



Video Volunteers

# ANNUAL REPORT

April 2014 to March 2015

# INDIAUNHEARD

*Video Volunteers' key program is [IndiaUnheard](#), the news agency for India's marginalized communities. It is a network of grassroots media producers from some of the most difficult areas, who enable a global audience to learn about poverty directly from those who live it. The correspondents report on 21 different themes related to human rights and development and then create action campaigns in their villages.*

# Our Performance: At a Glance

Between 1<sup>st</sup> of April, 2014 and 31<sup>st</sup> of March, 2015:

**1741** Stories Pitched

Total of **1230** videos this year

**696** of these were videos amplifying community issues

# TOP ISSUES COVERED

Education: **189**

Health: **113**

Food & Security: **118**

Governance & Accountability: **97**

Corruption: **154**

OUR NETWORK

# OUR NETWORK: GROWTH

**28** new Community Correspondents joined VV, making our network **174 correspondents** strong!

- ❖ 8 new recruits and a new State Office in Jammu & Kashmir
- ❖ 12 new CCs from Jharkhand, 4 from Odisha, 2 from Chhattisgarh and 1 from Madhya Pradesh
- ❖ Presence in **23 out of 24 districts** in Jharkhand

# OUR NETWORK : DIVERSITY

Diversity in our network and inclusion of the marginalized communities are of paramount importance for us when we identify potential recruits.

**Out of the total 174 Community Correspondents in 12 states in our network**

**52% are women**

**30% are Dalits**

**33% are Tribals**

**17% are from Other Backward Classes**

**30 CCs are Christian**

**16 CCs are Muslim**

# OUR NETWORK : PRESENCE

**We are present in 18% of India's total districts (127 out of 676),** focusing on those with the greatest poverty and human rights violations. For instance, we are present in:

- **49.4%** of the districts listed by the [Ministry of Home Affairs](#) as affected by **Left Wing Extremism**
- **21%** of the districts listed as '**Prone to Caste Atrocities**' by the [Ministry of Social Justice](#)
- **32%** of the districts listed as either **Scheduled V to Scheduled VI** by the [Ministry of Tribal Affairs](#)
- **23.86%** of the districts listed as **Industrial Clusters & Areas to be Critical or Polluted** by the [Central Pollution Control Board](#) of the Ministry of Environment & Forests
- **32%** of the districts rated as '**Backward**' by the [Backward Regions Grant Fund](#) (BRGF)
- **23.33%** of the districts identified with over **25% tribal population** by the [Ministry of Tribal Affairs](#)



# OUR NETWORK : SCOPE FOR FUTURE GROWTH

Two extensive Scoping Surveys were conducted this year to identify potential Community Correspondents based on issues of human rights violations in their areas and their level of engagement with social movements.

**January 2015, West Bengal:** The outcome of the survey was a feasibility report which recommended recruitment of 19-24 CCs (approx 17 female and/or 6 male) from all 20 districts of WB.

**Feb - March 2015, North East:** This research was initiated in 2013, on the basis of which, it was recommended that we recruit & train CCs from 15 districts of Manipur & Nagaland.

# TRAINING & MENTORING

# SKILL BUILDING

Correspondents and State Coordinators had many opportunities to hone in their skills, ranging from communications to legal understanding of issues they work for:

- ❖ 5 CCs from Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Odisha , Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh attended an **English speaking course** conducted by **Kanthari**, an NGO in Kerala, gearing these CCs for better communication
- ❖ 4 CCs attended a three day workshop organized by **The Civil Society Forum for Human Rights (CSFHR)**. At this workshop, they learned about a myriad of **techniques** that can be used **to monitor human rights violations**
- ❖ Anshuman Singh, the State Coordinator for VV's UP office, attended a "**National Training of Trainers on Human Rights Defenders and National/ UN Human Rights Mechanism, Legal resources and Strategic Advocacy, Actions and Remedies**" organised by **Working Group on Human Rights** in India and the UN (WGHR) in collaboration with **Human Rights Defenders Alert-HRDA** and the HRD Program of Forum Asia

# SKILL BUILDING

- ❖ Gayatri Devi, a CC from UP attended **Association for Advocacy and Legal Initiatives'** training on **laws to fight Violence Against Women**
- ❖ Reena Devi, a CC from Bihar, attended "**Poshan & Ajeevika Haq Abhiyan**" meeting conducted by **The Poorest Areas Civil Society**
- ❖ Mukesh Rajak, a CC from Jharkhand, attended a National consultation on **Using the Law to Defend the Defenders** organized in Haldwani by **Human Rights Law Network** and **Khalra Centre for Human Rights Defenders**
- ❖ Sajad, a CC Mentor and Consultant from J&K, attended a two-day workshop at the University of Kashmir, organized by the **Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative** and **J&K RTI Movement**.

# SKILL BUILDING

**In person meetings in our state offices:** at our eight state offices, CC's come for individual trainings on editing and to review footage.

- ❖ **Quarterly Trainings** - We gather all the CCs of a state at least once every quarter with the goal of giving refresher trainings on certain aspects of film-making and impact follow ups. This year, we focused on relevant and well shot footage; working on impact follow up; better community screening plans among other things.
- ❖ **Field Visits-** State coordinators went to CCs' field areas and helped them make videos and carry out follow ups with Impact. The focus was on CCs who were having trouble making videos or were inactive. We reached our goal of re-activating many CCs and helped boost the confidence of many to start working on achieving impacts on their videos.

# SKILL BUILDING

- ❖ **Forced Evictions, Jharkhand-** IU training with 20 participants included participants from Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh. Special module were rolled out for participants regarding Forced Evictions
- ❖ **Initial Correspondent training, Jammu and Kashmir-** We conducted a week-long IndiaUnheard training with 9 participants, which was headed by Stalin K.
- ❖ **Information Video Module-** A three days workshop was conducted for Jharkhand CCs to familiarize them with this style of video production. A total of 4 informational videos and 1 music video were made in this year documenting Right to Education and Forced Evictions.
- ❖ **Participatory Video Module-** We organized a one day workshop for Jharkhand CCs. Two CCs Amit Topno and Bharti Kumari used this method in their video and are currently helping Rejan Guria to train local communities to make videos to capture human trafficking stories in their area.

PRODUCTION

# INDIA UNHEARD : TOP PRODUCTIONS

## MATERNAL HEALTH

To address the horrifying number of **56,000 women who die during childbirth every year in India**, Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) is an Indian Government Scheme that was implemented in 2005, aimed at decreasing neo-natal and maternal deaths happening in the country. VV, however, begged the question, “Are women in the remotest villages of India getting the benefits?” to which VV Correspondent Reena Ramteke and VV Correspondent Mary Nisha video documented rejoinders.

Reena’s story , [One Village. Three Women. A State Run Facility that never Opens](#) brilliantly reveals the bitter truth of failure of policy implementation of schemes like the JSY in Khatti village, Chhattisgarh. An unfunctional health facility has resulted in one woman losing her 6 day old baby, another delivering a stillborn baby and a third who is 9 months pregnant with no access to healthcare.

In Mary Nisha’s [One Woman’s Harrowing Experience of Giving Birth](#), she video documents the appalling conditions of state-run health facilities in Godda, Jharkhand. It is a tragic story of a heavily pregnant tribal woman who had to wait for 6 hours to get any medical attention from a doctor at the hospital. Further, she had to incur out of pocket expenses of INR 400 for her delivery, whereas free medical treatment is hers by right under JSY. The doctor on duty never did show up and eventually her delivery was conducted by a nurse.



# INDIAUNHEARD : TOP PRODUCTIONS

## ODISHA BATTLES FORCED EVICTIONS

Our Community Correspondents from Odisha, are currently covering the darkest period for the indigenous people in Indian history and our production '[Save Niyamgiri: Voices from Ground Zero](#)' attempted to consolidate and magnify the intensifying protests by the Dongria Kondh tribals against the the UK-based company, Vedanta's, plan to set up mining projects in this ecologically and culturally sensitive area.

In [Drowned by Development](#), Satyanarayan Banchor, reported about the protests by the villagers of Buda Bahal Village of Bolangir district, Odisha who have been desperately protesting against the upcoming Lower Suktel Dam which will spell doom for their communities that are primarily dependent on agriculture and forest produce for their livelihoods.

'We will give our blood, but will not leave Niyamgiri. It is our God, our home and gives us everything we need,' says a resident because **in places like Niyamgiri Hill and Lower Suktel, development means the end of a way of life.**

# INDIAUNHEARD : TOP PRODUCTIONS

## MINOR RAPED ON WAY TO SCHOOL

On February 6, 2014, Sapna a **14 year old tribal girl** from Hazaribaug, Jharkhand, left home at 9:30am for school, as she did every day. What should have been a typical day for this little child turned into her worst nightmare. She **was accosted and then raped for three days**. The perpetrator of this vile act would have escaped punishment if it was not for the report of VV Correspondent , Chunnu Hansda, who [reported](#) about the event and the protests of the angry villagers, which resulted in the incarceration of Sapna's rapist.

## DALIT RIGHTS ACTIVIST BURNED ALIVE

Sanjay Khobragade was a Dalit rights activist from Kavalewada, Maharashtra. **Six 'upper class' men broke into his house in the middle of the night, doused him in petrol and set him on fire because of a land disagreement**. Before dying, [he identified his killers](#) but due to gross injustice, his wife and neighbor were not only accused but put in jail and left there for over four months. In jail, both were [physically and emotionally tortured](#) to say that they themselves killed Sanjay. VV Correspondent Alka Mate brought this story to the attention of VV. Human Rights Law Network and VV have teamed together to seek justice for Sanjay Khobragade.

# COMMUNICATIONS

# VV and Doordarshan Collaboration

In a milestone collaboration for community media, Doordarshan signed a contract with Video Volunteers agreeing to a **monthly half-hour slot, free of cost**, to air a **show called 'IndiaUnheard' in eight states**.

Doordarshan is the national broadcaster in India and is present in every home. This promises that millions of people in rural areas will be able to see videos about their own realities and take action to solve these issues.

The programme was launched in Bihar in November and since then has also been launched in Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand. It is set to launch in Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh soon.

# OUTREACH

We received **499, 428 unique views** this year and **481 likes** on our Youtube channel.

Our Social Media footprint increased this year with **4300 new followers** on Facebook, broadening our reach by **40%** to **11000** followers.

We engaged with audiences from more than **70 countries**.

**10,385 likes** on FB posts, **800** comments and **3000+** shares and retweets.

**10 Lakh+** people saw VV content on FB & Twitter.

# MEDIA MENTIONS

VV & it's media reports were featured in:

Huffington Post

Deccan Herald

Live Mint

The Economist

DNA India

Times of India

Radio France Internationale - RFI

India Today

Dainik Jagran

CNN IBN

New Indian Express

The Alternative

Scroll.in

The Goan

Hallabot

Newslandry

Verve

Bangalore Mirror

And in many more regional papers, blogs & sites

# EXPERIMENTS WITH TECHNOLOGY

**VV launched 3 new projects in its endeavour to make technology and information sharing accessible to the most marginalized, remote and invisibilized communities:**

In one of our most innovative initiatives, we trained our CCs on **SMS Reporting**. Correspondents from Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand were encouraged **to report about issues of modern day slavery** from their cell phones as a part of a collaboration with a British media organization ***Radar*** which works to curb human trafficking.

Over the year, we have **distributed 40 Micromax Tablets** to our CCs in Odisha, Bihar, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. Over two-day trainings, Correspondents were taught how to use these devices effectively **to screen their videos to government officials for impact-work** and to small audiences. Owing to the portable and convenient nature of these devices, we've seen that the number of screenings has increased dramatically.

To facilitate effective mentoring and knowledge sharing even to the most inaccessible areas of India, we started **sending voice messages to CCs with updates from the VV network as well as training tips**. We are using another system to track audience feedback and interactions from the Doordarshan show.

# SPECIAL PROJECTS

## Community Screenings about Human Trafficking with MTV Exit

More than 100,000 people attended 76 Community screenings we conducted in the state of Bihar of MTV Exit's film 'Bazar', on human trafficking. 12 Community Correspondents participated in leading the screenings in their districts. Audience members reported that human trafficking indeed was happening all around their villages, but that before these screenings they had never recognized it as such.

## Tackling the caste issue in Mumbai's Sewerage Work, with Sir Dorabji Tata Trust

Mumbai's vast sewerage system is cleaned almost entirely by members of the Dalit community who work in inhuman conditions resulting in very high numbers of deaths because of toxic fumes and lack of safety equipments. VV created a campaign and communications strategy to end manual scavenging in Mumbai, as part of the Trust's 'Mission Garima' which aims to improve the condition of sanitation workers. We organized meetings with key stakeholders including scavengers themselves and NGOs and CSOs working on Dalit rights



# SPECIAL PROJECTS

## Video Advocacy training for homeless men and women in New York

Working with the Jericho Project, a leading NGO combatting homelessness in New York, VV trained former homeless people including Iraq war veterans to produce videos. The purpose of the videos was to use it for advocating at the state capitol for more funds to be allocated to fight homelessness in NY, and to set up an Advocates program in the NGO.

## Speaker Series on human rights issues in India

VV's director Stalin K. conducted a weekly speaker series on Indian human rights issues for a group of New Yorkers, that included screening documentary films, VV videos and reading works on human rights issues.



IMPACTS

# IMPACTS: IN FIGURES

**209** impacts achieved this year

**474** impacts achieved till date

**3138** villages impacted

**140** Community Screenings

Total Number of **People Impacted: 11,97,303**

# TOP IMPACTS

## 60,000 Kashmiris now lead a safer life

A firing range, Tosmaidan, in Budgaum, Kashmir was leased out to the Artillery division of the Indian Army to conduct regular drills from May to October, every year. The firing has been ongoing since 1964. The place leased out to Army, however, has also been a pasture for grazing for thousands of animals for centuries used by hundreds of local shepherds. Due to regular shelling and firing - official records suggest that 110 people were killed and 700 maimed.

Sajad's video report from 2012 revived the Toasmaidan Bachav Campaign by locals, which had failed a number of times earlier due to heavy military presence in the area. With J&K RTI Movement's cooperation, pressure was built up and finally they were successful in pressurizing the J&K Government to cancel the lease agreement.

# TOP IMPACTS

## 1000 toilets for the villagers of Movaiya

Shabnam Begum reported on 13-year-old Nirama who lives in Movaiya village, Varanasi district, Uttar Pradesh where 500 people have no access to basic sanitation facilities. For Nirama, having to relieve herself in the open is an added challenge as she is visually impaired. She is afraid of being teased and more seriously, of being sexually or physically harmed. Shabnam's [video](#) was broadcast on Citizen Journalist on CNN IBN and one of the viewers contacted her.

Expressing solidarity with her cause, he very generously helped to build 1000 toilets for Shabnam's village, enabling her community to regain a dignified life.

# TOP IMPACTS

## New Teachers appointed where none took classes

Two teachers refused to report on duty in the Upper Middle School in Kulbhanga, Jharkhand for two years. In september 2014, Shikha Paharin [made a video](#) on this issue and screened it for the Deputy Commissioner of Sahebganj district .

Echoing the community's growing demand to appoint new teachers, Shikha visited the deputy commissioner again in November 2014. After this, a new Headmaster and a new Assistant Teacher were appointed on 14th February 2015 at the Utkramik Middle School in Kulbhanga Pahad village of Mandru block. Since 16th of February 2015, they have been teaching children regularly.

Both Kuldeep Yadav and Shankar Das, who never visited school except for Republic Day, have been suspended.

# TOP IMPACTS

## 16 year old rescued from trafficking

Behulia Paharin of Boriya village in Sahebganj District went missing in May 2014. She was taken to Gurgaon and made to do household work along with 3 more kids. Correspondent Shikha [made a video](#) about the issue and showed it to the Police officers at Boriyo but no action was taken. Shikha managed to file a missing persons complaint but the inaction, negligence and allegations from the authorities kept intensifying. Shikha then submitted a written application to the Superintendent of Police, Sahebganj. After 19 days of filing this application with the SP, on 19th August 2014, Behulia was returned to her home town by the same people who took her. She was paid no money for the work she was made to do for 3 months and confirmed presence of many other girls who were trafficked and kept in the same place.

[Behulia's story changed and for good](#). But that may not be the case for the rest of women trapped in this ring. The best way to tackle this is immediate action. The sooner the action is taken, higher the chances of safe retrieval.

# CAMPAIGNS & ADVOCACY



# MATERNAL HEALTH CAMPAIGN

VV launched a campaign [monitoring maternal health](#) facilities along with **Oxfam** in which 41 video reports were produced.

[56,000 women die a year in India in childbirth](#) - yet none of them are stories; no officials are accountable for their deaths. We're trying to change that by giving them a voice — and a way to 'move' local officials to action. Here are a few examples. [This video](#) is about the impact of a closed health clinic on three village women, two of whom lost their babies because of it. [This video](#) captures the undignified way women are treated when they deliver at state hospitals.

# PASS YA FAIL - RIGHT TO EDUCATION

Our [RTE Campaign](#) which aims to monitor the implementation of the Right to Education Act on the ground has produced approximately 110 audit videos bringing our total to 153 RTE audit videos systematically reporting on violations of RTE provisions in their communities

# CAMPAIGN AGAINST FORCED EVICTIONS

For our [Forced Evictions Campaign](#) we produced more than 89 videos on forced displacement, bringing the total to 200. Working with leading social movements such as **Narmada Bachao Andolan**, **Khandadhar Surakshya Mahila Mahasangh**, Sundargarh, Odisha, **Malkangiri Zilla Adivasi Mahasangha**, Malkangiri, Odisha on the ground this campaign primarily fights against development induced displacement and aims for an end to all forced evictions and for the full of implementation of Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas act.

A large number of these videos showcase how communities are forced by the State to leave their land even if they do not wish to do so. This coercion may take the form of withholding of basic services like access to education, healthcare or food security schemes.

# ARTICLE 17, CAMPAIGN AGAINST UNTOUCHABILITY

In our ongoing [campaign](#), VV along with its partner Human Rights Law Network has filed a Public Interest Litigation in the Supreme Court of India asking the government to take stringent measures to implement Article 17 of the Indian Constitution.

Our meticulous video documentation has acted as wake up call to a nation which believes that Untouchability is history.

# Key NGO Partnerships

VV's Campaign and Advocacy efforts got a tremendous boost because of our collaborations with various NGOs, namely:

Human Rights Law Network

Narmada Bachao Andolan

Dalit Haq Abhiyan

Akhil Bhartiya Dahashad Vad Virodhi  
Jan Andolan

Katraib Sanghatan

Ambedkar Center for Justice and  
Peace - ACPJ

Amnesty International

PACS - Poorest Areas Civil Society

Abhivyakti - Nasik

People for Peace Service Society -  
PPSS, Jaunpur

Prajayatr, Lucknow

Humsafar, Lucknow

Ekta Parishad

Jansahyog Manch

Gram Adhikar

Jan Chetna Yatra

Sathi - Cehat

SAMATA

Akhil Bhartiya Paragatisheel Women  
Association's

# ENGAGEMENT WITH GOVERNMENT

Video Volunteers not only acts as a whistleblower for issues, but over time has evolved into a bridge between communities and their governing bodies.

We **interacted with 168 public officials** some of the most notable ones being from the Health, Agriculture, Police, Social Justice, Labour, Forest and Development Departments.

**CORRESPONDENTS' WIDER INFLUENCE**

# POLITICAL ROLES

As a sign of their empowerment, this year two of our women CCs made a splash politically

- ❖ **Reena Ramteke** from Chhattisgarh was elected as a **Ward Member** for the Gariaband District Administration.
- ❖ **Saroj Paraste** from Madhya Pradesh, was elected as a Village Head (Sarpanch) of her block in Jabalpur district.

Having seen both women tackle administrative failures in the past, their communities were eager to see them take on more responsibility. Both of them attributed their nomination and success to their years of experience as Community Correspondents. [Watch Saroj talk about her work as a changemaker.](#)



# AWARDS & RECOGNITION

- ❖ **Xavier Hamsay**, our correspondent from West Singhbum, Jharkhand, was given a special mention for the **Indigenous Voices in Asia (IVA) Awards for Outstanding Reporting on Indigenous Peoples, 2014** by Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) on International Day for the World's Indigenous People.
- ❖ **Radhika Chincholikar**, from Hingoli, Maharashtra, received the “**Ananabhau Sathe Puraskaar**” from Social Justice Department, Maharashtra in July 2014 for her extensive work with the Paridhi Community, a marginalised tribe.

# AWARDS & RECOGNITION

- ❖ **Sulochana Pednekar, our CC from Goa** , was awarded the **District Women's Honour Award, 2014** on by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Goa for exemplary community engagement for creating awareness about issues like menstrual hygiene among girls.
- ❖ **Sulochana's** educative and insightful video on Recycling was shortlisted at **All India Environmental Journalism Competition** by **Indo-German Environment Partnership (IGEP)** Programme, 2014
- ❖ **Sulochana's** powerful video highlighting major problems in the state's garbage management and **Devidas Gaonkar's** video about destruction of forest cover was selected to be part of the **Digital Story Session** at the Bangladesh Summit on Sustainable Development organized on August 17-19, 2014, Senate Bhaban, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh.

# FILM FESTIVALS AND PANEL PRESENTATIONS

- ❖ **Ankur Film Festival, 2014** in Nashik, Maharashtra, screened a number of the VV Maharashtra team's videos such as [I am Nirbhaya](#), our State Coordinator [Anand Pagare's](#) Profile Video, Alka Mate's [interview with Sanjay Khobragade](#) (a Dalit activist who was murdered), Zulekha's Sayyed's [video covering demolition of Mumbai slums](#). The entire Maharashtra team was in attendance and got to feel the 'buzz' of a film festival.
- ❖ **Gayatri Devi**, our CC from Uttar Pradesh, made a presentation about the '**Power of Community Media**' to students and professors at the **Lady Irwin College, Delhi** on the occasion of the Department of Development Communication's Golden Jubilee. Gayatri made us proud by being the only woman on a male-dominated panel and impressed the audience by showing them examples of her work.
- ❖ **Amarjeet Kumar** from Bihar was invited to attend the **Meeting of Dalits in Kathmandu, Nepal** from 14-16th Nov. 2014 on behalf of VV.

THE END