



Highlights of this Quarter

Reached out relief to 12,500 people living in relief camps following violence between Bodos & Adivasis in December

- **"Be The Change"** – a College OutReach Programme Begins.
- Unnati Vocational Centre Started in the ant's campus.
- Peace Drama team performs in Delhi.
- A new Executive Director joins **the ant**.

Riots and Relief

Violence and trouble also broke out in our area after militants gunned down Adivasis in 2 other districts on Christmas eve. We were suddenly faced with thousands of people – both Adivasis and Bodos - fleeing their villages in our Deosri cluster. Since we had been working in the area for years now, many of people who fled to live in relief camps were known to us. They were either women from our groups or children in our evening study centres or farmers we had worked with. Thinking of the thousands sleeping in the open in the severe December cold gave us sleepless nights.

Thanks to donations from **Caring Friends**, we could give relief to thousands of families. Supplementing inadequate government supplies, we distributed blankets; tarpaulin sheets; soaps; masala packets to over 2500 families in relief camps.



Men from Koraibari guard their village after 25 houses were burnt down. Burnt grains smoulder even 5 days after being burnt.



Families live in the open under make-shift tents in Deosri relief camp. 850 plastic tenting sheets were distributed to such families.



175 sets of cooking utensils were distributed to families – both Bodos and Adivasis - whose houses were either burnt or looted.



Our volunteers make innumerable trips to and fro with tenting materials as there were no vehicles to hire in the many days of bandhs. We distributed 850 tarpaulin and 500 blankets.



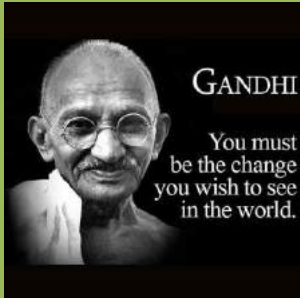
Ant team getting camp inmates to organise their tents so that 7500 people in Deosri LP School Camp have space to stay and also makes relief distribution more manageable.

Currently, we are supporting coaching classes of matriculation students who have been displaced. We helped the Students Unions of both the Bodo and the Adivasi communities to start residential coaching classes and apart from paying for full time teachers, we are supporting with supplementary food items like oil, daal, masalas etc. We are also working with other NGOs to see if we can start Cash-For-Work Programmes etc.

It is one and half months that people have been living in the relief camps. There is a crisis brewing as the government has declared the camps closed to force people back to their homes. Camp inmates refuse to go unless the government gives them in writing what their compensation will be, how they will rebuild their lives and how they will be protected from further attacks. Hunger stares in the face of the inmates as rations have stopped and so has health care. We are trying working to help break the deadlock between the people and the authorities. Because of this crisis, the regular development activities in Deosri supported by the **Arpan Foundation (U.S.A)** was **disrupted**, but our team there has managed to get on track some of the regular work.



Holding a meeting with Relief Camp inmates in Deosri and also various local organisations to discuss camp management issues. 3 Adivasi relief camps with 10,000 population came up on 26th December next to our field



BTC (Be-The-Change) Programme

Heeding Gandhiji's call, we have started a new Youth OutReach Programme called "BTC" or "*Be The Change*" Programme. We are partnering with 6 Junior and Senior Colleges in nearby towns where children from our villages (if they have not dropped out already!) go for higher studies. We will be carrying out regular sessions with around 200-250 students a year and through an interesting, activity based curriculum. The main goal is to build up self-aware, socially sensitive citizens who are also willing and skilled to take responsibility and action for change.



Youth Peace Drama in Delhi.

In July 2014, we started a process of building up a group of selected youth from various communities in conflict – especially the Bodo and Bengali Muslims.

Using drama, we created safe spaces for them to get



to know and work with each other. The team created their own drama and took the message of non-violent conflict resolution all over Chirang especially in places affected by the 2012 Bodo-Bengali Muslim conflict. Last month, in January 2015, the most active youth were taken to Delhi where they gave 8 performances in schools, colleges & Universities. We are told that the issues portrayed by this team stirred a lot of discussion even after they left.

Unnati Vocational Training Centre started in the ant's campus.



In collaboration with **Unnati** of Bangalore, we started our youth vocational training centre on the 15th December 2014. The new Multi -Purpose Training Centre welcomed the first batch of 10 trainees to 2 trades – retail sales (for matric passed youth) and admin assistant (for graduates). All students are taught Basic Spoken English and computer, values and also a trade. **Unnati** will

be adding on trades for under-matric unemployed youth in the next batch. We also have hostel facility for up to 30 youth to stay. We heartily thank each and every donor and friend for their generous support towards construction of the building and for helping make the centre happen.



A new Executive Director joins the ant

Sh. Bimal Saini joined the ant as its Executive Director (ED). With a rural management degree from IRMA (Anand, Gujarat), Bimalji has 32 years of experience of working on issues of livelihoods and economic development in different parts of India. He has worked both to organize wooden toymakers in Saharanpur and well as spent many years in the corporate sector. We are confident that Bimalji's experience and leadership will not only mean more effective teams but also efficient admin and management systems. This will help us deliver high quality work and also scale up our efforts and outreach. The founders Jenny and Sunil will continue to guide and mentor the new ED and ensure a smooth transition. They will be responsible to the organisation by also taking turns to be on the Governing Board.

