

**Internship
at
Khoj Foundation,
Amravati District (Maharashtra)**

**Submitted By
Somesh Gupta**

**Post Graduate Diploma in Rural Management
2012-2014**



**School of Rural Management
Institute of Health Management Research,
Jaipur
2014**

KHOJ FOUNDATION, AMRAVATI DISTRICT (MAHARASHTRA)

1: BACKGROUND

KHOJ is a voluntary organization working in Melghat region of Amravati district since 1996. Khoj began as a group of young professionals having a quest for ensuring justice and equality to those who had been denied these for reasons of caste, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexuality and to those who were trapped in the development models and policies adopted by the state.

KHOJ started its work with a vision to develop a collective voice and leadership of youths from the Melghat region as well as adjoining block of Achalpur empowering them with proper knowledge, skills and opportunities for development. Currently it is involved in social and economic development of people from Melghat and safeguarding their rights. KHOJ is the nodal agency coordinating the CBMP under NRHM work in Amravati district. In Amravati district, this programme is carried out in 5 blocks - Chikhaldara, Dharni, Achalpur, Chandur Bazar and Anjangaon with support of 2 other partner organizations.

Efforts:

In the last decade Khoj has moved from being just village focused to working on more regional issues confronting Melghat like-

- 1) Land restoration to tribal people whose land was grabbed by affluent communities.
- 2) Demanding transparent and participatory processes in the rehabilitation of villages from the Melghat sanctuary area.
- 3) Facilitating awareness and people's participation in the environment impact assessment of the proposed kharia-Gutighat dam under the upper Tapi project stage2
- 4) Filed PIL for protection of rights of people cultivating land which is disputed forest land
- 5) Developing a dialogue between people and government officials
- 6) Developed youth support and guidance programme for Melghat that allowed sharing of information, knowledge and skills, provided orientation and exposure to various initiatives of youth development. Career development, counseling and personality development programmes was conducted for the youths.
- 7) Demanding effective and timely implementation of the earlier Employment Guarantee Scheme and now the MREGA in Melghat so that proper plans to meet with the people's demand are made and employment made available to people. The effort is also to promote those kinds of work that built community assets as well as protects the soil and water.

- 8) Ensuring that there are enough opportunities for children seeking education in ashram schools and other institutions
- 9) Have facilitated programme for the youth of Melghat and adjoining areas, which included components of personality development, communication skills and family life Education in an efforts to develop their personality and their relationship with peer and family
- 10) Lobbying for people centered developmental policy and programmes
- 11) Representing the problems of Melghat at various governmental and non- governmental forums locally and nationally
- 12) Provided legal guidance and support to people in distress. We have conducted various legal literacy programmes with the people on issue like Employment Guarantee Act, Right to Information, Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Area Act(PESA)
- 13) Khoj has worked as a resource centre providing information to many academicians and researchers as well as to the local organizations and media with its documentation and rich collection of books from various fields.
- 14) Engaged with the National Rural Health Mission programmes, in community based monitoring (CBM) of health services. As a part of a state level collective initiative led by Sathi-Cehat, Khoj works as the district nodal agency facilitating work in 5 blocks of Amravati district forming CBM Committees at village, block and district level as well as conducting public hearing to understand issues of people in accessing the health services
- 15) Khoj initiated bridge school for children who dropped out of school but desired to get back to schooling. This 100 day school helped in recreating children's interest back to learning processes and back to school.
- 16) Have initiated a programme to empower adolescent girls with information on health, nutrition and life skills in chikhaldara block with cover 1000 girls
- 17) Khoj also supports and mobilizes resources to support many young people from Melghat and adjoining areas in pursuing their studies. Many of them are now at the verge of completing their professional courses from Art, to development, education, law and Pharmacy
- 18) In an efforts to create an effective team, several capacity building programmes for the team members have been undertaken and are also proposed for the future
- 19) Khoj provides a learning environment to youths who want to spend their time either volunteering or even studying at Khoj
- 20) Khoj has been undertaking programmes like public hearing on various issues of health, MREGA to highlight the issues confronted by the people and in trying to bring in more accountability and transparency
- 21) Our organizational development processes last year has led to strengthening our vision and Mission as outlined below-

2: VISION: Gram Sabhas and communities lead their development processes collectively.

3: MISSION: Enable and empower the communities of Melghat and adjoining regions so that they can demand their own rights (in the field of education, health and livelihood through a increased focus on youth and women's development) using approaches of constructive development and struggle based search for justice.¹