



# Annual Report

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*April 2014 – March 2015*



Forum for Learning  
and Action with  
Innovation and  
Rigour

**FLAIR - Forum for Learning and Action with Innovation and Rigour**  
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## Our Vision

We envision a society that is developing sustainably and where people are participants and beneficiaries in the process of economic and technological development in an equitable manner for ensuring justice, liberty, and dignity.



## Our Mission

FLAIR's Mission is to promote and engage in processes of participatory learning and action with innovation and rigour, leveraging the benefits of economic and technological development, for ensuring health, nutrition and education of poor, marginalized and vulnerable people and/or communities and ensuring for them a life with equity, justice, liberty and dignity.



**FLAIR AS A FORUM**

FLAIR is a forum of expert individual researchers and practitioners as well as organizations. It was formally registered as a Society in June 2013 and it draws from the experience and expertise of the founding individuals and organisations. It is a membership based organisation where all stakeholders work together in the true spirit of partnership and membership is open to all individuals and organisations. Our foray into creating, nurturing and operating spaces for actions are through – (a) participation in the

processes of policy and programme formulation through research and development of protocols and SOPs based on a combination of learning from grassroots and inputs from sector and subject experts, (b) programmes in the social development sector that have an interface with Information and Communications Technology (ICT). We work on the dimensions of -

- (a) Health and Nutrition,
- (b) Education,
- (c) Agriculture, Renewable Energy and Environment, and
- (d) Skills Development and Livelihoods.

We work through – (a) Research and Documentation, (b) Trainings, Workshops, Consultations, Conferences and Advocacy (c) Programme Implementation for Model Creation, and (d) Technology led Innovative Solutions for Social Development to create, nurture and operate spaces in triumvirate, viz. (i) young people from the poor and marginalised communities, (ii) the government, and (iii) the technocrats and their associations. These are the spaces where all the thinking, learning and action happen and solutions emerge and get implemented. We have been working with the poor and the marginalised and the technocrats to develop sustainable solutions for eradication of poverty and marginalisation. We work with the corporate sector in helping them design and implement their strategies for social responsibilities and also for developing and implementing their CSR Policy and Programmes.

Main focus areas in the first year of FLAIR's inception varied across different activities and programs, research studies, partnership promotion, organizing workshops and training programs as well as seminars and consultation with partner organizations, academics, education and nutrition experts and parliamentarians. The specific activities during June 2013 to March 2014 include –

### **1. Research and Documentation**

- (a) MIS Development for Three NGOs in Delhi
- (b) Policy Research- Process Documentation of Formation Process of SMCs in UP
- (c) Budget Analysis of Nutrition and Food Programmes for Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh and the Union of India
- (d) FLAIR Policy Paper: Public Investment on Food and Nutrition for Socially Excluded and Marginalized Groups and Directions for Public Policy and Public Finance
- (e) Annual Budget Analysis: Policy and Budget Analysis of the Social Sector Programmes – Union of India and Select States
- (f) Budget for Food and Nutrition Programmes and Agriculture : Union of India and Selected States

### **2. Trainings, Workshops, Consultations, Conferences and Advocacy**

- (a) Training/Capacity Building On Budget Analysis and Policy Advocacy in Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh And Union Of India
- (b) Work with NGOs and State Governments on development of annual work plan and budgets for food, nutrition and health in the wake of recommendations of Fourteenth Finance Commission
- (c) CMAM Working Group Meeting convened by FLAIR (Forum for Learning and Action with Innovation and Rigour) as part of CFNS (Coalition for Food and Nutrition Security)
- (d) Work with the Legislature on issues of Education
- (e) Meeting with Parliamentarians on the issues of Education with demands and recommendations based on analysis of budgets

### 3. Programme Implementation for Model Creation

- (a) Project for developing an effective Class 1 programme in mainstream State Schools with a focus on Emergent Literacy
- (b) Agriculture to Nutrition Pathways for prevention of Malnutrition

### 4. Technology led Innovative Solutions for Social Development

- (a) Ezzy Poshan

## 1. RESEARCH AND DOCUMENTATION

FLAIR's research is guided by its core value of rigour. Our researches are done with clear objectives, which are developed in consultation with all concerned stakeholders. We conduct all our research within the ethical framework towards both – (i) Our clients and partners who are users of the research, and also (ii) The subjects and respondents in the research.

#### (a) MIS Development for Three NGOs in Delhi

FLAIR was involved in designing and developing the Management Information System on operations and performances for the three partners of Plan India in Delhi.

#### (b) Policy Research- Process Documentation of Formation Process of SMCs in UP

Thematic focus of Poorest Areas Civil Society Programme [PACS] education programme is to ensure inclusive, equitable and discrimination free access to quality education to children from socially excluded groups. Within the framework of RTE, PACS Programme engages in strengthening and implementation of key components of SSA. Given that under the RTE Act, the SMCs are responsible for overall school development, PACS planned to focus on strengthening the School Management Committees (SMC) in PACS intervened areas in 17 districts of UP.

FLAIR has been involved in the policy research and documentation of the SMC campaign undertaken by PACS in Uttar Pradesh to facilitate the process by which the members



from the socially excluded communities could emerge into a leadership role in the School Management committees and are able to work effectively for overall development of the schools.

### (c) Budget Analysis of Nutrition and Food Programmes for Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh and the Union of India

In this project, the Schemes/ Programmes of Nutrition Security being implemented in India and states are selected for a situational analysis for the Financial Years – 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14 and 2014-15 for the States of Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and the Union of India. The main Nutrition specific scheme identified for this study are the centrally sponsored plan schemes such as - ICDS, MDM, SABLA, PDS and all other State level nutrition specific schemes including interventions under National Health Mission (NHM), aiming to examine linkages between maternal health policies, government allocations in these schemes/programmes, implementation of those programmes, and issues of access and effectiveness. The study had a special focus on the most disadvantaged sections of the community and therefore looked at allocations embarked for SCP and TSP for selected food and nutrition programs at national as well as State levels. The project of analyzing food and nutrition programs in India and five sample states was carried out with financial support from Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) and National Confederations of Dalit Organizations (NACDOR), Delhi.

### (d) FLAIR Policy Paper: Public Investment on Food and Nutrition for Socially Excluded and Marginalized Groups and Directions for Public Policy and Public Finance

India continues to have the dubious distinction of being a leading country on many malnutrition and mortality indicators. Malnutrition dimensions have now reached a situation of alarm with more than 50 per cent of the population suffering from some form of malnutrition or micronutrient deficiency, resulting in suboptimal cognitive and physical development, low productivity and high health care costs. In this situation, it is important that the problem of malnutrition receives necessary and adequate attention of the public policy and public finance. In the Policy Paper, we have analysed the budget outlays and expenditure patterns for the Food and Nutrition schemes of the Government of Union of India and the three the States with worst indicators of Child



#### Public Investment on Food and Nutrition for Socially Excluded and Marginalised Groups and Directions for Public Policy and Public Finance

- Ajay Kumar Sinha and Dolon Bhattacharyya

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Malnutrition across all the social groups in the Country viz., Bihar, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh. Understanding that the burden of child malnutrition is higher among the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes we have done a disaggregated analysis of allocation and expenditure for the SCs and STs. We have analysed the trends and patterns of Government's financial commitments to address malnutrition among children belonging to SCs and STs from the earmarked budget heads of Special Component Plans (SCPs) for the Scheduled Castes and Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) for Scheduled Tribes. We have taken the schemes of – (i) ICDS, (ii) MDM, (iii) SABALA, and (iv) Food and Civil Supplies Schemes including Food Subsidies.

**(e) Annual Budget Analysis: Policy and Budget Analysis of the Social Sector Programmes – Union of India and Select States**

FLAIR is carrying out Policy and Budget Analysis of the Social Sector Programmes in Union of India and the States of Bihar, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, mainly focusing on the Programmes that have the backing of legislation, e.g. RTE Act, National Food Security Act, Employment Guarantee Act and the like as well as different Missions launched and implemented by the Government of India in different sectors. We are also analysing different National Flagship Schemes of Governments that have been put in place for meeting the Millennium Development Goals in selected sectors

- i. Agriculture (Including Fertilizers Subsidy from Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers and Power and Irrigation Subsidy.)
- ii. Education (Including (a) School Education and Literacy and (b) Higher and Technical Education)
- iii. Public Health (Including Programmes from (a) Ministry of Health and (b) Ministry of Water and Sanitation)
- iv. Food and Nutrition Security (Including Programmes from - (a) Ministry of Food and Civil Supplies, (b) Nutrition programmes of Ministry of Women and Child Development/Social Security, (c) Programmes for Micro-Nutrient from NHM under Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and (d) Programmes for Management of Acute Malnutrition from NHM under Ministry of Health and Family Welfare)
- v. Livelihood and Employment for Poor (Including both schemes like MGNREGA and promotion of Medium, Small and Micro Enterprises),
- vi. Housing for the poor (Rural and Urban), and
- vii. Women and Child Protection

The Policy and Budget Analysis includes overall analysis of the selected sectors in terms of identifying discrepancies between (a) the provisions of the legislation and budget allocation, and/or (b) the requirements and budget allocation, after accounting for the Fourteenth Finance Commission led Fiscal Federalism. The purpose for the analysis is to demystify the 14<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission recommendations and engage with the States necessary, adequate and timely provisioning for different sectors.

#### **(f) Budget for Food and Nutrition Programmes and Agriculture : Union of India and Selected States**

With regard to vertical distribution, FFC has recommended by majority decision that the States' share in the net proceeds of the Union tax revenues be 42% which is a huge jump from 32% of 13<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission. As a result of this central's allocations in many important schemes across different sectors are reduced drastically and shortfall in the Schemes for the Welfare of Poor, Disadvantaged and Marginalised on account of FFC award are to be made up by the States from their enhanced resources. FLAIR is carrying an analysis of Union and State's annual budgets for schemes/programmes from different social as well as economic sectors that have direct or indirect impact and Food and Nutrition Security of poor and marginalized. The aim is to find out whether the decrease or only a marginal increase in Allocations for the important food and nutrition schemes/programmes in the Union Budget has been adequately compensated by increase in the Allocations in those schemes in the selected State Budget. The study also is analysing whether the state finances are in conformity with the state's performance on Human Development Indicators, in terms of health and nutrition indicators; what is the trend of utilization of allocated fund, which are instrumental in improving different development indicators if not utilized for the purpose they are allocated.

## **2. TRAININGS, WORKSHOPS, CONSULTATIONS, CONFERENCES AND ADVOCACY**

- (a) Training/Capacity Building On Budget Analysis and Policy Advocacy in Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh And Union Of India

FLAIR with National Confederation of Dalit Organizations(NACDOR) proposes to work to build a team of dedicated budget analysts at the State level to take up the task of budget analysis of social sector programmes and schemes from a social exclusion perspective. This team under the guidance of FLAIR will analyse the budgets of the States and the Union of India and the findings

will be used for advocacy through a two pronged strategy – (a) education and mobilisation of the people and organisation working on rights of the marginalised, and (b) policy engagement with the policy making and planning bodies of the Governments of the States and the Union of India.

**The overall objective of building a team of dedicated budget analysis** is to raise awareness on the full accountability cycle from planning, to costing, budgeting and expenditure, providing participants with an understanding of how to analyse budgets and conduct budget advocacy. The team is to be trained to identify discrepancies between national plans and situational analyses; identify gaps in costing, identify discrepancies between the costed plan and budget and Developing an advocacy strategy based on the analyses.

- (b) Work with NGOs and State Governments on development of annual work plan and budgets for food, nutrition and health in the wake of recommendations of Fourteenth Finance Commission

FLAIR initiated a process of involvement with different NGOs, nutrition experts and Academic Institutions across the country to develop annual work-plan and budgets for different food and nutrition programmes of the Governments. Working/discussion paper on budget analysis of Union and State Budgets of FY2015-16 is prepared for food, nutrition and health programmes which are in the process of sharing findings with NGOs and Nutrition Experts to work out annual work plan and budgets to be submitted to respective state governments.

- (c) **CMAM Working Group Meeting convened by FLAIR (Forum for Learning and Action with Innovation and Rigour) as part of CFNS (Coalition for Food and Nutrition Security)**

Following the National Consultation convened by FLAIR and Save the Children in February 2014, follow up to the National Consultation was held in July 2014 during the South Asia Conference on Food and Nutrition Security, where under the guidance and advice of Prof. M. K. Bhan it was decided that a small working group be constituted with diverse membership, which would work outside the government and be a bridge between the learning for practice and research and policy. The group would also be a facilitative fulcrum for feedback to further strengthen the National Policy once it is rolled out.

A meeting of CMAM working group was held on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2014 at the Conference Room of Centre for Community Medicine, Old OT Block, All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi with the objectives to –

- Deliberate on the ways and means of contributing to the Government of India's initiative of formation of National Nutrition Mission;

- Devise ways to provide independent, neutral and inclusive inputs to the draft guidelines on CMAM and the policy and action of the Government of India on Management of Acute Malnutrition; and
- Deliberate on the scope of work of the group.

#### **(d) Work with the Legislature on issues of Education**

FLAIR team has been influential in analysing parliament questions put forth by different Member of Parliaments to the **Ministry of Human Resource and Development**. It is during the Question Hour that the members can ask questions on every aspect of administration and Governmental activity. We have analysed the question raised in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha from 2009 till March 2015 (when this analysis was done) for the Ministry of Human Resource and Development. We have found out –

- i. the share of questions in MHRD in the total questions,
- ii. the share of questions on the three broad areas (a) RTE Act, (b) SSA, and (c) MDM in MHRD

FLAIR along with National RTE Forum has been involved in preparing demand for enhancement of the allocation to education, with an emphasis on making foundational investments in early childhood and elementary education. Findings from the Costing and Budget Analysis of SSA undertaken by FLAIR and Save the Children were used and cited by National RTE Forum to prepare the '*Demand for Financial Requirement for fulfilment of RTE Act 2009 from Union Budget 2015-16*'.

#### **(e) Meeting with Parliamentarians on the issues of Education with demands and recommendations based on analysis of budgets**

FLAIR team is also in contact with our Members of Parliament on regular basis inviting them in meetings, consultations as well as meeting them in person to keep them updated on facts and findings on Education including budget analysis of education programmes on the wake of fourteenth finance commission. Simultaneously, demands and recommendations based on the analysis and through consultative meetings with different NGOs working in the dimension of education are also presented to the parliamentarians to debate on the floor during budget session.

### 3. PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MODEL CREATION

#### (a) Project for developing an effective Class 1 programme in mainstream State Schools with a focus on Emergent Literacy

Though Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act), talks about compulsory schooling for children in the age group of 6 to 14 years, there are available documentation that shows school access does not necessarily transform the school into an inclusive learning space. There is an imperative need for effective school programmes at the Class 1 level which are based on an understanding of Early Childhood development and Emergent Literacy processes. This project aims developing interventions for a conceptually sound Class 1 programme with some of the key elements as under:

- Designing a programme for facilitating effective home to school transitions in Class 1 within mainstream, government primary schools based on conceptually sound and grounded principles of Emergent Literacy and Early Learning.
- Developing a programme for tapping local forms of knowledge and bringing them into the purview of the formal education system in the early years of schooling
- Integrating a programme of community participation in children's learning
- Setting up demonstration sites to facilitate the expansion of the key elements of the Early Learning and Emergent Literacy programme to wider locations.
- Building a resource base and process documentation for wider dissemination and training.

Once this programme is in place the key programme elements may be shared through training packages and resource dissemination for Class 1 and ECCE teachers; teacher educators and policy makers across different locations and programmes including the ICDS.

#### (b) Teach India – Skills Enhancement for Employment

Through the TEACH INDIA Initiative, FLAIR has been able to further our relationship with youth and communities and brought a meaningful and logical dimension to our community engagement. The Learners have benefitted immensely from the programme. They have been placed in good companies as per their interest. Some of our Learners have been placed through Teach India at an initial salary of Rs. 15000/- per month. We connect with the youth through evening and weekend meetings where we have discussions on the issues of society and country and how they specifically affect them. We mobilise the youth for joining Teach India programme as it is an excellent platform to achieve the goal financial independence and contribution to the family, society and country.



### (c) Agriculture to Nutrition Pathways for prevention of Malnutrition

FLAIR has started a project in Gaya district of Bihar on Agriculture – Nutrition connect. The idea is to link the Farmers Producers Organisations with the Market for their produce directly. In the first phase FLAIR has been able to form Farmers' Groups and identify lands and mark them for various agriculture produce through the year in various seasons. An analysis is also underway on the food habits, recipes, tastes and markets for the produce along with the nutritional requirements.

## 4. TECHNOLOGY LED INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

### (a) Ezzy Poshan – Smart Phone App to facilitate the execution of Malnutrition Programme

Ezzy Poshan has been awarded IT Innovation of the Year 2014 by Computer Society of India.

This innovative tool to provide this solution is a system of four integrated stages –

- Data collection through mobile application – “Ezzy Poshan” working on any of the three platforms – iOS, Windows and Android. Each single child is issued an unique ID and is tracked for treatment and subsequent rounds of anthropometric measurements for longitudinal data sets;
- Data transmission to the main server and data analysis on the server;
- At the data analysis stage itself there is a provision for recognition of a malnourished child in need of treatment and/or referral and alert is sent to the concerned officials with details of the child’s identity and location for referral and/or treatment of the malnourished child. A provision has been made that this action is taken within 4 days of anthropometric data enumeration of the child.
- Statistical Data Analysis and Report Production.

We have observed that a major problem in dealing with the scourge of malnutrition lies in collecting anthropometric data for identification of the malnourished child at an appropriate time and using this data for treatment and/or referral of the malnourished child within a medically acceptable time limit.

Also the statistical analysis and report production after the data collection takes such long time that it becomes useless for any corrective action at policy and programme level.

- The data collection, storage and analysis need to be streamlined in such a manner that the whole process takes a maximum of one month or in Real Time during the times when huge data sets are being collected for research and planning purposes.
- Also, for regular programme implementation an intervention is required that allows for quick analysis of anthropometric data at the project level for referral and/or treatment of the malnourished child. It will be a huge boon and go a long way in treating the malnourished child.

## 5. FLAIR'S MEDIA COVERAGE

FLAIR made a significant advancement in FY2014-15 in terms of making a public presence and engagement with the Members of Parliament. FLAIR's policy paper on *Public Investment on Food and Nutrition for Socially Excluded and Marginalized Groups and Directions for Public Policy and Public Finance* that highlighted the fact that India has the highest number of deaths of children under five years of age is carried in National daily like Times of India.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/India-has-highest-number-of-deaths-of-children-under-five-years-of-age/articleshow/46722307.cms>

FLAIR's analysis of Union budget and state budgets of Bihar and Himachal Pradesh on allocations for direct and indirect Food and Nutrition Programmes shows a significant decrease over last year's budget. Therefore, devolution of enhanced tax resources to states as directed by the 14<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission that resulted in decrease in central share of allocations in many important schemes including nutrition schemes were not compensated by adequate increase in allocations in state budgets of Bihar and HP for those programmes. FLAIR team shared these issues in a consultation organised jointly by FLAIR and Save the Children, India on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2015 in Delhi. FLAIR's views in the briefings was carried out by National Daily like The Hindu on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2015.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/states-unlikely-to-bridge-gap-in-funding/article7228669.ece>

**GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS (2013-14)**

1. Prof. Abdul Matin – President
2. Mr. Ajay Kumar Sinha – Secretary
3. Mr. Somnath Chakraborty – Treasurer
4. Mr. Vinay Krishna – Joint Secretary
5. Ms. Soni Prabha – Member
6. Dr. Raj Bhandari – Member
7. Ms. Mridusmita Bordoloi – Member
8. Ms. Shweta Verma – Member

**SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM**

1. Mr. Ajay Kumar Sinha – Executive Director
2. Mr. Somnath Chakraborty – Director, Marketing
3. Ms. Soni Prabha – Director, HR and Admin
4. Ms. Dolon Bhattacharyya – Director, Research and Documentation
5. Ms. Mridusmita Bordoloi – Adviser, Research