PRAYATN is a voluntary, secular and non-profit organization. It was founded in 1992 to enable people to respond to and change their situation of inequality and injustice. We focus on education and awareness, community involvement and collective action as the driving force of social and economic change. Our work is guided by the philosophy that a community should be viewed as a potential resource, that can be honed with the skills and knowledge that will help lift them out of situation of deprivation.
Prayatn is registered under the following Acts:
- The Societies Registration Act, 1860.
- The Foreign Contributions Regulation Act (FCRA) 1976.
- Registered under PAN (Permanent Account Number, TAN (Tax Deduction Account Number) and EPF (Employee’s Provident Fund Act)
Prayatn’s vision is a just society in which men and women are equal. We believe that each and every person - irrespective of their sex, age, caste, class and religion - should have a life of freedom and dignity in which they enjoy all their human rights and have the opportunity to fully develop their potentials.

In pursuit of this vision Prayatn works to enable people facing inequality and injustice to help themselves. We aim to strengthen ties in local communities so that people can work together to bring about positive changes in their lives. We particularly encourage women to participate in this process, as they are the most marginalized, downtrodden and powerless social group in India. Prayatn gives them the opportunity to develop their decision-making skills and leadership capacity so that they can address the issues affecting their lives. Playing the role of catalysts, we help to implement sustainable development processes that will make communities self-sufficient in the long term.
The organisational strategies of Prayatn includes following,

- Enhancing local capacity to address developmental needs and ensure appropriate access to rights based entitlements thereby developing community based systems and mechanisms;
- To engage with institutions of accountability thereby developing operational partnership and collaboration to ensure access of partner communities to rightful entitlements;
- To experiment and develop child and women centred development processes for broader replication;
- To develop experience based knowledge management model thereby developing training programs for sharing of knowledge with development workers, academia, government departments and development professionals.
To facilitate the process of empowerment with special focus on the marginalized and disadvantaged sections of society i.e. women & children;
To facilitate participation of local community in programme planning, implementation and evaluation;
To mobilize social institutions and evolve people’s organisations to address problems and issues affecting the socio-politico-economic fabric of society;
To foster leadership capacities at the grass roots level which promote appropriate initiatives in the community;
To develop a system to disseminate information to create awareness and evolve a forum for policy interventions.
The organization is registered at national level and at present it is working in four states – Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Orissa. We have our presence in Dholpur, Bharatpur, Karouli and Jhalawar districts of Rajasthan, Morena district of Madhya Pradesh, Agra and Varanasi districts of Uttar Pradesh and Sundergarh district in Orissa.
Over the years of grassroots experience women and children issues have emerged as the focal point of Prayatn’s activities. After 60 years of Independence and despite remarkable steps forward in various quarters, India stands out with its bleak data on social development indicators. On all fronts i.e. health, education, governance, income and access to water and sanitation, women bear the brunt of inequitable interventions and skewed nature of power relations. Religion, culture, education are all various tools used by the society for the perpetration of this unjust value system. These values are handed down over the centuries over generations, in ways very subtle. This unjust value system, in turn presents challenges for the people particularly those who are already marginalised. Prayatn see women and children as the ultimate sufferers of these processes.
As an organisation, Prayatn is committed to bring about change in the situation of the women and children, thereby promoting people’s capacity to use the constitutional space. A change to this state of affairs can come only when the excluded community groups themselves become aware of their servitude and the structures of society. It is important for these community groups to acknowledge themselves as equal citizens having equal rights and help themselves to remodel their roles with new convictions. Prayatn’s role in this process is that of a facilitator.

It is in this context that Prayatn gears its efforts, complemented with its past experiences and perspectives, towards the future with a broader outlook which includes structural changes and new programmatic interventions. The core intervention areas of Prayatn are as under,

1. Gender and Justice
2. The Rights of the Child
3. Health
4. Strengthening Democratic Processes
5. Developing institutional capacities
Violence against women is one of the most pervasive of human rights violations, denying women equality, security, dignity, self-worth, and their right to enjoy fundamental freedom. Perennial imbalance in sex ratio in the region (the Dang region) is the ultimate outcome of the inhuman situation(s) a women face. Factors contributing to this situation include: socioeconomic forces, the family institution where power relations are enforced, fear of and control over female sexuality, belief in the inherent superiority of males, and legislation and cultural sanctions that have traditionally denied women an independent legal and social status. Though a number of constitutional safeguards exist, often state policies and inaction perpetuate or condone such violence within the domestic sphere.
Prayatn’s interventions in the broader theme of “Gender and Violence” have been informed with its decade long experience of working with women issues. Started with addressing issue of domestic violence we later realised that domestic violence is just one amongst many forms of violence against women. From aborting of female foetuses to domestic violence, the women face numerous oppressions during infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and as elders. Besides facing this visible violence, it is also about living in a climate of fear, misery, loss, mistrust, humiliation and despair. The Life Cycle Approach is the guiding approach for Prayatn’s work with women. Our intervention design is based on four principles of prevention, protection, early intervention, and ensuring accountability of duty bearers. Considering the interconnections between the factors responsible for different forms of violence against women the strategies and interventions are designed within a comprehensive and integrated framework.

1. Gender and Justice
Poverty impacts the child in critical stages of life-span. Children face many risks, including exploitation, abuse, discrimination, violence, and neglect. Having among the lowest HDI status areas in the state, the Dang region presents some very specific challenges and disproportionate impacts on children and adolescents, undermining their rights. The progress against basic indicators of child health (infant mortality, immunisation status, and malnourishment), access to education, and protection has been dismal in the region. The factors contributing to this situation include inadequate access to services for the children like education, and lack of livelihood options for the adults. On the other hand, traditional values, norms, social practices, weak child protection mechanisms also contribute to the poor child rights situation in the region.
Given this, Prayatn has been making efforts to device strategies and mechanisms to ensure an enabling environment for children so that they have an improved access to developmental opportunities. Our interventions are focussed on ensuring that there is a favourable policy environment for children that exists at local, state and national level. Started with a small intervention to ensure access of primary education to the girl child, Prayatn has now expanded its work around the core elements of child rights programming. From protecting the right to life of a girl child who is not even born to ensuring that children have a better access to developmental opportunities, Prayatn has specific interventions. To reinforce these processes and to enable a better policy environment for children Prayatn has joined hands with a number of state and national level networks working on the issue. Particularly, the issues of child protection need an immediate attention. Specific issues such as child labour in most hazardous processes including mining and brick kiln are being addressed.
Right to health is vital to all aspects of human life and well-being, and is crucial to the realization of many fundamental human rights and freedom. Women and health issues encompasses women’s rights to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical, mental and emotional health, throughout their life-cycle. Women’s reproductive and sexual health situation is particularly poor with high mortality rates, particularly during childhood and their reproductive years. The situation when coupled with the lack of skilled health personnel, infrastructure, financial resources and health systems that are responsive to the needs of excluded communities, presents a great challenge for communities and development workers. While the government through introduction of the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) is reinforcing its involvement in community health care service delivery a large gap still remains.
Prayatn takes action to improve access of partner communities to affordable health care services. Our work in the area of reproductive health includes creating a demand for health services at the local level and to enable women to access her health entitlements. Prayatn has also implemented targeted intervention project with high risk groups in terms of prevalence of HIV-AIDS. The women resource centre helps women to attain maternity benefit schemes such as the Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY). Special educational interventions are done with adolescent girls groups so that they are aware on issues of adolescent health. Prayatn organises session with children on issues of health and hygiene. Besides, to address immediate health needs of women and children we organise health and referral camps.
Prayatn recognises that there is a considerable overlap in the founding principles of rights-based approach and sustainable livelihoods approaches. Both emphasise the importance of influencing the policies, processes and institutions in ways that enable people to achieve better access to entitlements and resources. Prayatn’s present work in livelihood enhancement is very limited and is informed by livelihood assessment exercise conducted for Dholpur and Varanasi areas. The Livelihoods Initiative contributes towards strengthening livelihood opportunities of small and marginal farmers, landless labourers and empowering women’s non-farm enterprises to benefit from markets. Prayatn focuses on strengthening partner community’s organisational capabilities and enables them to evolve strategies for livelihood enhancement. Prayatn’s approach for this purpose include developing organisational and mutual collaboration of people having common livelihood needs and interests and come up with effective models of cooperation for livelihood enhancement at local level.

As mentioned earlier, Prayatn’s work in livelihood sector is in nascent stage. The livelihood intervention in Prayatn is designed in response to felt needs of the partner communities and is being build up on our past work with communities. Women and men, who were organized in community-based organisations (CBOs), are further organised according to livelihood needs and interests. Our past work has been instrumental in facilitating women access to rights based entitlements. For instance now they have better access to social security schemes and employment schemes such as MNREGS. An improved access to entitlements has also contributed to livelihood portfolio of the family. Prayatn is in a process of developing strategies towards diversification and enhancement of livelihood opportunities for its partner communities.
Primarily in the Livelihood Initiative the CBOs are being reorganised according to livelihood interests and needs. The reorganized groups are being provided with institutional capacity building support. Prayatn also engages with awareness raising activities for the communities and lobby with duty bearers with an objective to improve access of partner communities to right to work and employment. Efforts are made towards enhancing access to common property resources by small farmers by providing management and conflict resolution skills among farmers and pastoralists.

Special focus is also on women groups. They are trained in entrepreneurial and technical skills related to food processing and preservation. The groups have also been provided with necessary backward and forward market linkages. The coverage of this activity is limited to urban locations of Varanasi district.

A revolving fund has been instituted with an objective to support poor families to create livelihood asset. In Varanasi, Prayatn has organised rickshaw pullers as mutual responsibility groups. The members of these groups are provided with cycle rickshaw on ownership basis. The instalment recovered is pooled as revolving fund so that the help can be extended to other rickshaw pullers.
Democratic institutions particularly the institutions of local self governance have been natural partners of our work. Besides the affirmative action promised in the 73rd Amendment of the Indian Constitution, capacity building efforts are also required to be able to create a cadre of local leadership that is capable of transformation. Training PRI members has emerged as a critical requirement to establish good governance at the grassroots. Prayatn has constantly been working with PRI representatives towards enhancing their capacities. Given the existing social inequalities, it is imperative to help particularly the women, scheduled caste and scheduled tribes fight the disadvantages and enable them to participate in the local government processes with confidence. Prayatn organizes training covering multiple dimensions including rules and regulations, administrative issues, budgeting and finance and the implementation of development schemes. With reference to the local self governance, Prayatn also takes up research and studies to understand performance, operational bottlenecks and democratic behaviors of people.
Building institutional capacities of partner communities is the core of Prayatn’s endeavours. It is also a fact that most of the poor do not have access to the wider social networks that are usually needed to lead a dignified life. Considering that creation of vibrant community based institutions is fundamentally a social process, Prayatn has introduced specific input(s) to create and nurture community based institutions. Prayatn envision that in long run the CBOs will have a better clarity of role in over development processes in respective villages.
Pushing the CBOs from a stage where they participate in development processes to a stage CBOs being custodian of all the development processes is a difficult task. The institutional building processes needs to be supported with considerable specialised inputs. Prayatn has developed curriculum and training methodologies for developing CBOs in its area. The capacity building element considers a distinctive phase-wise input plan for community based institutions. About 150 CBOs have been formed by Prayatn. There is a systemic process to assess growth and needs of these CBOs. The process is being done periodically. Apex level institutions called as Jago Sakhi Sanghthan (JSS) have also been formed. The JSS has successfully undertaken several interventions towards ensuring access of women to justice and entitlements. The growth and needs of CBOs is being monitored using specific tools. The capacity building needs to CBOs are being supported with appropriate training and exposure session by internal and external experts.
To facilitate smooth functioning of different programs and field processes, Prayatn has constituted support cells. The support cells include Training and Development Cell, Monitoring and Evaluation Cell and Research and Documentation Cell. Support cells work at centralised level and provide inputs to field teams. Each of these cells have specific mandate and objectives. Prayatn also extends specialised support and guidance to other organisations through these cells.

Throughout the process of implementing the project, concurrent feedback on quality and effectiveness of field processes is required. The Monitoring and Evaluation Cell take the time to review the status of the field processes. Through application of participatory approaches to M&E, the cell focuses on keeping a track on change processes. The status review measures the results of the activities already implemented against the initial plan and identifies possible problems that need to be addressed. Besides, the concurrent monitoring processes are always helpful in underlining the areas of mid course interventions so that the processes can be lead towards the desired goals.
Capacity building remains a significant part of Prayatn’s work. The rights based approach considers capacity building as the most critical tool for empowerment. Training and development is a highly developed area and needs specialised input. Prayatn has inducted a Training cell. The role of this cell is to facilitate internal and external capacity building processes. The Training Cell team extend support to field teams in conducting training needs assessment, training design, developing reference and resource materials etc. Prayatn adopts the androgogical model of learning. The training cell has a resource base related to development trainers, resource material and training methodologies. The cell also maintains Prayatn’s library. Our library has a collection of more than 2000 books and periodicals.
General Body

The General Body, composed of the general members, is the supreme body of Prayatn. All major policy decisions are taken by the General Body. The General body meets once a year. The decisions in the Annual General Body meeting are made on the basis of consensus or majority votes. Attendance of at least 51% general members is the required quorum. The chairperson of the executive board chairs the Annual General Body Meetings.

The Executive Board

The Executive Board is formed with representation of various stakeholders having years' of experience in community development work at National and International level. The executive board has been formed through election and nominating the competitive members from the General Body. The Executive Board meets thrice in year. Agenda presented by the committee members, executive director and the staff members is tabled in the meeting for discussion and taking necessary decisions. The Committee makes decisions regarding operation and programmes of the organisation under the policy guidance provided by the General Body. The Chief Executive Officer also acts as member secretary of executive board of Prayatn. On behalf of the board and the general body CEO performs the mentoring functions. Besides, he is responsible for program development, resource management and mobilisation.
The Management functions

The management functions related to grant management, resource mobilisation and program development is led by the Chief Executive Officer. The accounts and administration unit work in close coordination with the CEO. Besides, the CEO provides guidance to the Executive Director for timely and appropriate implementation of approved plans. The management function (Programme) of Prayatn is led by Executive Director. ED is responsible to implement the decisions made by the General Body and the Executive Committee and implement the approved plans and programmes. ED takes decisions regarding day-to-day administrative functions i.e. standard procedures of office (SPOs) as well as implementation of the programme activities in accordance with the guidance of policy decisions.

A management committee under the leadership of the Chief Executive Officer take decisions on the management issues of office, staff and programme management. Other members of the management committee include Executive Director and In-charge of programme, and head of finance and administration.

Prayatn has formulated various guidelines to describe the policies and procedures that relate to the administration, accounts and programme implementation. These include Accounts Manual, Human Resource Development Policy, Child Protection Policy, Gender Policy, Procurement Policy and Service Manual. The intention of the policies is to maintain systematic discipline, to have an appropriate and effective control over utilization of resources and promoting practice of accountability and efficiency.
Organisational Structure

Executive Committee

Chief Executive

Executive Director

Group Coordinator

Program

Group Coordinator
Research, Documentation, Publication and Monitoring

Group Coordinator
Human Resource Development

Group Coordinator
Finance and Administration

Project Coordinators, Project Officers, Advocacy Officer

Monitoring Officer, Research Officer, Documentation Officer

HRD Officer

Finance Officers, Accounts Officers

Field Coordinator, Process Facilitator, Community Organiser, Animator

Research Associate, Program Executive, Computer Operator Documentation Experts

Field Administrator

Field Administrator Field Accounts Officers, Store Keepers
Remembering Vijay N. Vadhyar

Very few people in the contemporary social development world understand human rights to the depth that you did.

You dedicated prime decades of your life living in remotest deprived areas to feel the suffering and the challenges of the most marginalised sections of the society and learned ways to bring them out of their misery and indignity.

We, at Prayatn, remember you as our Mentor who was not just a Master but a Genius of Social Work and a true Gem of a Person.
Our core programme promoting gender equality has a sound grounding in principle and practice. Revolving around and gathering its roots from the burning issue of sex selective abortion it aims at comprehensive handling of the issue and strives towards integrated empowerment package for women. Men and women are organized into groups famously called as Jago Sakhi in the region. Jago Sakhi is not an entity; it is a movement having in its fold the strength, conviction and aspirations of around 10,000 people across the four districts of Rajasthan (Dholpur, Bharatpur, Karauli and Jhalawar). Receiving capacity building inputs on various topics Jago Sakhi is a silent revolution in generating a climate of gender sensitivity.
The study on PCPNDT Act is one of its kind in the entire country, which looks at the implementation of the Act across the state of Rajasthan. The study has provided valuable insights into the status of implementation, the gaps and challenges and enlightens on the way ahead. The government has taken the study report as a reference for its action for reforms.

The training of Asst. Public Prosecutors on Gender and Crime against Women is widely acclaimed by Department of Prosecution, Rajasthan and HCM-RIPA, a state training institute. This is a pioneering effort which first time happened in India wherein judiciary allowed any external agency to train their people. A training module has been prepared and approved as a reference training toolkit for future trainings of Asst. public prosecutors both in the inbuilt trainings of the Department and as a separate training programme.

We have successful in creating a strategic alliance with the district administration in our constituency. In Dholpur, we have strong presence through Women Support Centre in police headquarters. A Women resource centre has also been established in association with district administration in District Collectorate.
Prayatn has been active in the effective implementation of PCPNDT Act at the grassroots level. Appropriate Authorities that are an important link in stopping sex determination and sex selective abortions are functioning effectively due to strong community pressure and community based monitoring mechanisms. Similarly through advocacy and lobbying efforts the Advisory Committee at district and subdistrict level are made functional. The concept of medical audit has been developed to monitor the medical clinics to stop sex selective abortions.

The organization facilitated formation of a separate PCPNDT Cell at the state level to oversee the implementation of the Act. A separate PCPNDT coordinator has been appointed for the task. Rajasthan is the first and only state having this structure. This has also resulted in formation of district level PCPNDT Cell and appointment of PCPNDT Cell coordinator in each district.
**Child friendly village:** Prayatn has been working on the issues of children and the concept of child rights has been introduced in the working area. Communities are sensitized and capacities are built towards the issue of child right to survival, development, protection and participation. Based on various parameters 90 villages in Dholpur district are declared as child friendly villages. These parameters relate to community sensitivity, behavior and action towards issues of child rights violation. There is significant reduction in number of incidences and practices of child beating at home, corporal punishment at schools, child abuse, sex selective abortion and infanticide. Child forums are constituted and nurtured which voices child concerns, needs and problems. Child marriage in the area has reduced drastically. The village has also developed internal committees and taken oath to work for protection of child rights.

**Community Based Systems and Mechanisms:** Prayatn has successfully facilitated evolution of community based systems and mechanisms to protect children’s rights and other issues of social cause such as gambling, alcohol consumption, child marriage, death feast etc. In many villages of Prayatn intervention areas the communities have developed mechanisms to address various issues. There are very clear guidelines for awareness, sensitization, pressure building and action. This has resulted in very sharp decline on various community evils and ill habits and in last two years no case of child marriage, dowry death, domestic violence etc has been reported in the area.
Prayatn gratefully acknowledges the support of the following organizations, who are participating and collaborating with our work. Their co-operation and encouragement are invaluable to us. We take this opportunity to extend our sincere thanks and gratitude to them. They are as follows:

- UNICEF, Rajasthan
- ACTIONAID International, Rajasthan (Supporting under FCRA)
- Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India
- IFES / USAID, New Delhi (Supporting under FCRA)
- Rajasthan State AIDS Control Society (RSACS), Jaipur, Rajasthan
- District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), Bharatpur and Dholpur, Rajasthan
- District Administration, Bharatpur and Dholpur, Karouli, Jhalawar, Rajasthan
- Save the Children – Bal Raksha Bharat (Supporting under FCRA)
- DFID through Save the Children (Supporting under FCRA)
- Hope for Children, UK (Supporting under FCRA)
- Meljol, Mumbai (Supporting under FCRA)
- Aid-et-Action, Jaipur, Rajasthan (Supporting under FCRA)
- Room to Read, Jaipur, Rajasthan (Supporting under FCRA)
- IFMR / JPAL / UNDP, New Delhi
- Back to Life, Germany (Supporting under FCRA)
- Counterpart international (Supporting under FCRA)
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