has only been formally recognised in policy circles since the Indian government's Sachar Committee reported on the plight of Muslims in India in 2006.<sup>10</sup> It remains a controversial issue, with disagreement over both the

extent of the discrimination faced by Muslims and the measures that should be taken to address it. The introduction of reservations for Muslims is particularly contested. In addition, the conversion of people of certain social and caste-based groups to Islam means there are more vulnerable groups – such as Dalit Muslims – within Muslim communities.

## Women

Girls and women in India face gender discrimination at all stages of their lives, starting even before birth through sex-selective abortion. In the international gender gap ranking, India scores an abysmal 114 out of 134 countries. Gender discrimination is one of India's main development challenges. Women belonging to categories of socially excluded people face even more pronounced challenges, having to deal with multiple forms of exclusion.<sup>11</sup>

## Women facing multiple forms of discrimination

**Women from socially excluded groups suffer oppression and exploitation on multiple levels. They not only experience the discrimination that all women in Indian society encounter as a result of patriarchy, but face further discrimination based on group-specific identity such as caste, disability, religion and ethnicity.**

**One study, which looked at villages in three states including Orissa, found empirical evidence to show the nature of economic discrimination faced by SC and ST women. Results suggested that while all women suffer from lower levels of non-agricultural employment, results differ by social background, with SC and ST women faring worst of all.<sup>12</sup>**

<sup>10</sup> The high-level independent committee, chaired by Rajindar Sachar, published its report Social, Economic and Educational Status of the Muslim Community of India on 30 November 2006. The report included recommendations aimed at improving the inclusion of Indian Muslims.

<sup>11</sup> The Gender Gap Report examines the inequalities between women and men. It assesses countries on how well they are dividing their resources and opportunities among male and female populations, regardless of the overall levels of these resources and opportunities. Ricardo Housmann, Laura D Tyson and Saadia Zahidi, The Global Gender Gap Report 2009, World Economic Forum.

<sup>12</sup> A study found that yearly non-farm employment rates across three villages in Orissa, Haryana and Gujarat were 290 days for high-caste women compared to 148 days for SC women and 73 days for ST women. Thorat Sukhadeo, Mahamallik Motilal and Panth Ananth, Caste, Occupation and Labour Market Discrimination: A Study of Forms, Nature and Consequence in Rural India, ILO Study, 2004.

# THE PACS APPROACH

The change PACS aims to bring about is captured in the project's logical framework. The project's goal is to reduce the gap in wellbeing status between the socially excluded population and the general population. To do this, it aims to improve the uptake of entitlements to discrimination-free services and livelihoods by socially excluded people in 120 targeted districts across seven

states. In order to progress towards the purpose and goal, the project will aim to ensure the following:

- Stronger CSOs prioritise and raise issues affecting women and socially excluded communities in PACS-targeted areas.
- Women and socially excluded communities are better represented and have a greater voice in committees at village/block/district level, government decision-making bodies and CSOs.
- Civil society works to make service providers more responsive and accountable to women and socially excluded communities.
- Learning from the programme is widely disseminated.

Two fundamental premises underpin the PACS programme. The first is the notion that chronic poverty in India is to a large extent caused by discrimination on the basis of group identity – in other words, social exclusion. The first part of this paper sets out this argument and provides a few key statistics to support it. The second premise is that civil society has a critical role to play in addressing social exclusion. The case studies in this document give a few examples of how Indian civil society has worked towards more inclusive development outcomes in the past.

Why do socially excluded people have limited access to basic services and livelihoods opportunities? In PACS, we believe that the main reasons include the following:

- Social structures, beliefs and practices place barriers against socially excluded groups.
- A lack of responsiveness, transparency and accountability in public services.
- Discrimination in service delivery.
- Discrimination and exploitation in the marketplace.
- Limited awareness among socially excluded people of their rights and entitlements, and constraints on building this awareness because of educational status, limited access to information and information technology, and time poverty.
- Rudimentary mobilisation among socially excluded people, with limited social capital, and few civil society organisations that originate from within the community and are truly representative.
- Restricted participation in elections, elected bodies and governance structures. An unsatisfactory system of political representation, and limited political accountability.
- As a result of all this, limited ability to have needs met and voices heard.

Although civil society has great potential to turn this situation around, it also has limited capacity, and is often less alert to issues of social exclusion than it should be. There is a need to improve CSO governance and accountability, while parts of civil society and prevailing practices may perpetuate patterns of social exclusion.

PACS aims to unlock the potential of civil society to address social exclusion, by providing:

- Grants to individual CSOs to help them assist people who face social exclusion to claim their rights and entitlements.
- Capacity-building support for these CSOs, on issues ranging from financial management to policy advocacy.
- Opportunities for networking, alliance building, communication activities and the promotion of joint advocacy.
- Knowledge management – tracking progress with programme implementation, identifying and disseminating lessons learned, filling operational knowledge gaps, and providing evidence for policy advocacy.

# JANADESH – ADIVASIS CLAIM LAND RIGHTS

## CASE STUDY



Adivasis from the Baiga tribe marching to claim land rights in Pandaria, Chhattisgarh.

Photo credit: Ekta Parishad

**In October 2007, 25,000 rural poor and landless people, mostly from Adivasi communities, joined the Janadesh march organised by campaigning coalition Ekta Parishad to demand their right to land, livelihoods and resources.<sup>13</sup>**

Ekta Parishad provides a platform for the voices of the oppressed, the disenfranchised, and the marginalised communities of India. Part of its mission is to strengthen the leadership capacity of these communities and to unite the fragmented struggle for equitable land distribution. For almost 20 years, Ekta Parishad has worked with these communities to help create the changes necessary to bring an end to land seizures, to ensure equitable land distribution, and to protect access to livelihood resources.

One of the consequences of the march was the establishment in January 2008 of the National Land Reform Council, which was a first step towards creating land reform policies. In October 2008, the commission submitted the first draft of a new land reform policy to the Ministry of Rural Development. Ekta Parishad continues to mobilise support and monitor the policy's progress through Parliament.

In recent years, the movement has led to the registration of 686,892 land claims. In Bihar alone, 800,000 acres of Bhudan land<sup>14</sup> have been identified for redistribution to landless families, and nearly 5,000 families have received land in Chhattisgarh. Meanwhile, Ekta Parishad's campaign on forest rights has enabled over 11,000 Adivasi families in Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh to claim their entitlement to land under the Forest Rights Act.

<sup>13</sup> Ekta Parishad and the Janadesh march received funding from the first phase of the PACS programme (2001-2008).

<sup>14</sup> Bhudan land refers to the land gift movement started by Acharya Vinoba Bhave in 1951, which resulted in people voluntarily giving a proportion of their land to the government for redistribution.

PACS support is aimed at making partner CSOs strong and confident advocates for social inclusion – with government, elected bodies, private sector actors and civil society. PACS aims to sharpen the evidence-focus of partner CSOs, help them listen more closely to the socially excluded, represent their interests with more impact, and become more inclusive themselves in the process. Civil society will support socially excluded people with awareness raising, mobilisation, capacity building and advocacy support, either by facilitating the socially excluded to do their own advocacy or doing this on their behalf.

CSOs are encouraged to work with national, state and local governments to improve the service delivery mechanisms of government-supported schemes and programmes. Evidence-based policy advocacy towards government and citizen feedback will help to make government services more accessible, more reliable and of higher quality. It will also boost the accountability and transparency of government. Similar processes will happen for elected bodies and the private sector.

The engagement of socially excluded people themselves with

government, elected bodies, civil society and the private sector will change. More aware of their rights and better equipped, socially excluded people will start articulating their needs and priorities more forcefully and will be more eager and prepared to demand accountability and to challenge when entitlements are not met or rights are violated. We should see more people belonging to socially excluded groups stepping forward for inclusion in elected bodies and civil society governance structures. We should also see more CSOs of socially excluded people emerge.

## Inclusive and non-discriminatory access to livelihood opportunities and basic services

In the seven PACS-targeted states, socially excluded groups face discrimination in accessing livelihood sources, and education and health services. The PACS programme will support and partner with civil society to challenge discrimination and encourage inclusive policies and decisions aimed at creating opportunities for the poor. PACS has two thematic strands.

1. Livelihoods: improve non-discriminatory access to livelihood opportunities for socially excluded groups.
2. Right to basic services: non-discriminatory access to basic services (education, health and nutrition) for socially excluded groups.

### Secure livelihoods

This thematic strand focuses on supporting communities to improve non-discriminatory access to livelihood opportunities. It incorporates CSOs working to foster non-discriminatory access

to work, including protection from discrimination in hiring decisions, regular and timely payment of fair wages and unemployment allowances, and equal access to employment under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS).

PACS will support CSOs working to build the capacity of ST and other traditional forest dwellers, especially women, to help them claim land-title rights and common property rights, and to demand the right to access and manage their forest and grazing land. PACS aims for full participation of women in forest committees and other decision-making bodies, and the increased capacity of communities to manage natural resources.

PACS will partner with CSOs working to make communities resilient to natural disasters, such as droughts, floods and cyclones, by promoting sustainable adaptation and disaster risk reduction models.

The Indian government has policies aimed at tackling the problem of

landlessness through the distribution of public and private land to landless households. However, there are no measures aimed at overcoming the specific barriers to land lease or ownership faced by socially excluded groups, so PACS seeks to support CSOs to challenge this.

With its livelihoods work, the programme promotes equal and favourable access to assets such as land that strengthen people's livelihoods. It also supports organisations seeking to engage with networks of producers and entrepreneurs from socially excluded groups, as well as sustainable, innovative livelihood models and public-private partnerships.

# I AM NOT ALONE

## CASE STUDY



Nandu Bhai, from the Bhil tribe, is a member of Ekal Nari Sakthi Sangathan. According to Nandu, women need 'to develop capabilities and strengths... we must help ourselves. That is the only way we can move forward.'

**Rajasthan-based organisation ASTHA initiated a movement of poor single women in early 2005 which, over the years, has grown to become a network of organisations called Ekal Nari Sakthi Sangathan (Strong Women Alone)<sup>15</sup> across five states. The campaign has helped widows to obtain land rights and claim official entitlements to increased pensions and separate ration cards. It has also helped to change caste and community customs.**

Single women from eight states launched a National Forum for Single Women's Rights in New Delhi on 7 and 8 October 2009 – an important milestone in the campaign – which drew participants from 17 states of India. The forum has been created to exert pressure on decision makers to provide more resources for poor single women and for new laws, schemes and systems to benefit their lives.

<sup>15</sup> Strong Women Alone initiatives in Bihar received funding from the first phase of the PACS programme (2001-2008).

## Right to basic services

The PACS programme will identify discriminatory practices that hinder, in full or in part, access to basic education, health and nutrition services. This will inform and focus advocacy efforts to engage with the state to bring an end to discrimination.

Discrimination in education can be seen through the discriminatory behaviour to which students are subjected by teachers, administrative staff and other pupils. This results in an inability for children from socially excluded groups to participate fully and actively in classes and social activities at school. Such discrimination has a long-term, damaging effect on students' emotional wellbeing and can lead to poor academic performance,

students giving up on learning and increased drop-out rates.

The PACS programme is partnering with civil society to demand an end to discriminatory practices in schools by teachers, administrative staff and students, and to call for all children to have full access to quality education, drinking water, midday meals, books and uniforms, government scholarships and in-school health services.

In the sphere of health services, socially excluded groups need to be equipped to monitor healthcare provision and to advocate for discrimination-free access to treatment for all patients. This includes ensuring that non-discriminatory check-ups and treatment by doctors and health

professionals are available to all, particularly women, children and adolescent girls.

Under this thematic strand, the PACS programme works with partners to encourage the active and informed participation of socially excluded groups with block and district level functionaries to plan and monitor inclusive health programmes, such as the National Rural Health Mission, Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojna and the Integrated Child Development Services Scheme. The programme also supports communities to demand non-discriminatory access to nutrition programmes, including food security schemes, run by government and government agencies.

## A lasting legacy for all

The PACS approach, which is rooted in a partnership between DFID, IFIRST Consortium<sup>16</sup> (the management consultants) and CSOs, seeks to support and build the capacity of civil society to tackle the structures that exclude large swathes of the population in India from the benefits of development.

PACS seeks to leave a legacy of empowered communities that understand their rights

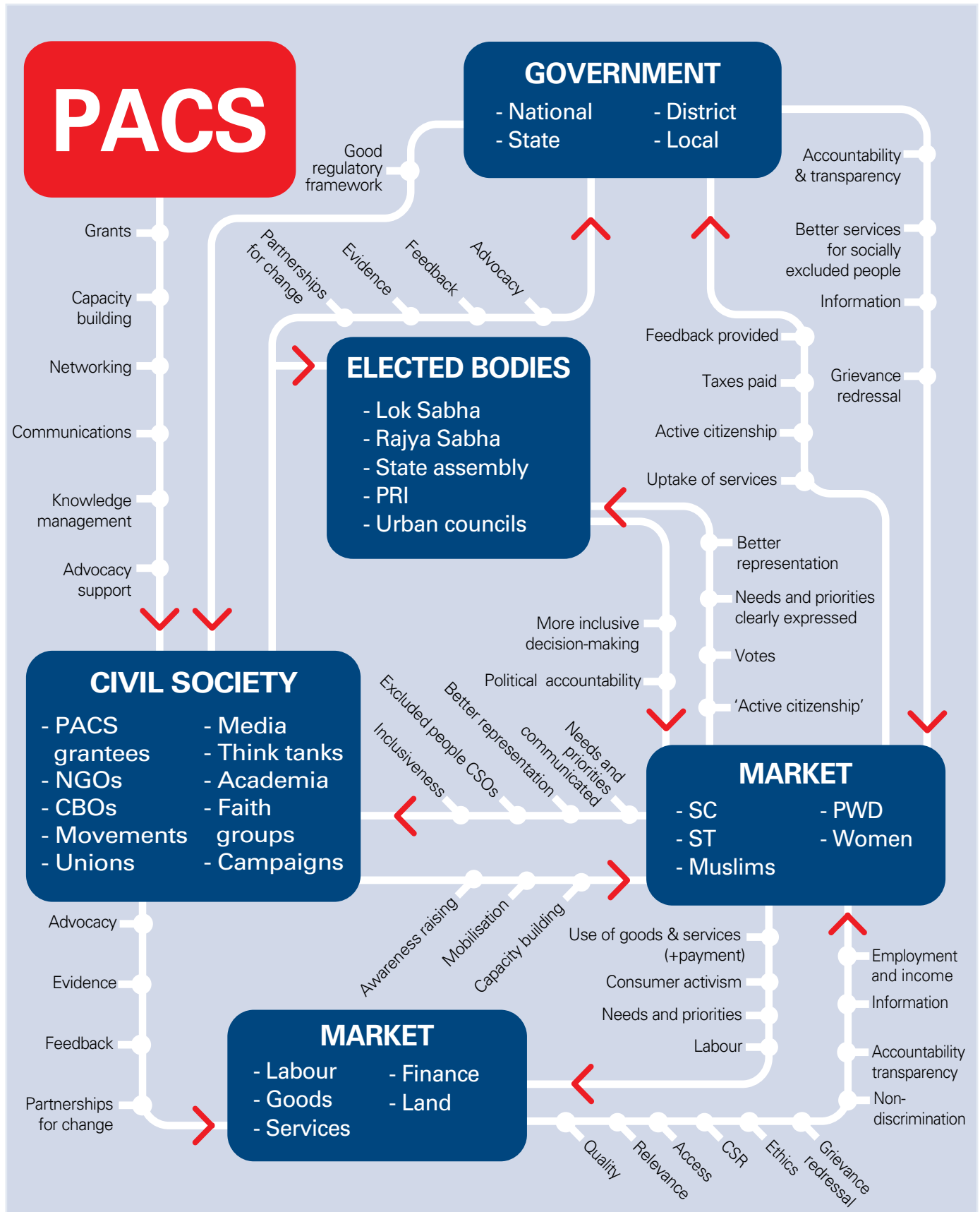
and entitlements and have the confidence and skills to negotiate with others to claim them. Furthermore, it seeks to establish a society in which authorities are accountable to all their citizens, lessons and responsibility for change are shared, and all have the opportunity to interact freely and productively with others and to determine the course of their own economic and social development.

The goal of reducing the welfare gap between socially excluded groups and the general population will only be met if all play an active role. PACS presents a unique opportunity to progress towards creating a more just and equitable society, to unleash the potential of all, and, finally, to relegate exclusion to the history books.

<sup>16</sup> The Indian Forum for Inclusive Response and Social Transformation (IFIRST) Consortium has been appointed by DFID to manage the PACS Programme. IFIRST is led by Christian Aid with Caritas India, Indian Institute of Dalit Studies, ACCESS Development Services and Financial Management Services Foundation. IFIRST members are internationally acclaimed for their expertise on issues related to social exclusion and poverty in India. IFIRST addresses social exclusion through research, policy and advocacy, and through programmes aimed at improving accountability and livelihood opportunity.

# PACS ENVIRONMENT

The PACS programme supports CSOs to engage with various stakeholders that are able to influence or bring about non-discriminatory access to rights and entitlements for socially excluded groups. The diagram maps out this approach and indicates the different stakeholders that CSOs will be encouraged to engage with.



**Poorest Areas Civil Society (PACS) Programme**  
**National Office**  
**CISRS House**  
**14 Jangpura B**  
**Mathura Road**  
**New Delhi – 110014**  
**India**

**Tel: +91 11 24372660/24372699**

**Email: [info@pacsindia.org](mailto:info@pacsindia.org)**

**[www.pacsindia.org](http://www.pacsindia.org)**

हमारा अधिकार • हमारी आवाज़  
**PACS**  
Our rights • Our voice

Supported by



Management  
consultant

