

**Project Completion
Report, 2008-2009**

EMPOWERING ADOLESCENT GIRLS

Supported by Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI)



Centre for Rural Education and Development Action

Empowering adolescent girls from marginalized communities through skill training and literacy in Halia, Lalganj, Madihan and City blocks of Mirzapur district

**An action programme supported by
Canada Fund for Local Initiatives**



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Foreword

Centre for Rural Education and Development Action (CREDA) is internationally known for its commitment for the cause of supporting, encouraging and empowering poor and needy. CREDA has been constantly making an endeavour to reach out to people in order to provide them long term support system in strengthening community action for development, justice and against inequality. Gender equity is one of the major objectives of the organization. The organization has encouraged poor women and adolescent girls to be a partner in development and also to obtain social justice and human right.

Non-government organization plays a crucial role in socio-economic development sector and also on the issues related to social justice and human rights. The concern and dedication of NGOs leaves a greater impact on the people, policy makers and fund givers. CREDA, as an organization, is constantly thriving for higher achievements for working with projects in the community. This also includes proactive measures and intensive advocacy to highlight various issues and problems that affects poor and marginalized.

CREDA is grateful to the Canadian High Commission, New Delhi for supporting the project under Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI) for providing better life opportunity to adolescent girls in sub-urban and rural areas of Mirzapur district.

CREDA will continue its efforts to combat challenges in providing justice, equity and development opportunities to empower the needy adolescent girls and young women and also will ensure their active participation in decision making and personality development.

Shamshad Khan
Secretary

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1. Introduction

Adolescent girls in poor families are the most deprived group living in slums, suburban and rural areas. Poverty, injustices, neglect, non-accessibility of needed opportunities, and inequality factors have deprived them the opportunities for education and development. This situation makes them marginalized in the society. Therefore, they need opportunities for better and meaningful future. The project has tried to provide them socially useful and economically productive knowledge and

skill through suitably designed project activities.

The project has tried to reach out to poor adolescent girls from socially and economically marginalized families. The target group has also been provided basic information and inputs related to wages, family violence, health, hygiene, nutrition, family life education including family budgeting, legal literacy, etc. and also tried to encourage them to move forward as an active agent of change.

2. Project Objectives and Activities

A. Project Objectives

1. To develop skills among poor and marginalized 360 adolescent girls within one year to empower them for becoming self-dependent through need-based and economically gainful skill training.
2. To equip the adolescent girls with knowledge through education and literacy classes to empower them with legal, moral, practical, and family life education and motivate and encourage them to get involved for gender equity and social justice.

B. Project Activities

Survey and Identification of Target Group

Through a structured format, survey of adolescent girls was carried out in rural as well as urban slum areas of the district. Mostly those girls who were simply literate or had left their education or school dropped out were identified as target group and enrolled in Adolescent Learning and Skill Centers (ALSCs).

Motivation and Counseling of Target Group and Parents

A series of meetings were held in selected locations for motivation and counseling of

target group and their parents and inform them about the benefit of skill training and literacy. The counseling was successful in the sense that parents and target group welcomed project objectives and the enrolment started. On each center, the aspirants for enrolment were higher than the capacity of Center. This shows the interest and enthusiasm of the adolescent girls and their willingness to benefit from the opportunity which they did not have in past.

Selection of Location and Setting of ALSCs

While setting up ALSCs, following criteria were used for selecting the location:

- Area /village inhabited by poor and marginalized community
- Adolescents interested in gaining skill and knowledge
- Approachable and reachable during all seasons
- Safe for project beneficiaries
- Environmentally sound
- Availability of needed raw material for skill training

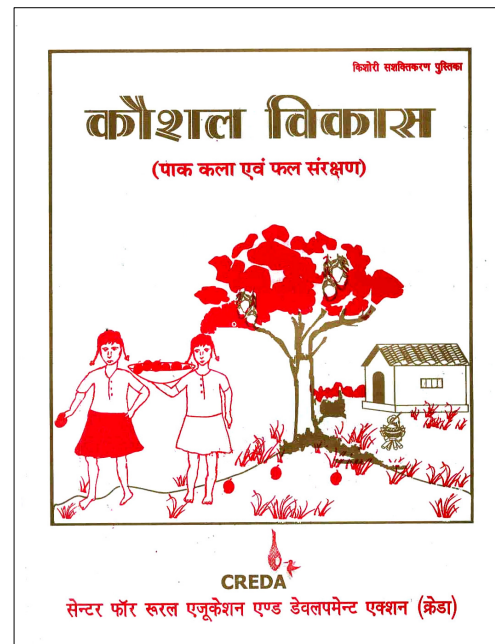
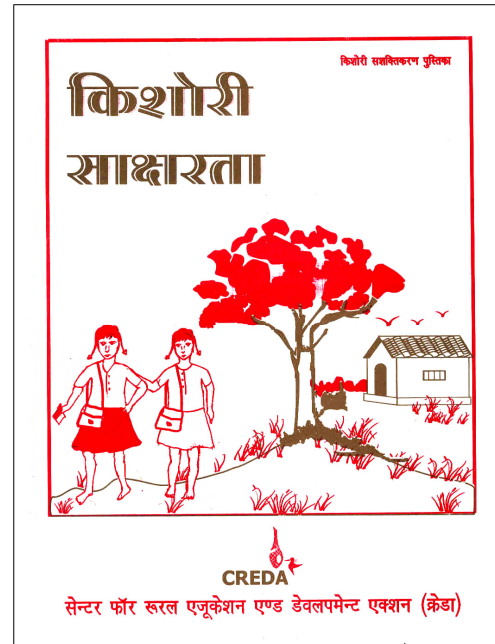
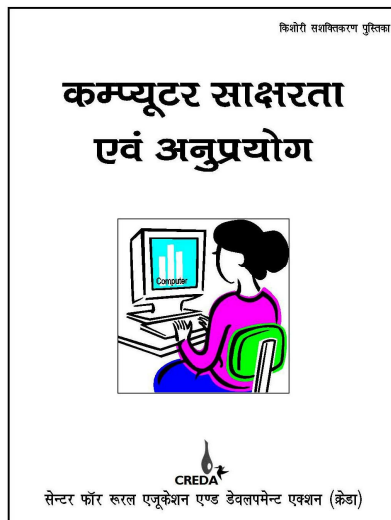
Development, Procurement and Distribution of Materials

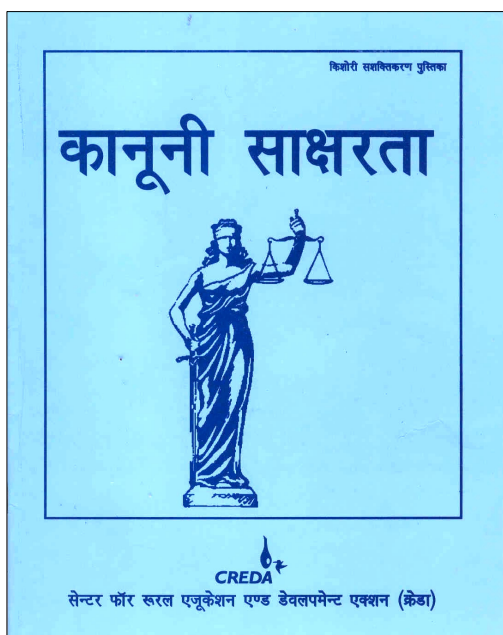
As per the need of project activities, necessary infrastructure and materials were arranged and provided to ALSCs.

According to the need of the target group, some of the teaching learning materials were developed in the institution and also purchased from other sources.



Four booklets named 'Kishori Saksharta' (Adolescent Literacy), 'Kaushal Vikas: Pak Kala Evam Phal Sanrakshan' (Skill Development: Cooking and Food Preservation), 'Kanooni Saksharta' (Legal Literacy) and 'Computer Saksharta Evam Anuprayog' (Computer Literacy and Applications) were developed, printed and distributed among the beneficiaries.





Recruitment of Staff

In order to get the experienced and committed staff two systems were applied – first, inviting application through vernacular newspaper advertisement and second, through contacts. For selection of staff, written as well as interview method were adopted and a selection committee of experts was formed. The project employed 26 full-time/part-time staff and out of this, female staff were 22 and male 4 in number.

Training of Recruited Staff

Recruited staffs were provided training. A training module was prepared by those experts of the organization who had earlier experience for working with

adolescent girl project. The training module was prepared in accordance to the objectives of the project.



Following issues were discussed during the training programme:

1. Introduction of trainees including their background and experience
2. Understanding the aspiration and problems of poor adolescent girls
3. Poor girls, their socio-economic situation and causes
4. Focus on trainer-trainees behaviour and relationship
5. Strategies to tackle classroom problems
6. Skill learning requirements of target group
7. Organizing focus group discussion (FGD)
8. Counseling skill
9. Market study
10. Market-oriented skill requirement and training
11. Building relationship among staff and sense of cooperation and coordination

- | | |
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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Literacy on various issues useful to target group 13. Legal literacy and family life education 14. Role of trainer and instructor in providing solution to personal and family problems of target group 15. Problems in running of ALSCs in rural areas and strategy to overcome the problems 16. How to make the ALSCs interesting and joyful 17. Sharing of responsibilities 18. Skill development for writing of case studies 19. Teaching of literacy and numeracy to illiterate target group 20. Report writing and presentation 21. Family visit and family counseling 22. Organizing parents' meet 23. Documentation including photographic documentation 24. Assessing medical and first aid requirement of target group and their support 25. Guidance and support to victims of family violence | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Education for budgeting, accountancy and saving 2. Family life education 3. Legal literacy 4. Moral values 5. Gender specific education and literacy 6. Mother and child care 7. Reproductive health 8. Water and sanitation 9. Immunization 10. Child labour 11. Child marriage 12. Minimum wages 13. Family violence 14. Health and hygiene 15. Superstition and taboos 16. Dowry and violence related with dowry 17. General knowledge useful in day to day life 18. Government programs for the benefit of poors |
|--|--|

Legal Literacy

The target groups were given inputs on human right knowledge and other legal entitlements so that they are equipped with knowledge useful in fighting against exploitation and injustices, such as dowry, family violence, compensation, minimum wages, and rights of women under various circumstances. The booklet comprising legal entitlements has been provided to every target group. These legal booklets have been purchased from Legal Cell of Indian Social Institute (ISI), New Delhi. On each center, a set of

Preparation of Curriculum for Education / Literacy and Skill Training

A one-day workshop was organized involving experts of the organization to prepare curriculum and training design to provide education and skill training to target group. The broader outlines are as follows:

instructional materials named '*Hamare Kanoon*' (Our Laws) were kept and used. These materials were obtained from Multiple Action Research Group (MARG), New Delhi.



The booklet '*Kanooni Saksharta*' published by CREDA was also distributed among the beneficiaries.

Health and Family Life Education

Every target group was imparted health and family life education through classroom transaction. Flip Charts, posters, were used by the instructors imparting health and family life education.



The instructional materials on health related issues were procured from Voluntary Health Association of India (VHAI), New Delhi. The ALSC staffs were provided proper orientation about the use of flip charts and other materials in classroom so that knowledge given is properly understood by the target group.

Monitoring and Supervision

Apart from ALSCs staff, other staff like Women Project Associate and two Women Counselors were orientated in providing necessary education and training support and monitoring of the project. Wherever necessary, proper guidance and instruction were provided by senior staff for successful conducting education and training program.

Award of Certificates to Beneficiaries

Certificate giving ceremony was organized in urban centres on 7th March 2009. In rural areas, because of the harvesting time, the programme will be organized on a suitable day.



3. Strategies / Processes adopted

Under the education / literacy program, the target groups were given lessons in a very simplified manner so that they are able to understand the subject or issue. The group formation system was also adopted in the class itself. The total illiterate girls were motivated to shed their hesitation and be friendly with others in the process of learning. At initial stage, an environment of friendship and cooperation was encouraged through cultural programs and personal interactions to bring the target groups closure.



Several materials in simplified form were developed to make the subject easily understandable. The skill training was discussed with the target group and only those skill trainings which were interesting, useful and have marketability were provided to the target group. The trainings were imparted in both ways i.e. theory and practical.



It is also worthwhile to mention that even mothers and other older ladies showed their interest to get enrolled in the ALSCs for learning of the skills.

The skill was provided by trained and experienced staff.



While providing skills training, illiterate and semi-literate girls were given due attention.

Zari training was organized in urban centres because this employment-oriented training has potential and requirement only in urban areas.



While providing legal education, the legal issues that are important in daily life were identified and accordingly reading materials in printed form were provided and classroom transaction was done.

The illiterate girls were helped to read and write. Now many illiterate girls are able to read and write and can also understand numeracy. These girls were

also given home work to continue their learning at home.



Under the project, 66 girls were provided computer literacy. The purpose of the programme was to enable the target group to have basic skill and knowledge of computer application. It was also thought that after gaining basic knowledge the girls will go ahead learning advance computer application and will seek the employment. Processes adopted for teaching was to classroom lecture, home exercise, monthly test, and practical knowledge. Three computers were provided by the organization and group of the girls were formed for practical

work. Each beneficiary has been provided two books on computer along with necessary stationery.

Education and literacy materials from various sources on various useful subjects were collected by the staff and other members of the organization. The materials were compiled and edited in a simplified form which could be understood to the target group. Four booklets were printed and distributed. These are:

- Kishori Saksharta
- Kaushal Vikas: Pak Kala Evam Phal Sanrakshan
- Kanooni Saksharta
- Computer Saksharta Evam Anuprayog

The parents' meetings were organized at all the centres. Two meetings were held in each month to keep the mothers informed about the progress of their daughters and motivation for continuity of the girls in the ALSCs.



Mothers were also given inputs during mothers' meet on health, legal and gender issues.



In the program schedule, days of public holidays had been lessened so that

enough days are available to target groups.

Although the project part (ALSCs) ended at par scheduled time i.e. 24th

February 2009 but the process of information collection, printing of photographs, writing of reports of various activities, and auditing of accounts continued upto 25th March 2009.

4. Problems Faced During the Project Implementation and Solutions

Initially, the target groups in rural areas were found to be engaged in activities at home and in agriculture sector. The parents were contacted and motivated to relieve the girls from other work and support them to benefit from the opportunity provided under the project. Because of the certain local phenomenon, absentism in rural centers were more as compared to urban but in the course of time, the situation was improved through parental counseling and motivation.

In one of the ALSCs, the poor Muslim girls were involved in the activities related to carpet weaving. The parents relieved them for certain period of

time to join ALSC for learning and training.

The training in Zari (embroidery) work was imparted to interested participants in the beginning. Two zari tainers were recruited to impart training to 90 girls. The zari work is an economic activity which is specifically done in urban area, hence the training was imparted at the centers in urban areas.

Due to slow learning of selected target groups, the computer literacy was not completed in specified time period. Hence, extra time was given to complete the computer literacy to achieve the target.

5. Expected Results and Achievements with Indicators

Purpose/Objective-1

To develop skills among poor and marginalized 360 adolescent girls within one year to empower them for becoming self-dependent through need-based and economically gainful skill training.

Expected Result

Social awareness in selected villages/urban locations on the issue of adolescents and their development.

Achievement

As a result of legal literacy and discussion on various other social issues, the hamlets and villages where programs have run have shown a positive awareness. The knowledge provided and discussions held on various issues at the ALSCs have impacted the families and community through the beneficiaries in the project area.



They have become aware on the issues on girls education, importance and benefit of education, violence against women, women's rights, evil of dowry system, minimum wages, child labour, gender equity, legal entitlements, money saving, family health, environment, etc. The major achievement is awareness about the importance of education of girl child which was found to be increased and in July 2008, several girl children in the project area have been enrolled in government primary school.

The other indicator is demand for opening of more ALSCs for skill development training of poor adolescent girls in the area. Women have also come to several ALSCs with their problems like FIR against husband for domestic violence, dowry related cases, payment of minimum wages, child labour, etc. Equality among boys and girls has been realized and people in the project areas condemn child marriage in rural areas. Knowledge about Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) has gone to the families and community through target groups.

Expected Result 2

360 adolescents mobilized for literacy and skill training.

Achievement

In the two batches, 366 adolescent girls were motivated and mobilized to take benefit of the component that is being provided in the form of education / literacy and skill training in ALSCs. Knowledge about family life education, budgeting, saving, housekeeping, and knowledge about their entitlements has benefited adolescent girls for better understanding of the life situation. The detailed programme was shared with the mothers and adolescent girls. The program was interesting and useful to them. We faced problem for enrolment more than the place available.

The continuity of adolescent girls in ALSCs is also indicator of proper mobilization. The skill training has resulted in self-employment although a small number in beginning but likely to be increased in future. The trainees are able to save family money by doing some work at home after training for which they were depend on market i.e. stitching of cloths of self and family members. The skill like embroidery, fabric paining, beautician course, menhdi, food preservation, soft toys making, flower making, candle making and other decorative items will certainly provide them better self-employment opportunities.

Expected Result 3

6 Adolescent Learning & Skill Centres (ALSCs) established at urban and rural locations.

Achievement

6 ALSCs established in three rural blocks and in the city block. The impact of above ALSCs in the areas has increased the demand of opening more such centers for the benefit of poor adolescent girls so that girls from poverty stricken families could learn skills values and increase their awareness on various other issues.



Purpose/Objective-2

To equip the adolescent girls with knowledge through education and literacy classes to empower them with legal, moral, practical, and family life education and motivate and encourage them to get

involved for gender equity and social justice.

Expected Result 1

360 families benefited from literacy / education and skill training.

Achievement

366 adolescent girls from rural and urban areas benefited from ASLCs. Since they belong to 366 families, indirectly 366 families also benefited from the literacy and skills learned by the adolescent girls.



There is all likelihood that the targeted girls will help the other family members in making the positive impact.



The family member of the girls started realizing about money saving in the family. The girls are also encouraging family members for saving which could be used in difficult circumstance. The skills learned by adolescent girls will help the family in saving the money which should have gone to market. Secondly, knowledge about the saving and budgeting will also have the impact on money saving.



The skills such as tailoring, embroidery, food preservation, menhdi, decorative items, beautician skill, etc is also an earning and money saving skill for the family.



Expected Result 2

Minimum 60 adolescent girls got computer literacy training.

Achievement

During the project period, computer literacy was provided to 66 girls although the target was only 60 girls. In the first batch, 21 girls were enrolled for computer literacy. 3 girls dropped out and 18 continued. Although the training period was extended, but only 8 girls could learn the computer literacy because of the low pace of understanding. Therefore, 52 more girls were to be covered in the remaining 6 months period to meet the target of 60 beneficiaries.



In the remaining 6 months, 58 girls were provided computer literacy. Hence, a total of 66 girls covered in the computer literacy component. In this period, the time schedule for computer literacy was divided into four batches of three months each at two ALSCs. Additional time was given to computer learners wherever required.



Expected Result 3

360 educated and trained adolescent girls available as social change agent in the community.

Achievement

In each batch, the literacy and skill training provided useful knowledge which resulted in attitudinal change among the girls and it is envisaged that after gaining useful knowledge, the girls will be a change agent in the family and community. This has also resulted in change of perception and attitude of the family in favour of girl child.



The target groups were found full of confidence and enthusiasm. They even decided to help other poor girls about the skills they have learned. Opposing the dowry system was the consensus of the target group and they prepared to help those adolescents and women who are victim of domestic violence.

Expected Result 4

360 adolescent girls gained knowledge about health, hygiene, legal and family life education.

Achievement

366 adolescent girls under the project are equipped with needed knowledge of health, hygiene, legal and family life education, which will have affect on family and community. The girls are able to transfer the knowledge learned from ALSCs to family members and community members and their behaviour will also change. They now have ability of being a conscious and alert person and demanding their rights particularly minimum wages.



The target groups have also shown their interest in opening beauty parlor, tailoring centre, zari work, sharing knowledge and skills with others. These are the indicators of the empowerment of the target group.



Expected Result 5

360 adolescent girls able for gainful self-employment opportunities.

Achievement

366 adolescent girls who came out of ALSCs are now helpful to the family members in supporting them with their skills, in money saving and adding some income by applying the knowledge and skills learned.



6. Lessons learnt

During the project period, following lessons were learnt:

- In rural areas, time schedule should be arranged by considering peak agriculture seasons.
- The centres should be centrally located where survey has already been done.
- The girls in rural areas should be given opportunities for exchange visit.
- The language of literature / reading materials to be provided should be as simple as possible.
- More time should be allotted for skill training than other activities.
- The project of this nature should be a continuous process to benefit disadvantaged adolescent girls.

The components of the project were found extremely useful to the adolescent girls belonging to underprivileged families of the community. After starting the project, demand from community, parents and even adolescent girls started coming for the enrolment of other girls but because of financial limit, the organization could not provide opportunity to other aspirants. It is also found that the project has created interest among the poor girls to gain skill training and learning. The project is more in demand in urban slums and other backward urban areas than the rural areas of Mirzapur district. Computer literacy has a higher demand because of the free opportunity provided to 66 learners.

7. Case Studies

Ruby Quraishi

Ruby belongs to a poor Muslim family. Her father is a daily wage earner. Due to strict *parda* (veil) system in this fundamental Muslim family, Ruby was not allowed to go to school since childhood. Hence, she remained illiterate. Centre was opened near her house, after persuasion by project staff, her father allowed her to get admission in the ALSC. The skill training, tailoring and embroidery have helped her to earn the money at home by tailoring the women cloths. Ruby also took admission in computer literacy class and it is a surprise that the illiterate adolescent girl has gained the basic knowledge of computer along with fluency in Hindi font typing on computer.



that her ambitions were suppressed because of lack of opportunity but the ALSC provided her better life opportunity to learn many skills including computer literacy. She says that she will start beauty parlor for a gainful employment and also help other poor girls about the skills she has earned at the Centre opened by CREDA. She says that the computer literacy will also be helpful to her in doing some part time job work in future. She traveled four kilometers daily to attend the ALSC situated at Gosain Talaab.

Anju Gupta

Anju Gupta aged nearly 17 year belongs to most poverty stricken family. Her father is handicapped and elder brother is a scrap collector and mother runs a tea shop for livelihood. She is deprived of formal schooling hence is illiterate. She was motivated by the staffs to join the ALSC. At the beginning, she was hesitant and shy but gradually she mixed with other girls and gained skill training in tailoring, embroidery, flower making, soft toy making, tie and dye, etc. She also learned literacy and numeracy. The books and materials provided to her are being shared by other peer groups in her locality. She says that whenever a sewing machine is



Nargis Bano

Nargis Bano lost her father at the age of 7 years. She was supported by her maternal uncle to get education upto 10th standard and could not continue further education because of economic problem. She said



available to her, she will opt for commercial tailoring.

Kaihnoor Bano

Kaihnoor Bano aged 17 years belongs to a very poor family. She is eldest among 5 sisters. Her father is a daily wage labourer. Kaihnoor is educated upto 5th standard and could not continue her education further because of extreme family poverty. She is happy to learn several skills at ALSC and says that she will utilize her skill training in gaining self-employment and help other family members in meaningful way. She has gained confidence while being at ALSC for six months training course and says that it is a change in her life, "I never imagined that I will be able to learn so many skills and literacy on various issues, but the facilities provided by CREDA has brought change in me."



know ALSC has been opened near her house, one day she walked to the Centre and requested the trainer to enroll her. She continued for six months. She says that my learning will be shared with other poor girls in and around my house. In fact, she was interested to learn certain skills like tailoring and embroidery but opportunity was not available to her. She is desirous of using her skill for income generation.

Awareness against dowry and domestic violence

An awareness programme on social evils and illegal practices was organized at ALSCs. The major problem in this area is the dowry and dowry related domestic violence. Apart from beneficiaries of ALSCs, the adolescents and women victim of dowry and domestic violence were contacting the Centres. The target groups were encouraged to come forward against dowry system and domestic violence. Such encouragement resulted in writing script and performance against social evils and illegal practice of dowry.

Muskan

Muskan belongs to a below poverty line family. Her father is wage earner and mother earns some money as maid servant by washing utensils and cleaning in few houses. She gets 70 rupees per month from each house for such works. When Muskan came to



The mothers of enrolled girls along with neighbours witnessed the performance which created awareness and empowerment. The enrolled girls have also been provided written materials on dowry and domestic violence.

Strengthening communal harmony at ALSCs

Peace and communal harmony has always been a major concern for CREDA. At ALSC also CREDA tried to strengthen the concept of communal harmony among various religious groups.



The performance through songs and drama based on communal harmony created awareness among the participants on this issue.



About CREDA

Centre for Rural Education and Development Action (CREDA) was founded in 1982 as a registered society. Since its inception, CREDA is involved in constructive activities in several districts of U.P. Since beginning, the organization focused on human rights, entitlements related and development issues. CREDA got national and international attention for its works on child labour and child rights. Its activities related to empowerment of women and adolescent girls have been widely appreciated. CREDA is also supporting in various ways many grassroots NGOs in U.P. as well as in other states of India.

The development works of the organization is based on in-depth survey and studies. The studies and researches done by CREDA are referred internationally. It continues to play important role in mobilizing rural youths to inculcate among them the leadership to fight against corruption and injustice and also play the role of catalyst for development. It is also organizing various training and orientation programme for different target groups to equip them with needed skill and motivation to work for the cause of poor and needy.

Representation of CREDA in various committees of ministries and departments of Government of India and State Government reflects its credibility and reliability in government. The organization is also contributing in policy making bodies of Government. In past, it has contributed in Sub-Group on Women and Child Labour, National Commission on Labour, Govt. of India and Sub-Group on Child Labour, Planning Commission, Govt. of India. CREDA is also contributing in evaluation of projects on child labour and education.

Various studies and researches on the activities / projects of CREDA have been carried out by development workers and researchers from India and abroad. Few years back, a scholar from University of Tokyo, Japan completed her Ph.D. thesis on CREDA and was awarded doctoral degree. This was a unique research on a voluntary organization in India. CREDA has won several national and regional level prestigious awards such as National Role Model Award and National Outlook Speak Out Award.

Thousands of the volunteers are real strength of the organization. They are active in their areas to provide need based support to poor, needy and vulnerables and also act as link between people and the organization. They continue to raise their voices against injustice to poors. CREDA has come to occupy a leading position amongst the voluntary organizations in the region. It is committed to work with Gandhian approach for development.



Centre for Rural Education and Development Action