
RIGHT TO FOOD PROJECTS, MADHYA PRADESH

The Right To Food (RTF) project has six organizations working at the grassroots level in Madhya Pradesh on the issue of the Right to Food. The facilitating agency for this is Samaj Pragati Sahyog (SPS), as a key member is the Advisor for Madhya Pradesh to the RTF Commissioners appointed by the Supreme Court. The six organizations are Gram Sudhar Samiti, Nirman, Spandan Samaj Seva Samiti, Sambhav Social Service Organization, Parhit Samaj Sevi Sanstha and Holistic Action Research and Development.

Their overall objective is to ensure that the ruling of the Supreme Court of India on RTF in 2001 is implemented. The Court has ruled that all state governments should take urgent and effective measures to ensure that the existing food schemes are implemented. The ruling was based on the fact that in India it is not a shortage of food that leads to hunger, but rather the faulty distribution system. Thus, access to food becomes a right. These six organizations work at the local level to see that this Court Order is implemented. SPS helps them in training, monitoring and reporting.

The scope of this project is vast and it is not the first time that people have tried to ensure that the poor get access to food. But what makes this project different is the Court's backing as well as the heightened awareness of rights and concern among NGOs and the poor themselves. However, even with this backing, NGOs have an uphill battle and face the usual issues of corruption and disinterest by government agencies and functionaries. Networking is crucial for any measure of success in this work. The organizations have been advised that for the Right To Food campaign to become a success, an integrated approach to the project will have to take place. This includes building the capacities of the NGOs on right's-based work while also working on other grassroots problems and projects. The feedback from the field to this has been positive.

While an initial pilot project helped SPS and the six NGOs address the non-implementation of the Court's Order, the current phase of funding is expected to focus on strengthening local people's organizations so that they themselves can raise questions and tackle issues on their own in the future.

A grant of Rs 18.80 million was sanctioned in 2006-2007 (to the six organizations), over three years.

Community meeting on the Right to Food issue





Information on the Right to Food schemes displayed prominently



Educating the community through discussion and debate