

MARVELS OF MOBILE TECHNOLOGY UNRAVELLED!

It has been about a year since Radio Sangharsh, a platform to address rural problems using mobile phones, was launched in the Singrauli district of Madhya Pradesh. For the first time, people living in the Mahan forest region are using this simple mobile radio tool to report corruption, human rights violations, stories of their livelihood and culture, and to demand development that benefits each and every individual.

Hundreds of localities, that are under the direct impact of the coal mining in the Mahan block, have now become citizen journalists with Radio Sangharsh. In the past few months, reports regarding a range of issues like environment and corruption have been received through Radio Sangharsh.

Greenpeace is in high spirits thanks to the increasing participation of the villagers and their support in our mission to save the jungle. Radio Sangharsh strives to protect the environment and protect the livelihood of hundreds of villagers in Mahan.

Last month, the Radio Sangharsh team submitted a memorandum to the District Magistrate on severe water crisis and cases of corruption prevailing in Singrauli. The DM promised to take action and within a few days, 4 out-of-order hand pumps were repaired, putting an end to the water scarcity in Amelia, Singrauli.

Since last year, apart from continuous on ground presence to connect with the people and their problems; around 40 'amplifiers' from four villages were trained to further train the community on how they can report via mobile radio (the latest Amplifiers' workshop being held in May with 12 amplifiers from 4 new villages to increase the reach of the Radio Sangharsh network). We await the government to end issues that are victimising the people.

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THE
UNFILTERED
TRUTH



EDITORIAL

From the desk of:

Samit Aich
Executive Director
Greenpeace India

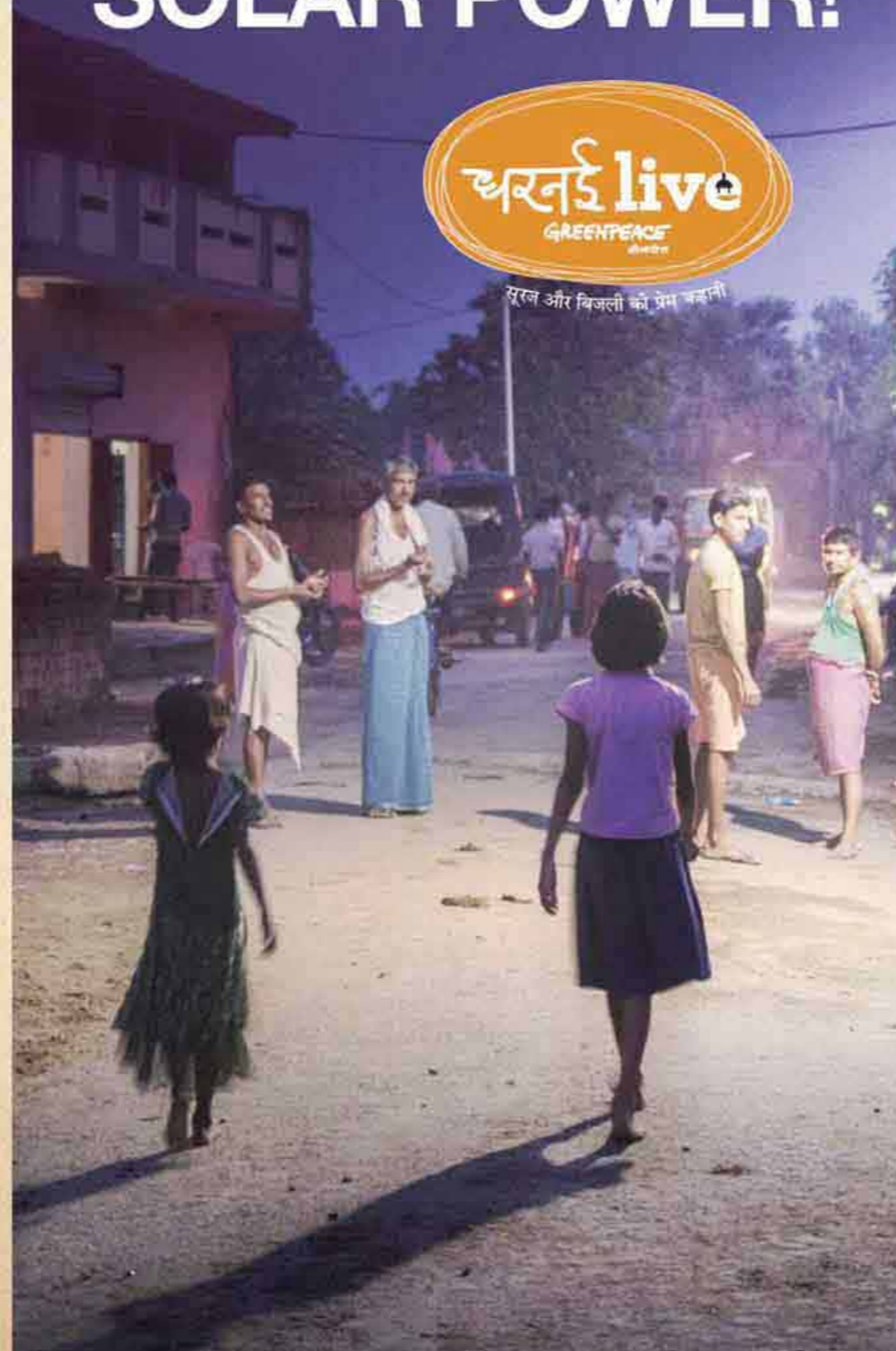
Development is about transforming lives, not just the economy. We, Greenpeace India, truly believe in this, as much as we do in our values of nonviolence, bearing witness to environmental crimes and complete financial independence. Our values are an inseparable part of our work culture and our campaigns that subsequently help us in effective lobbying and to tackle authorities.

In view of the recent IB report that slams Greenpeace as anti-development, I am actually glad that the much needed debate on development and the environment has finally got triggered. The truth is that today in India, development is limited to only a handful of cities, and millions of people in our villages still have no access to electricity and a decent standard of life. Greenpeace aims to peacefully buckle down the worst form of violence i.e. poverty, and is relentlessly promoting a people-powered-development paradigm which also ensures the safety of millions of trees, endangered wildlife and livelihood of thousands of villagers.

The elephant in the room is the fact that climate change is a big crisis waiting to collapse and gravely affect us if we don't address it immediately. Greenpeace is proud of and yet humbled by the immense financial support of about 300,000 people that we have received so far since our inception here in India.

I am confident of the Greenpeace team being in the right purview of development and the faith of all the supporters we have, like yourself. After all, the onus of keeping our environment and the natural resources protected and preserved is in our own hands.

FROM DIESEL GENERATORS TO 100% SOLAR POWER!



Imagine one day of your life without electricity, and that feeling when it finally gets restored. Now imagine your entire life without it and then one day, having a bulb light up in your house.

More than 450 households in the village Dharnai, Bihar now have access to electricity, after more than 30 years of being in the dark. Greenpeace India, with the help of BASIX and CEED, has set up a solar powered smart micro-grid in the village that is supplying clean electricity to the entire village, 24x7. Decentralised and a sustainable solution to rural electrification, where central grid has completely failed people for decades. If this isn't development, then what is?

25 year old Soni Devi is a farm labourer in Dharnai, and the benefits she is receiving with uninterrupted access to electricity are multidimensional. Lack of electricity aggravates safety issues for women, since there are deaths and rapes that have happened in the dark. However, with the solar project lighting up the houses, there is a hope that has lit up too. "I can now live with dignity" she says.

The new shining Dharnai has had the villagers look forward to a better standard of life with more economic opportunities. The tremendous amount of happiness seen on the faces of the villagers is beyond description. They have weathered the storms all these years and deserve all our support. And of course, a big shout out to the beautiful shining Sun up in the sky!

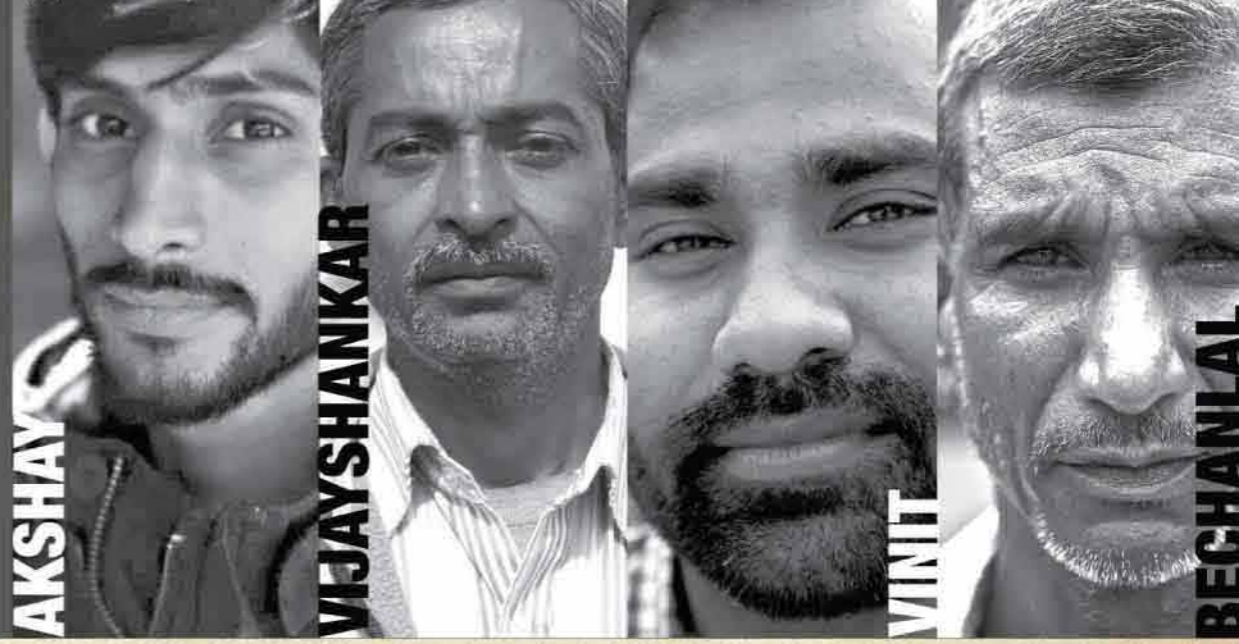
UNWAVERING COURAGE OF ACTIVISTS IN MAHAN

The ongoing struggle in Mahan is a classic example of a people-powered movement to save our forests and the environment. Greenpeace, together with the Mahan Sangharsh Samiti and lakhs of supporters, is determined to save the forests- a source of livelihood for over 50,000 villagers from 54 villages and home to 600 innocent wildlife species. Unfortunately, Essar secured the stage II clearance for Mahan coal block early this year.

The month of May was exceptionally tense. Eighty heroic Van Satyagrahis protested and successfully stopped work in the Essar-led coal mine in Mahan. Mining activity is not only destroying the forests on which they depend for livelihood, but has also resulted in tremendous pollution levels in the area. In a turn of events, four Greenpeace and MSS activists were arrested on unknown charges, and one of them assaulted by police. Owing to the intense situation, global support has poured in to support the Van Satyagraha movement to save 5 lakh trees from being chopped down!

Greenpeace and MSS filed a case on 20th May to challenge the Mahan coal block clearance since it was based on hundreds of forged signatures of villagers and clearly violates the Forests Rights Act.

The movement is getting stronger and bigger thanks to the committed support of volunteers and supporters across India!



BE THE REVOLUTION! #IAMMAHAN

In an unprecedented show of support, over 1500 volunteers from 113 locations across the globe stood up to show support for the fight in Mahan, as part of solidarity events organised by Greenpeace across India and globally. Volunteers staged photographs with messages like #IamMahan and #StandForForests along with placards reading the name of their cities. It was incredibly overwhelming to receive support from far-off towns like Budgam in Jammu and Kashmir, Imphal in the north-east and Tirunelveli in south, enthusiastic volunteers from various cities in the USA, Canada, Greece, Czech Republic, Thailand, Philippines, Tunisia, Yemen, Slovakia and Nepal also took part in the global event.

Our campaign Junglistan is relentlessly mobilising more and more people together to stand up for a region, Mahan, that plays a significant part in keeping the world environment and climate stable. Support for the Mahan forests is growing fast, totalling a number of 1,043,204 Junglistan supporters till date!

Looking at the growing support for Mahan, Essar should definitely address the grave environmental issues at hand, or batten down the hatches.

SHE'S COMING HOME!

Yes, your ship is finally free! Early in June, the Russian authorities decided to release the Arctic Sunrise back into our hands. Currently, it is undergoing essential repairs in Murmansk. The Sunrise and her crew were detained illegally by Russian forces in international waters after a peaceful protest against Arctic oil drilling eight months ago.

While we wait for it to return, our mission to save the Arctic goes on in full swing! Greenpeace activists blocked oil rigs belonging to Gazprom and Statoil in Netherlands and Norway last month, from going to drill in the fragile Arctic ecosystem.

As long as Greenpeace is there, nobody can drill in the Arctic!



THE MAHUVA CAMP Urban ⇌ Rural

-Ali, Greenpeace India volunteer and activist

“ Words fail me when I try to describe my experience of being a part of the Mahuva Camp in Mahan, facilitated by Greenpeace India. The camp intended to bridge the gap between the urban and rural by inviting about 28 participants to visit the Mahan forests and live with the villagers.

There are abundant Mahuva trees in the forests and the flower is used in making soaps, liquor, perfume, ayurvedic products and occasionally also used in cooking. Mahuva picking is one of the main sources of livelihood generation and we volunteered to pick Mahuva from the forest everyday from 4am and in this manner contributed to the struggle by raising money for it.

We got opportunities to explore the forests and interact with the locals. I saw how the innocent people are paying the price of the perks of development that we city dwellers enjoy. It was an eye opening realisation of how far the urbanites are from the realities of the world. My belief in renewable energy has become stronger after witnessing the effects of hazardous open mines and mining related tragedies. I am inspired by the villager's bravery to fight for their rights. ”