

**Norad project number: GLO-04/268-106 (NCA Project ID 10323)**  
**Name of your Organisation: Norwegian Church Aid**  
**Local Partner(s): Church Auxilliary for Social Action (CASA)**

## **ABOUT THE EVALUATION**

**Evaluation year: 2004**

**Conducted by: Team headed by Context International, Holland (also including one team-member from CASA).**

**Country: India**

**Region: South Asia**

**Theme/DAC sector: 150.50**

## **SUMMARY OF THE EVALUATION**

### **Title of Evaluation Report:**

External review of the Core Programme of Church Auxilliary for Social Action

### **Background:**

Born as a relief organisation in the aftermath of partition of India in 1947, CASA today is one of the foremost relief and development organisations in India representing the concern and commitment of the Indian Protestant and Orthodox Churches. The long-term development programme of CASA (Core programme) covers approximately 30 localities in 13 states.

### **Purpose/aims of study:**

- To analyse the premises, concepts, strategy and approach of Core Programme of CASA in order to assess its relevance, efficiency and effectiveness in the current socio-economic and political context. And to assess the relevance of the objectives of the Core Programme of CASA in particular.
- To assess the organisational pre-conditions (existing and required) and status of interventions (programme) for integrating a rights-based approach to development and empowerment in relation to an articulated perspective for the current decade.
- To review the outcome of the intervention and consequent transformation process that has taken place within the programme against the articulated objectives.

### **Methodology:**

In the process leading to the evaluation, it was decided that the exercise would be “external” in nature, but with an active involvement of CASA-staff, community and other stakeholders.

### **Key Findings:**

- The core programme units have encouraged community groups and people’s organisations to pursue the objective of self-reliance. The cumulative achievement is indeed impressive. However, apart from strengthening the rights of people through

activism at micro level, not much organised effort appears to have been made to deal with the policies that impede people's rights at meso- and macro level.

- Self Help Groups for women and village development associations, youth groups and social action cells are the main organisational forms that have been promoted by CASA at the village level. There is perceptible change in the lives of women belonging to Self Help Groups.
- CASA has played a critical role in organising Tribals and Dalits into strong village development groups. The strength of CASA's approach has also been around organising youth (often ignored in development strategies).
- CBOs have a variety of achievements spanning social and economic issues to their credit, including political empowerment through representation at the ward, Panjajat Raj Institution and Counsellor levels. Economically and politically, the CBOs have become empowered to a considerable extent. The Rights Based Approaches are gaining ground slowly and steadily.
- The programme has made several efforts to ensure that its development actions are gender inclusive. However, it must be realised that while participation of women has enabled them to create a space for themselves, it has not necessarily ensured addressing the gender-based discrimination at the community and household level.
- In terms of lobby and advocacy it is generally observed that CASA and CBOs are involved mostly in grassroots campaigns and people's mobilisation on issues, such as land rights, house sites and basic needs which can be termed as components of rooted and people centred advocacy at local level, which itself is appreciable. These are yet to scale-up to well-planned, broad-based and sustained advocacy.
- With regard to the organisational set-up of the programme, the major observation is the ability of CASA to change its strategic focus in view of the changing development scenario in India, though there still are organisational challenges.

### **Recommendations:**

- The concept of people's organisations needs to be revisited within the framework of the new Rights Based Approach
- The position of CASA in the Indian civil society needs to be explored a bit more in depth: What is the position that CASA would like to take within the Indian civil society; what are the options given the character and institutional set-up of CASA?
- The issues of linkages and relationships with other stakeholders require further attention. This relates especially to the relationship between issues at micro-, meso- and macro level and strategic alliances and relationships beyond the direct "CASA family."

### **Follow-up:**

CASA has prepared an action-plan as to the planned measures to follow-up recommendations of the review.

Report of the external review of  
the Core Programme of  
Church's Auxiliary for Social Action  
(New Delhi, India)

*March 2004 – October 2004*

December 2004



Church's Auxiliary for Social Action  
New Delhi, India

Report of the external review of  
the Core Programme of  
Church's Auxiliary for Social Action  
(New Delhi, India)

## **Composition of the evaluation report**

### *Main chapters*

The present report consists basically of three clusters. The main substance of the report is provided in the Chapters III - VI, which deal with the relevance of CASA's Core Programme (III), organisational assessment (IV), financial analysis (V), and programme analysis (VI). These chapters contain data collected from the study of dossiers, fieldwork, interviews and workshops. Chapter II, which is the position paper that the CASA staff members wrote at the request of the study team, deals basically with the 'being' of CASA, a historical overview of the Core Programme and the general context in which the programme is being implemented.

### *Summary, conclusions and major reflections*

The report starts with an executive summary of the major findings, conclusions and reflections of the study team. In Chapter VII the study team presents some thoughts; 'reflections' about the future of the Core Programme.

### *Annexes and footnotes*

The report contains Annexes with empirical data about the programme. Footnotes in the text provide in a number of cases empirical evidence for statements, which have been made in the text, reference to documents, and/or a further elaboration of arguments. Both the Annexes and the footnotes are meant for the more interested and/or involved reader.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It is quite remarkable that a Non-Governmental Development Organisation, such as the Church's Auxiliary for Social Action, New Delhi, India, invites outsiders to carry out a 'self-imposed' external evaluation of the CASA Core Programme. At the onset I want to thank CASA for the opportunity which has been given to the members of the evaluation team.

Many people have assisted the evaluation team with the implementation of this external evaluation. During the process, the evaluation team visited PAT units in the four zones (North, East, West, and South) where CASA is working and had interactions with representatives of these organisations and various community based organisations. In a number of places the evaluators arrived at an odd hour. During these visits there was always a warm welcome and what is more important, a preparedness to share experiences related to the life of poor, marginalised and under-privileged communities.

Staff members of CASA accompanied the members of the evaluation team during the various field visits, introduced them to communities and their colleagues, and acted often as able interpreters. An elaborate three-day participatory self-assessment workshop was held with 23 CASA staff members representing the four zones and the Head Quarters (September 22 – 24, 2004). Numerous focused group discussions and interviews were held with staff members at village-, PAT-, zonal- and Head Office level in order to arrive upon an adequate understanding of the relevance of the Core Programme, the organisational set-up, programme implementation and relationships. The evaluators had a briefing with representatives of CASA and the CASA Round Table at the beginning of the evaluation process (March 17 – 18, 2004). During the debriefing workshop (September 30, 2004) CASA staff members provided valuable feedback to the 'report in progress'.

A special word of thanks is due to both the Director and the Chief Monitoring Officer of CASA who together with colleagues and support staff provided important encouragement and assistance throughout the evaluation process.

At all levels the team experienced a collaborative attitude and an openness, which enabled the evaluators to take up numerous issues in a relatively short time. We are grateful for this professional and personal support, which has been given to us and which made the participation in this external evaluation a pleasant learning experience.

Last but certainly not least: I want to very sincerely thank all the members of the evaluation team. Mr Binoy Acharya (UNNATI, Ahmedabad) and his colleague Mr Hitendra who was so kind to take over part of Binoy's work during the primary data collection process, Dr. M K Bhatt (Development Support Initiatives, Bangalore), Ms Bhaswati Chakravorty (independent Consultant, New Delhi), Mr Manoj Fogla (independent consultant, Cuttack), Ms Amita Joseph (Business & Community Foundation, New Delhi), Mr Jayant Kumar (Monitoring Officer, CASA, New Delhi), Ms Anthya Madiath (independent consultant, Bangalore), Mr Ajay Rai (Earth Care Consultants, New Delhi), Mr Rajan Singh (Former General Secretary of BUILD,

Mumbai) and Dr. Annapurna Sanyal (independent consultant, Kolkata) for the pleasant and professional collaboration during all stages of the study process.

The members of the team appeared to be rather complementary. It is quite remarkable that their respective organisations valued this evaluation so much.

It speaks for itself that despite this intensive collaboration the content of the report is solely the responsibility of the evaluation team. Feedback is welcome at: [info@developmenttraining.org](mailto:info@developmenttraining.org)

*Context, international cooperation*

New Delhi, India/Soesterberg, the Netherlands

December 10, 2004

Fons van der Velden

Coordinator of the study

## ABBREVIATIONS

AP	Andhra Pradesh
BIMAROU	Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Orissa and Uttar Pradesh ('sick')
BPL	Below Poverty Line
CASA	Church's Auxiliary for Social Action
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
CF	Chief Functionary
CLC	Cluster Level Committee
Crore	Ten Million Rupees
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CZO	Chief Zonal Officer
DfID	Department for International Development
EG	Economic Group
EGS	Employment Guarantee Scheme
FA	Female Association
FC	Foreign Contribution
FCRA	Foreign Contributions Regulation Act
FMSF	Financial Management Service Foundation
GOs	Government Organisations
GRL	Grass Root Level
HP	Himachal Pradesh
HPD	Human Potential Development
HQ	Head Quarter
IAY	Indira Awas Yojana
ICCO	Inter Church Organisation for Development Cooperation
IGP	Income Generation Programme
IRDP	Integrated Rural Development Programme
JFM	Joint Forest Management
JoD	Journey of Development
Lakh	Hundred Thousand Rupees
LFA	Logical Framework Approach
LPG	Liberalisation, Prioritisation & Globalisation
MIS	Management Information System
MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly
MM	Mahila Mandal (Women's Group)
MP	Members of Parliament
NABARD	National Bank for Agriculture And Rural Development
NFE	Non Formal Education
NG(D)Os	Non-Governmental (Development) Organisations
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission
NNGOs	Northern Non-Governmental Development Organisations
NRM	Natural Resource Management
NSWC	National State Women's Commission
OSA	Organisational Self Assessment
PAT	People's Action for Transformation
PC	Project Coordinator
PDS	Public Distribution System
PGN	Practical Gender Needs



PLC	PAT Level Committee
PME	Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
PO	People's Organisation
PPME	Participatory Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
PR	Public Relation
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRI	Panchayat Raj Institutions
PSP	Participatory Strategic Planning
RBA	Rights Based Approach
RC	Resource Centre
Rs	Rupees (Approximately one Euro is Rs.55?)
RSA	Resource Sharing Agency
SAC	South Asian Churches
SC	Scheduled Castes
SEP	Social Education Programme
SGI	Strategic Gender Interest
SGRV	Sampoorna Gram Rojgar Yojna
SGSV	Swarnajayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana
SHG	Self-Help Groups
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time bound
ST	Scheduled Tribes
TN	Tamil Nadu
ToF	Training of Facilitators
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
VDO	Village Development Organisation
VLO	Village Level Organisation
VMSROP	Vision, Mission, Strategy, Role, Objective & Program
WB	West Bengal
YG	Youth Group

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **1. Process of the study**

In the year 2004 CASA has initiated itself a process of external evaluation of its Core Programme. It should be acknowledged that it is quite remarkable that a Non-Governmental Development Organisation such as CASA invites outsiders to carry out a 'self-imposed' external evaluation.

The main purpose of the study was to contribute to the learning of all stakeholders involved. In order to do so the study team looked basically into six major areas: (a) the relevance and appropriateness of the Core Programme; (b) organisational set-up; (c) financial management and systems; (d) programme performance; (e) linkages; (f) learning's from the programme.

The evaluation was carried out in close collaboration with CASA staff members. At all levels the evaluation team experienced a collaborative attitude and an openness, which enabled the evaluators to take up numerous issues in a relatively short time.

### **2. Relevance and appropriateness of the programme**

During the 57 years of its existence CASA has developed from a relief organisation in the middle of the previous century, to a 'needs based', later on 'issue based' and presently 'rights based' approach oriented organisation. While taking a bird's eye view on CASA's organisational evolution it may be concluded that over the years the organisation has manifested itself as a 'living organisation'. Over and over again important changes and adjustments have been made in the overall strategy of the Core Programme in view of changes in the development scenario in India. Within the organisation there exists a healthy tension between the aspired and present functioning. This is an important organisational quality.

CASA's current strategic position to act as a facilitator in strengthening people's organisation and people's movement through a countrywide programme is not only appropriate but also exemplary.

While the organisational position with regard to strengthening grass root level democracy and the social fabric of civil society is quite clear, the position of CASA with regard to some national level issues, and the position CASA wishes to take in the Indian civil society is not always sufficiently indicated in the policy documents.

CASA has clearly analysed the issue of poverty in India. The consultations with the poor have provided a diverse manifestation of poverty which not only indicates income-expenditure poverty but also other social deprivations. However, there is a need to consolidate the analysis on poverty as a key programme area.

### **3. Organisational set-up**

With regard to the organisational-set-up of the programme the major observation is the ability of CASA to change its strategic focus in view of the changing development

scenario in India. This is an important organisational quality. The translation of the new Rights Based Approach into an adequate organisational set-up is in 'progress'. There are still some organisational challenges in different areas such as Human Resources Management, Planning Monitoring and Evaluation and e.g. Research & Development.

CASA is a value based organisation and the corporate values are understood, shared and internalised by staff members. Some of the values and especially guiding principles need to be deepened and made more context-, situation- or subject matter specific.

Basic systems with regard to (Participatory) Planning and Monitoring and Evaluation are in place. The core purpose of the PME-system is articulated as 'tool for empowerment of the reference community' but needs to be clarified further. The hierarchy in objectives with regard to the PME system requires some further clarification. Furthermore, the systems appears to have a certain bias towards 'canonical' issues and need to be updated in order to capture the richness of the development practice in which many staff members of CASA are involved.

The governing structure of CASA is, in view of the character of the organisation, constituency based. Although the board and the executive committees are the policy makers within the organisation, the CASA director and staff members play an important preparatory role in terms of policy preparation and formulation. Intensive and regular discussions and consultations do take place between staff and board members with regard to major issues.

Staff members generally have the required knowledge, skills and attitudes and competencies to implement community based programmes. Self-confidence and competencies with regard to the implementation of the (new) RBA needs further enhancement in a number of cases. However, within this area there is (already) a lot of 'work in progress'. In the recent past many capacity building efforts have been undertaken at different levels within the Core Programme in diverse areas. There is a need to improve the translation of the experiential learning pedagogy into action.

Many staff members have a long track record within CASA. This loyalty to the organisation is a quite remarkable asset of CASA. However, by and large the level of payment within CASA is (too) low in view of the job descriptions and responsibilities and what is being paid elsewhere in the development sector. The mainstreaming of gender is yet to take place within CASA as an organisation.

Organisational learning with regard to the Rights Based Approach does take place within the organisation but needs to be institutionalised further. In terms of staff archetypes CASA seems to have a tremendous potential in balancing 'doing' with 'reflection, 'learning' and 'planning'. This is an important quality.

One of the major shortcomings of the current CASA corporate PPME system most probably is that the system is not always consciously and systematically linked to organisational learning in terms of systems, procedures, staff development, culture, et cetera.

The issue of inter-relatedness and synergy needs more attention. This relates not only to synergy between various programme activities, but also to the synergy among the zones and departments. This is again an Organisational Development issue, which is in 'progress' as part of the reorganisation process.

#### **4. Financial analysis**

The total expenditure on the Core Programme is around 80 million Rupees a year, which is one fifth of the total budget of CASA.

The Finance Committee is the apex body for all finance related decisions. It comprises six members who are also the members of the National Board. The Finance Committee meets four times a year to discuss and approve budget, review receipt and expenditures and other important issues. The day-to-day management is being looked after by the director and the hierarchy runs downwards to the finance head and further. In general, the system seems to be well organised and effective.

Proper book of accounts are being maintained at head quarters, zones and PAT offices. CASA has a centralised system of accounting. The current accounting system is highly centralised, but the proposed computerisation of the accounting system should help in rationalising it. CASA has drafted a comprehensive accounting procedure manual as well as financial policy. Proper systems are in place with regard to the funds movement and financial management. There are certain areas in which there is still scope for improvement.

The internal auditor is doing an adequate job at the head quarter, which enhances the financial checks and balances at head quarter level. It is recommended that similar internal audit/control systems are initiated at the zonal and downstream level.

The second line of leadership in the finance department is bit of a concern. There is a need for recruiting a professionally qualified finance person, who could take over after the retirement of the current senior finance staff. CASA should initiate a more focused effort towards the capacity building of various staff, which could be done through facilitation of a tailor made workshop for its finance staff. It is appreciated that CASA has initiated proper employee's welfare schemes, which are desirable as well as legally required. The salaries given by CASA to both its key functionaries and staff members are modest by contemporary standards.

The organisation is under the process of computerising its accounting system. The computerisation of accounts will go a long way in rationalising the accounting system. Absence of fund accounting makes it difficult to control inter-project transactions and negative balances, if any, in projects.

Half yearly financial reports are being submitted to the donor for the Core Programme. Narrative reports are also being prepared and submitted separately. The financial and narrative reports are not prepared simultaneously. From a finance perspective, it was noticed that, the narrative report does not corroborate with the financial report in terms of expenditures made during the period. It would be advisable to initiate a system of financial narrative reporting, in addition to the existing structure of reporting.

There is a bottom up approach in budgeting which is very participatory. CASA needs to work however on the documentation of budgetary processes at Zonal and PAT level. The documentation of budgeting processes can only improve through greater interaction between programme and finance departments.

CASA should explore the possibility of improving the MIS as well as co-ordination between the finance and the programme departments.

## **5. Programme assessment**

CASA has located the Core Programme in areas which are predominantly populated by poor, disadvantaged and oppressed groups and communities. Though the Core Programme was started in the early 1980s, the work in some of these locations seems to have picked up momentum and scale only around the mid 1990s.

Issues that people have chosen have a direct correlation with poverty and social exclusion. The zonal evaluation teams have observed that there is a need for greater contextualisation and sharpening of the analysis around each of these issues in each location. This would enable stakeholders to be more specific in determining their strategies and would result in sharpening outcomes and impact.

The Core Programme is ambitious in its objectives. There is considerable variance in achievement between objectives and across different units. Without question, the strategies adopted by the Core Programme have provided reference groups with opportunities to take charge of their development. The extent of achievements is considerable.

Capacity enhancement has been a core strategy of the programme. Staff at the programme level has not received much training on the pedagogy of adult learning and on training methodology, despite of being responsible for such an important element of the overall strategy.

From all accounts, Core Programme units across the board have encouraged community groups and people's organisations to pursue the objective of self-reliance. The cumulative achievement is indeed impressive. Apart from strengthening the rights of people through activism at micro level, not much organised effort appears to have been made to deal with the policies that impede people's rights at meso- and macro level. Such an approach has its limitations.

The programme has made several efforts to ensure that its development actions are gender inclusive. However, it must be realised that while participation of women has enabled them to create a space for themselves, it has not necessarily ensured addressing the gender based discriminations at the community and household level. In addition, CASA's gender draft policy could be finalised to provide direction in the implementation of its programme.

Despite the relevance of the programme and all the 'good' work which is being done, by and large the Core Programme has not been able to live up to all its ambitious objectives. In general, CASA staff members in the field have not been equipped with the capacity to support or undertake serious policy analysis on the key issues that confront the poor. Having made this point, efforts have been undertaken by various



programme units to create mass awareness, campaign and challenge the practice of implementation and service delivery by government departments and agencies deserve mention and commendation.

As a trend, those CBOs, apex organisations and networks that have been promoted by various programme units and continue to be active, have moved ahead on the continuum of issue based and movement orientation in the last four years. The movement orientation is clearly more visible in some regions than in others.

CASA has been approaching the issue of making CBOs, their apex organisations and networks self sustaining and independent. These strategies undoubtedly are yielding results. However, in its final analysis, the study finds the need for greater clarity particularly at field level on what will enable these organisations to become autonomous; how much longer this is likely to take; what support CASA will still need to provide these organisations with services and how CASA should be defining its role (in a focused and strategic sense) in relation to these organisations in the next few years. CASA proposes to hand over the Core Programme with resource linkages to CBOs within the next 4-6 years. Such a process necessitates a corresponding change in the roles and relationship and also a clear delineation of tasks between CASA and CBOs.

In the present context, the relationship between CASA and the CBOs appears to be mutually dependent. It is apparent that presently the division of tasks, roles and responsibilities between CASA and CBOs are not clearly defined and that the CBOs continue to be dependent on CASA with varied degree.

Mahila Mandals/Self Help Groups (SHGs) for women and village development associations, youth groups and social action cells are the main organisational forms that have been promoted by CASA at the village level. There is a perceptible change in the lives of women belonging to Mahila Mandals/SHGs.

CASA has played a critical role in organising Tribals and Dalits into strong village development groups. The strength of CASA's approach has also been around organising youth – again a category that is often ignored in development strategies. However, it must be realised that these village level groups have a varied level of understanding as some groups have joined the programme in the later part. CASA needs to play a more pro-active role in developing their capacities.

Currently, the synergy between various programmes which are being carried out by CASA is quite mixed among the zones. CASA needs to be more focused in creating synergy between its various programmes to ensure cross learning.

## **6. CBOs apex bodies and networks**

CASA's strength is seen in the large number of CBOs, apex bodies and networks set up as a grassroots based bottom up movement. There is quite a bit of variation between the various geographical areas where CASA is working. CASA has a futuristic perspective of making these CBOs and apex bodies self managed and self-sustainable. However, a clear-cut road map for sustainability of the CBOs and apex bodies needs to be evolved.

It is clear that a federating process has been initiated which is bottom up, collective and involves youth, women and men separately who can identify issues and work together for solutions. Levels of maturity of CBOs and apex bodies vary from zone to zone as does their functioning and autonomy.

CBOs have a variety of achievements spanning social and economic issues to their credit including political empowerment through representation at the ward, PRI and Councillor levels. Economically and politically the CBOs have become empowered to a considerable extent. The Rights Based Approaches are gaining ground slowly and steadily.

In the perspective plan, CASA intends to focus on livelihoods but till now the emphasis has been on campaigns and in future there is a need to strike a balance between campaigns and livelihood strategies with special emphasis on scaling up of income.

## **7. Advocacy and campaigns**

In terms of lobby and advocacy it is generally observed that CASA and CBOs are involved mostly in grassroots campaigns and people's mobilisation on issues such as land rights, house sites and basic needs which can be termed as components of rooted and people centred advocacy at local level, which in itself is appreciable. These are yet to scale up to well planned, broad based and sustained advocacy.

## **8. Relationship and linkages**

Relationship and linkages are an important component of the RBA-strategy. There is generally a good relationship of CASA and its staff with the local administration as well as the state government. However, the relationships with government agencies should be made more strategic and critical (collaborate and confront) to address the issues which the PAT forums at different places take up.

Church is an important constituent and stakeholder of CASA. Churches are represented in zonal and regional committees. The strong and close relationship with the Churches has been mutually beneficial and impacting.

The horizontal and vertical linkages are generally within and among the CASA related organisations. Outside 'package programme' framework, relationship and linkages with NGOs varies across different zones as well as PAT forums. On strategic and major policy issues much wider networking and alliance building is necessary. CASA needs to be more pro-active in initiating, promoting, supporting and engaging with 'issue based' networks.

PRIs and improvement in local self governance has been a focus area for CASA. The most significant relationship is at the Gram Sabha level where CASA has been directly involved in organising and strengthening the institution. CASA should look at innovative and diverse ways of working with PRIs.

The outcomes of networking and alliance building vary in degree from place to place depending upon the specific issues addressed and local context.

## 9. Reflections about the future

The story of CASA and its Core Programme is a story of a responsible development organisation, which has manifested itself really as a ‘living organisation’; changing in order to remain relevant within the shifting development scenario in India. Especially the recent strategic decision to opt for a Rights Based Approach may be described as a remarkable achievement. In general terms during the study process a picture has emerged of which the CASA general body, board, executive committees, management and staff may be proud of. With regard to a few areas there are challenges in order to achieve greater satisfaction. These issues can be summarised as follows.<sup>1</sup>

### a) *People’s organisations*

The concept of people’s organisations needs to be re-visited within the framework of the new Rights Based Approach.

### b) *Coherence in perspective building*

A second issue is that greater satisfaction may be achieved by attaining greater coherence in perspective building around issues such as rural poverty, gender, livelihood and the Rights Based Approach.

### c) *CASA as a civil society organisation*

The position of CASA in the Indian civil society needs to be explored a bit more in depth: what is the position that CASA would like to take within the Indian civil society; what are the options given the character and institutional set-up of CASA?

### d) *Organisational learning*

The issue of organisational learning in connection with the Rights Based Approach requires also some more systematic and conscious attention. With regard to this issue the present attempts to come to experiential learning need to be appreciated.

### e) *Staff policies*

The issue of Human Resources Development, in terms of staff remuneration, opportunities and growth, capacity enhancement in connection with the RBA, need further attention. The study team appreciates the fact that most of these issues are already on the agenda.

### f) *Expansion at field level*

The study team is furthermore of the opinion that some of the above mentioned issues need to be dealt with in an adequate manner before further expansion at field level can take place. Within this context it is important to analyse pre-requisites at the level of the village level groups.

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<sup>1</sup> For a more elaborate account reference is made to Chapter VII.

*g) Linkages*

Last but not least; the issues of linkages, relationships with other stakeholders require further attention. This relates especially to the relationship between issues at micro-, meso- and macro level and strategic alliances and relationships beyond the direct 'CASA family'.

## CHAPTER I: PARAMETERS OF THE EVALUATION

### 1. Introduction

CASA initiated its Core Programme in the early 1980s, focusing on building and strengthening people's organisations in order to enable them to be able to analyse and understand the existing socio-economic and political realities, its inter-relationship with the causes for their deprivation and exploitation and take appropriate actions concerning their lives. The Core Programme targeted on raising critical consciousness of the poor through action-reflection methods by visiting their experiences and analysing the context.

The Core Programme of CASA is spread in 33 different locations in 13 States, where collective actions on different prioritised issues are ongoing. Each programme area represents 70 to 300 villages as a single Core Programme Unit (now reorganised).

### 2. Purpose of the evaluation

The Forward Plan of CASA articulating Programme Goals, Objectives and Strategic direction (1992-2002) has come to an end in March 2003. The perspective plan for the next decade starting April 2003 to March 2013 has been outlined rearticulating its position vis-à-vis the context, key development perspectives and its future strategy. In order to further strengthen the perspective plan and make it more effective in being with the poor and the marginalised, it was felt essential to study the existing Core Programme of CASA, its premises, concepts, relevance, effectiveness, roles, responsibilities, capacities, and programme restructuring requirements in view of the current socio-economic and political context. For more information, reference may be made to the new Perspective Plan of CASA ('Development Paradigm & Perspective Plan 2003 – 2013') and the study Terms of Reference (ToR).

The present study was undertaken at the initiative of CASA. The study is viewed as an opportunity for all constituents to derive 'learning' for future strengthening. Since the Perspective Plan of CASA relates significantly to the Core Programme, the outcome shall contribute to its appropriate organisational pre-requisites for adequate implementation including strategic reformulation and planning. It is hoped that the outcome will ensure among others more effective PME in management and operationalisation of rights based interventions and further strengthen a process-oriented approach. It would help CASA gain deeper insight in different programmatic and organisational issues related to the Core Programme in particular and other programmes in general and strengthen linkages and integration with other interventions, thereby contributing significantly to strengthening the Perspective Plan for the period 2003-2013.

It was agreed in the ToR that the study shall focus on the following themes and/or areas:

- a. *Relevance and appropriateness of the programme*
- b. *CASA organisational issues*
- c. *CASA programme issues*
  - (i) Programmes

- (ii) Regarding CBOs, Apex Bodies and Networks
- (iii) Campaigns/Advocacy
- d. *Relationships/linkages*
- e. *Major learning's: reflections about the future*

(For further details reference may be made to Annex I: Terms of Reference of the study.)

### 3. Evaluation process

In general, evaluations are meant to be a learning exercise that provides an opportunity to reflect on the past in order to define future policy and actions. It is essentially a mutual learning exercise that enables all partners - in this particular case CASA, community, partner NGO, churches and resource sharing partners - with a better appreciation of strengths and weaknesses. In the process leading to the evaluation it was decided that the exercise would be 'external' in nature, but with an active involvement of CASA staff, community and other stakeholders. One of the staff of CASA was nominated on the evaluation team. This has led to a better appreciation of the complexities in which CASA and its constituencies are operational. Moreover, such an approach enhances the ownership of the study.

Other guiding principles for the evaluation process were a consensus approach, importance to feelings and sharing, an experienced learning process, respect to knowledge and experience of the community and a transparent and accountable process. (See also the ToR in which the guiding principles and values which guided the study process have been made explicit.)

Against this background, the evaluation process went through various stages, which may be summarised as follows.

**Table I: Evaluation process**

Stage	Task	Period
1	Preparatory meeting, finalisation of ToR, composition of team, attaining uniformity, reporting framework, identify data required, incorporating as much as possible resource sharing agencies perspectives, et cetera	March 17 to 18, 2004
2	Primary data collection by CASA staff members, development of indicators, formulation of position paper, et cetera by CASA staff members (at zonal and HQ level)	March 19 to September 12, 2004
3	Field visits: primary data collection and triangulation	September 13 to 26, 2004
4	Sharing and discussion amongst evaluators and submission of individual and group reports; compilation of 'report in progress'	September 27 to 29 2004
5	Debriefing workshop: submission of report in progress	September 30, 2004
6	Internal stock taking; preparing for the draft report	October 1, 2004
7	Submission of input for the draft report by members of the study team	October 8, 2004

8	Submission of draft report	October 29, 2004
9	CASA/Evaluators feedback to Team leader	November 17, 2004
10	Submission of final report to CASA management	December 10, 2004

#### **4. Methodology**

##### *(a) Preparation of position paper*

Prior to the actual commencement of the primary data collection by the members of the evaluation team CASA prepared a position paper, which dealt with the following issues: (a) position of CASA within the broader Indian context and development scenario and the Indian civil society; (b) organisational set-up of CASA in general and regarding the Core Programme in particular; (c) programme output and performance (1999 – 2003); (d) relationships with primary, secondary and tertiary stakeholders; (e) dilemma's, paradoxes and problems, which are faced both at policy and operational level while implementing the Core Programme.

##### *(b) Data collection: techniques*

Considering the spread of the Core Programme of CASA, involvement of eleven evaluators with diverse background, concurrent ongoing work, et cetera the evaluation was organised in phases.

The external members of the study team performed the following tasks: assisting CASA to develop an appropriate study design; facilitate a process of participatory data collection; undertaking triangulation; analysis and learning from the findings; documenting the outcome of the study.

The data for analysis was collected from both primary and secondary sources. The secondary sources included reference to documents like programme and annual reports, reports of internal evaluation, internal documents, manuals, et cetera.

During the evaluation a combination of quantitative and qualitative evaluation techniques were applied, including field visits, direct observation, interviews, case studies, group discussions, data collection through questionnaire, analysis of records and participatory workshops, (SWOT analysis, Appreciative Enquiry and Concept Mapping, Self Assessment et cetera). Furthermore, an analysis of secondary data was also done.

The methodology was participatory where scope and opportunity for participation by all stakeholders was ensured. During the evaluation field visits to four different zones were undertaken by the teams and discussion on process and content with community, project staff and stakeholders was held.

The review team (four zonal and one organisational) visited at least two programme areas i.e. resource centres in each zone. The selection process of the Regional Resource Centres, have been summarised in Annex IV: Selection of Regional Resource Centres for primary data collection of the ToR.

The review covered all four zones and Headquarters of CASA and national, zonal, PAT (RC level) and village/community level. The eleven-member evaluation team

was divided into four teams of two each (one man and one woman). All four teams were co-ordinated by a team leader, who was also responsible for the report in progress and final reporting to CASA management.

*(c) Participatory indicator development*

Prior to the actual data collection staff members of CASA facilitated a participatory development of indicators by relevant stakeholders for the organisational analysis, programme performance and linkages. Such an exercise was carried out at the level of the Head Office, Zonal office and POs/CBOs.

## **5. Composition of evaluation team**

The study was carried out by a team of 11 i.e. 10 external consultants and one CASA staff member in close co-operation and collaboration with CASA staff, representatives of communities and other constituencies.

Mr F. van der Velden (director, Context, international cooperation, The Netherlands) was the team leader and overall coordinator of the study. The remaining nine external consultants, Mr Binoy Acharya (UNNATI, Ahmedabad)<sup>2</sup>, Dr. M K Bhatt (Development Support Initiatives, Bangalore), Ms Bhaswati Chakravorty (independent Consultant, New Delhi), Mr Manoj Fogla (independent consultant, Cuttack), Ms Amita Joseph (Business & Community Foundation, New Delhi), Ms Anthya Madiath (independent consultant, Bangalore), Mr Ajay Rai (Earth Care Consultants, New Delhi), Mr Rajan Singh (Former General Secretary of BUILD, Mumbai) and Dr. Annapurna Sanyal (independent consultant, Kolkata). Mr. Jayant Kumar, Monitoring Officer, CASA participated from the side of CASA.<sup>3</sup>

The members of the evaluation team worked as a team and submitted a joint report. Although the various team members worked together intensively during the evaluation, the team leader has had the final responsibility for the reporting.

## **6. Limiting factors**

Despite the strong commitment and involvement of all parties involved to make the evaluation a success, some factors limited the scope of the study. The following major issues need to be mentioned.

- The size of the programmes and coverage in terms of number of villages and actual coverage by the evaluation team constitutes a lower percentage. which makes generalisation difficult.
- In terms of coverage of resource centres there are variations within and among zones leading to a different focus in the various zonal reports.
- The findings of the study are based on in-depth research in limited areas and an overview of other areas in the zones. This also affects generalisation.

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<sup>2</sup>Mr Hitendra was so kind to take over part of Mr Binoy Acharya's work during the primary data collection process, as Mr Acharya was not in a position to travel extensively due to health problems.

<sup>3</sup> In Annex VII to the Terms of Reference the core competencies of the members of the evaluation team have been specified.



- The diversity amongst the states within the zones could not be captured as all states were not visited.
- The focus on Core Programmes in the study process has limited reference to higher level of advocacy and lobbying work on issues of PRI, water, disasters, BP,L et cetera;
- The varying degree of accomplishments/achievements amongst zones also marks generalization difficult.

## **7. Reflections on the research design**

In general terms the evaluation process has however been a 'smooth sailing'. The Terms of Reference were accepted, understood and internalised by all stakeholders involved. During the preparatory meeting in March 2004 the members of the study team got familiar with each other and CASA, and a clear division of labour was worked out. Substantial preparatory work was carried out by CASA in the period April – September 2004. The primary data collection in the four different zones and at organisational level could be carried out as envisaged at the beginning of the process.

In retrospect some major learning's about the study process may be identified in four, partly interrelated areas.

### *(a) Research design*

In the research design, as spelled out in the Terms of Reference (see Annex I), not sufficient time has been allocated for sharing of observations within the evaluation team, for a joint analysis, collegial feedback and formulation of the 'report in progress'. This issue was complicated by the diversity between the zones. Moreover, it was not always easy to generalise on the basis of the primary data collected in the different zones. Furthermore, it would have been advisable to include some project locations on the basis of a random sample.

### *(b) Debriefing*

The participatory, collaborative effort of the study team and CASA got a bit affected during the debriefing meeting. The meeting was not fully characterised by an atmosphere of curiosity; an attitude of 'listening, summarising and probing further' was in general terms missing. This change in ambience may have been influenced by the fact that CASA staff members read the 'report in progress' prior to the verbal (power point) presentation of the team; the fact that there was limited time for reading the document; the plenary character of the meeting and the tone and contents of the 'report in progress', which was written under a great time pressure and contained (still) some imbalances.

*(c) Participation of CASA in the team*

In retrospect it has been an adequate decision to include one of the senior CASA staff members in the study team. This was one of the tools to enhance CASA's ownership of the study, facilitate a proper communication between CASA and the team and to make optimal use of existing experiences and capacities within CASA.

*(d) Availability of documents*

At the beginning of the study process CASA staff members provided important reference documents to all members of the evaluation team. This helped the members of the evaluation team to prepare themselves for the primary data collection process.

However some of the documents were of a rather empirical nature (especially the output reports) and did not provide an analytical (bird's eye) view on the state of affairs.<sup>4</sup> Secondly, especially with regard to the organisational analysis some of the relevant documents were only made available while the actual data collection stage was over.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the limitations and complications which have been mentioned in this and the previous paragraph, the study team is of the opinion that in general terms justice has been done to the Terms of Reference for this study.

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<sup>4</sup> In the response to the draft report CASA has rightly indicated that the format for the output report was formulated by members of the evaluation team and that the team did not explicitly request for a consolidated analytical report ('The evaluation team should have sought the details differently'.)

<sup>5</sup> This issue was complicated by the fact that the status of some of the documents was not clear and that some documents appeared to be incomplete.

## **CHAPTER II: DESCRIPTION OF CASA'S CORE PROGRAMME**

### **1. Introduction<sup>6</sup>**

This position paper is prepared in view of the external evaluation of CASA 2004. This paper discusses the context analysis of 1990s, the progress of Core Programme and the position of CASA on various issues. It also discusses the New Perspective and Paradigm Shift of CASA.

### **2. Our vision and mission**

Interventions of CASA are guided by its overall Vision, Mission, Core values and Development Principles. It has enabled CASA to continue to be on the side of the poor and the marginalised by addressing their real needs.

#### *(a) Vision*

'CASA's visualizes a society in which Peace, Justice, and Equality prevail and wherein citizens irrespective of caste, creed, language and religion live in peace and communal harmony. CASA also envisages a society where the poor, the marginalised and the under-privileged have equal opportunity for their involvement in the development process which is value based and sustainable and also have an appropriate environment to develop their fullest potential'.

#### *(b) Mission*

'CASA actively supports and works for a just and sustainable society by creating conditions for meaningful and disciplined involvement of all people and their organisations in the development process, which is based on macro approach and involves networking of the organisations at various appropriate levels. CASA also responds to human suffering and distress caused by natural or man-made calamities in a manner which upholds the dignity of the affected people and enhances their capacity for disaster mitigation and management of the programs which are in accordance with development principles. In doing all this CASA strives to optimize all potential from within the organisation as well as its reference community and other partner organisations'.

### **2. Core values**

As an Organisation there are certain values and principles which are central to our activities like equal opportunity to all and particularly to the poor, marginalised, oppressed and such other vulnerable groups and communities, respecting the knowledge, tradition, customs, culture and aspirations of the referral groups; openness to constructive criticism and learning from failures; and finally recognising that each human being is an important creation of God and has a definite purpose for being in this world.

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<sup>6</sup> This Chapter has been contributed by CASA at the request of the external members of the evaluation team.

### **3. Guiding principles**

The following development principles are practised in all the development interventions namely people's participation; sustainability of the development initiatives; human rights as a livelihood and justice issue; gender equity; eco-friendliness; respect to indigenous knowledge and practice and transparency and accountability.

CASA's theory of change holds that the present human suffering is due to unjust sharing of resources, control and manipulation by handful, which has been perpetuated by age long structures and systems of the society. All the existing issues and problem are an effect of such a situation.

Desired changes can be brought only by people's organisations representing various appropriate levels. To enhance their capacities and potential further, they need educational interventions and exposures, which would create abilities in them to carry forward and sustain a people centred and process oriented development. Only the transformation within individuals, groups and society can bring about structural changes. In bringing about PAT, CASA plays the role of a 'facilitator' rather than that of 'doer'.

### **4. CASA's Core Programme since inception – an overview**

CASA was born out of the concern of the Indian Christian community, which responded to the appeal to assist in relief work among displaced refugees across the boarders to India during the partition of the country in 1947. Since then CASA has served the poor and the marginalised community as the auxiliary of the Indian Protestant and Orthodox Churches. As the social action arm of the Churches it has effectively carried forward the mandate of relief and development, aimed at empowerment of the poor and the marginalised irrespective of religion, caste, creed, et cetera.

Initiated as a relief organisation, CASA entered into planned long-term development through its first Forward Plan of the 1980s. During this period, the programme operated towards social distribution of status, power and resources with two pronged strategies – Community organisation (IRDP) and Social Education (SEP/PPP).

These efforts had brought about visible changes in rural communities of the programme areas. The reference communities began to understand societal realities in which they live, gain space and numerical strength through the neo-rural organisations in the form of Village Development Associations (VDAs), Mahila Mandals (MMs), Youth Groups (YGs) and Economic groups (EGs) which were interactive at the village level. Jointly they built their community assets – roads, electricity, water supply, transport systems and many more. However, the larger issues e.g.; untouchability, illiteracy, gender violence remained un-tackled. Using the experiences of the past, counting on the vicissitudes of time, CASA sought to add new dimension and goal, which the need of the hour demanded. The logical sequence is a process oriented thrust, which calls for involvement of stakeholders taking up micro issues in a macro perspective – The New Forward Plan of the 1990s.

Over the years working with the people has helped CASA to understand that false values often create and maintain exploitative structures, more than the visible manifestations of poverty. The root causes of poverty need to be addressed in order to bring about real development. Only the transformation within individual, groups and society can bring about structural changes towards peace, justice and equality. It was realised that there is a need for a shift in strategy focusing on a process oriented holistic development. The New Forward Plan of the 1990s believes that development cannot be brought from outside and the affected should work for themselves collectively in order to bring about a life with human dignity. The three strategic elements were Planning, Human Potential Development (HPD) and People's Action for Transformation (PAT).

Planning as a participatory activity emanated from the grass root level. The referral communities involved in different levels in the planning process namely village, cluster, region, state, zone and national; they are able to identify and articulate their own needs and prioritise issues to be tackled. The participatory approaches led to the emergency of a strong action force in the form of People's Organisations (POs) and Community Based organisations (CBOs).

HPD intervention has a crucial role in enhancing the capacity of individuals as well as POs and CBOs to achieve the decision-making capacity and build the development process. The planning and HPD process did not remain confined to the grass root levels but promoted the internal capacity enhancement of the human resources as well as facilitate organisational planning. Thus promoted internal connectivity and established organic linkages between the organisation and the grass root levels.

PAT is the cutting edge of the core programme, which facilitates people's movement. Networking, advocacy and collective action towards strengthening people's movement became the major strategies. The overall focus was to facilitate ownership of the development process by the poor for sustainable changes.

The Resource Centres established under the PAT Units were not simply a brick and mortar structure but played and still plays an important role in facilitating the empowerment process by providing platforms for dialogues, discussions, planning of actions and required support in terms of knowledge, awareness and skill. Forums and networks of grass root organisations facilitated collective action around prioritized issues like untouchability, casteism, violence against women, deprivation, land rights, food security, child labour. There are visible changes in the society in favour of the poor – Dalits, Tribals and women in the program areas.

## **5. General context**

The current social, economic, political situation has thrown many challenges to the civil society, particularly the social change mission driven organisation.

CASA has been mindful of these changes in the society by making an in-depth study of the situation and making analysis so as to respond appropriately. Moreover, such an exercise has helped CASA to make periodic reviews of its mission, strategy and programmes.

The context analysis has looked into the dimensions as discussed below:

(a) *Social*

In the social context the condition of the poor and the marginalised has been very difficult and inhuman. More than 40% of total population lived in an environment of uncertainty, oppression, starvation, violation of human rights, caste-tribe religious discrimination and denial of dignity and justice. India witnessed an increased number of religious, caste and class conflicts due to fast disappearing value of tolerance and peaceful co-existence. There is a mergence of new alliance on the basis of caste and religious consideration and the political parties and people with vested interest take undue advantage. The gap between the rich and the poor is widened. Atrocities on the poor still continue to exist. Millions of people suffer from discrimination and human rights violation continues to be a major concern. Perhaps the most prominent example of discrimination against marginalised groups is that of the Tribals and Dalits, who constitute a large portion of the population of India. There exists an unholy nexus between the state and the dominant caste in all Dalit and Tribal rights violation.

(b) *Environment*

There are dwindling sources of livelihood due to various factors including alienation of Tribals from their land, irrational management and over exploitation of natural resources and mechanisation of agriculture. Besides, moving away from the disaster, especially in the rural sector, has continued to add hardship and miseries in the lives of the poor. The most vulnerable group adversely affected is comprised of Tribals, Dalits, women and children. As a result migration has become a frequent phenomenon. Migration is actually uprooting these people from their place of origin and social political context and has made them further vulnerable to a situation of larger uncertainty and a polarised eco-system. Untimely rainfall, illicit tree felling, exploitation of people moving away from agriculture and farming activities are issues of great concern. The land allocated for irrigation purposes is fast turning into non-irrigated land.

The present Indian context is highly paradox in nature. The complexity is difficult to comprehend and grapple as it has thrown enormous challenges to the civil society. This new millennium has introduced an aggressive way of farming without being sensitive to the land. The intensity has led to erosion of land. The depletion of forest and natural resources for industrial purpose has brought up natural calamities. And the reduction of the water table, increase in soil erosion, drought and flood are only a few examples of mismanagement of nature.

(c) *Globalisation*

Globalisation refers to the increasing interconnectedness of individuals, groups, companies and countries and has had profound economic and social effects in India. It has been driven by the liberalisation of trade, investment and capital flows as well as by rapid technological change. This combination had led to huge increases in both the quantity and the speed of international trade and financial flows. More and more economic activity is now spread across borders and continents and labour migration both within the country and between neighbouring countries has increased.

Corporate power supported by the international financial institutions has increased vis-à-vis the nation side. World trade organisation rulers for example have strengthened companies control over technology through new rules on intellectual property and have reduced the government's capacity to regulate investment through rules or investment measures.

Poverty in India must also be analysed in the context of globalisation. Globalisation may have huge opportunities for some but the impact on the poor as in many cases resulted in less security, fewer opportunities, and more inequality and greater poverty. Efforts to eradicate poverty in India as elsewhere cannot be made without challenging the existing rules governing world trade. Current global markets need to be restructured too so that globalisation leads to a fairer distribution of world's resources not to increase inequality.

Globalisation has negative impact on the poor of this country. It is widely experienced that the governmental budget allocation to meet and safeguard interest of the poor is no longer a priority. As a result of this, primary health, distribution of food (PDS) and the elementary education sectors in this country have experienced a severe dent. There is an emergence of a neo-rich class in this country. Globalisation is showing colours through its negative impact and the rural economy. All the rich reserves of natural resources such as timber forests, coal mines, aqua-culture are taken over by the multi-nationals under the pretext of economic growth and employment. For instance Tribals have no right on the forest produce. Due to the consumerist goods all relevance and importance with the cottage industries is lost. The imported hybrid seeds have taken the place of the Indian variety seeds and the staple food, like wheat and rice, has been substituted with potatoes and tomatoes to cater to the needs of the multinational companies like McDonalds who produce chips and sauces.

The LPG has de-stabilised the rural economy. Privatisation has sidelined small farmers and the rural people. The structural adjustment, according to World Bank, forced the government to reduce its expenditure on primary and basic needs subsidies such as land, farms, et cetera.

Poverty in India takes many different forms and has resulted from a complex development based on many different factors. Of particular significance are gender, age, caste and ethnicity. Discrimination against certain groups of people is widespread and has in many cases led to their exclusion from having access and control over economic resources. There are also new groups of poor people notably those who are disposed of their land and access to other natural resources.

Urbanisation has created an increasing number of poor urban people. The urban poor are particularly affected by increases in consumer prices, cuts in public sector employment and limits on wage increases and cuts in public spending on urban infrastructure, health and education often guided by macro economic policies.

In spite of the marked progress in science and technology the profit and the benefits as envisaged has not gone to the masses. Only few enjoyed all the opportunities whereas the benefits for the poor have resulted in less security, fewer opportunities, more inequality and greater poverty. The gap between the rich and the poor has widened. In the era of globalisation there is greater need to support the interests of the poor.

Commercialisation and commodification of livelihood sources – water, land, air, bio-diversity is ensured through new property rights built into trade agreements, which transformed people's resources to corporate monopolies.

The poverty issue in India varies in its form and has resulted from a complex range of political, social, economic and environmental factors. It has manifested itself in inadequate secure sources of livelihood, exclusion from having access and control over economic and natural resources. The increase in consumer prices, low wages, decrease in public spending basic infrastructure, health and education have further affected both the rural and the urban poor. It calls for reform in government policies, greater decentralisation local self-governance and protection of human rights and promotion of social welfare.

*(d) Economic*

Unemployment is the major problem of rural India. Agriculture sector being neglected is an important reason of concern. The situation of the poor and the marginalised is badly affected due to the impact of global economy and all business earnings and products revolve around agriculture. With the advent of globalisation the farmers are changing their cropping pattern. They are producing goods, which fetch them high prices and which favour global market. As a result imported HYV seeds and fertilizers are used. In the initial stage they get bumper crops, but it is not sustainable in the long run. The land gets deteriorated. Due to the increase of cash crop produced and decrease of food products there is a shortage in availability of food, land alienation, dependency, deprivation, change in food habits and loss of traditional skills and knowledge.

The seasonal unemployment has worsened the family situation rendering most of the family members jobless. The educated unemployed, who are in majority, have no option but to migrate to the nearby cities and towns for jobs.

Globalisation, which is patronised by government, is highly pro-rich. The failure of the 'trickle-down effect' in bringing the benefits of development to people at the grassroots' level is due to the absence of people centred/people owned approach in the overall planning process. In the absence of decentralisation and people's participation the aspirations and needs of the people have generally not been taken into consideration.

*(e) Political*

India is politically becoming unstable as governments are formed through coalition with parties belonging to divergent different ideologies. The mushrooming of many political parties has led to serious political crisis at village level as politics have become more and more like a family business. The control over decision making and resources lies with the political leaders, who are mostly rich and of the higher caste, which marginalises the poor even further. The caste and religion based politics have become a threat to the fabric of our nation as it does not favour Dalits, Tribals, women and the minorities.



However, the special provision under the 73rd and 74th amendments of PRI has special place for women and the marginalised section. The real democracy is in question as the elite of the village dominate. The same with the case of women as men dominate although they are elected. The increase in federalism, although this is a positive trend, can affect governance.

Despite progress towards more democratic forums of governance, the issues of exclusion and discrimination of women and marginalised groups have not been addressed adequately. While law may recognise their formal rights, in practice many people cannot participate fully in political and economic activities and processes. Access to land and other means of securing their own livelihood are also major constraints. Right to land of the Tribal living in the forest is one such issue.

World events such as the terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001 and the recent war on Iraq have not only affected the world economy, but also the national economy has been badly affected. It gives evidence of interconnectedness, inter-dependence of the small nations on the developed nation's economy. These events affected tourism affecting the livelihood of small-scale producers, artisan and craftsman. Secondly the enormous resources are diverted towards the security services.

*(f) Health*

In the context of health less and insufficient food intake due to non-availability by the poor and marginalised, especially women and children, has resulted in malnutrition. Lack of allocation of funds for health facilities, the conditions of the PHCs have deteriorated leaving no option to the poor but to use spurious medicines, which are outdated and ineffective. Due to lack of education rural people are unaware of hygiene and sanitation. This is also because of the lack of awareness; children in rural areas experience a 70% higher probability of dying before their 5th birthday. Children belonging to scheduled caste and tribes have a higher rate of infant mortality in the State of Maharashtra. The spread of AIDS is another potential problem that will affect the health of the poor masses in the days to come if the spread is not checked and preventive measures are not taken.

*(g) Educational*

Literacy rate is very low as the poor, women in particular, cannot afford education. Education has been the monopoly of the higher caste and the Dalits and Tribals are left with little or no educational facilities. Education of girl children is not favoured. The state withdraws itself more and more from the welfare and education sector and increases the investments in defence and nuclear program; a development of great concern with regard to the future of India. Lack of infrastructure facilities and teaching staff has led to a very poor standard of education for the majority in rural India.

*(h) Gender*

The issue is of gender equity rather than on gender equality. There are lot of legislations, programmes and schemes favouring women, but still the participation of

women is a missing link. Therefore, more efforts are required to see whether the women get a fair chance to participate in all the programmes and development activities. Secondly, the strong patriarchal system hampers many of the gender sensitive initiatives and programmes. Women are exploited both in the domestic domain and outside. Access to and control over resources is very limited making them economically dependent. Violence against women has increased resulting in lack of social security to women in the State.

The participation of women in PRI due to reservation policies of the Government are manipulated. The women members and Sarpanches of the PRI institutions are being sidelined by their husbands or the respective political parties they belong and the duties and responsibilities are being performed by males from dominant political groupings. The women have become a 'Rubber Stamp' which can be used at user's choice. However, there are encouraging changes in this area and in many places women representatives have started creating examples of independent decision making.

The issue of gender justice is still at stake despite their increase awareness on gender discrimination. There is a greater need to translate the learning on gender discrimination into gender based organisation among women or the gender based agenda of village institution.

*(i) Conflict situation in India*

The Indian society has increasingly got divided and fragmented around caste, religion, ethnicity, language and gender. The growing disparity between the rich and the poor further enhanced discrimination and division. The people have no option but to depend on the state for their welfare. Therefore, there is a need for fullest participation of polity, especially underprivileged, because strengthening the institution of local self-governance can reduce the issue of discrimination.

Internal conflict on the basis of ethnicity and religions over development, ideologies and natural resources become communal conflicts and may culminate into extremism and terrorism.

In context analysis, CASA has realized that the spread of the problem is such that no analysis could be complete in itself. The interconnectedness of issues and problems require a set of complex and integrated response strategies. The issues in each of these dimensions reveal the complexity of situation.

## **6. Development policies**

In response to the above fast changing socio-economic, political context the government has evolved/developed numerous policies so as to enable people, specially the poor and the marginalized, to benefit and develop their standard of living.

The Government has implemented various multi-faceted development programs and schemes.

The Development Policies of the Government are implemented through the Five-Year Plans (FYPs). They have been implemented through various development schemes and programs. They largely represent the agenda/or the manifesto of the ruling Government, in particular the political party in power.

Secondly, dependency on foreign assistance for addressing the issues of poverty also has influenced the National policies of the Government. Multi-lateral agencies like the World Bank, IMF, WTO, UN Agencies have had major influence on the development policies of India in the recent past.

The Agenda 21 of the UN too has influenced the development policies in India. The Development Policies has major focus on food security and agriculture. Primary attention is paid to provision of basic minimum services such as safe drinking water, health care, education, shelter, employment generation and environment. The Development Policies of the Government in principle are good but the question still remains as to how much it has benefited the actual target community. Attention is paid to the manual in which the policies are implemented.

Moreover, in the recent past due to lack of funds for development the schemes and programs are clubbed together making the policies more complex and rigid.

The Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002) was based on the common minimum program of the Government giving priority to agriculture and rural development, food and nutritional security, providing basic minimum services, empowering socially disadvantaged in particular women.

Claims have been made of its success in achieving the predetermined goals on sustained economic growth, education, health & sanitation, housing and employment. However, the impact of these policies on the people, specially the poor and the marginalized, reveal that it has not benefited much because of red tapeism, rigid bureaucratic system and corruption in the implementation process. Its benefit to the people below the poverty line, women and other disadvantaged community is not very visible and positive. It is also realized that the democratic institutions existing at various levels especially at the Panchayat level are not involved actively. No power is given in decision making and carrying forward the development activities at Panchayat level. Moreover, the allocation of budget to the development activities is meagre in the first place as compared to allocations made for other sectors. Much of the funds from the development sector are diverted to address the incidence of natural disaster like cyclone, floods, earthquakes et cetera.

There is a greater need for the involvement of the development actors such as civil societies and in particular the voluntary development organisations. It calls for them to be active, watchful and vigilant in the implementation of development policies and wherever possible assist the concerned authorities in doing the same.

## **7. CASA's position on .....**

CASA being a national voluntary development organisation has been very mindful of its role in the fast changing socio-economic political situation in order to address the needs of the poor and the marginalised. It appreciates the efforts made by the Government in developing policies to address the needs of the poor and the

marginalized. However, CASA feels that the development policies can be implemented if they are focused, involve the participation of local self-governance and institutions and also create space for the involvement of other civil societies. In order to enable the government to be effective in implementing the government policies CASA feels that the issue of disaster mitigation and preparedness should be addressed separately with appropriate strategy and budget.

CASA wishes to focus on the issues of gender equity, food security, local self-governance, advocacy, involving civil societies and disaster preparedness and mitigation in order to be vigilant and proactive in its development efforts and to make clear its stand on the issues of the poor and the marginalized. CASA has accordingly made itself explicit in what way it would elaborate its work on these issues and what would be its stand.

Regarding Gender equity CASA's realization is that there is a need to move from practical gender need to strategic gender need. The recognition of gender equality and equal status of women in the society can only be achieved by creating adequate space and opportunities for women to participate in decision-making at all levels. It also calls for making gender central to all the development activities.

'The concept of gender equity highlights the importance of equality of results. It calls for the differential treatment of groups in order to end inequality and faster autonomy. It calls for fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities between women and men. The concept recognizes that women and men have different needs and power and that these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies the imbalances between the sexes'.

CASA believes that women need to be empowered in order to make them capable of changing their subordinate position in the society. For us empowerment would mean enabling women to gain more autonomy and control over their lives. Women should be the agents of their own development, capable to exercise choices and set their own agenda. Gender based planning should guide all the development activities of CASA in the future.

With regard to food security CASA believes that food is a vital part of human being for their existence. Food security supersedes all other securities in this world. CASA recognizes that food security is to be achieved on a sustainable basis. Hence it has become not only a basic need but also a basic human right. The approach of CASA is to ensure food security through social justice. CASA initiated activities in line with national programs and food campaigns such as reclamation of land, digging of irrigation wells, waste land development, watershed management, desalting of irrigated wells, creation of percolation tanks, strengthening of tank bunds, regeneration of forestry and creating community assets such as formation of roads, culverts, contour bounding, check dams, deepening and formation of irrigation canals. These activities focused on increasing the food production so that food security can be achieved at the micro and macro level.

The concept of food security as understood by CASA is access to sufficient and nutritious food by everyone at all times to be able to lead a healthy and active life. Therefore the key elements of food security are availability of food, stability of food supply, access to food for individual consumption and quality of food by meeting the

special needs of the vulnerable groups. CASA recognizes that the problem of non-availability of food at individual, household and village level is a hindrance to sustainable development and its reference communities and it affects the women and children the most. Micro action in this direction is a significant step in its overall strategy of linking field issues identified through analysis of the problem to macro issues affecting the lives of the poor through networking as emphasised in the perspective plan of CASA. In order to achieve the objective of food security and stability on a sustainable basis, active participation of the reference communities at all stages of issue identification, planning implementation, monitoring and evaluation will be enhanced.

People's organisation will be the prime mover in all activities of program implementation and monitoring – a collective decision making process with equal participation of women will be promoted. Empowerment of women is an effective strategy to improve food security. The women groups that CASA has formed in the villages are a potential area for empowering women and to achieve food security. All activities in the project will directly or indirectly aim at improvement of the food and nutrition situation at the household and village levels. The development of human potential in various fields related to income generation, better agricultural practices, improved health and nutrition levels, personality and leadership development will be promoted for sustainability of the program.

Regarding local self governance, CASA shall integrate its work with and work for implementation of the ethos of the 73rd & 74th Constitutional amendment and its extension to the scheduled areas in its spirit and support and facilitate the process of empowerment of the masses with focus on Tribals, Dalits and women. The intervention of CASA shall be at the levels of people elected representative, partner organisations and at the state and central level. CASA's intervention shall be in all the three phases of the creation and establishment of new Panchayat system i.e. pre-election, during election and post election and in its direct program as well as through its partner organisation. It will strengthen the capacities of the people for effective transfer of power as well as work with other groups and networks in creating pressure groups for strengthening the acts and its implementation for true transfer of power.

On advocacy, CASA's endeavour will be to ensure that the advocacy role takes into account and acts positively on important issues affecting the poor and disadvantaged groups in India. CASA realizes that in order to influence a policy there is a need to provide an alternate framework and content. It also realizes that mere resistance to policies affecting the poor may not necessarily lead to desirable change in favour of the poor and hence the need for an alternate model.

On the role of Civil Society CASA believes that civil society has a crucial role to play in promoting better governance and challenging the government policy. They have been less engaged in social justice issues and are more towards delivery of services. Therefore the work of the civil society would be to provide the community with an in-depth analysis of the consequences of these policies and to build up resistance wherever possible and where policy reversals are possible the same should be identified and taken up with the policymakers. It is imperative that NGO's create space for other civil society and enable them to play a role in facilitating empowerment of the poor and marginalized. In particular in the context of Panchayati Raj, where the focus is on mobilisation and training of community in new

technologies, sharing expertise and knowledge in issues relating to livelihood, environment restoration and entrepreneurship.

On disaster preparedness and mitigation, CASA is mandated to respond to human suffering and distress by rendering immediate humanitarian relief assistance to all victims of disasters irrespective of caste, creed, religion, gender and language. In addressing disaster it emphasizes upholding the dignity of affected people and wishes to enhance the capacity of the affected people for disaster mitigation and management by means of a decentralized disaster response system or so-called community based disaster response. It believes in integration of disaster and development based on sustainable development principles. In doing so CASA would actively involve community based NGO's, disseminate disaster related information, provide capacity building support to village and community level and NGO's and develop perspective plans for vulnerable disaster prone areas.

## **8. The organisational structure and system**

CASA society is constituted by the representatives of the member churches. The National Board is constituted from the CASA society, followed by the Executive, Finance and Personnel Committee. The Director is the Executive Head, who is over all in-charge at the national level. The Chief Projects Officer, Senior Accountant, Administration Officer, Planning Officer, Monitoring Officer, Training/HRD Officer and the Chief Material Aid Officer (not existing now) were in-charge of finance, planning, monitoring, training, administration and port operations at the national level and responsible to the Director. (Organisation's chart national level is annexed)

At the Zonal Level it is the Zonal Committee followed by the Chief Zonal Officer who is in charge at the zonal level. The Project Officer looks after the projects/programs at the zonal level and the grassroot workers. He is assisted by the Assistant Planning Officer, who looks after the planning desk and takes care of the HPD programs. The Assistant Monitoring Officer monitors all the programs planned and implemented. The Project Officer is also assisted by three field officers, who coordinate the activities at the field. The PAT Coordinators and Facilitators, who are the grassroot level workers appointed by CASA, act as the enablers to achieve the Core Program objectives.

## **9. CASA's intervention, output and impact (1999-2003)**

The goal is 'Empowerment of the poor and marginalized.'

The general objectives of the Core Program are:

- to facilitate a change process in the lives of the poor by creating opportunities to participate, influence and direct their development initiatives;
- to strengthen community capacities by building confidence, problem solving capacities, resilience and skills among all stakeholders;
- to increase self-reliance of poor by strengthening their organisations in order to have access and control over the resources by collective and sustainable actions for its optimum use and management;

- to strengthen community capacities in mitigation of disasters, building their livelihood support base, and assist them to play an active role in the process of self-governance through PRIs;
- to promote gender inclusive initiatives in all the development actions;
- to advocate for policy changes in favour of the poor and marginalized;
- to review CASA's organisational strategies on a regular basis for reformulating/accommodating emerging strategic needs during the course of program implementation.

The Core Program of the 90's has three components: Planning, Human Potential Development (HPD) and People's Action for Transformation (PAT). The specific objectives under each of the components are as follows:

*(a) Planning*

- To enhance the understanding of the societal context of the referral communities through analysis and reflection, prioritization of problems and issues through the process of group discussions;
- to facilitate the development of action plans of the referral communities and their organisations at village/cluster/ PAT/State levels on the basis of their articulated strategic needs and issues for collective action;
- to continuously document and update the baseline data for additional information and conduct feasibility studies for effective programme implementation.

*(b) Human Potential Development (HPD)*

- To enhance the capacities of referral groups and individuals in group management and PME;
- to increase the capacities of staff in facilitating the development process, PSP and to make planning gender sensitive;
- to capacitate the capacities of Church representatives and partner organisations in facilitating people centred development processes;
- to develop the capacities of referral groups in addressing identified issues such as self-governance, food security, environmental degradation, human rights, gender justice and resource management at local/GRL/micro level;
- to enhance the capacities related to networking, advocacy, PME of referral groups and other stakeholders at different levels;
- to build common understanding on development concepts and theory of change among the referral community, partners (Church and VOs) and CBOs.

*(c) People's Action for Transformation (PAT)*

- To develop and strengthen people's organisations and encourage community action around identified issues at local level;
- to organise forums and networks of POs, NGOs and institutions at macro levels to facilitate collective action on prioritized issues for policy changes in favour of the poor and marginalized;

- to increase access and control over local resources by the referral communities and promote their sustainable use and management for self-reliance and livelihood support;
- to facilitate people's participation in strengthening institutions of self-governance;
- to promote collective action towards gender justice and equity;
- to promote self-sufficiency of Resource Centres to maintain organisations' networks and sustain self-reliant people's movement.

*(d) Strategies*

- Community organisation: forming, strengthening and sustaining the activities of people's organisations and enabling them to form democratic federations to serve as vehicles for carrying forward the development activities;
- capacity building: enhancing the capacity (awareness + knowledge + skill) of the leaders of people's organisations, in order to help them take charge of the development process;
- creating opportunities for the churches to develop understanding of the holistic ministry in the contemporary context and capacitating leaders to play their role in social action;
- networking and linkage: enabling the people's organisations to analyse the issue deeply and facilitating people's movement around identified issues. Networking between people's organisations, churches and like-minded agencies and cooperation and understanding among various partners, towards creating a macro base;
- capital generation: promoting income generation activities among the people's organisations to generate local resources towards sustaining their efforts.
- advocacy and lobbying.

*(e) Area Coverage*

CASA's Core Programme is being implemented in 13 States all over India, through 33 PAT units from 4 zones; the programme area covers a population of 3,500,700, in 746,243 families. In all there are 4,671 villages, in 2,183 panchayats, in 290 Mandals of 77 districts.

## **10. Output and impact**

*(a) People's Organisations*

People's organisations such as VDA, YG, MM and EG at the village level, CLC at Cluster level and PLC at PAT level were established, registered and grown through the CORE process. The number of people's organisations led by women is on the rise, and this is remarkably visible in the day-to-day management of mandal and the thinking pattern of women. Economic and political empowerment of women is given prime focus by the women headed mandals. Decision-making has been efficiently affected by mandal leaders. Training in organisational management has helped in the process. At the grass root level POs are the main action force. The POs have gained confidence and have increased their knowledge base. Some VLOs have started specific self-reliant activities. The CLC and PLC have also considerable strength in addressing the pressing development issues.



For example the CLC/PLC of Mukhed PAT Unit had organised a rally where the attention of the government was drawn on the recent drought condition and a memorandum was submitted to the Government officials, asking them to undertake drought relief measures like providing drinking water in the worst affected villages and implement the employment guarantee scheme (EGS) in these villages in order to check migration by providing employment to the affected people. The CLC/PLC of Taloda PAT unit took up the issue of malnourished children of Dadgaon and Molgi cluster with the staff. The issue was discussed and the staff identified the affected villages through survey and 976 children from 16 villages were covered under the nutritious supplement programs run by CASA on an emergency basis. There was considerable change in the weight of children, which prevented a major calamity. The programmes on awareness and advocacy are also being carried out by staff.

The identified issues are presented zone-wise.

**Table II: Identified issues at zonal level**

Zone	State	Issues
North	HP, MP, Chhattisgarh & Rajasthan	Drought, environmental degradation, health and hygiene, illiteracy, unemployment, local self-governance, economic insecurity, increasing pressure on agriculture, migration, food security, lack of alternative/additional income, drinking water
East	Jharkhand, West Bengal & Orissa	Gender equality, environmental degradation, food and income security, illiteracy, Tribal self-governance and local self-governance, Tribal identity crisis
West	Maharashtra & Gujarat	Environmental degradation, decreasing crop yield, drinking water, disaster, land encroachment by organised groups, health and sanitation, caste certificate, mono cultivation, issues related to forest produce, human rights, gender, local self-governance, migration, bribery, malnutrition, Tribal rights, marketing of agricultural produce and food security.
South	Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala	Human rights, child work force, food security, health, family welfare, gender, pollution and diminishing forest coverage, bonded labour, panchayati raj, pro-rich government policies, illiteracy drinking water, LPG, geographical domain building by NGOs, shift from food crop to cash crop, land agro economy to industrial economy, conversion of agricultural land to industrial land, unemployment, communalism, Tribal issues, social evils, unorganised labour issues.

*(b) Networking*

The networks and forums promote issue based peoples movement. The types of networks exist now at both vertical and horizontal level and include cluster and regional level forums of peoples network, regional NGO forum, state level POs network and state level NGO forum et cetera.,

The performances of networks are remarkable. In Ahmednagar the Pat Unit Parner cluster has made the PDS system function effectively. Due to peoples initiative 15 Tribal families from 5 villages are getting ration regularly from PDS outlet. In Muked, the Mukramabad cluster level committee fought against women's exploitation where a village woman was raped and murdered. The cluster level committee mobilized the local VLO and took out a procession to the Mukramabad police station and demanded for immediate arrest of the culprit. As a result of this, police had to take immediate action by taking the culprit into police custody. Government was forced to provide employment to one of the sons of the victim.

The village level organisations are linked horizontally. To give numerical strength, Mahila Mandals (MMs) and Youth Groups (YGs) are linked vertically to form forums and federations.

CASA also joins hands with like-minded agencies and churches of different denominations. This sort of strategic alliances pave the way for micro activism e.g. increase in wages, supply of infrastructure facilities and such. Larger issues cover a bigger area. Thus, networks strive towards people-centred advocacy for policy changes in favour of the poor.

#### *(c) Gender justice*

CASA believes in creating a society where justice and equality prevail. Its development interventions are also guided by these values. The acts of injustice and inequality are of various kinds and gender injustice in particular is one of the most condemnable of them.

Keeping in mind the necessity for moving towards a society where there is no discrimination on the basis of gender, CASA in all its interventions has incorporated this issue on a priority basis.

Women's day is celebrated with much pomp, fun and fair at all the PAT units, such events signify the importance of women coming together on a common platform to fight issues and besides it is an indication of collective strength. The women's day celebration has helped them to identify issues related to violation of their rights and fight for the same. Women, who made outstanding contribution through their leadership for the development of their village, were honoured on this day. More women have become economically independent through the SHG activities.

#### *(d) Environment Restoration*

The depletion of forest and natural resources have been the main cause of environmental problems in the operational area. The insufficient rain and water situation in the districts of Ahmednagar, Nandurbar and Gondia have been the major issue that has affected the poor severely. The massive deforestation and continuous degradation in the environment has caused a lot of problems for the poor and the marginalised farmers. To revive the traditional livelihood support base of our referral community emphasis has been given on the protection of the local forest and other

local natural resources. To increase awareness around this issue among the major stakeholders, many workshops, seminars and training programs were conducted.

*(e) Food Security*

The awareness programs have helped the communities to develop a clear understanding on the causes of food (in)security at their family and community level. Efforts were made at community level by the individuals, families and groups to initiate activities to minimize the causes of food insecurity as well as have alternative means to ensure supply of sufficient and safe food for consumption by the members of poor families.

To ensure food production in sustainable and eco-friendly manner, skill trainings were provided to the farmers to prepare compost pits, vermi-culture, pest control measures, organic farming, dry land farming, storage of food/paddy by using indigenous methods et cetera. All these skill trainings have helped farmers of BPL families to get increased production of paddy and vegetables, which are again free from chemical based fertilizers and pesticides.

There were efforts to ensure improvement in the cultivation practice and increased production by using eco-friendly methods; furthermore the farmers in PAT units arranged testing of soil, improvement of their agricultural land, irrigation, good quality of seeds (and local seeds) et cetera.

*(f) Local self governance*

The concept of 'empowerment' deals with distribution of power, changing the balance of power and control over resources, ideology and over one self, favouring those who had been denied of any power so long. The constitutional amendment for strengthening the Panchayati Raj has been a great leap forward towards the decentralization of power to the village panchayats. This has initiated the process of bringing freedom and autonomy in governance at lowest level. It has significantly empowered the rural people to participate in the governance and affairs of the community.

CASA took a number of steps towards the capacity building of its own staff, partner organisations and community based people's organisation. Intensive training was given for the elected representatives, in management, planning, implementation, control and evaluation of their administrative functions as well as the development interventions. Next to this CASA has distributed various educational and resource materials in different local/regional languages in many states of the country.

*(g) Resource mobilisation:*

The cash value of the resources mobilized during the reporting period has been to the tune of Rs. 324990628.00 out of which Rs. 207752828.00 was from Government agencies, Rs. 89840729.00 from Banks and rest Rs. 27397071.00 was People's contribution through their free labour and materials support. Detailed year wise mobilisation is as follows: -

**Table III: Detailed year wise mobilisation**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Government</b>	<b>Bank</b>	<b>Local</b>	<b>Total</b>
1999-2000	56325580.00	27116980.00	8433973.00	91876533.00
2000-2001	56956168.00	13846426.00	7585468.00	78388062.00
2001-2002	64786326.00	23360260.00	7378501.00	95525087.00
2002-2003	29684754.00	25517063.00	3999129.00	59200946.00
1999-2003	207752828.00	89840729.00	27397071.00	324990628.00

Note: Amounts in Rupees

## **11. Relationship between primary, secondary and tertiary stakeholders**

CASA in order to fulfil its Vision and Mission and for effective implementation of its strategies and programs requires to relate to a number of stakeholders from civil society, state and the market (i.e. target groups, like-minded VDOs and Civil Societies, banks and financial institutions, government regulatory and governing bodies, resource agencies, philanthropic groups, networks and forums. All of them directly or indirectly support implementation of the objectives and programs. As an organisation CASA not only involves them for attainment of its goal and objectives but also collaborates with them in attaining their own goal and objectives. It collaborates with stakeholders at various levels namely:

### *(a) At grassroots level*

CASA collaborates with the primary stakeholders that is the target community (comprising of women, landless, small and marginal farmers who live below the poverty line belonging to SC/ST/OBC/minorities) so that they address the issues of livelihood which affect their day to day living. It provides them the opportunity to organise themselves by forming their organisations/collectives. For sustained leadership and action it provides them with necessary capacities, skills, knowledge and information and exposes them to various realities and wherever possible support them with financial and material assistance so as to enable them to continue with their issues resolving process.

Secondly, it provides them the opportunity for wider discussion on the issues and for experimental learning among the other like minded POs/CBOs and further strengthens them to develop collective mass action at cluster (comprising of more than 20 villages) and PAT level (60 to 100 villages) thus enabling them to address issues of macro nature.

Thirdly, depending upon the nature of issues it links them with ongoing networks and forums existing on issues of livelihood and environment, for example with regard to land, water, forest, local self governance and human rights.

### *(b) At state and national level*

At the State and regional level CASA has been involved in supporting like minded small voluntary development organisations (VDOs), who are addressing the similar issues by providing them support for coordination and capacity building support. To enable them to address issues on a long-term basis it has introduced them to resource

agencies and other ecumenical bodies internationally. It has collaborated with them in developing their capacities for organisation development (i.e.; developing their own vision, mission, strategy, objective, program in short their future perspective). It initially has provided assistance for strengthening their organisation and later has enabled them to focus on issues, to link their approaches, strategies, capacities and develop a common platform, a forum network and alliances.

For sustaining People's organisation in addressing the issues, CASA has enabled them to approach the various government bodies, financial institutions and corporations so that they are able to procure necessary material and access monetary assistance, schemes and projects earmarked for development purpose. For wider experimental learning pertaining to better practices and methods related to sustainable livelihood, environment restoration, agriculture, health, advocacy activities they are exposed to various groups and centres, which further motivate the POs to initiate the same in their own areas.

CASA also has enabled the POs and VDOs to join hands with other existing state and national level networks and forums to address issues related to land, water, forest, agriculture, human rights, local self governance, gender, food security and economic policy at macro level. Through other instruments, CASA supports and facilitates different networks of voluntary organisations throughout the country. These networks involve more than 200 voluntary development organisations.

*(c) At South Asian and global level*

In our present experience we find that issues of local level have interconnectedness with regional and global levels and this has been particularly observed after the invasion of globalization, privatization, liberalization and WTO. To enable the like-minded Christian and related organisations existing in the South Asian level, CASA has taken the lead in developing programs enabling the organisation to share their expertise experiences and success stories with other partner organisations enabling them to develop solidarity on common issues at South Asian level through its Regional Inter Agency Partnership (RIAP).

*(d) At civil society level*

While doing the above CASA also simultaneously collaborated with other civil societies directly or indirectly during the implementation of its various programs at grass root level. CASA has from time to time invited them to participate in numerous workshops and has facilitated consultation and dialogue on issues of livelihood, food, health, local self governance, gender violence, land, water and forest in order to procure their support for campaign and for lobbying with the legislators and parliamentarians. Secondly, CASA has recognized the important role of civil society in rebuilding the lives of the poor and the marginalized and that development is not only the arena of VDOs alone but also of existing civil societies.

## **12. Challenges and complexities**

CASA realizes that challenges in the context are of a varied nature and need to be addressed differently to get value added advantage in favour of the poor and the

marginalized. The biggest challenge it feels is to ensure that the disadvantage section of the society should remain an active part of the mainstream of the Nation's development agenda rather than always been supported in isolation 'as special case' and secondly to ensure that the constitutional rights and privileges are not denied consciously or unconsciously. Keeping in view the development context, programmatic interventions and CASA's future perspective some of the important challenges are listed below.

Addressing the issues of structural poverty has been the concern for CASA because of its complexities and interconnectedness with political, social, economic and environmental factors. It characterizes a complex range of problems such as inadequate or insecure sources of livelihood, illiteracy, poor health, gender, caste and class discrimination, exclusion of certain groups of people from having access and control over economic and natural resources, increase in consumer prices, limits of wages. Furthermore, cuts in public spending, on for example health and educational services, have further worsened the poverty situations.

The globalization process has brought huge opportunities for some where as for the poor it has brought fewer opportunities, more inequality and greater poverty. Efforts to eradicate poverty cannot be made without challenging the existing rules. World trade and current global markets need to be restructured so that globalization leads to a fairer distribution of resources.

Addressing internal conflicts through peace and reconciliation initiatives has been another challenge. Conflicts are related to the struggles amongst ethnic groups and religions, which are rooted in ethnic, religious and political divisions. These conflicts lead to abuse and suppression of democratic processes and as a result to migration and displacement. These conflicts lead to major cuts in government expenditure and diversion of funds from social sectors for such conflicts.

Addressing disasters both natural and manmade is a serious concern because India is regularly hit by cyclones, floods, earthquakes, fire and violence. The spread of disasters require a long term perspective and integration with planned development. Along with the state, NGOs and civil society the community in vulnerable areas need to acquire skills and understanding to respond to disasters and live with the same. Thus strengthening understanding and skills at different levels and action at the policy levels for sustainable systems and structures is essential.

The issue of gender equity and justice, which is critical to all development actions, needs continuous action to ultimately, strengthen the position of women. Gender, justice and equity means access and control by women over resources and decision making, participation in political process without any discrimination and prevention of atrocities/violence against women.

Instituting better governance is a major problem because corruption has become intrinsic to the process of governance. The procedures to bring policy makers and politicians accountable turn out to be very difficult. Moreover, corruption has severely impaired the effectiveness of government in implementing poverty reduction programs. Decentralization is also a major challenge for governance. The fiscal control by central government over local government budgets and limited decision making powers to local authorities is another major problem.

Involving the civil society to play a continuous crucial role in promoting better governance is necessary because many have been vibrant in amplifying the voices of poor and marginalised. However in the past they have been simply the implementers of government policy focusing solely on the delivery of services and not on the issues of social justice. In many cases the more vocational elements within civil society have tended to be elite led, urban based NGOs.

Ensuring the rights and privileges of the Dalits, Tribals, ethnic and religious minorities is a major concern. Discrimination and human rights violations continue to be a major concern. The Dalits and Tribals continue to suffer widespread discrimination, disadvantages and oppressions even to the extent of physical attacks. The Tribals in particular have been exploited to the core in terms of displacement and rights violations. Millions of ethnic and religious minorities, Dalits and Tribals are denied their right to a decent living, education, health care and adequate food while the commercial exploitation of children has been taking place on a massive scale.

The attempt by the state to introduce changes to different acts governing the voluntary sector have become a major concern and has reduced the space and opportunity for genuine action for addressing the issues through a rights based perspective.

### **13. Challenges ahead of CASA**

- Review and reformulate organisation's objective;
- reorganise our systems (operational and management);
- value addition to our approach;
- enlarge and strengthen our core competency area for responding to the challenges efficiently and with competence;
- reformulate organisational and management strategies;
- become pro-active and vigorous actor in civil society for Peace and Justice;
- look beyond our so called 'operational areas' and reach out to address larger issues (viz. reaching out to 30,000 panchayats in the next 10 years, gender mainstreaming in the society, launching mass awareness campaigns on impact of globalization on the poor, etc);
- picking up available strength and core competent areas of CASA and making them available for a greater use by other civil society organisations (e.g. setting up a National Resource Centre on Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Preparedness);
- gender mainstreaming within the organisation.

### **14. CASA's strategic plan**

The fast changing socio-economic and political context have thrown new challenges for Voluntary Development Organisation (VDO). It has called for new strategies and roles. CASA is one among the many VDO, which tries to be vibrant and active in addressing the issues of the poor and the marginalized. There is a need to review its vision, mission, objective, strategy and program, keeping in mind the fast changing societal context affecting the lives of the poor and marginalized. CASA has undertaken a so-called Participatory Strategic Planning Process within the organisation cutting across all kinds of endeavours of stakeholders. The systematic

procedures and steps were followed for facilitation of the process which involved training and developing staff as Core Facilitators and Facilitators.

Structured events took place throughout the organisation In carrying forward the PSP Process. Initially Environment building, Training of Facilitators (TOF) & Formal inauguration were held. During the process various steps were followed i.e.; Context analysis of past and present at national, zonal and grass root level, VMRSOP analysis of past and present at national, zonal and grass root level, analysis of organisational resources, capacities, strengths and weaknesses of the past and present at national, zonal and grass root level, alternative scenarios of aspired (attainable society) and desired VMRSOP and Module for future and consolidation of findings of the PSP process.

As a outcome of PSP the CASA New Development Paradigm Perspective evolved. The Strategic issues were identified by CASA to be further addressed namely; livelihood, environment, health and education, rights and cultures of Dalits and Tribals, gender, disaster management, democratic governance, development support to voluntary sector, globalization and caste, religion and ethnic conflict. The emerging scenario made CASA to focus its action on the poor through concerted rights based approach thus enhancing their accessibility and control of the poor. This led CASA to have a shift in its development paradigm to respond at macro levels to sustain and bring about changes at micro level.

## **15. Towards a paradigm shift**

CASA strongly believes that the present deteriorating socio-economic conditions can be changed by people themselves through the recognition and legitimization of their potential, capacities, knowledge, experiences and their indigenous resources. CASA in its theory of change upholds the dignity of the poor and marginalized and seeks to restore a dignified living with mutual cooperation and sharing among the reference community, based on its cherished values and principles. CASA holds that the present human suffering is due to unjust sharing of resources and control and manipulation by a handful, which was perpetuated by age long structures and systems of the society. All the existing issues and problems are an effect of such a situation and manifestation of a deteriorating society.

Desired changes can be brought only by people's organisations at various appropriate levels. To enhance their capacities and potential further they need education interventions and exposures, which stimulate them towards people centred and process oriented development.

Development is not economic growth but equitable distribution, enhancement of people's capabilities and widening of their choices; it gives top priority to elimination of poverty, integration of women into the development process, self reliance and self determination of people and government and protection of the rights of disadvantaged communities. This calls for a rights based approach towards empowerment and sustainability. It is a constant improvement of the well being of the entire population and of all individuals on the basis of their active, free, meaningful participation and development with a fair distribution of the resulting benefits.



A Rights Based Approach to development is a conceptual framework for the process of human development that is normatively based on international human rights standards and operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights. There is no single universally agreed rights based approach. The idea of rights based approach is not an entirely new concept. The principles include equality and equity, accountability, empowerment, participation and sustainability. CASA understands that the following elements are included –

*Empowerment*; preference is given to strategies for empowerment over charitable responses; emphasis is on the human person as the centre of the development process through organisations of civil society. The goal is to ensure people's power, capacity, capabilities and access needed to change their own lives, control over resources, improve their own communities and influence their own destinies.

*Participation*; the rights based approach required a high degree of participation from communities, civil societies, minority, indigenous people, women and others.

*Non-discrimination* and attention to vulnerable groups (women, Dalits, Tribals and the disadvantaged). Women and girls are among the first victims of discrimination. They are the most vulnerable and least empowered in society. The existing imbalances need to be addressed e.g. between men and women, land owners and landless upper castes and Dalits, et cetera.

*Accountability*; focus on raising the levels of accountability in the development process by identifying claim holders (the poor and marginalized) and their entitlement and corresponding duty holders (obligated to protect, promote and provide); simultaneously work towards bringing about adequate laws/policies/institutions, administrative procedures/protection and mechanisms to redress and respond to denial/violations, access to entitlements and control over natural resources.

*Linkage to rights*; not in agreement with policies/activities that have affected all violating rights; does not allow trade-offs between development and individual rights e.g. health, education, housing, et cetera.

This calls for an evolutionary shift in the development paradigm from need-based ⇒ issue based ⇒ rights-based.

## **16. Salient features of the new paradigm – ‘rights based’**

Features of the paradigm shift include:

- Ownership of the development process to the people (change from facilitation to ownership);
- rights based approach;
- value addition to the program (through strategic alliances and integration of relief and development);
- involvement of broader civil society in development issues;
- strengthening democratic and just governance;
- building future leadership (amongst church, partners and others);
- challenging conventional thinking (keeping poor, sick and hungry at the foreground);

- address not just the poor, but also the reasons for their poverty;
- amplifying the voice of voiceless;
- focusing on gender mainstreaming and gender justice;
- initiate, intervene, inspire, inform, influence, to be the philosophical base of CASA's intervention.

Based on the analysis of emerging issues and their magnitude CASA has decided to respond to the context with concerted efforts through action in the following thrust areas:

1. Sustainable Livelihood and Local Self-Governance (including land, water and environment) CASA holds that the right to life is the very basis for all rights. Right to livelihood, right to health, right to clean water, right to clean environment are linked up with the right to life. The thrust is on generating deeper understanding on prioritized issues, policy advocacy at various levels, capacity building of POs, strengthening of PRIs.
2. Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation calls for operationalisation of the PPME system, institutionalization of PPME, impact assessment on process as well as projects on the withdrawal strategy of the program area, support to POs on PME.
3. Perspective and Capacity Building and Peace and Reconciliation initiatives are necessary for building potentials within the community to ensure sustainable livelihood and growth. The focus would be on Institution building, perspective building on focused issues, knowledge, skill and awareness building and facilitation skill development. Peace and reconciliation intervention would be underlying all capacity building initiatives.
4. Advocacy, Networking and Alliance Building calls for building networks/alliances around issues, confederation of existing networks, networking with like-minded VDOs and their network and advocacy on issues like gender, food security, globalization et cetera.
5. Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Management: The basic aim is to develop a holistic perspective on disaster management and humanitarian response integration, disaster preparedness in development thinking and action.
6. Research, Documentation and Communication and Resource Mobilization focus would be on maintaining an information system, producing promotional materials, facilitating experiential learning, action and issue based research, organising symposium and dialogue and facilitate internal resource mobilization.

Emerging role for CASA in the new strategic plan is that of facilitator, trainer, enabler, resource mobiliser, negotiator and advocater. The focus is on research, documentation and sharing, stewardship, monitoring, coordination, development support to other NGOs, promoting civil society and strengthening democratic governance.

### **CHAPTER III: RELEVANCE, APPROPRIATENESS AND STRATEGIC POSITIONING OF THE CORE PROGRAMME**

The objectives and strategic direction of the Core Programme of CASA have been clearly articulated in the second Forward Plan document (1992-2002) as well as in the project proposal and annual plans. A set of 10 objectives is derived in the planned document based on a context analysis and strategic choice for action. CASA further rearticulated its position vis-à-vis the context analysis, key development perspectives and future strategy in its document Development Paradigm and Perspective Plan: 2003-2013.

CASA developed its position taking into account its experience of engagement with people and commitment to make positive changes in the lives and aspirations of the people. The Perspective Plan 2003-13 state that 'The issues are now increasingly addressed through a rights based, perspective. Thus, through continuous interaction and experience gained during implementation of various programmes and the outcome of PSP exercise, internal reviews, areas/state perspectives, internal dialogues and dialogue with the churches, partners and other stakeholders... the issue have emerged for action by CASA, the reference community and the partners'<sup>7</sup>. In other words the past experience and consultations with different stakeholders have lead to the articulation of development perspectives and agenda for action. CASA has also articulated the mission, vision and strategy and programme objectives with coherence. This effort is done in a participatory way involving all stakeholders and continues to be an ongoing process.

#### **1. Organised Action for Social Transformation**

CASA's Core Programme views the existence of social discrimination based on caste, gender religion, ethnicity and region as a main cause of perpetuation of social conflict, injustice, denial of rights, denial of equal opportunity and poverty. Very often, the poor, the socially excluded are not informed and aware of their rights and responsibilities. Hence CASA's Core Programme puts emphasis on formation and strengthening of people's organisations so that they develop their collective bargaining power for equitable sharing of resources, assets and services.<sup>8</sup>

CASA's strategic position to act as a facilitator in strengthening people's organisation and people's movement through a countrywide programme is not only appropriate but also exemplary. The Forward Plan states that 'there is a general consensus that the root cause of poverty is the unjust socio-economic order, propped up by structures which perpetuate the system. The movement towards social justice would have to necessarily change these structures and if further necessary, demolish those structures, which act as impediments to social justice'.<sup>9</sup>

The social analysis based on power and control and emphasis on building collective strength of the poor and marginalised is a 'rights based' approach to social change and transformation. It has a potential to build a people's movement based on their issues

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<sup>7</sup> CASA, Development Paradigm Perspective Plan 2003-2013, page 9.

<sup>8</sup> CASA, 2<sup>nd</sup> Forward Plan 1992-2002, page 2-3.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

and to organise strength of the people affected by the issues. The emphasis on social justice through people's action is most appropriate in an unequal society. The perspective plan (2003-13) states that 'in bringing about People's Action for Transformation, CASA played the role of facilitator rather than of a 'doer'. This shift over the years from 'need based' to 'issue-based' to 'rights based' is imperative'<sup>10</sup>. This is indeed a desirable shift in order to make wider impact.

To strengthen the people's organisation, the Core Programme has aimed to strengthen the social analysis of people and their organisation with humanistic values and a rights based approach. It aims to strengthen the skills on participatory planning, organisational management and taking up collective action. CASA has chosen a transformation: a liberating educational intervention. This strategy has been proven effective worldwide.

In the context of a building people's movement CASA aims to strengthen local level leadership with vision, social perspectives and skills. CASA has created strategic choices to develop direct partnership with struggling people and their organisations. For a national level organisation directly reaching out to marginalised people of 5,000 villages (covering 290 blocks, 77 districts of 13 states) this is the most appropriate strategy to build a people's movement.

## **2. Strengthening Civil Society**

A diverse, vibrant and large civil society is an important pre-condition for participatory, democratic development of poor and marginalised communities. This is one of the major lessons of the development practice over the last two decades of the last century. This lesson is also applicable to India.<sup>11</sup>

Strengthening civil society may take place through (a) assisting grass root level initiatives (i.e. POs and the CBOs, VDCs and SHGs linked to them), which try to enhance the awareness and bargaining capacity of communities at micro level; (b) by supporting the social fabric of the civil society and civil society organisations as such; (c) by taking an active and articulated position in the civil society with regard to important contemporary issues such as communalism, globalisation et cetera.<sup>12</sup>

As indicated earlier<sup>13</sup>, CASA's overall organisational strategy has shifted over the years from 'need based' to 'issue based' to a 'rights based' perspective. The new CASA Perspective Plan 2003 – 2013 speaks about the need for a paradigm shift and the need for public and people centred advocacy.<sup>14</sup> CASA's analysis of the development scenario in India also clearly emphasizes the need for lobby and

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<sup>10</sup> CASA, Development Paradigm Perspective Plan 2003-2013, page 1.

<sup>11</sup> For an elaboration of this argument see: Fons van der Velden, *Review: The contribution of Dutch co-financing organisations to civil society building in India*, study commissioned by the steering committee for the evaluation of the Netherlands' co-financing programme, in Biekart, 2002. Civil Society inhabits the area between individuals or families and the state, and is made up of associational groupings of all sorts. In essence, 'civil society comprises the collective of those social organisations that enjoy *autonomy from the state* (are not part of the state or creatures of it) and have as one important goal among others to *influence the state* on behalf of their members' (Blair, 1997).

<sup>12</sup> H. Blair, 1997, p. 26-31.

<sup>13</sup> See Chapter II.

<sup>14</sup> See Chapter 7 of the Development Paradigm & Perspective Plan 2003 – 2013 (page 16 – 18).

advocacy at state, national and international level. While the organisational position with regard to strengthening grass root level democracy and the social fabric of civil society is quite clear, the position of the organisation with regard to some national level issues is not. Besides, the position CASA wishes to take in the Indian civil society is sharpening the articulation as indicated in the policy documents. This was also acknowledged during the participatory self-assessment workshop where the statement 'clarity of CASA's position' received a high priority in terms of prerequisites for an adequate implementation of the Core Programme.<sup>15</sup>

Civil society is no homogenous construct. A diverse form of civil society association makes the national context complex. 'In many cases the more vocal elements within civil society have tended to be elite led, urban based NGOs'<sup>16</sup>. CASA also recognises the decline of space of voluntary action through state regulations<sup>17</sup>. In this context CASA has to clearly define its own role nationally and within the context of the state. It is a courageous step for CASA to recognise the need of strengthening civil society as well as taking position on issues.

### **3. Fighting Against Poverty**

CASA has developed its poverty analysis in consultation with the poor, which has provided insights into a diverse manifestation of poverty. The definition not only indicates income-expenditure poverty but also other social deprivations. CASA has noted several multiple household level indicators of poverty, including the issue of material deprivation, asset-lessness, dependence on exploitative intermediaries, exclusion and isolation from mainstream development, insecurity in terms of risks of being subjected to physical violence because of low social status, lack of coping mechanism to external shocks like disasters, illness and death in the family. In different documents CASA has made efforts to deepen the analysis of poverty. Broadly three issues are identified as the root cause of poverty-structural discrimination: (1) dependence on exploitative intermediaries; (2) non-accountable and (3) non-responsive government services. However, there is a need to further deepen the analysis and consolidate the analysis on poverty as a key programme area. The analysis of poverty, along with the measures based on level of income and consumption, also need to be highlight measures like health, education, vulnerability and risk, crime and violence. The analysis should also look into specific conditions related to women and children.

CASA recognises the adverse impact of globalisation and privatisation on the poor in terms of undue transfer of natural resources from the community to private market and multinational companies, change in commodity prices, change in labour practices et cetera. The analysis in poverty clearly aims to identify the adverse impacts of globalisation and to raise people's voices against it. CASA recognises that poor are the true poverty experts; hence it has articulated the policy analysis based on the experience, priorities and aspirations of the poor. The policy documents specify Dalit and Tribals as the poor and excluded communities.

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<sup>15</sup> For details see Chapter IV.

<sup>16</sup> CASA, Development Paradigm Perspective Plan 2003-2013, page 6.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

In various PAT level interventions CASA has identified creation of sustainable employment as one of the issue to address poverty, indebtedness, dependency and marginalisation. This is a very clear goal in consistent with the UN Millennium development goal under ‘reducing extreme poverty’. The 10<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan of the Government of India has also put ‘growth, poverty and employment’ as one of the priority issues. The plan document states that ‘agricultural development is to be viewed as a core element of the plan since growth in this sector is likely to lead to the widest spread of benefits, especially to the rural poor’<sup>18</sup>. The second priority as mentioned in the plan document is the ‘development of other rural infrastructure that supports not only agriculture but all rural economic activities’. CASA’s Core Programme emphasizes addressing acute poverty through increasing the land productivity by promotion of improved farming and land & water resource development. Access to government employment programmes like Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarajgar Yojna (SGSY), involving micro finance and micro credit flows through social mobilisation as one of the strategic aims, is in accordance with the national governmental strategy to address poverty. The Core Programme also tries to increase the poor people’s access to national programmes like Sampoorna Gram Rojgar Yojna (SGRY), Indira Awas Yojna (IAY) et cetera.

#### **4. Social Sector Development**

The Core Programme mentions addressing the issue of social development. The Millennium development goals highlight the issues of universal primary education (enrolment), gender equity (reduced sex ratio), reduction of infant and child mortality and access to health care, particularly reproductive health services. The field level activities and programmes address some of the issues through social mobilisation, awareness building and organised effort to access services. However, the goals on social development need to be very clearly articulated in the strategy paper. The 10<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan states that ‘most of the monitoring targets of the 10<sup>th</sup> Plan relate to significant improvement in the social indicators, particularly in the areas of education, health and family welfare. These are not only important in themselves, but they also have an important bearing on the achievement of the growth and employment targets’.

#### **5. Decentralised Governance**

CASA has very clearly articulated the need of promotion of decentralised governance. There is both national and global consensus that state institutions are too remote from the daily realities of poor people’s lives and decentralisation is often recommended as a solution. The World Development Report (2000-01) states that ‘decentralisation can be powerful for achieving development goals in ways that respond to the needs of local communities. The best option is to assign control rights to people, who have the information and incentives to make decisions best suited to those needs and who have the responsibility for the political and economic consequences of their decisions. It is not in itself a goal of development, but a means of improving public sector efficiency’<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> Govt. of India, 10<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan.

<sup>19</sup> The World Bank, World Development Report 2000-2001, Chapter 6.

In India, the 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment, which provided statutory status to the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) has been particularly important mandating the community role in planning and development projects. The amendment created reserved seats for women and scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, potentially providing an opportunity to bring historically marginalised groups into the political process. The devolution process is barely a decade old and it requires support to function in its true spirit. The 10<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan document emphasises the participation of people, especially women's groups, at all stages of planning, implementation and monitoring and considers this as a prerequisite for good governance. It is clear that the decentralisation process has provided space to the leaders of the marginal section to be representatives, but it does not necessarily mean that the marginalised participate in the government process. CASA's Core Programme has identified the national priority of creating an awakening process on decentralisation, participation of all social groups and accountability. It is a challenging task as there is resistance from administrative bureaucracy and patriarchal institutions. The socio-political perception of capacity and credibility of Panchayati Raj institutions as effective public offices need to be changed. CASA's policy paper on decentralisation in India specifies that 'It shall work for effective implementation of the spirit of the act through its direct intervention with people, the elected representatives with its partner organisations in pre, during and post election phases...., for the transfer of power'.

## **6. Disaster Response as Development Issue**

CASA is one of the foremost disaster response institutions in India. It is stated that 'CASA today consciously integrates development values, principles and practices in its emergency operations. Thus an organic linkage is ensured between relief, rehabilitation and development'<sup>20</sup>. This is a very welcome step as today it is widely recognised that vulnerability reduction through development process reduces the risks arising out of disasters<sup>21</sup>.

In the event of hazards, vulnerability of communities increases the risk (vulnerability + hazards = risk). The extent of impact of disaster is related to vulnerabilities due to socio-economic marginalisation, alienation, illiteracy, physical disabilities et cetera. The recent experiences of disaster management have reinforced the vulnerability analysis that links up the cause of vulnerability with social and economic aspects. The poor and socially marginalised community groups and minorities are unable to access the relief and rehabilitation support as the processes are not inclusive and targeted. Also due to lack of social capital and assets, their vulnerability increases during times of disaster. Schemes like JRY and SJRY et cetera used to build community assets in form of basic infrastructure and they do not focus on vulnerable groups and hence do not ensure equitable access to these community groups in the times of disaster. It has been found that these community assets are not monitored for its use and benefit to the vulnerable communities.

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<sup>20</sup> CASA, Development Paradigm Perspective Plan 2003-2013, page 1.

<sup>21</sup> Disaster - Development Linkage Table 1.1, *Chapter 1 - Development At Risk, Reducing Disaster Risk: A Challenge For Development, BCPR, UNDP, 2004*

Risk reduction strategies need to focus on reducing vulnerabilities of the communities focusing particularly on the poor, socially marginalised, minorities and the physically disabled. And it is with this objective of reducing long term vulnerabilities, as mentioned before, that mainstreaming of disaster preparedness in development programmes has emerged as the key strategy. Development programmes need to clearly focus on vulnerable target groups in order to address the socio-economic causes of their vulnerability. The monitoring mechanisms for development programmes need to specifically look into the aspects of asset building and employment generation of these groups and monitor them regularly. At the same time, development programme also need to develop social inclusion strategies so that equitable access is created for the provisions made through the programmes. By integrating disaster response within development strategies CASA has opened a new perspective in its policy and response, which has potential to make long term impact.

## **7. Gender**

CASA has very clearly articulated that ‘the issue of gender justice is critical to all development actions and to the society at large... Gender justice and equity are viewed not only a strategic issue but also as development principles’<sup>22</sup>. In this regard CASA has developed a draft gender equity policy. The draft policy broadly states the overall approach on ‘gender and development’. The policy does not articulate the key issues that need to be addressed and institutional mechanisms to be at place at different levels to effectively address the issues. The gender policy may examine the Gender Development Index (GDI) of Human Development Report 2002, gender scenario in the county, particularly literacy, sex-ratio, female participation in work, gender based violence and so on. The policy should also develop an overall strategy on how to work with other institutions on gender issues. It may be noted that all the state governments have developed ‘women or gender policies’ along with National Women policy. Over the years, numerous laws, policies and programme have been formulated and implemented to protect and promote gender equity. India has also ratified the various international conventions like Convention on Eliminations of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and declaration of the Fourth World Conference on Women. It is in this back drop CASA’s gender policy need to be placed.

## **8. Peace Building**

It needs to be understood that the present socio-political climate in India is extremely communalised. In the context analysis and subsequent strategic plan CASA has taken a clear position about the increasing communalisation of society. This trend is very disturbing as it divides the society, particularly the poor. It creates fear among the poor of different religions groups to take organised action on issue of denial of basic rights. It also directly subverts the constitutional right to practice a particular faith on free choice without fear and coercion. Besides communal conflict, in some of the states there are Naxal and cessionist forces coming in the way of organised social development. The second Forward Plan mentions ‘Creating a cohesive and non-divisive society’ by strengthening village, cluster and regional level organisation, engaging on dialogues on peace building, encouraging local communities to devise

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<sup>22</sup> CASA, Gender Equity (Draft Policy).



their own mechanism to deal with communal conflict and promote ideals of secularism. However, this is such a complex issues that it requires higher order knowledge building and building strategies involving Church leaders, people's organisations and wider secular groups.

## **9. Networking and Alliance Building**

Promoting networking at different levels to articulate demand for advocacy in favour of the poor is a strong objective of the Core Programme. However, there is no clear articulation on the issue of base networking. At the field programme level the Core Programme has addressed many issues for advocacy. However, the plan documents have not critically examined and listed out issues that need to be taken up for advocacy. In the regional and state level CASA has promoted forums of NGOs regarding issues of the forest dwellers right over the forest. CASA is actively engaged in the anti globalisation campaign and member of the organising and governing committee of World Social Forum 2004. As a post WSF follow up a social service forum has been created among CRS, World Vision, CARITAS, AFPRO, AFFARAM and CASA. On the issue of peace building and reconciliation CASA has association with South Asia Peace and Reconciliation Alliance (SAPRA) and Peace in South Asia (PISA). Viewing the issues the Core Programme addresses, it would be more appropriate to work closely with organisations like National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), National and State Women's Commission (NSWC) and other civil society rights based organisations and networks focussing on various campaigns like Right to Food, Right to Work, Right to Information, Abolition of Manual Scavenging.

CASA aims to facilitate participation of government and banks (financing institutions) to effectively support the problems of the poor. This openness increases the scope of accessing resources in favour of the poor. However, there is no mention with regard to engaging with the corporate sector. Invoking social responsibility of corporate sector can be area which CASA may explore in consistent with linkage with the Church. Subsequent to the liberalisation and globalisation process there is increasing emphasis on the need to make the corporate houses accountable to the civil society, not only in term of their business and profit but also towards ethical practices in terms of labour standards and environmental standards. Corporate Philanthropy is not the key criteria to judge social responsibility. Social responsibility is a core value towards employees, customers, community and overall environment locally and globally.

## **10. CASA's staff perception**

In the preceding paragraph the study team has provided an account of the relevance, appropriateness of CASA's overall strategy and the strategic positioning of the organisation. This issue was also discussed with CASA staff members during the participatory organisational self-assessment workshop.<sup>23</sup>

During a participatory Logical Framework Approach type of exercise (development of problem and activity, objectives tree and distilling of appropriate strategies) CASA staff members made a self assessment of the current and desired strategy. The overall

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<sup>23</sup> For details see Annex III: 'Report of the organisational self assessment workshop' and Chapter IV.

conclusion of this in-depth exercise was that the staff is of the opinion that CASA's overall strategy is relevant and appropriate in view of the current development scenario in India. The group came to the conclusion that perhaps some more attention could be paid to peace building and conflict resolution initiatives.

In general terms it may be concluded that the views of CASA staff members and the evaluation team are congruent with regard to the relevance and appropriateness of CASA's overall strategy and the strategic positioning of the organisation.

## CHAPTER IV: ORGANISATIONAL ASSESSMENT

### 1. Introduction

As per the ToR (see paragraph 5.b) the evaluation team has studied organisational characteristics of CASA, which are related to the Core Programme. In the ToR basically five areas for research are indicated: (a) the issues of values (regarding e.g. transparency, accountability, gender sensitivity within the organisation); (b) Planning Monitoring and Evaluation and Management Information Systems within the organisation; (c) decision making regarding the Core Programme; (d) staff in terms of policies and competence; (e) the issue of synergy (inter linkages within CASA with regard to the programmes). Before dealing with these issues the data collection process will be summarised and an assessment will be provided of the organisational evolution of CASA with regard to the Core Programme.

### 2. Process of data collection

With regard to the organisational analysis data have been collected from various sources: study of documents; bilateral interviews and focused group discussions with staff members from the CASA Head Quarters, including the CASA director; interviews and focused group discussions with staff members of the East- and Western zone; a participatory organisational self-assessment workshop.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, in this part of the report empirical data and observations of the study team members who worked at zonal level and looked into financial aspects of the programme have also been incorporated.

During the first part of the organisational self-assessment workshop the emphasis was on analysis of the relevance, appropriateness and strategic positioning of CASA's Core Programme within the present development scenario in India.<sup>25</sup>

During the second and third day the accent was on an analysis of institutional prerequisites - in terms of in-house capacities - to implement the Rights Based Approach within the Core Programme in an adequate manner. During this so-called Concept Mapping<sup>26</sup> exercise the participants first analysed the required institutional requirements, prioritised and clustered the issues and subsequently carried out a self-assessment of CASA's existing capacities. The exercise was based on the perceptions and experiences of the participants. It was a participatory, transparent, vibrant and very open process.

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<sup>24</sup> For further details regarding the study process reference may be made to Chapter I about the Parameters of the study. For the interview an item list was prepared; see Annex IV: 'Item list for interviews Organisational Analysis'.

<sup>25</sup> This was the first day of the workshop. The findings of this part of the workshop have been incorporated in Chapter III (paragraph 10) about the relevance and appropriateness of the Core Programme.

<sup>26</sup> In the rest of this document it is referred to as the 'Concept Map'. See also Annex I and paragraph 5 of this Chapter.

### **Box I: Concept Mapping exercise: process**

Concept mapping is a transparent, participatory, democratic and systematic exercise to seek the views of participants with regard to (complex) issues. Within the purview of the present study the tool was used to carry out an organisational self-assessment. The exercise consisted of the following steps.

#### *(a) Focus sentence*

In order to facilitate a Concept mapping process a neutral focus sentence will be used in order to stimulate and facilitate contributions from the participants. With regard to the self analysis of CASA's organisational capacities the following focus sentence was used: 'In order to implement the RBA within CASA's Core Programme in an adequate manner in terms of in-house capacities, CASA requires .....'.

#### *(b) Statements*

CASA staff members, who participated in the workshop, finalised this sentence in pairs or individually. In such a manner 93 statements were generated. So far the exercise does not allow for any value judgement.

#### *(c) Prioritisation and clustering*

During the next stage the exercise becomes more normative. The statements were subsequently prioritised and clustered by the participants themselves. This was done through formats provided by the facilitator.

#### *(d) Generation of the Concept Map*

With the assistance of CASA support staff all these data were inserted in a software programme (Ariadne) through which basically three outcomes were calculated: (a) a priority list of the statements (see Table IV in paragraph 5); (b) clusters of statements (see Table V in paragraph 5); a Concept Map.

The cluster which emerged out of the activities carried out by the participants was processed by the facilitator with the help of the Ariadne software. In total 18 clusters emerged: see the Concept map in paragraph 5. The labelling and interpretation of the clusters – and the Concept map in general - was subsequently carried out again by the participants.

#### *(e) Self assessment*

After the interpretation of the clusters and the Concept Map in general was carried out, the participants made a self assessment of the identified desired and existing in-house capacities with regard to the implementation of the Rights Based Approach. This was done in the form of scores on a ten point scale (0 = low; 10 = excellent). In such a process the participants identified the strengths and weaknesses of the organisational set-up of CASA in connection with the Core Programme. For further details about the outcome reference is made to paragraph 5 and Annex III: 'Report of the self assessment workshop'.

The data obtained from this exercise have subsequently been cross-checked by the evaluation team with the findings from the primary data collection at field level and with documents.

### 3. CASA: ‘a living organisation’

The new Perspective Plan for the period 2003 – 2013 starts with a paragraph ‘CASA: a dynamic organisation’.<sup>27</sup> It is summarised that over the years CASA has developed from a relief organisation in the middle of the previous century, to a ‘needs based’ (80s), later on ‘issue based’ (90s) and presently ‘rights based’ approach oriented organisation. CASA is indeed today a ‘...relief and development organisation working with a holistic perspective of social economic emancipation of the poor’.<sup>28</sup>

While taking a bird’s eye view on CASA’s organisational evolution it may be concluded that over the years the organisation has manifested itself as a living organisation. Over and again important changes and adjustments have been made in the overall strategy of the Core Programme in view of changes in the development scenario in India. There obviously exists within the organisation a healthy tension between the aspired and present functioning. This is an important organisational quality.

The study team has been informed by CASA management that a reorganisation of the organisation in view of the changed development scenario in India and the new strategy is on its way.<sup>29</sup> The team is conscious of the fact that restructuring of an organisation such as CASA will require time in view of the participatory approach which is being followed, because of the intrinsic complex nature of an Organisational Development process, the need to change tacit aspects of the organisation, to change mind sets and moreover, to release quite a number of staff members (‘right sizing of the organisation’) and attract new ones and the necessity to involve the constituency of the organisation. In the new Perspective Plan it is indicated that the plan will be ‘implemented in a phased manner’ and ‘will be completed in the first two years of the plan’ (i.e. by April 2005).<sup>30</sup>

Within this context various activities have been undertaken to enhance the understanding, participation and ownership of various echelons within CASA, including CASA’s constituency, the Indian Protestant and Orthodox Churches and CASA’s staff. Activities which have been organised include: (a) a Participatory Strategic Planning Process (PSP) with the involvement of staff from various levels, partner organisations, NGOs, Churches and the board of CASA; (b) staff consultations; (c) outsiders views and assistance with regard to a number of issues such as the HRM policy and systems, Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), computerisation of the accounting system; and (d) a major consultation with church leaders.<sup>31</sup> The whole process was based on participatory principles and values and provided space and opportunities for stakeholders to participate and contribute.

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<sup>27</sup> Perspective Plan 2003 - 2013, page 1.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.: page 1. For the contents of the RBA see Chapter II; for an appraisal of the relevance and appropriateness see Chapter III; for CASA’s experiences with regard to the actual implementation of the RBA see Chapter V.

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Mr S. Agrawal, director, dated September 26, 2004. See also: CASA, Status report: Reorganisation of CASA, Paper presented at the Core Group Meeting, March 16 – 17, 2004, New Delhi.

<sup>30</sup> See Perspective Plan: page 28.

<sup>31</sup> See among others: Report of the Strategic Planning process, not dated (2002?); the reports of outside consultant MindShare HR Consultancy Pvt Ltd and Feedback Reach with regard to the HRM policies and systems; the draft HR Policies and Systems Manual; Report of the consultation with Church

The study team wants to express its appreciation for this process of organisational change. At the same time it should be observed that the (rather far-reaching) change in CASA's overall strategic approach with regard to the Core Programme is not yet (sufficiently) reflected in the organisational set-up of the organisation, which is still basically organised as per the requirements of the previous strategy. In the recent organisational history of CASA the emphasis has been on strategically positioning and less on Organisational- and Institutional Development. This is understandable as 'form' follows 'function'. The old structure is a product of the previous policy and historical considerations. Important (new) functions which are related to the RBA approach, such as policy formulation, lobby and advocacy, research and documentation, an integrated Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation system, Human Resources Development, networking and alliance building have not yet been translated into organisational capacities and functions.

As indicated earlier, it is understandable that this process takes time. At the same time it also important that the process will be concluded as the translation of the new roles of CASA - in an efficient and effective organisational set-up at relatively short notice - is an important prerequisite for the implementation of the new Perspective Plan (2003 – 2013). An early completion of the process will also contribute to maintaining the high level of commitment of staff (see further on).

#### **4. Values within the organisation**

It is evident that CASA is a value based organisation. The opening sentence of the Vision statement reads: 'CASA's vision is inspired by Christian faith and values....'. Core values (such as equal opportunities to all, respecting and valuing indigenous knowledge systems, openness and transparency, recognising that each human being has a definite purpose in the world and justice) and development principles (such as participation, sustainability, gender sensitiveness, cooperation and eco friendliness) are clearly articulated in various policy documents.<sup>32</sup>

These values have not only been expressed on paper, but are also understood, shared and internalised by staff members, who quite often have a long track record within the organisation. This deeply rooted embedded ness and ownership are important strengths of the organisation. There clearly exists an open culture within the organisation, whereby staff members take time to question their own performance beyond the routine type day-to-day affairs. Wherever there is commitment to airing differences and working through complex issues. The critical self-assessments which have been carried out within e.g. the framework of the PSP process and the development of a new PME Manual are a manifestation of this culture.<sup>33</sup> The outcome of the organisational self-assessment workshop, which was carried out within the framework of the present study – see the next paragraph - is yet another expression of this ethos.

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Leaders, *Rebuilding the lives of the poor; Development paradigm and perspective in the new millennium*, November 21, 2001.

<sup>32</sup> See also Chapter II.

<sup>33</sup> See Report of Participatory Strategic Planning, page 34 – 35; draft Participatory Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation System (PPME's) of CASA, not dated, page 7 – 8.

It should however also be noted that understanding some of the values and especially guiding principles need to be deepened and made context, situation or subject matter specific. One of the issues is the concept of sustainability, which has many different organisational, institutional, financial, ecological and other dimensions that are not always clear from a policy and operational point of view.

Furthermore, with the entry of a relatively high number of new staff members on account of the ongoing reorganisations, it may be desirable to have clear orientation procedures and systems for review in place. (See also further on.)

## 5. Organisational issues: perception of CASA staff members

During the Concept mapping exercise the following statements emerged as the most important single items with regard to in-house capacities required to implement the RBA in a responsible manner.

**Table IV: Most important statements with regard to required in-house capacities**

No.	‘In order to implement the RBA within CASA’s Core Programme in an adequate manner in terms of in-house capacities, CASA requires .....’.	Preference (score)*
1	Clear cut policy on RBA	4.45
2	Understanding of RBA by CASA staff	4.27
3	Support from the Indian churches	4.18
4	Strong visionary, committed and transparent leaders	4.18
5	In-house facilitators for organisation-wide understanding of RBA	4.18
6	Engage more with media	4.18
7	Training and capacity building of staff on RBA	4.09
8	Alliance building with national networks	4.09
9	Clarity on CASA’s position	4.09
10	Understanding of RBA by all stakeholders	4.00
11	Adequate and competent manpower	4.00
12	Strong legal back up	4.00
13	An integrated PME system	4.00
14	Knowledge of legal and constitutional provisions	4.00

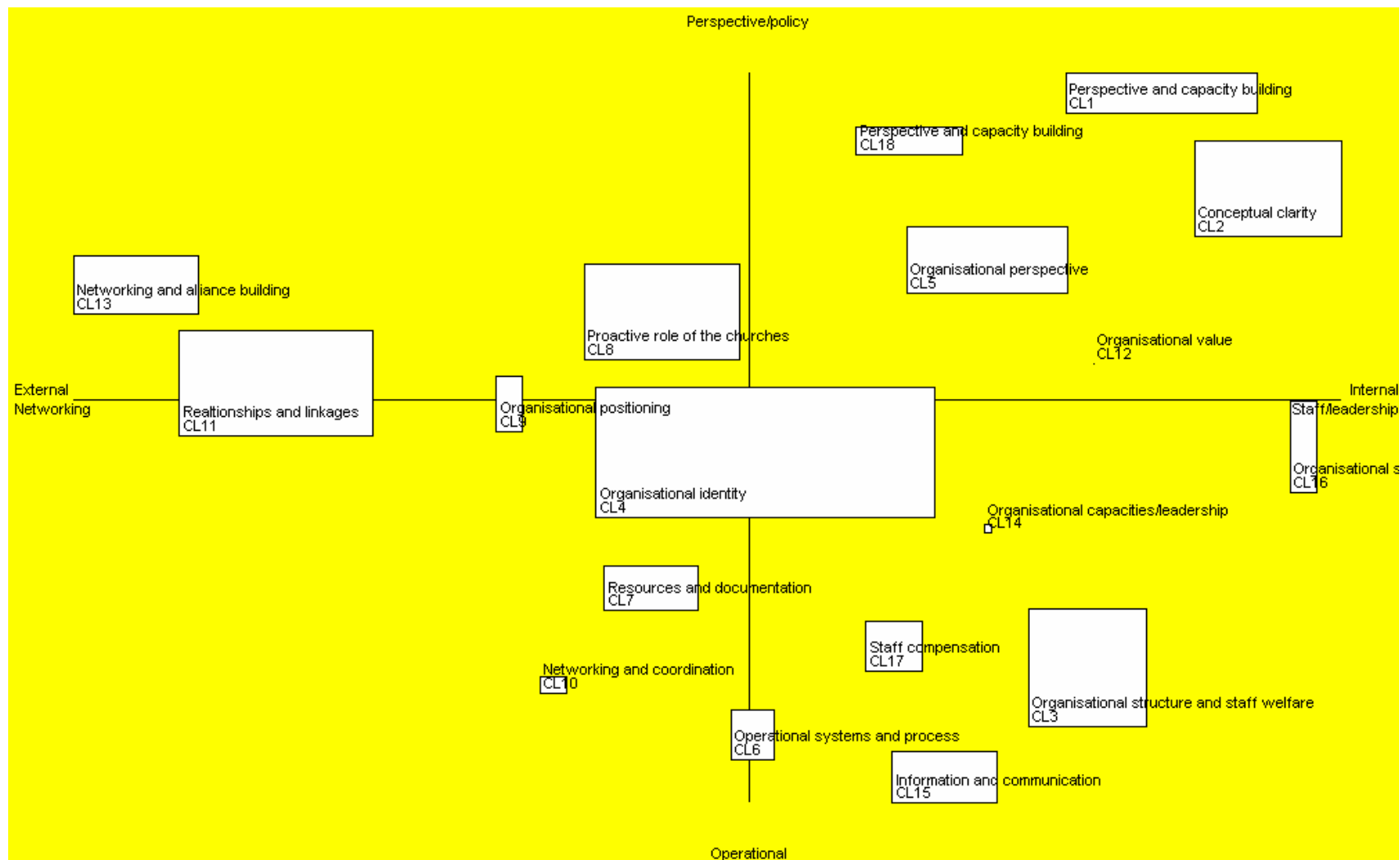
Note \*: the valuation of the 93 statements ranges from 1 up to 5 (least to most important). These are the statements which received a score of 4 and above. (See also Annex III)

These priority statements relate basically to (a) a need for a clear policy regarding RBA, which is understood and internalised by all stakeholders, especially staff; (b) staff requirements in terms of competencies; (c) clarity on CASA’s position and support from leaders and Indian churches; (d) ‘weaving and webbing’ (networking and alliance building, support of media); (e) legal support; (f) an adequate (integrated) PME system.

Once all the statements were grouped together by the participants the following clusters and Concept Map emerged. (See next page.) The horizontal axis clearly indicates the external – internal dimension; the vertical axis: perspective and policy versus operational issues. On the basis of this map the following observations may be made.

- The participants of the Concept Mapping exercise view CASA's organisational identity, organisational positioning and a proactive role of the churches as core issues. (See the centre of the Map);
- internal conceptual clarity, perspective and capacity building emerge as important prerequisites to implement the RBA within the Core Programme. (See the North East part of the Map);
- internal operational issues (South East) surface as important areas of attention;
- the third area is mainly external: networking and alliance building.





While interpreting the map the following scoring of CASA's present performance in these areas transpired.

**Table V: Cluster about in-house capacities and self assessment**

No	Cluster name	Score
1	Perspective and capacity building	5.5
2	Conceptual clarity	5
3	Organisational structure/staff	8
4	Organisational identity	5.5
5	Organisational perspective	5
6	Operation systems and process	5
7	Resource and documentation	5
8	Proactive role of the Indian churches	5.5
9	Organisational positioning	5
10	Networking and coordination	4.5
11	Relationship and linkages	8.5
12	Organisational value	5
13	Networking and alliance building	6
14	Organisational capacities regarding legal issues	2
15	Information and communication	7
16	Organisational structure and policy	4
17	Staff compensation	5
18	Perspective and capacity building <sup>34</sup>	5.5
	<b>Total (average on scale 1 (low) – 10 (high))</b>	<b>5.5</b>

Note: The scores in this table relate to the valuing of the various clusters which had been identified by the participants of the workshop. Please note that the scores in Table IV relate to individual statements. For further details see Annex III.

From the above it can be concluded that in terms of process the staff members present in the organisational self-assessment workshop were open about CASA's in-house capacities to implement the RBA within the Core Programme. Almost all the scores centre around 50% with a few exceptions, which were actually rated as 'too high' during the plenary discussion. The average score is 55%. (See also Annex III with the full report of the organisational self-assessment workshop.) The interpretation of the score depends on the yardstick that is being applied. During the debriefing workshop a consensus merged between the study team and CASA senior management that 'a 55% score on in house capacities at the end of 18 months of a new programme period appears to be satisfactory' in view of the paradigm shift, the inherent complexities related to the Rights Based approach and the character and size of CASA as an organisation.<sup>35</sup>

## 6. Participatory Planning Monitoring and Evaluation

Both review of documents and observations from the field visits indicate that basic systems with regard to (Participatory) Planning and Monitoring and Evaluation (PPME) are in place. Planning is basically 'bottom up', fully participatory and transparent. Data information needs are clearly differentiated for various levels within the organisation.<sup>36</sup> Most of the reports about the Core Programme are however of a

<sup>34</sup> This cluster has obtained a similar name as an earlier cluster, which is quite natural as in the Concept Map the various clusters which are close to each other are closely interrelated.

<sup>35</sup> In the rest of this report the observations of the CASA staff will be compared (triangulation) with data from other sources.

<sup>36</sup> See the draft new PPME Manual, page 30 – 31.

rather empirical nature and do not always provide an analytical bird's eye view on the process of transformation, in which the reference communities and people's organisations are quite often involved.. The existing- and proposed new PPME system has however many other important limitations, which may be summarised as follows.

(a) *Core purpose*

With the current and new PPME system CASA tries to serve many different purposes all at once. On the basis of recent literature about participatory PME in theory at least four to five different purposes may be identified.

- *Accountability* (upward, downward, horizontal);
- *Management Information System* (oriented towards control);
- *Societal support* in different spheres e.g. political, state administration, sector, general public; (back) donors (institutional sustainability/legitimacy);
- Improvement of *organisational performance*; achieve the overall mission of CASA (improvement of quality)
- *Learning* at different levels of the people's organisations and within CASA.

Despite the fact that CASA staff members have informed the team that 'PME is a tool for empowerment of reference communities'<sup>37</sup> the evaluation team is of the opinion that the various documents related to this issue do not clearly and sufficiently indicate the core purpose of CASA's PPME systems and do not specify a hierarchy in objectives. It would be helpful if these issues could be clarified further.

CASA's draft new system seems to fit into the overall development within the development community of putting more emphasis on Result-Based Management (RBM).<sup>38</sup> It is understandable that the CASA management feels the need to collect data at organisational level within the framework of a RBM approach.

During the debriefing workshop CASA staff members reiterated that 'CASA considers PPME as a tool of empowerment and learning'. For this purpose a variety of different tools are being used by the organisation; some related to the Logical Framework Approach, others are Participatory Rural Appraisal (related) techniques. It may be worthwhile to identify and develop further open-ended<sup>39</sup> participatory systems and tools, which do justice to their specific context, reference communities and thematic areas within which the Core Programme is being implemented. Moreover, only such tools should be selected which really facilitate learning and empowerment.

(b) *Measurement: too canonical*

Implementing the Core Programme from a Rights Based perspective is basically '...a risky, murky, messy business with unpredictable unqualifiable outcomes'.<sup>40</sup> It is essentially – as has also become clear from the stories which were told by

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<sup>37</sup> See the feedback to the draft evaluation report.

<sup>38</sup> See Fowler, 2003: 22-23.

<sup>39</sup> See also the next paragraph.

<sup>40</sup> Morgan, 1997. This is basically also acknowledged by CASA: 'Societal changes occur through such complex process ... that only bits and pieces of the reality may be assessed objectively through standard procedures'. (Draft PPME Manual, page 35).

representatives from communities during the primary data collection process - a rather chaotic, non-linear process. With regard to the measurement of such developmental interventions, it has therefore been widely acknowledged that the strong emphasis which has been laid since the mid 80s on quantitative indicators, and standardised systems for data collection has not been very helpful for gaining insights in complex processes of change.

The current and new PPME system, and especially the reporting formats which are being used, contain a certain bias towards what is 'expected' and 'agreed upon' and does not always do sufficiently justice to the complexity of the implementation of the RBA at both micro-, meso- and macro level. To what has not been agreed up on and what has not been planned, but still does occur.

**Box II: Typology of M&E practices<sup>41</sup>**

	<b>Known practices (expected)</b>	<b>Unknown practices (unexpected)</b>
<b>Standards agreed</b>	'Canonical' measurement ( <i>LFA – 'data'</i> )	Transitional ( <i>qualitative, contextual</i> )
<b>Standards not agreed</b>	Transitional ( <i>dialogue, negotiation</i> )	Non-canonical methodology ( <i>dialogue, new forms</i> )

A measurement system, which has a bias towards what has been agreed upon and what is expected, leads to so-called 'canonical' measurement.<sup>42</sup> In the global debate consensus is slowly emerging about the topic that quantitative data need to be balanced with qualitative data, which do more justice to the complex developmental practice and which contribute to learning.<sup>43</sup> Warren Bennis has summarised this trend by saying 'we need more good stories'.<sup>44</sup>

This is a difficult challenge that many organisations including apparently CASA are struggling with. Therefore, with regard to information gathering and data collection techniques worldwide many experiments are taking place and it would be worthwhile if CASA staff members would familiarise themselves a bit more with this ongoing discussion.<sup>45</sup> The importance of an integrated and comprehensive PPME system is also acknowledged by CASA staff, as during the Concept Mapping exercise this issue appeared quite strongly. (See Table IV and Annex III.)

Apart from being too canonical, the present system has a bias to data collection and documentation, while data processing in terms of analysis and distilling learning's for

<sup>41</sup> Noordergraaf & Abma, 2003: 864.

<sup>42</sup> In the feedback to the draft evaluation report CASA has stated that 'With regard to measurement, CASA has always taken qualitative and quantitative data in measurement process together. The process may require further strengthening'.

<sup>43</sup> See. e.g. Taylor, 2003.

<sup>44</sup> Bennis, 2003: xvii.

<sup>45</sup> During the latest INTRAC conference (April 2003) about measurement of development, 'story telling' obtained a prominent place on the agenda on account of the request of African and Australian development practitioners. ([www.intrac.org](http://www.intrac.org)) See e.g. also: [www.cdra.or.za](http://www.cdra.or.za)

future policies and instruments and procedures is not always done in a conscious and systematic manner.<sup>46</sup>

*(c) Conceptual clarity on main concepts*

Generally, within the international debate about measurement of developmental programmes, a distinction is made between input, throughput, output, outcome and impact. In the CASA policy documents and manual there however appears to be some confusion with regard to some of these concepts; outcome is often labelled as impact.<sup>47</sup> It may be advisable to clarify this issue both at conceptual and operational level.

*(d) The use of indicators*

As part of the new (draft) organisational guidelines of CASA for measuring performance mainly so-called SMART-indicators are being suggested.<sup>48</sup> In the international debate it is common understanding that ‘in the evaluation of social development programmes one of the major difficulties encountered by evaluators is a definition of indicators, which can be used as a means of measuring the progress, or lack of it, made by social development programmes’.<sup>49</sup>

Over the last decade the limitations of the development and use of SMART indicators has become apparent and acknowledged as the characteristics do not sufficiently do justice to the complexity and dynamics of a development process. Against this background the use of SPICED indicators is being propagated:

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<sup>46</sup> The study team was informed that up to a certain degree this takes place within the regular review meetings at PAT and zonal level.

<sup>47</sup> See e.g. page 24 of the draft PPME Manual: ‘impact shall look into the results and changes brought due to activities and programmes accomplished’.

<sup>48</sup> See the draft PPME Manual page 36.

<sup>49</sup> Pratt & Loizos, 1992: 79. Roche has rightly observed that ‘the choice of indicators is often seen as one of the most crucial steps in the process of impact assessment, but there is no agreed method of doing so’. While Guijt has stated that ‘the quality of the PM&E process depends greatly on who is involved, and *how* they are involved, at each step’. Roche, 1999: 41; Guijt, 2000: 2003.

### Box III: SPICED indicators

- *Subjective*: informants have a special position or experience that gives them unique insights which may yield a very high return on the investigators time.<sup>50</sup> In this sense, what may be seen by others as ‘anecdotal’ becomes critical data because of the source’s value;
- *Participatory*: indicators should be developed together with those best placed to assess them. This means involving a project’s ultimate beneficiaries, but it can also mean involving local staff and other stakeholders;
- *Interpreted and communicable*: locally defined indicators may not mean much to other stakeholders, so they often need to be explained;
- *Cross-checked and comparable*: the validity of assessment needs to be cross-checked, by comparing different indicators and progress, and by using different informants, methods and researchers;
- *Empowering*: the process of setting and assessing indicators should be empowering in itself and allow groups and individuals to reflect critically on their changing situation;
- *Diverse and disaggregated*: there should be a deliberate effort to seek out different indicators from a range of groups, especially men and women. This information needs to be recorded in such a way that these differences can be assessed over time.<sup>51</sup>

During the debriefing workshop CASA staff informed the study team that ‘indicators in use already have elements of SPICED though they may not be termed so specifically’. The study team appreciates this approach. However in the draft new manual, the formats and the actual reporting there appears to be still a bias towards SMART indicators, which is most probably too quick a ‘fix’ for complicated problems. More conscious and systematic use of SPICED related methodology - which much more acknowledges and accepts the position of different stakeholders in a development process, allows and values diversity and participation, leaves room for locally developed indicators, et cetera - may be an important step forward in measuring the results achieved within the Core Programme.<sup>52</sup>

## 7. Governance and decision making

The governing structure of CASA is, in view of the character of the organisation, constituency based. Being the auxiliary of the Indian Protestant and Orthodox Churches, these Churches ‘own’ CASA as a legal entity. The society however has ten co-opted members who have a professional background in a field related to the work of CASA. The society meets once every four years. The board of CASA is *de facto* the highest decision making body within the organisation and has the right to veto any decision which has been taken within CASA. The board meets once per annum. Both the general secretary of the NCCI and the director of CASA are ex-officio members of the board.

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<sup>50</sup> This issue is also acknowledged by CASA: ‘Subjectivity in evaluation may be needed ... This recognises that interpretation of different involvement or affected groups (stakeholders) may be different and a view that they should all be duly recorded and understood’. (Draft PPME Manual, page 35).

<sup>51</sup> Roche, 1999: 48 – 52. See also Crackwell, 2000: 279 – 281 and 31 – 322.

<sup>52</sup> CASA agrees with this point: ‘We surely agree that we need to strengthen this process of indicator development, use and measurement et cetera further’. (Feedback to the draft evaluation report.)

There furthermore exists a finance-, personnel and executive committee with clearly defined roles which meet once a quarter. Both the finance- and personnel committee report to the executive committee which needs to ratify the decisions which have been taken by these bodies. The minutes of all these three committees are circulated among board members in order to keep them informed and involved in the process.

Although the board and the executive committees are the policy makers within the organisation, the CASA director and staff members play an important preparatory role in terms of policy preparation and formulation. In a sense it is an interactive process in which experiences are shared, processed and analysed and taken as an input for future policies and operational guidelines. Intensive and regular discussions and consultations do take place between staff and board members with regard to major issues.<sup>53</sup>

The actual implementation of the policy is entrusted to the director and the staff of CASA within parameters which have been agreed upon. The impression exists that the Chief Zonal officers basically have a mandate within what has been agreed upon and have to refer issues back to the next highest level in case of major deviations.

A lot of collegial dialogue and consultation takes place between the director and senior colleagues. There are frequent and structured meetings with the Heads of Departments for sharing, stocktaking and future plans. These meetings have resulted in a better coordination and improved planning. A CASA 'corporate' management team does however not exist. This may have its implications in terms of obtaining synergy and organisational learning.

During the Concept Mapping exercise the participants expressed the need for 'strong visionary committed and transparent leaders'. (See Table IV.) This issue obtained a high score indicating that there is quite a bit of consensus around this topic. During the assessment stage of the workshop the 'leadership quality of personnel within the organisation' was rated 5 on a scale of 10 by the participants.

The leadership issue has not been dealt with extensively within the scope of the present study. External consultants point out that leadership style within CASA has changed over the recent years and that the present leadership is faced with the challenge to build a new form of institutional leadership and governance within the organisation.<sup>54</sup> On the basis of the interaction with CASA staff members during the study process it may tentative be concluded that the leadership of CASA consists of both managers and leaders.

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<sup>53</sup> The consultation which was held with church leaders in November 2001 on CASA's new strategic plan is just one of those meetings.

<sup>54</sup> FeedbackReach, 2002, page 10.

## 8. Staff: policies and competencies<sup>55</sup>

### (a) *Staff competencies*

During the organisational self-assessment workshop the issues of internal perspective building and conceptual clarity about the RBA were given primary importance by the participants. The statements ‘Understanding of the RBA by CASA staff’, ‘In-house facilitators for organisation wide understanding of RBA’, ‘Training and capacity building of staff on RBA’, ‘Adequate and competent manpower’, ‘Knowledge of legal and constitutional provisions’ are high on the priority list. (See Table IV.) At the same time staff members who participated in the workshop have also been rather critical about their own understanding of the RBA and the capacity to implement the RBA within the Core Programme in a responsible manner. (See Table IV.) It is obvious that staff members have realised that their competencies need to be upgraded and changed in view of the new programmatic challenges.

During the field visits it was observed that staff members generally have the required knowledge, skills and attitudes and competencies to implement community based programmes. Self-confidence and competencies specifically with regard to the implementation of the (new) RBA may need to be improved.<sup>56</sup> Capacity needs can be identified in the areas of perspective building, knowledge (conceptual issues), and skills (translation RBA into action), and attitudes: the issue of self-confidence. This is certainly an area, which requires attention from the CASA leadership.

### (b) *Staff policies*

External consultants report that there are ‘concerns on HRD policies and practices’.<sup>57</sup> At the same time it is important to mention, that staff turnover within CASA is negligible. Within this context it should be noted that there already is a lot ‘work in progress’ with regard to Human Resources Management (HRM) within CASA. A consultant has done an elaborate study about role profiling within CASA and is working on an integrated system of values and culture; systems & procedures; self & career development; outreaching with regard to HRM. A draft HRM Policies and Manual is in place.<sup>58</sup> It is expected that these policies and systems will be operational by the first half of 2005.

At the same time it should be noted that the post of HRM coordinator at national level is vacant since mid 2004. At present there also is no assistant HPD coordinator at national level.

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<sup>55</sup> In the present Chapter the issue of staff will mainly be dealt with in terms of CASA staff at Head Quarters, Zonal and up to some extent PAT level. A more in-depth analysis of staff competencies at the micro implementation level will be provided in Chapter VI.

<sup>56</sup> This issue is complicated by that fact that some staff members seem to feel insecure about the issue where CASA as an organisation stands within the perspective of the RBA. The item ‘Clarity on CASA’s position’ received a high priority and a low score during the Concept mapping exercise. See Table IV and Annex III.

<sup>57</sup> FeedbackReach, *Report on Revitalizing CASA’s structure and roles & developing a rational basis for compensation management*, May 2002, page 9.

<sup>58</sup> See various documents formulated by MindShare HR Consultancy Pvt. Ltd. and the Draft HR Policies and Systems Manual.

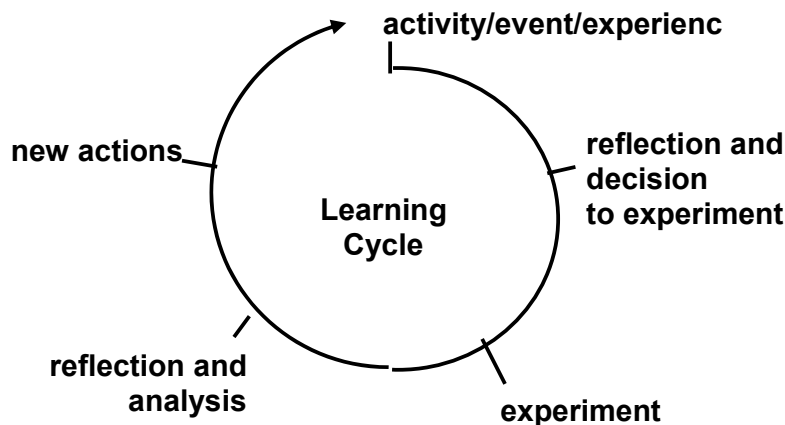


(c) *Capacity enhancement*

During the field visits and interviews it has become clear that in the recent past many capacity building efforts have been undertaken at different levels within the Core Programme in diverse areas such as PME, advocacy and lobby and livelihoods through a Rights Based perspective. This should be appreciated. For these meetings often rather ‘traditional’ educational methods have been used (such as presentations, small group discussions, case studies and lectures). In retrospect it may be observed that the effectiveness of these trainings and workshops may have been negatively influenced by the training pedagogy, which does not always start with valuing and building on existing capacities. Despite the fact that the need for experiential learning is mentioned in several CASA policy documents and operational guidelines,<sup>59</sup> it may be worthwhile to do so in a more systematic and conscious manner.

A guiding principle with regard to this may be the *action learning approach*, whereby the development practice, experiences, history and knowledge of those within the CASA system are systematically and consciously taken as a starting point for reflection, learning and future action.

These steps can be visualised in the following manner.



Source: Adapted from Weinstein, 1999: 40 (combination of Kolb and Revans’s learning cycles).

In such a process the development practise (‘action’) provides - at least initially - the main vehicle for learning. Subsequent steps are (a) recalling them; (b) reflecting on them; (c) trying to understand what was happening; (d) coming to some conclusions or having some insights (learning); (e) preparing to do things differently next time, and (f) than beginning on some ‘new’ actions.<sup>60</sup>

Despite the fact that one speaks about learning cycles, they need to be depicted as learning spirals (as shown in the figure above) as no return to the starting place takes

<sup>59</sup> See the draft PPME Manual, page 9, and e.g. 99: ‘the action and reflection process is very essential for any development initiative’. The director informed the study team that experiential learning is also already practiced during various review meetings at zonal level. (Interview on September 26, 2004.) This issue was also reiterated by CASA staff members during the debriefing session.

<sup>60</sup> Revans, 1998; Weinstein, 1999.

place. The intention is learning and moving to a different place; hence the notion of something moving and changing - a spiral.<sup>61</sup>

The basic assumption of this pedagogy is that the CASA staff members and (representatives of the) reference communities are knowledgeable. They have their own history, rationality, indigenous knowledge systems and traditions, which need to be respected and valued not only for its validity and usefulness but because it is part of the power of the poor. To put it in other words: human- and social capital does also exist within CASA and the communities with whom CASA is working, and this should be carefully nurtured. This history and rationality is generally strong on knowledge of local diversity and complexity, precisely where outsiders' knowledge (i.e. trainers and facilitators from outside) is weak.

During the debriefing session CASA staff members made it clear that the organisation has already been experimenting with action learning approach and experiential learning in general.<sup>62</sup> It may be worthwhile to review these experiences systematically, so that skills and approaches may be developed further and this approach can be mainstreamed within the organisation.

#### *(d) Remuneration*

The issue of staff remuneration needs to be mentioned. Many staff members have a long track record within CASA and have moved over the years from one position to another despite quite often relatively low compensation. This loyalty to the organisation is a quite remarkable asset of CASA. However, not only the participants of the organisational self-assessment workshop (see Annex III ), but also the members of the study team are of the opinion that by and large the level of payment within CASA is (too) low in view of the job descriptions and responsibilities and what is being paid elsewhere in the development sector. FeedbackReach reports that the 'current compensation system is skewed towards older employees' and has worked out a marking system for remuneration and promotion.<sup>63</sup>

#### *(e) Gender*

Although there is a draft policy on Gender equity<sup>64</sup>, the mainstreaming of gender is yet to take place within CASA as an organisation. All the heads of departments and Chief Zonal Officers are men; there is only one female project officer (in the Southern Zone). There is an enabling environment, which seems to provide space for people to work including women.

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<sup>61</sup> See also Fowler, 2000. It speaks for itself that the issue of learning and how to become a learning organisation can not be dealt with extensively within the framework of the present paper. (See: Van der Velden, forthcoming). The above is, for instance, only part of the whole story. There also is an inner learning cycle or spiral, which implies deeper reflection at personal level about not only action, but also thoughts and feelings.

<sup>62</sup> See also the feedback to the draft evaluation report which specifies: 'The pedagogy is based on principles of experiential and adult learning and action reflection process. However, there are definitely gaps in its translation, which may not be uniform in terms of application (skills) as well as common understanding of the pedagogy'.

<sup>63</sup> See: Draft HR Policies and Systems Manual.

<sup>64</sup> CASA, *Draft policy gender equity*, not dated.

## 9. The issue of organisational learning

As has been indicated in section 3 of this chapter CASA's ability to adapt to a changing environment has been quite remarkable and needs to be acknowledged. At the same time learning does not always seem to be consciously and systematically institutionalised within the organisation as part of the core practice and competency. Moreover, there has been a bias towards strategically positioning versus internal (organisational) development processes.

### (a) *Learning styles within CASA*

From the early 90s onwards there is a growing realisation that organisational effectiveness is correlated with an ability to learn from experience.<sup>65</sup> This insight is of particular relevance for the development sector. As entities dedicated to social political change, they predominantly function as the natural open systems, where performance is very dependent on and sensitive to instability and rapid change in the external environment.<sup>66</sup> Development which is carried out on the basis of the RBA is – as indicated earlier – a complex non-linear process which is, or should be, a knowledge-based endeavour. The importance of learning what works, and why, is essential to success. Knowing what does not work might even be more essential.<sup>67</sup>

During the organisational self-assessment workshop the participants were requested to fill in a questionnaire about their learning styles. (See Table VI).

**Table VI: Learning styles within CASA**

Category	Activist	Reflector	Theorist	Pragmatist
No. of participants	0	14	02	06
Total score*	189 (16.81%)	342 (30.42%)	280 (24.9%)	313 (27.84%)

Among the participants of the workshop, the archetype 'reflector' was predominant (30 %) followed by 'pragmatist' (28 %) and 'theorist' (25 %). The percentage 'activists' among the participants was low. Despite the fact that it may not be so easy to generalise these figures to the organisation as a whole, in terms of staff learning styles, CASA has a tremendous potential in balancing 'doing' with 'reflection', 'learning' and 'planning'. This is an important quality as overcoming learning disabilities cannot be 'engineered' from outside CASA, but normally requires a change in mind-set and culture, which should emerge from within and may only be facilitated from outside.<sup>68</sup>

As indicated earlier, there exists already a learning climate within CASA. Maybe greater satisfaction could still be achieved by further enhancing a supportive culture; collecting in a systematic manner internal experiences; allocating time and space for internal reflection in a structured conscious and systematic manner; using the organisation's systems for in-depth analysis and drawing conclusions, et cetera. Especially emphasis on learning towards focus on RBA needs enhancement. The

<sup>65</sup> Senge, 1990.

<sup>66</sup> Fowler, 1995: 143-145; Fowler, 2000.

<sup>67</sup> Smillie & Helmich, 1993: 18.

<sup>68</sup> See Pedler et al, 1997.

recently initiated annual staff retreat ('National Planning and Review Meeting') can be regarded as an important step in this direction.

Within this context, it should be noted that the study team is of the opinion that - in the eventual new organisational set-up of CASA - learning should not become a specialised function in one of the line departments at the CASA Head Quarters. The learning function is mainly an issue of internal culture and it is important to continue the present integration into the practice of the Core Programme itself; not as an 'add on', but as part of the core process and competency.

#### *(b) Tools for knowledge development*

One of the major shortcomings of the current CASA corporate PPME system most probably is that the system is not directly linked to organisational learning in terms of systems, procedures, staff development, culture, et cetera.<sup>69</sup>

Knowledge development and learning in general should take place, and be institutionalised, at different levels within CASA. Over the last few years several tools have been developed to enhance the learning capacity of an organisation.<sup>70</sup> With some modifications these tools can also be used by CASA. One could furthermore think of intra-zonal knowledge networks and platforms within CASA. During the Concept Mapping exercise it became clear that many participants feel that inter- and intra organisational learning and systematic sharing need to be strengthened within CASA.<sup>71</sup> Inter-organisational peer review could be another important tool to enhance learning.<sup>72</sup>

From the primary data collection it becomes apparent that a lot of informal sharing does take place among CASA staff members and that there are valuable insights from which CASA as a whole could benefit. The sharing of this knowledge with senior management and 'deep listening' to what the staff members and representatives of communities are saying, could however be improved and (more) systems need to be in place to improve the link between CASA staff members individual knowledge, the *informal* networks and the more institutionalised/formal networks within CASA.

### **10. Synergy**

It is common knowledge within CASA that the issue of inter-linkage and synergy needs more attention.<sup>73</sup> This relates not only to integration between various

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<sup>69</sup> Recent research however indicates that M&E that involve participatory processes, those involved often experience changes in thought and behaviour as a result of learning that occurs during the M&E process. M&E, which is conducted in such a manner, can be linked to contribute to organisational capacity development and organisational learning. See: Horton et al, 2003.

<sup>70</sup> Pedler et al, 1997: Chapter 4; Senge, 1992: 22-30.

<sup>71</sup> 'Good networking within the organisation' 'Zonal inter-linkages in terms of sharing of experiences' received a score of 3. See Annex III.

<sup>72</sup> Within every organisation, there is a cluster of interconnected communities of practice. The more people engaged in these *informal networks* and the more developed and sophisticated these networks, the better the organisation will be able to learn and respond to changing circumstances. In other words, 'the organisation's aliveness resides in its communities of practice'. (Capra, 2002: 95.)

<sup>73</sup> The issue has been brought up by many during the bilateral interviews.

programme activities (such as the Core Programme, bilateral programmes and the package programme), but also to the integration among the zones and departments.<sup>74</sup>

This is again an Organisational Development issue, which is in ‘progress’ as part of the reorganisation process. In the new structure it is envisaged that all the various programmes will be brought together in one department, which will be headed by a Head of programmes.<sup>75</sup>

Within the present structure there is also hardly any manpower in the Head Office with regard to the overall coordination, supervision and quality control of the Core Programme. The study team has been informed that this issue will also be addressed while finalising the new organisational set-up of the organisation.

## **11. In conclusion**

In the 57 years of its existence CASA has been able to readjust its strategy over and over again. The organisation has indeed widened its domain of work and contribution substantially. The recent repositioning process is a manifestation of the remarkable quality. It is a challenge for CASA to match this quality with appropriate institutional processes in various areas; some of which have been mentioned in this chapter of the report. In essence the issue is finding a balance between CASA’s aspired values, mission, strategy and operational goals and its Organisational- and Institutional set-up. In terms of change management a number of issues are already in progress. It is a challenging Organisational- and Institutional development process.

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<sup>74</sup> During the Concept Mapping exercise the issue of ‘Zonal inter-linkages in terms of sharing of experiences’ and ‘coordination among different departments’ emerged as articulated requirement. The self-assessment with regard to these issues was low (4).

<sup>75</sup> Ref. to the interviews with Mr S. Agrawal and Mr. J. Kumar.

## CHAPTER V: FINANCIAL ISSUES

### 1. Overview of Core Programme

The total expenditure on the Core Programme is around 80 million a year, which is one fifth of the total budget of CASA.

The total annual budget of CASA on average remains in the vicinity of Rs. 400 million a year. The annual budget of Core Programme is approximately Rs.80 million a year. The co-ordination budget of the Core Programme is around 22%. The component of salaries under the head Co-ordination was 10% of the total Core budget. However, other programme heads also had salary components of programme staff which amounted to around 33% of the total Core budget. The break-up of the Core budget for the period 2003-2007 each provided in Financial Annex 1. The financial abstract of the Core Programme for the period 1999-00, 2000-01, 2001-02, 2002-03 is as under:

**Table VII: Financial abstract Core Programme 1999-2003**

Components	1999-2000 Rs.	2000-2001 Rs.	2001-2002 Rs.	2002-2003 Rs.	Total
Planning	3,326,600	3,446,000	3,659,500	3,956,534	14,388,634
HPD	7,533,800	7,794,200	7,972,760	8,408,460	31,709,220
PAT	38,368,100	38,700,000	40,075,085	41,254,100	1,58,397,285
Emergency Admn.	3,920,000	4,169,800	4,343,600	4,572,300	17,005,700
Co-ordination	14,050,000	15,033,500	16,086,000	17,211,800	62,381,300
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>67,198,500</b>	<b>69,143,500</b>	<b>72,136,945</b>	<b>75,403,194</b>	<b>2,83,882,139</b>

### 2. Finance committee

The finance Committee is the apex body for all finance related decisions. It comprises 6 members, who are also the members of the National Board. The finance committee meets four times a year to discuss and approve budgets, review receipt and expenditures and other important issues. The day-to-day management is being looked after by the Executive Director and the hierarchy runs downwards to the finance head and further. The power and functions of the Director and other authorities have been explained in the finance manual. An overview of the approval limits of various authorities is given in Financial Annex 2. In general the system seems to be well organised and effective.

### **3. Books of account**

Proper book of account are being maintained at head quarters, zones and PAT offices. CASA has a centralised system of accounting, wherein all the vouchers and cash books are carried from various district and PAT offices to zonal offices and from zonal offices to the head quarters every month. The current accounting system is highly centralised but the proposed computerisation of the accounting system should help in rationalizing it. In Financial Annex 3 the existing accounting system has been explained along with the proposed improvements.

### **4. Financial management and internal control**

CASA has drafted very comprehensive accounting procedure manual as well as financial policies. Proper systems are in place with regard to the funds movement and financial management. There are certain areas where there is still scope for improvement and such issues are discussed in the succeeding paragraphs.

### **5. Internal audit**

CASA has appointed an external firm of Chartered Accountants as its internal auditor. The internal auditor works concurrently with the accounts department round the year. We were told that, the job description of internal auditor included verification of the following:

- Vouchers approximately 50%, the remaining are verified by the Statutory Auditor
- Leave records
- Travels
- Stationery
- Fixed Assets
- Tax deduction at source of employees
- Income Tax and FCRA compliances
- Periodical sample visits to zonal or PAT offices

The internal auditor is doing a fair job at the head quarter, which enhances the financial checks and balances at the head quarter level. It is recommended that similar internal audit/control systems are initiated at the zonal and downstream level. Internal control audit should ideally be close to the location and time of the transaction. Most of CASA's expenditure is made at the field level. The pros and cons of the existing internal audit system and the proposed improvements thereof have been discussed in Financial Annex 4.

### **6. Insurance**

It was noticed that CASA had made comprehensive insurance policies to protect its people and assets. All important assets of CASA including vehicles, buildings and stocks have been insured. Medclaim and personal accidental policies have also been

taken by CASA for its staff members. In Financial Annex 5 the details of insurances have been provided.

## **7. Staff capacity and enhancement initiatives**

The finance department is headed by Mr. Michael Masih. There are 4 other accounts personnel at the head quarter. All the accounts personnel at the head quarter and zonal level generally have commerce background with rich experiences gathered over the years. List of finance staff is enclosed in Financial Annex 6.

The second line of leadership in the finance department is bit of a concern. As Mr. Michael Masih and the second most senior person Mr. Jeremiah both are due to retire in less than three years. There is a need for recruiting a professionally qualified finance person, who could take over after the retirement of the current senior finance staff. Induction of a professional finance person will also enhance the financial governance of CASA. While discussing this issue with the leadership of CASA we were informed that the Personnel Committee in its meeting held on 22nd June 2004 has already taken note of this issue and appropriate measures are being contemplated.

It was noticed that some capacity building measures were also initiated by CASA for its finance personnel. Some of the finance staffs were provided training in various workshops. The detail of capacity building measures taken in recent past is provided in Financial Annex 7.

In our opinion, CASA should initiate a more focused effort towards the capacity building of various staff, which could be done through facilitation of tailor made workshop for its finance staff. For instance, some areas where capacity building is required are as under:

- Thorough understanding of the legal compliances and the legal implication of the day-to-day finance practices. FCRA and Income Tax laws can be very confusing and they also keep on changing;
- The recording and assessment of own means of contribution, primarily for PAT level staff;
- Internal control procedures, which vary at each level of activity;
- Preparation of narrative reports in context of the expenditures made in that particular period, et cetera;
- Recent changes in accounting standards and auditing practices, et cetera.

## **8. Staff benefits and compensation**

It is appreciated that CASA has initiated proper employee's welfare schemes, which are desirable as well as legally required. The welfare scheme for the employees include provident fund, gratuity, Medclaim, L.T.A, Leave encashment, Christmas Gift, Medical reimbursement up to Rs.5,000/-, insurance et cetera

The salaries given by CASA to both its key functionaries and staff members are modest by contemporary standards. CASA should seriously explore ways and means for providing increments.



## **9. Computerization and fund accounting**

CASA is under the process of computerizing its accounting system. We were told that an appropriate software programme was being developed. The computerization of accounts will go a long way in rationalizing the accounting system. It will help in reducing the time-lag in consolidation of accounts at the head quarter as all the zones would be connected electronically. The initiatives taken by CASA are highly appreciated. In this context, we would like to point out that care should be taken to incorporate fund accounting of various projects in the proposed computerised accounting system, for instance under the current accounting system the closing balance of each project will be available at the end of each month. But the break-up of such closing balance in terms of cash & bank balance and investments will not be available. Absence of fund accounting makes it difficult to control inter-project transactions and negative balances, if any, in projects. Further, the segregation of various investments on the basis of the funds to which it belongs is not possible. It is advisable to incorporate the virtues of fund accounting in the proposed computerized software package.

## **10. Financial and narrative report**

Half yearly financial reports are being submitted to the donor for the Core Programme. Narrative reports are also being prepared and submitted separately. The financial and narrative reports are not prepared simultaneously. The last available narrative report was for the period 01.04.2003 to 31.12.2003.

From a finance perspective, it was noticed that, the narrative report does not corroborate with the financial report in terms of expenditures made during the period. It would be advisable to initiate a system of financial narrative reporting, in addition to the existing structure of reporting. In other words, all PAT offices and resource centres should be capacitated and assigned the task of preparing a brief narrative report, which basically provides explanatory value to the various expenditures made during the period.

## **11. Financial MIS**

CASA has elaborate PME systems, which are being handled by the programme departments. Various kinds of reports are generated at the PAT level including:

- Quarterly narrative reports
- Monthly statistical reports
- Financial statement
- Case studies
- Monthly programme status report, et cetera

The financial report confines to the accounting statements, which are consolidated at the Head Quarters. In that sense, the financial statements provide the details of the transaction made during the last month. But no separate report is being generated for the consumption of the zonal and head quarter authorities. The statistical and narrative reports are not related with the accounting statements. Therefore, reportable linkages

are not being built with the financial statements. This is one area, which could be studied further for possible improvements. The financial narrative report as discussed earlier could be a step towards building such linkages.

## **12. Budgeting Processes**

CASA prepares a four year rolling budget which becomes the guiding factor for that period. Currently the rolling budget for the years 2004-07 has been prepared. The trace of budgeting processes can be found from the participatory planning mechanism discussed elsewhere in this report. The requirement and need of each programme is being ascertained at the grass root level and the budget is prepared with the help of various processes, which are consolidated at the head quarter. At zonal level every 6 months a meeting involving all the key persons from the zonal offices, PAT offices and resource centers is being held and the future plans for the next 6 month are being placed. To sum up there is a bottom up approach in budgeting which is very participatory. However, CASA needs to work on the documentation of budgetary processes at Zonal and the PAT level. The documentation of budgeting processes can only improve through greater interaction between programme and finance departments. It has to be understood that a budget is just the translation of the plan into financial terms.

Furthermore, there is a need to capacitate the PAT level staff member to make a clear-cut distinction between budgetary processes and budget variance analysis. Budgeting is a part of planning process whereas budget variance analysis is a part of the monitoring process. Currently the existing budget is being compared with the actual expenditure, where the focus is to ensure that the actual expenditures are being incurred as per the budget. But no real variance analysis is evident where both Finance and Programme departments analyse the variations in actual expenditures.

Currently, monthly programme status report is being prepared where a budget versus actual analysis is made. But no formal mechanism was evident, wherein such analyses are being discussed and debated with the programme department. CASA should explore the possibility of improving the MIS as well as co-ordination between the finance and the programme departments. As discussed above the programme and finance people do meet once in every six months to review and discuss the activities and the future plan for the next six months. CASA should endeavour to make such processes more effective and desirably more frequent at the zonal and field level.

## **13. Own means of contribution**

It was heartening to note that CASA had developed a detailed system for recording the own means of contribution raised at the field level. Separate registers are also being maintained to record the people's contributions. The existing system of CASA is well appreciated. CASA can further strengthen its existing systems through some capacity building of the PAT level co-ordinators for greater understanding of financial concepts with regards to assessment of people contributions.

#### **14. Use of Non FC bank account**

It was noticed that CASA had a practice of issuing certain payments from the local accounts, which are subsequently reimbursed from the FC accounts. For instance, Rs.8,68,331.00 was transferred from the head quarter's FC account to the local account vide for example voucher no. 18, dated 02.09.2004 being a reimbursement of expenditure made to local books of account. Numerous of such transactions were also noticed at the zonal level. In our opinion, CASA should avoid using the local bank account for FC purposes. We were told that, certain draft issued to various PAT and other offices are required to be made from the local bank account, as the FC bank account does not have branches in remote places. In this context, CASA is advised to consult with its legal advisor and Statutory Auditor and if required link-up accounts in other banks for FC purposes may be opened.

#### **15. Legal compliance**

CASA is registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860. It also possesses all other requisite legal registration such as:

- (i) Registration under section 12A of the Income Tax Act, 1962
- (ii) Registration under section 80G of the Income Tax Act, 1962
- (iii) Registration under Foreign Contribution and Regulation Act, 1976

Proper returns under all the above legislation are being filed on annual basis as per the requirements of the respective laws

#### **16. Overall recommendations**

1. CASA should explore having an internal audit/control system closer to the fields at the zonal level, because majority of the expenditures are being incurred at field level only. The current system of the internal audit is concentrated at the head quarters.
2. Staff capacity building measures, as discussed in the report, need to be taken up.
3. There is a need for recruiting a professionally qualified finance person, who could take over after the retirement of the current senior finance staff. Induction of a professional finance person will also enhance the financial governance of CASA.
4. CASA is in the process of developing a software package for computerization of its accounts. It is advised that the system of fund accounting is incorporated in the proposed package.
5. The narrative reports do not corroborate with the financial reports. To enhance greater coordination between programme and finance departments, it is advisable that a brief financial narrative report is being prepared. A report which narrates and explains the various expenditures shown in the financial report.
6. The salaries given by CASA to both its key functionaries and staff members are modest by contemporary standards. CASA should seriously explore ways and means for providing increments.

## CHAPTER VI.1: PROGRAMME ASSESSMENT

### 1. Introduction

In accordance with the ToR, this chapter examines achievements of the programme per se. Since this report has had to adopt an analytical approach, much of the rich empirical data that the study has generated is incorporated in the regional reports and may not be found in this report.

To start with it may be worth noting that though the Core Programme was started in the early 1980s, in some locations, it seems to have picked up momentum and scale only around the mid 1990s.

Visits to twelve resource centres and PAT locations by the regional study teams, confirm that CASA has located the Core Programme strictly in keeping with its mission. The areas which were visited are populated predominantly by poor, disadvantaged and oppressed communities such as Tribals, scheduled castes, landless and marginal farmers.

Village coverage under the units of the programme varies from 50 to 300 villages; coverage is generally contiguous. The evaluators have a mild concern with regard to the selection of villages. Why for instance are programme villages in Gumla spread across three blocks instead of being concentrated in one block particularly since the entire area is dominated by the same Tribal group?

Issues that the people have chosen to focus on range across Tribal identity, alcoholism, indebtedness, land alienation, self governance, access to local resources particularly forests, exploitation, food insecurity, migration, malnutrition, gender inequality, casteism, et cetera. All of these issues are known to have a direct correlation with poverty and social exclusion. Nonetheless, the study teams observe that better contextualization and sharpening of the analysis around these issues in each location is necessary to enrich the action being taken and in turn sharper outcomes and impact.

### 2. Achievements

The Core Programme is ambitious in its objectives. It has set up a large body of indicators to measure achievement of these objectives. It would have been helpful if each unit had chosen a set of indicators from CASA's indicator bank specific to their context and objectives. In the absence of such specificity, the evaluators have had to adopt a broad, reflective and exploratory approach to the measurement of the achievement of the main objectives of the Core Programme. In an overall sense, the achievements of the programme are commendable. There is however, considerable variance in achievement between objectives in each programme unit and across units.

#### (a) *Change in people's lives*

Without question, the strategies adopted by the Core Programme have provided reference groups with opportunities to take charge of their development. While the

programme may not have brought about a radical transformation of people's lives, but it has succeeded to arouse people, raise consciousness, forge unity, build confidence, promote a large number of community based groups and organisations and create a band of dedicated community leaders. Reference communities have been able to achieve an inexhaustible list of tangible development gains:

- Analyse the causes of their powerlessness and marginalisation;
- Establish a range of formal and informal organisations of the poor;
- Increase their bargaining and political power;
- Participate in local governance;
- Fight corruption and exploitation;
- Gain access to government schemes and services for the poor;
- Increase their access to and control of local natural resources;
- Adopt sustainable agricultural practices;
- Access financial services through self help groups;
- Improve their economic situation.

The extent of these achievements is considerable.

*(b) Capacity development*

This has been a core strategy of the programme. In the eastern zone, for instance this component accounts for a major part of the overall expenditure of the programme. A wide variety of training events have been conducted for reference groups and people's organisations. This intervention broadly has aimed at building community confidence, problem solving skills, leadership and organisational management, improving agriculture, livelihood development and understanding on specific issues such as deforestation and self governance. The impact of the capacity building component would have to be judged from the overall achievements of the programme. Nevertheless, it is most evident in the pool of community leaders the programme has helped to create.

In some zones, the planning and conduct of these training events has been managed largely by Resource Centre teams. The evaluation team observes that despite being responsible in the main for such an important element of the overall strategy, Resource Centre staff has not received much training on the pedagogy of adult learning and on training methodology.

The programme has also aimed to build staff capacity. Staff has been trained in participatory strategic planning, gender, planning, monitoring and evaluation, food security and more recently CASA's paradigm shift towards a rights based approach. However, many staff members opine that facilitators in particular have received less than desired levels of capacity building and staff at the zonal and field coordinators also require much higher levels of exposure and training than they have received.

The evaluation team is surprised that the staff have not been exposed to people's organisations and mass movements promoted by other organisations and that there has been very little exchange of learning between the people's groups and organisations promoted by the Core Programme itself.

*(c) Selfreliance: access, control and management of local resources*

This objective was intended to promote people's right to natural resources such as forest, land and water, resources that have traditionally formed the base of people's livelihood, cultural and religious systems. Also included under this objective is access to resources from government and other agencies. In many areas, these issues have been approached from a rights perspective.

Across the board programme units have encouraged community groups and people's organisations to pursue this objective. Despite in-built constraints, that essentially have to do with an administrative environment that is known to be unfriendly and hostile to the poor, the cumulative achievement is indeed impressive.

*(d) Local self governance*

Local governance has been approached from different dimensions by the programme units. In some Tribal areas such as Jharkhand, action is clearly situated within a rights perspective. It is situated in the framework of the right to self rule and the right to incorporate traditional governance practices in State Panchayat Raj policy and acts. Units in this state are propagating the concept of traditional systems of Tribal self rule as against the mainstream concept and practice. They are helping to build the quality of governance of gram sabhha's and to sharpen the discourse on the merits and demerits of traditional systems.

In other areas actions to achieve this objective have taken the form of enhancing participation and gaining entry into panchayats bodies to ensure that the voice of the poor is heard and prevails. In every zone, members from reference communities have been elected as ward members and surpanches in varying degree. More and more members of reference groups including women are beginning to see the importance of political participation as a means to challenge their oppression.

*(e) Gender inclusive development*

The programme has made several efforts to ensure that its development actions are gender inclusive. Sensitising men and women to gender issues, promoting separate forum (mahila mandals/SHGs/federations) for women's participation and encouraging women to take part in political decision making processes (PRI) have been some of the key strategies of the programme. Clearly gender seems to be one of the key cross cutting issues for CASA.

However, it must be realised that while participation of women has enabled them to create a space for themselves, it has not necessarily ensured addressing the gender based discriminations at the community and household level. For instance, issues related to domestic violence or division of labour are still not being addressed clearly, also due to the absence of female staff at the field level. Therefore, concerted effort is needed in order to realise the objective of gender inclusive development and also gradually move towards strategic issues related to women's access and control over (productive and reproductive) resources. In addition, CASA's gender draft policy could be finalised to provide direction in the implementation of its programme.

*(f) Pro poor policy change*

By and large the Core Programme has not been able to live up to this ambitious, albeit important objective. Field staff has not been equipped with the capacity to support or undertake serious policy analysis on the key issues that confront the poor nor have they received qualified support in this regard from the higher echelons of the organisation.

It must however be said that programme units have undertaken a variety of mass awareness campaigns to challenge globalization and the role of multinational corporations, the quality of service delivery to the poor, people's right to labour and employment and the revision of the Employment Guarantee Scheme. Some units have supported people's groups to undertake voter education campaigns prior to gram panchayat elections. Adivasi and Dalit rights, the forest act, practices leading to land alienation et cetera are some of the other issues that people have rallied and mobilized around. While these efforts are indeed commendable, it must also be noted that so far the Core Programme has not been able to bring about change at the policy level.

### **3. Growth in issue based movement orientation**

CBO's, apex organisations and networks that have been promoted by various programme units and continue to be active, have moved ahead on the continuum of issue based and movement orientation in the last four years. The movement orientation is clearly more visible in some (southern and western) regions than in others. The southern region can be proud of the Central Trade Union of unorganised labourers across 54 categories that has been formed and registered. The federation of various people's organisations and the four tier structure that has been set up is another example of mass organisation in the south. In the western zone, the Committee for Dalit Rights Movement, the Committee for Tribal Rights Movement and the Mahila Aghadis that have been formed in 2003 are seen to have a strong potential to emerge as people's movements. What is happening in Jharkhand also has the makings of a broad based people's movement. The same cannot be said of the organisations in North Bengal. Here the trend is towards a community development orientation.

CASA needs to decide. Where its work under the Core Programme is producing less than desired results, it may need to consider how it deals with this situation. Where there is potential for strong networks and people's movements to flourish it needs to sharpen its understanding, perspective, strategies and interventions in order to be more focused and effective in its support to these emerging formations. This issue is dealt with in the ensuing paragraphs.

### **4. Sustainability of CBOs and people's organisations: perspective, approach and issues**

CASA has been approaching the issue of making CBOs, their apex organisations and networks self sustaining and independent through a mix of the following strategies and interventions:

- Building analytical, leadership and organisational management through a variety of capacity building inputs;
- Encouraging apex organisations such as PAT forums to draw up their own action plans every six months and implement and monitor these plans on their own;
- Encouraging community based groups to adopt the same approach as PAT forums to planning, monitoring and evaluation;
- Promoting village level organisations especially Gram Sabha's to create community funds;
- Encouraging and assisting CBOs to register with the government;
- Assisting CBOs, Gram Sabha's and other groups of reference communities to build linkages with government and other agencies with the purpose of drawing on the support these agencies are able to provide;
- Bringing people's organisations together with other agencies particularly partners of CASA's package programmes to form local, regional and state platforms around common concerns and issues.

These strategies are yielding results. However, in its final analysis, the study finds that there is need for greater conceptual clarity particularly at the field level on how to build autonomous and sustainable organisations of the poor.

## **5. Division of roles and responsibilities and community based organisations**

CASA proposes to hand over the Core Programme with resource linkages to community based organisations (CBO) within the next 4-6 years. Such a process necessitates a corresponding change in the roles and relationship and also a clear delineation of tasks between CASA and CBOs.

In the present context, the relationship between CASA and the CBOs appears to be mutually dependent. While it has been observed that by and large the apex body (PAT committee) are able to formulate and implement plans on their own, CASA as a facilitator has a role in strengthening such organisations through training, counselling, disseminating information, and facilitating linkages.

It is apparent that presently the division of tasks, roles and responsibilities between CASA and CBOs are not clearly defined and that the CBOs continue to be dependent on CASA with varied degree. However, the task and role clarity seems to be gradually evolving through experience and also as the CBOs are moving towards building their own independent identity.

In this context, it could be useful for CASA to analyse the self-reliance potential of each of the CBOs to enable them in identifying the critical areas of support and chart out the direction to move towards sustainability. Such an exercise would also help in subsequent role transformation and handing over of the programme and resources to the CBOs. Presently, there is a strong focus towards economic empowerment so gradually but strategically CASA has to move towards making the CBOs politically empowered. Eventually, it would be desirable for CASA to move into a role of an external facilitator based on demands generated by CBOs.



## **6. Changes that have taken place in various reference groups**

Mahila Mandals/Self Help Groups (SHGs) for women and village development associations, youth groups and social action cells (in southern zone) are the main organisational forms that have been promoted by CASA at the village level. Other formations such as forest, education and health committees have also been promoted. Clearly since CASA's intervention the hidden faces of women, Dalits and Tribals are slowly gaining visibility.

There is a perceptible change in the lives of women belonging to Mahila Mandals/SHGs. It is the first time they have ventured to create a space for themselves to discuss common issues. Through CASA's capacity building initiative particularly on PRI, women seem to have developed confidence to not only actively participate in Gram Sabha meetings but also demand redressal to their problems. The number of women being elected as ward members and Panchayat members is also highly encouraging.

CASA has played a critical role in organising Tribals and Dalits into strong village development groups. Such groups, who have historically been by passed by development interventions, are slowly gaining confidence to demand and bargain for an equitable share of resources and services from the government. Some of the prominent changes can be discerned in their self-confidence, attitudes, leadership qualities, articulation and interface and negotiation with Government.

The strength of CASA's approach has also been around organising youth – again a category that is often ignored in development strategies. Youth groups in the south have been organised for constructive engagement and social mobilization together with women and rural unorganised labour (RUOL in Tamil Nadu). Likewise, their energy has also been used in strengthening Gram Sabhas and Panchayat.

However, it must be realized that these village level groups have a varied level of understanding as some groups have joined the programme in the later part. Likewise the performance of other formations such as forest, agriculture, health and education committees is also observed to be quite varied in some places. Therefore, in particular for the groups that have yet to develop their potential, CASA needs to play a more proactive role in developing their capacities.

## **7. Synergies between programmes**

Other programmes which are being implemented by CASA (in the Core Programme region) besides the Core Programme include Food for Capacity Development (FFCD) and package programme supported by various donors. Currently, the synergy between programmes is quite mixed among the zones. The bilateral programmes and Core Programmes are reported to be quite well integrated in the west zone while in the north the synergy appears to be lacking. For instance there is no apparent linkage between the Core Programme in Banswara and the Rajasthan Development Programme.

CASA needs to be more focused in creating synergy between its various programmes to ensure cross learning. The bilateral programmes (concentrating on food security,

nutrition, village infrastructure development) could strategically be used in strengthening the village level organisation processes. Likewise the package programme that includes NGOs of small and medium size could be used as a critical resource support to strengthen the PAT forum.

## Chapter VI.2: CBOS, APEX BODIES AND NETWORKS

Just as India lives in her villages, CASA's strength is seen in the large number of CBO's, Apex bodies and networks set up as a grassroots based bottom up movement working for transformation with vertical growth into Federation / Trade Unions and horizontal linkages among CBOs and with local NGOs, Churches, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Resource Centres, PRIs, et cetera

### 1. Village level organisations

At the village level there are Village Development Associations (VDAs), Rural labour Organisations, Women Associations through Mahila Mandals (MM) and Youth Associations. CASA is one of the few organisations that have mobilized the youth along with men and women and this synergy works both at the Grama Sabha level and at the State level. One of the best achievements of CASA in the South Zone has been the registration of the Tamil Nadu Rural Labourers Movement as a Central Trade Union. The development of this group is given below:

#### Box IV: Historical development of rural labourers movement

1989 –1990	:	Beginning of 'Periyar District Rural Labourers Movement'.
1990 –1991	:	Registration of PRLM under Tamil Nadu Societies Act.
1991 –1992	:	Steps taken to spread PRLM.
1992-1993	:	Change of name as 'Rural Labourers Movement' and Block level coordination of village branches initiated.
1993 –1994	:	Village level VDA, MM, YC are clubbed with RLM.
1994 –1995	:	First election was conducted democratically. Cycle rally was conducted to organise more members in RLM.
1995-1996	:	RLM was participating in Panchayat Elections. Unorganised labourers Cluster level coordination process was initiated.
1996 –1997	:	Signature campaign was conducted to demand Tamil Nadu Government for 'Unorganised Labourers Welfare Board'. Regional level coordination completed.
1997 –1998	:	Signature campaign was conducted to demand Tamil Nadu Government for 'Employment Guarantee Act'. State level coordination started.
1998 –1999	:	RLM has started a state level Trade Union of its own – 'Tamilaga Rural Labourers Movement's General Trade Union'.
1999-2000	:	State level Federation of all like-minded grassroot level people's organisations continued by TRLM and CGTU.
2001 Dec	:	Tamilaga Rural Labourers Movement's Central General Trade Union was registered under Trade Union Act (Reg No 331/ERD). The same is legally approved to function all over the state.
2001 –2002	:	Efforts are taken to organise the unorganised sector labourers to collectively work for their own development and to gain political attention to their problems.
2002 –2003	:	State level alliance building with like-minded people's movement and Trade Unions.

In the South during the past 5 years emphasis has been on strengthening the Federation of CBOs at cluster, Block/Mandal, district and state level. From 2001 the approach has been village level CBOs, cluster and Block level organisations and Networking within and among 3 Federations up to state level. This approach is common to all 4 states but more actively operationalised in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. In Tamil Nadu the 3 CBOs have been federated at state level with their own byelaws and management committees. In case of RLM it has been now registered with the Government, which has given recognition to Central Trade Union (CTU) to certify the unorganised labourers in 54 categories already benefiting 1000s of labourers. The above are all major changes and achievements. At the village level also on the issue of land, house sites, getting Governmental facilities there are a lot of success stories. Apart from this, many campaigns, at cluster and block level, have taken place on issues including atrocities on Dalits, violence against women et cetera. The women's group has also grown from 1,115 in 1999 to 1,310 in 2002-2003.

In the North Zone the groups are quite rooted in the ground reality, as these are all community-based organisations. CASA's intentions of transferring power to the apex body are highly commendable and towards that they also have initiated processes – like forming committees – and also building their capacities. However, for these apex bodies to become completely independent and autonomous, they would require further institutional and development support in the North and can learn from their South Zone counterparts. The future plans of these apex bodies in the North are more at the level of development goal – like development and self-reliance of poor Tribal community – the forward plans are yet to take a concrete shape. Here the South is in complete contrast with people seeking political empowerment and unionisation at the district and state level in order to pursue developmental goals.

In East Zone RC's it was seen that the CBOs are endeavouring to function well. Apart from leadership, management skill in organisation development, registration of the organisations is the key for the sustainability there. Seventeen village based organisations have been registered under the government of West Bengal. But this is also posing problem as it has become expensive for them for the renewal process. Their only hope to meet the expenses and the development of the area lies in schemes from the government level but this too is not an easy thing for them as the response is not always favourable and there is lack of job opportunities for those youths who had been trained in desk top publishing. It may be suggested that CASA should disseminate information on the available government schemes in the East. Community work is done through Gram Sabhas and Mahila Mandals and they are not registered yet. Their main issues are Tribal self governance, Tribal identity, control over local resources and gender justice. The PAT forum in Saotalpur had been formed in 2002. 25 CBOs are represented in this forum. Out of the three cluster forums only one is functioning effectively. PATs are presently working on issues such as moneylenders and land alienation (cluster 3), change in land use, illiteracy, child education, low income from agriculture, allocation of development resources, alcoholism, health, inclusion and exclusion of BPL list, usage of chemical fertilizers and appointment of Santhali teachers. Gram Sabhas have done well in terms of raising community funds which is a unique achievement.

In West Zone the degree of transformation process in last 3-4 years is commendable. In each village there are three Mandals, Mahila Mandal, Gram Bikash mandal and Yuba Mandal. They are slowly on the process of registration and due to their

formation they are united. At PAT level meetings in three RCs the evaluation team members were informed that it is due to CASA that positive changes have come in their lives. They are able to fight jointly in the issues like water, land encroachment and Jal, Jungle, Jamin. The village women who did not dare to come out in front of outsiders are fighting against the forest officials, government officials for asserting their rights and have become more articulate and vocal.

CASA has a futuristic perspective of making these CBOs and Apex bodies self managed and self-sustainable. However a clear-cut road map for sustainability of the CBOs and Apex bodies needs to be evolved.

## **2. Transformation process (outcome)**

It is clear that a federating process has been initiated which is bottom up, collective and involves youth, women and men separately and who can identify issues and work together for solutions. The grass rooted ness of CBOs and Apex bodies of the CBOs is a clear outcome of the process initiated by CASA at village level. However the levels of maturity of CBOs and Apex bodies vary from zone to zone as does their functioning and autonomy. The South Zone appears to be the forerunner in this sphere. However, the sustainability is one issue that all zones and CASA, CBOs themselves have to grapple with a clear cut road map and plan for self-reliance to be set in motion in the next five years as these are crucial years for the critical mass of people's organisations to become self-managed and self-sustained.

## **3. Results and achievements**

CBOs have a variety of achievements spanning social and economic issues to their credit including political empowerment through representation at the ward, PRI and Councilor levels. In South, in the panchayat elections held during 2001 a total 1770 Ward Sarpanches won; of these about 12% are Panchayat Presidents. In the West zone as well many women and men from the mandals have been elected to the Gram Taluka and Zilla Panchayats. In the north zone a total of 81 ward panches and 13 surpanches, both women and men have been elected from 45 villages/CBOs. Issues of land, title deeds, violence against women, atrocities against Dalits, alcoholism, indebtedness, mobility, and casteism have been taken up as well as physical amenities across all zones. Most important is the collectivisation of the marginalised and their increasing confidence to tackle issues and interface with Government and other agencies, understand globalization and united prioritise issues which are remarkable achievements. While at the local level networks have been forged with local NGOs and CSOs. This need to be further strengthened at the zonal and national level.

Socially, economically and politically the CBOs have become empowered to a considerable extent. Reduction of alcoholism and indebtedness in Tribal communities, popularizing Tribal identity giving life to Tribal aspirations for respect to their cultural identity, taking control the control of local resources are some of the important achievements over the years in the East zone. However, none of the apex forums in the East are functioning independently and there has been no foundation to become financially sustainable either in the near future. To become sustainable the staff and CBOs felt the need to be registered to gain legitimacy and access government funds.

The right based approaches are gaining ground slowly and steadily. The Committees for Dalit rights, Tribal Rights, Mahila Aghadi have been formed and moving towards to raise some critical issues like rights to forest land, displacement of forest villages, malnourishment and grazing land rights.

In each R.C in the West it was seen the villagers could mobilise government funds for road construction, housing, social forestry, et cetera An example is given below:

**Table VIII: Example mobilisation**

R.C	Year	Amount
Paithan	1999-2003	10,45,900
Taloda	1999-2003	56,71,428
Dediapada	1999-2003	86,78,440

#### **4. Status and outcome on gender issues**

CASA has now a draft Gender Policy. There are women focused activities with women groups at grassroots level which are federated vertically. A large number of women leaders have been created at least about a minimum (of about 50-100) in many Resource Centres/Region with a good number of them getting elected to PRIs, especially in the South. The women federations closely collaborate with youth & men's/labourers federation horizontally at all levels. The women CBOs/federations in co-operation with other CBOs have been taking up the issue of violence on women, alcoholism etc SHG/micro finance has given economic strength to women at varying degrees and enhanced status in the family and society. The issue of involving the adolescent girls into the Youth Groups (which now have only male members) could be considered as well as a plan for Gender mainstreaming as a cross cutting issue with the necessary training and exposure to women's groups given at all levels at CASA and in the field and to the CBOs as well.

The programme has made several efforts to ensure that its development actions are gender inclusive. Sensitising men and women to gender issues, promoting separate forum (Mahila Mandals/SHGs/Federation) for women's participation and encourage women to take decisions in the political decision making processes (PRI) have been some of the key strategies in the programme

It was observed that almost all the Mahila Mandals slowly started savings groups in the villages. They have opened bank accounts and mobilizing money from the government schemes. However, there is a need for strengthening of the SHGs and training both vocational and refresher courses. There is also a need to make SHG grading in order to strengthen the weaker ones and give them inputs on record keeping, documentation for better accountability, transparency, et cetera. In each cluster committee R.C. level wise there has been representation of one female and one male. In PAT level there is also female representation. Last year one Mahila Aghadi has been formed at the state level in the west zone. However, to ensure that the poorest among the groups are represented and their voices are heard it is also necessary that they are trained in leadership and management skills to promote affirmative action and ensure examples such as revolving leadership. Clearly gender seems to be one of the key cross cutting issues for CASA.

## **5. Future plans**

There are plans to register CBOs wherever they have not been registered so far. However, there is a need for them to consider a wide range of options for registration than just an NGO mode e.g. collectives, cooperatives, membership based organisation, et cetera. These are general activity plans in each zone which needs to be more strategic in terms of achieving sustainability for CBOs within a time frame by identifying key inputs that can be provided by CASA and others and a clear road map may be evolved. That would set in place self-managed and self-reliant CBOs. Networking can also be strengthened at the district and national levels with other CBOs, networks and alliance such as people's movements such as NAPM and Trade Unions, Ashray Adhikar Abhiyan, Disability Networks, et cetera. There is also a need to consciously involve other minority groups into mass organisations.

In the perspective plan, CASA intends to focus on livelihoods but till now the emphasis has been put on campaigns and in future there is need to strike a balance between campaigns and livelihood strategies with special emphasis on scaling up of income. Disability focused within zones is another area that needs to be strengthened.

## **6. Role-played by CASA and other stakeholders**

Different stakeholders like CASA, churches, local CSOs, NGOs have extended solidarity and support, guidance and active participation in all CBO activities especially in campaigns and struggles. CASA originally played the role of promotor of CBOs at the grassroots level and subsequently facilitator of the process of vertical federation, horizontal co-operation and social mobilization for campaign on issues and problems faced by the poor and marginalized.

In all zones the villagers felt that initial motivation and start up came from CASA. In the coming years they expect to work on their own but they need guidance, information, linkages, training & exposure visits facilitated by CASA within a time frame of 5-10 years before they can be financially self-sufficient and independent organisations. In this context, it could be useful for CASA to analyse the self-reliance potential of each of the CBOs to enable them in identifying the critical areas of support and chart out the direction to move towards sustainability. Such an exercise would also help in subsequent role transformation and handing over of the programme and resources to the CBOs. Eventually, it would be desirable for CASA to move into a role of an external facilitator based on demands generated by CBOs.

## **CHAPTER VI.3: ADVOCACY AND CAMPAIGNS**

### **1. Advocacy and campaigns: CASA's context**

From the experience of CASA's Core Programme [1999-2003] based on community organisation, Human Potential Development and Peoples Action for transformation, there is now a strategic shift towards Rights Based Approach [RBA] focusing on the issues of poverty, backwardness and marginalization. CASA's new Participatory Strategic Plan [PSP] has the following programme components:

- a. sustainable livelihoods and perspective building
- b. local governance
- c. participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation [PME]
- d. Networking and Alliance building
- e. Research and documentation
- f. Disaster Preparedness and CASA intends to follow RBA and desires to use Advocacy as the tool to advance and assert the rights of the people as well as to influence the policies in favour of the poor and marginalized.

CASA, in its PSP as well as status paper and the project proposal has identified zonal specific issues and problems, but as of now there is a planned and structured Advocacy plan and sustained Rights Based Action. What CASA has initiated are local level campaigns on burning issues like land rights, house pattas and some basic facilities, which could be considered as people centred and rooted actions. These actions can be developed into well planned advocacy efforts to address the problems at macro policy level even while the local actions/campaigns help to benefit the poor and marginalized.

### **2. CASA, advocacy and the Right Based Approach**

In CASA's Core Programme which stresses on RBA, Advocacy and campaigns are considered to be important tools to uphold rights, access to justice and basic needs.

There are different definitions of Advocacy and some are given the following:

1. Advocacy is a political process to change unjust and unequal power relations and power structures in favour of the oppressed and marginalised.
2. Advocacy is influencing the powerful in favour of the powerless.
3. Advocacy is also information based argumentation together with lobbying campaigns and mass mobilisation to influence the decision making centres and policy processes.
4. Advocacy is a planned/ organised participatory process.

Right Based Approach (RBA) is assertion of Basic Rights, namely, Right to Live, Right to life with dignity and Right to access Basic needs. (As enshrined in the Indian Constitution and based on precedence created by Supreme Court judgement.) Since the role of Advocacy is to create an enabling policy environment for sustainable development, uphold rights, access to justice and basic needs, RBA & Advocacy can be seen as two sides of the same coin.



There are different types of Advocacy, namely;

1. Policy Advocacy ( generally macro level policy issues);
2. Public Advocacy ( people as objects and policy as tool);
3. People centred advocacy ( people as subjects and using RBA);
4. Programme based Advocacy ( influencing policies through successful models);
5. Rooted Advocacy (continuum of action on grass roots level/ community level e.g. on gender and child related issues).

Media campaigns & Advocacy can be organised in support of the above 5 categories and/ or independently as well.

The following finding/observations of CASA Core Programme in all the four zones indicate where CASA and CBO's efforts fit into with respect to Advocacy and Campaigns.

### **3. South Zone**

CBOs at different levels have undertaken at times successfully some campaigns and lobbying facilitated by CASA South Zone. They have also responded in some cases at micro level for e.g in Tamil Nadu on Macro level policy issues arising out of Globalisation and MNC entry by boycotting the sale and use of their products in some villages by effective resolution by the Panchayat itself. But a strategy to replicate is necessary if real impact is to be made at much wider and macro level. Another example is demanding from the Government to provide 250 days of work instead of 100 days suggested in the proposed EGS Act. Nature of most activities are in a campaign mode but not based on a plan for sustained and broad based advocacy process.

Campaigns in some cases have enabled to get land rights, housing, basic amenities, better wages and protection against atrocities. There is an increasing recognition and respectability for the CBOs among Governmental and political circles. The fact that the CITU and AITUC belonging to communist parties have begun to co-operate with the CTU (the unorganised labourer's state level federation) is one example.

### **4. West Zone**

In all the R.Cs visited a Jan Jagriti campaign using educative posters were carried out on the Panchayati Raj Institution in Pre Gram Panchayat election; a campaign was undertaken to educate and mobilize the people to exercise their right to vote. In a small way cycle rallies were done for this issue. The areas of advocacy need strengthening particularly on the national forest act, implementation of the PRI act and Dalit and Adivasi rights.

The Maharashtra state strategy paper identifies six core issues as follows;

- Income security
- Food Security
- Environment restoration
- Resource rights
- Farmer rights

## ➤ Health

Three of the issues (income security, resource rights and health) have been identified for policy advocacy work which need lot of planning/ preparatory work and follow up.

### **5. East Zone**

Campaigns that have been conducted include an Adivasi Adhikar rally in Gumla and a cycle rally against deforestation in Saontalpur. The PAT Forum and member CBOs in Saontalpur now regularly organise a series of events each July to spread awareness on the environment and deforestation. The Forum and one of the CBO's in particular have managed to get the Government of West Bengal to issue a Government Order that prohibits the conversion of agricultural land to tea gardens.

CASA has not undertaken much systematic advocacy work; nor has much work been undertaken to link micro level issues with action at state or national levels. The one exception is the national convention on people below the poverty line.

### **6. North Zone**

There have not been much advocacy efforts at either of the PAT units. Banswara unit has taken up the issue of Mahi dam, but more efforts are needed to mobilize a campaign on the issue.

### **7. Conclusions**

What is generally observed is that CASA & CBOs are involved mostly in grassroots campaigns and people's mobilisation on issues such as land patta, house sites and basic needs which can be termed as components of rooted and people centered Advocacy at local level, which in itself is appreciable. These are yet to scale up to well planned, broad based and sustained Advocacy. CASA is part of some National and International networks which address some of the national and global policy issues. What is most striking is CASA's participation in world social forum in 2003 with the southern zone itself sending over 250 participants from the people's organisations. Advocating for secular governance during the recent elections is yet another example.

## **CHAPTER VI.4: RELATIONSHIPS AND LINKAGES**

### **1. Introduction**

Relationship and linkages are an important component of the strategy under ‘issue based approach’ and more so under the ‘rights based approach’. The same is recognised by CASA as reflected in its focus on relationship and alliance building under the new Perspective Plan, 2003 -- 2013. Working on ‘rights’ would bring the organisation in ‘confrontation’ with well-entrenched and powerful forces. These forces prefer either ‘status quo’ or are working for changes which are likely to make the life of ‘poor’ more difficult. A strong and vibrant alliance with link-minded institutions would help to effectively counter such forces and also strengthen the ‘voice for change’ in favour of poor.

### **2. Relationship and linkages with government**

There is good relationship of CASA and its staff with the local administration as well as the State government. CASA facilitates and even participates in government programmes outside the Core Programme (e.g. Sericulture Project in Cooch Bihar) for the purpose of relationship building and benefiting its target group. At PAT level, the relationship is mostly limited to block or panchayat level. Casa is a member of government advisory committees in some states such as Himachal Pradesh, which provides opportunity to directly influence the policies and programmes of the government. The political capital of CASA has been built, over the years, through its involvement in disaster management and community development. It speaks volumes of CASA’s approach that they have been commended for their work by the state governments even in states like Gujarat.

The relationship with government agencies should be made more strategic and critical (collaborate and confront) to address the issues, which the PAT forums at different places take up. The relationship needs to be multi-dimensional and at different levels. Concrete efforts to identify, sensitise and build relationship with government officers should be undertaken particularly with those who empathise with the issues being raised by POs or CASA. A continuous dialogue process can be initiated so that there is clearer understanding of each other’s position on various issues. Prevailing corruption and stereotyped biases against NGOs are going to be major challenges in developing relationship with government agencies. Another challenge would be to ensure acceptance by government of PAT forums or their union as a representative voice of the people on specific issues.

### **3. Relationship and linkages with the church**

The church is an important constituent and stakeholder of CASA. Churches are represented in zonal and regional committees. The strong and close relationship with the Churches has been mutually beneficial and impacting. While the Churches have gained through a better understanding of the development issues, CASA has gained, directly or indirectly, from the social as well as political capital of the Churches. Apart from determining the policies of CASA, Churches at local level are also partners in various development programmes. In certain states such as Jharkhand, the

Church bodies have significant political capital, which they utilise for influencing policies as well as politics.

#### **4. Relationship and linkages with NGOs**

The horizontal and vertical linkages are generally within and among the CASA related organisations. Outside 'package programme' framework, extent of linkage with NGOs varies across different zones as well as PAT forums. At places like Gumla one can see a formal network of NGOs emerging on the issue of self-governance. In west zone, issue based linkages have been established with NGOs in different regions and different state level forums have emerged to work on rights of Dalits, Tribal and women on issues related to forest and land. In north zone, some preliminary initiative can be seen to build network around the issue of land, forest and water in Padhar. In south zone, local NGOs are part of the zonal level planning committee.

CASA, over last few years, has collaborated with agencies like Action Aid, PRIA, VANI et cetera to work on various issues of common interest. It has been involved with campaign on issues related BPL, PRI, water, food security and disaster management at national or state levels. CASA is part of Social Service Forum, which is an ecumenical forum of CRS, World Vision, CARITAS, CASA, AFPRO, and AFFARM. It is also networked with NGOs in south Asia (SAGA – South Asia Gender Alliance, SAPRA – South Asia Peace & Reconciliation Alliance, PISA – Peace in South Asia). On strategic and major policy issues much wider net working / alliance building is necessary. CASA needs to be more pro-active in initiating, promoting, supporting and engaging with 'issue based' networks and 'movements'.

CASA has had a long experience in very successfully initiating and managing NGO networks under the framework of other programmes, which could prove very useful in developing new alliances. Developing a common goal and common strategy, dealing with expectations of funding from CASA (particularly for small local NGOs), reaching out to NGOs outside the 'package and bilateral programs' would be major challenges in building the linkages with NGOs.

#### **5. Relationship and linkages with Panchayat Raj Institutions**

PRIs and improvement in local self governance has been a focus area for CASA. The most significant relationship is at the Gram Sabha level where CASA has been directly involved in organising and strengthening the institution. At places like Saontala, the RC staffs participate as resource persons in government sponsored training of Panchayat members. In almost all the zones, there are numerous examples of leaders developed under the Core Programme entering PRIs at various levels<sup>76</sup>. In south zone, CASA seems to be moving from linkages with PRI to enabling the poor and empowered women and Dalits to enter and control PRIs. The PRI members are also members of the CBOs created through the Core Programme, and participate in planning as well as implementation of programme activities.

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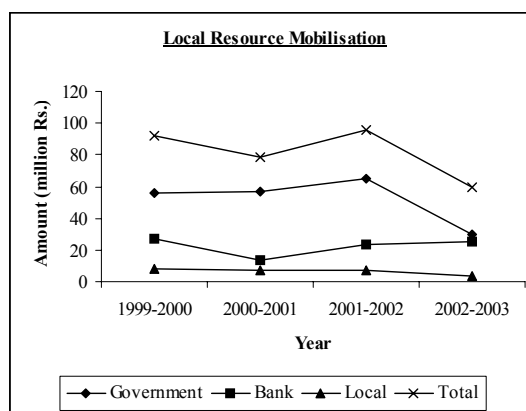
<sup>76</sup> In South Zone, 1770 persons including women got elected in CASA operational Panchayats as ward members (88% of total) and presidents/vice-presidents (12% of total) in the election held in the year 2001. This was a substantial increase as during the last election in 1996 only about 500 were elected.

CASA should look at innovative and diverse ways of working directly with PRIs. It should explore the possibility of including training of PRI members under the Core Programme.

## 6. Local Resource Mobilisation by POs & CBOs

The extent of resource mobilization is impressive. Around Rs. 325 million<sup>77</sup> was mobilized in four year period, mainly from government, banks and through community contribution.

Most of these resources were mobilized for specific development activities under various programmes and schemes of the government, and do not necessarily indicate financial stability of the CBOs and POs. A declining trend in the resource mobilisation is a matter of concern and needs further investigation. Examples from east zone indicate that systems of community contribution (fees) and income (through community resources and assets) are still in the process of being established.



## 7. Outcomes of networking and alliance building

The outcomes of networking and alliance building vary in degree from place to place depending upon the specific issues addressed and local context. The outcomes are visible, to a certain extent, in every zone. In west and south zones it has resulted in creation of state level forums and formal bodies. In the west zone a 'Committee for Dalit Rights Movement' and a 'Committee for Tribal Rights Movement' have been created. A 'National Forum of Forest People & Forest workers' has also emerged. In north and east zone regional and local NGO networks have been initiated in last couple of years around issues such as Tribal self-governance (Gumla) and 'rights over land, water and forest (north zone).

In south zone formation and registration of Central Trade Union (CTU) of unorganised labourers is an outcome of the Rural Labour Movement initiated and promoted with active co-operation between the Church, CASA, CBOs, local NGOs and PRIs (in some places). CTU is recognized by Tamil Nadu Government as an agency to certify and give identity cards to 54 (out of 152) categories of unorganised labourers. As a result, thousands of unorganised labourers have got access to various benefits from the state government.

There are various examples of at block and district levels over various issues all across the programme area – rallies, campaigns, road blocks – which were taken up in collaboration with other NGOs. These helped to create greater awareness and strengthen the local discourse on a variety of issues such as local self governance,

<sup>77</sup> Ref. Core Programme Performance report, April 1999 – March 2003. This figure could be on the lower side as at some places like Gumla, resources mobilised by CBOs from government and other NGOs have not been recorded.

deforestation etcetera. Another outcome has been the sense of solidarity and social security among women, Dalits and Tribals.

Many of the networking efforts are too recent to result in any concrete outcome in terms of policy advocacy or policy change.

## **8. Suggestions**

Under the Core Programme various issues related to control over local resource, local self-governance, livelihood, land rights, reservation of forest, displacement, unorganised labour, women and child exploitation are being taken up. The strategic linkages and relationships need to be guided by the level and nature of advocacy that CASA undertakes. There could be a need to concentrate on some issues at national level while others can be more effectively dealt at state or district or block or panchayat level.

There is a need to focus on developing direct linkages between various PAT forums which share a common goal as well as with a variety of other stakeholders. PAT forums linkage and acceptance with the government would go a long way in achieving the goals of the programme under rights based approach. Providing an independent identity to the PAT forums could facilitate this. Opportunities of direct participation in the advisory committees of the government at central or state level needs to be identified and exploited (for example Trade Unions or Co-operatives with certain minimum membership automatically become eligible to participate in such committees).

In order to develop effective relationships, CASA would need to work with others who have similar objectives but differing views, approaches and strategies. CASA should also explore the possibility of strategically positioning its other programmes to focus on similar issues (as in Core Programme) and facilitate development of its NGO partners to become resource agencies for POs.

## CHAPTER VII: REFLECTIONS; A FEW CHALLENGES

In a recent issue of *Economic and Political Weekly* the data of the National Sample Survey (NSS) with regard poverty and inequality are being questioned. Sen and Himanshu argue that the rather optimistic projections of the NSS are not correct: ‘The poverty ratio fell at most by 3 percentage points between 1993-94 and 1999-2000, and it is likely that the number of poor increased over this period’.<sup>78</sup>

The latest number of the magazine *Civil Society*<sup>79</sup> carries several articles about how civil society organisations in India use existing laws, such as the Right to Information Act in Delhi, successfully to expose corrupt government officials and departments.

These developments form some components in which the Church Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA) is implementing its Core Programme. It is a programme, which is being implemented in 13 states all over India, through 33 PAT units from four different zones. The programme covers a population of approximately 3.5 million people.

In the preceding chapters an assessment has been provided about the strategic positioning of CASA in the context; its organisational set-up; financial management and policy; programme performance and linkages. It is a story of a responsible organisation, which has manifested itself really as a ‘living organisation’; changing in order to remain relevant within the shifting development scenario in India. Over and over again important changes and adjustments have been made in the overall strategy of the Core Programme. There obviously exists a healthy tension between the aspired and present functioning within the organisation. This is an important organisational quality. Especially the recent strategic decision to opt for a Right’s Based Approach may be described as a remarkable achievement.

The organisational basis of CASA is sound; some updates need to be carried out in order achieve a more optimal coherence between mission, vision, and strategy and the organisational set-up. The Core Programme is being implemented in a responsible manner; in a few programme areas there is scope for improvement both at policy and operational level. Adequate organisational linkages exist; in some areas relationships need to be expanded and/or strengthened. During the study process in general terms a picture has emerged of which the CASA general body, board, executive committees, management and staff may be proud of.

With regard to a few areas there are challenges in order to achieve greater satisfaction. These issues, which have also been shared with CASA during the debriefing workshop, can be summarised as follows.

### 1. People’s organisations

The concept of people’s organisations needs to be re-visited within the framework of the new Rights Based Approach. The issue needs to be dealt with at conceptual level,

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<sup>78</sup> A. Sen & Himanshu, Poverty and inequality in India I, *Economic and Political Weekly*, September 18, 2004: 4247 – 4263.

<sup>79</sup> Vol. 2 no. 1 September/October 2004, 2004.

at the level of strategy. Within this context the issue of socio-political sustainability needs to be dealt with. (For an elaboration of the argument see especially Chapter VI.)

## **2. Coherence in perspective building**

A second issue is that greater satisfaction may be achieved by attaining greater coherence in perspective building around issues such as rural poverty, gender, livelihood and the Rights Based Approach. This relates again both to conceptual, policy and operational issues. (For an elaboration of the argument see especially Chapter III and VI.)

## **3. CASA as a civil society organisation**

With the emphasis on the Rights Based Approach CASA is positioning itself as a civil society organisation. Strengthening the Indian civil society can be done through varied different ways and means: promoting grass root level democracy; strengthening the social fabric of civil society as such; by taking an articulated position as a civil society organisation. The first two approaches are well covered under the Core Programme. The third one needs to be explored a bit more in depth: what is the position that CASA would like to take within the Indian civil society; what are the options given the character and institutional set-up of CASA.

This issue needs to be explored further in order to both internally and externally provide more clarity on CASA's position with regard to this issue. (See especially Chapter III.)

## **4. Organisational learning**

A learning organisation can be defined as an 'organisation, which builds and improves its own practice consciously and continuously devises and develops the means to draw learning from its own (and other's) experience'.<sup>80</sup> If CASA wants to become a full fledged learning organisation, the issue of organisational learning in connection with the Rights Based Approach requires more systematic and conscious attention. With regard to this issue the present attempts to come to experiential learning can be seen as an important starting point. (See especially Chapter IV.)

## **5. Staff policies**

The issue of Human Resources Development, in terms of staff remuneration, opportunities and growth, capacity enhancement in connection with the RBA, requires further attention. The study team appreciates the fact that most of these issues are already on the agenda. (See especially Chapter IV, V and VI.)

## **6. Expansion at field level**

The study team is furthermore of the opinion that some of the above mentioned issues need to be dealt with in an adequate manner before further expansion at field level can

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<sup>80</sup> Taylor, 2002: 22.



take place. Within this context it is important to analyse pre-requisites at the level of the village level groups.

## **7. Linkages**

Last but not least; the issues of linkages, relationships with other stakeholders require further attention. This relates especially to the relationship between issues at micro-, meso- and macro level and strategic alliances and relationships beyond the direct 'CASA family'.