

## **A message from President, PREM's Desk.....**

It is not something usual and still it has been the case with PREM to its credit. PREM has lived beyond its silver jubilee to tell the tale of the unbeaten completion of its 40 years' commitment to the cause of the marginalised during its grand celebration held in Mohana on the 19<sup>th</sup> February, 2023. Countless of the underprivileged, whom **PREM had led through the path to liberation**, had, on the day, thronged the place of assembly, where had set out the People's Rural Education Movement in 1982.

Founded on the noble concrete objective of total transformation of the marginalised including the tribal, Dalit, fisher people and landless famers, the process had aimed at their overall development in all the realms of human life economic, social and political. Social transformation was the focal area of attention and action though. The span of Economic development varies according to its kind, customers and the entrepreneurs. It may be materialised within a month's time or a year. Social transformation, however, takes longer period of time for its realisation and it all depends upon the strength of the communities. In fact these debilitated and oppressed communities necessitated persistent multi-pronged means for them to be awakened and empowered to rise to the standing as we find them to be today.

The one thing of utmost importance that an NGO or a GO ought to pay heed to is the fact that it is not realistic to think of the attainment of a community's development without its prior liberation; pragmatically Mukti (liberation) and Pragati (development) go hand in hand and the former invariably precedes the latter and they are reciprocally complementary to each other. ***Development can be envisioned only when there is liberation from Socio-Civil bondage in place.*** The empirical evidence standing in favour of the logic is the inability of the country to achieve the constitutional goals even after 66 years of its independence on account of its failure in dealing with the root causes. The concept was known and clear to PREM from the very inception of its expedition on the work towards and the working principal mantra of ***'Mukti and Pragati'***.

The first step PREM had taken was education as a tool towards the liberation and empowerment of every individual as well as the community. The second strategic measure was eco-friendly livelihood adventures, comprising agro-

forestry and organic farming both of which called for plantation on forest land, that used to be denuded for shift cultivation, and the protection and conservation of existing forests.

Women, almost the 50% of the population, were from prejudice, deprived of opportunities along decisive domains of life and democratic functionality such as education, economic growth and governance; PREM's prioritised intervention on women's emancipation has elevated them to such status as to bargain efficiently and have full access to their entitlements. Gender disparity has considerably diminished. Addressed fairly well, caste discrimination, an equally repulsive issue, also has fallen drastically.

The public and government actors as well as Civil Society Organizations would usually tend to do charity works bringing about merely transient changes or momentary relief but not lasting solutions that is wanted. PREM did set aside charitable activities terming them futile and unproductive for the reason and concentrated upon sustainable changes, highly essential for long term subsistence. Besides support for professional and vocational education of numerous Adivasi and Dalit scholarly children, immense initiatives have been taken on and investment made in various farm, non-farm and off-farm livelihood activities which have unfailingly and sustainably effected adequate standard of living. A systematic business plan, the art of which the women's groups have been equipped with, could fetch a family an income between Rs.12000/- and 15000/- per month today. PREM has thus accomplished landmark in the fields of education, health, livelihood and good governance; these have gained all-embracing appreciation and wide spread acclamation so much so that they stood as models for the state and the central governments to accept, replicate and scale them up with PREM's support.

The functionaries of PREM do not believe it to be an institution. To them its identity is the movement by People's Organisations that had evolved from grass roots to the national level in the course of the consciousness building and promotion of human resources and unveiling inner potentials. People became critically conscious of the structural causes of their status and embarked upon concerted battle for the realisation of their rights; they staged protest rallies and did unyielding lobby and advocacy with the policy makers and administrative bodies at state and the central levels for policies, provisions and decisions in their favour and have been successful of bringing in positive end results. The myriad of achievements during the forty years of journey are

nothing but the fruits of incessant and persevering mounting pressure exerted by the critical mass PREM had built and facilitated.

The future road map of PREM is to carry forward the work towards Gram Swaraj in alignment with the vision of Mahatma Gandhi the father of the nation; this is to shape up every village into a model village that would emerge strengthened economically, socially and politically. What is more is that all the people of a village would coexist as in a family with love, truthfulness and the sense of justice. If this is done and realised in reality in all respects as intended, mankind can find available **“Heaven here on Earth itself”** to enjoy it before passing over to the next world.