



## Oxfam India calls for closing the gap between the two Indias

*New strategy launched by Ms. Nisha Agrawal, CEO, Oxfam India and Mr. Rahul Bose will focus on seven lagging states and four lagging groups*

*~ FOCUS STATES: Assam, Bihar, Orissa, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand ~  
~ FOCUS GROUPS: Women v/s Men; Dalits v/s non Dalits; Tribals v/s Non-tribals; and Muslims v/s non-Muslims~*

**New Delhi, April 16.** Oxfam India's new strategy for 2010–2015 was launched by Ms. Nisha Agrawal, CEO, Oxfam India and Mr. Rahul Bose, Global Ambassador, Oxfam here at Constitution Club today. The strategy aims at reducing the extreme development disparities that exist among various socio cultural groups and states of India. The new strategy formulated by integrated researches and discussions with academicians, social activists, government officials and development experts revolves around the three key pillars of change: an active citizenship, an effective and accountable state and a responsible and accountable private sector.

Deeply concerned over the widening divide between the two Indias - the developed and the underdeveloped - and the lack of an inclusive development path that India is currently on, Oxfam India has given the call for closing the gap between four groups of people -- *women and men; dalits and non dalits; tribals and non-tribals; and muslims and non-Muslims.*

Launching the new strategy, Mr. Rahul Bose, Global Ambassador for Oxfam said, "I share Oxfam's concern over the widening divide between the two Indias - the developed and the underdeveloped - and the many miles the country has to travel to tread a truly inclusive path of development. I also support Oxfam India's call for closing the gap between four groups of people -- women and men; Dalits and non-Dalits; tribals and non-tribals; and Muslims and non-Muslims. As an active citizen of India, I have been supporting many of these causes in the past and I am passionately committed to also supporting them in the future through Oxfam India."

Ms. Nisha Agrawal, CEO, Oxfam India addressed the media and elaborated on the rationale, methodology, new focus areas and implementation plans of the strategy.

"Among all poverty indicators, it is the dalits, tribals and Muslims who are found to be worse off than the others. While there has been a growing assertion among the dalits led by its middle class intellectuals and politicians, a similar pattern is yet to emerge among the tribals and the Muslims," says Nisha Agrawal, Chief Executive Officer, Oxfam India, adding: "And despite positive changes in the policy environment and progressive legislation, Indian women continue to face discrimination on all fronts, including inside and outside their homes.

While India has already become the third largest economy (in terms of purchasing power parity)

after USA and China and as per the World Bank and has seen consistent growth rates between 6-9% for the last five years, second only to China, even today, according to World Bank parameters of 1.25 \$ a day, 456 million people or approximately 42% of the people in India are poor. It is also worth noting that every third poor in the world is an Indian; every third illiterate in the world is an Indian too and approximately half of its children are malnourished. India also ranks deplorably high in maternal deaths (in many states higher than sub-Saharan Africa).

Oxfam India is now seeking to focus its programs in a few key thematic and geographic areas so as to maximize impact. It will focus its work in seven states that have above average poverty rates and have lagged in the post-liberalization period and would require strategic intervention:

Assam, Bihar, Orissa, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. "Since roughly two-thirds of poverty is concentrated in these states, Oxfam India will focus two thirds of its resources here and use one third of its resources to respond to specific issues in the rest of India. In view of the increasing number of urban pockets of acute poverty, it will include an urban component in its programs and address urban-specific issues." Nisha informed.

Oxfam India has also recognised certain cross-cutting perspectives to its work. "Given India's young population, we will try to engage with young people to develop active citizens amongst them," informs Nisha. Oxfam India will also be focussing its efforts on building the capacity of its staff, partners and communities to understand as well as address discrimination by making people aware of their own perceptions, prejudices and facilitating an understanding of others. It would work towards building partners capacity to address communal conflict and foster peace. Oxfam India will seek to build up a program of support to tackle the special issues of peace building in Jammu and Kashmir and the North-East of India.

The other key areas of work for the future would be to influence the role of private sector in poverty reduction and also explore key aspects of India's growing role at the South Asia regional as well as international level from the perspective of influencing policies and programs for a poverty free region and world. It will also seek to build an active and international platform of civil society groups across northern and southern countries.

| <b>Focused goals as per the thematic priorities for 2010 – 2015</b> |  |
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| <b>Economic Justice</b>   | To make more women and men to realize their right to secure and sustainable livelihoods  |
| <b>Essential Services</b>   | To make people living in poverty, especially women and girls, to realize their rights to accessible  |
| <b>Gender Justice</b>   | To make women in all communities to gain power over their lives and the live free from violence through changes in attitudes, ideas and beliefs about gender relations, and through increased levels of women's active engagement and critical leadership in institutions, decision making and change process  |
| <b>Humanitarian Responses and Disaster Risk Reduction</b>           | To make all women and men in humanitarian crises to be assured both the protection and the assistance they require, regardless of who or where they are or how they are affected, in a manner consistent with their rights. Fewer people to suffer deprivation as a result of conflict, calamity and climate change and to reduce risks and building community resilience to disasters |

“Oxfam India is seeking to gradually transform itself from essentially being a grant administering and monitoring agency to an active member of Indian civil society and a rights based advocacy organization. Our advocacy will be based on the grassroots work that it supports. To understand better what is working well and what is not, we are committed to set some of the key processes in place, and work towards setting up community based monitoring systems to track and use the outcomes to enhance programme quality and ensure rights based approach in programmatic interventions,” says Nisha.

Talking about his association with Oxfam, Rahul said : “It is rare to find non-profit organisations working at both ends of the spectrum-policy and advocacy on one hand, and grassroots initiative on the other. Oxfam gives me the chance to do just that. Another reason why my work with them is unbelievably stimulating and challenging is because they have some of the brightest people on the planet.”

The new Oxfam India partnership policy envisages both funding and non-funding partnerships with a wide range of development actors—grassroots NGOs, academic institutions, research think tanks, national and global advocacy NGOs, etc. The proposed patterns of funding relationship include maintaining the diversity of partner size (micro, small, medium and large) but establishing limits for each category; establishing longer term relationships with partners and to fund each partner for a maximum 10-12 year cycle (through two strategy periods); and wherever feasible, provide core funding rather than project-by-project funding to partners.

At the moment, Oxfam India is upscaling its fundraising operations across various cities, to expand its supporter base and to build active citizenship by engaging the rich and middle class in India in addressing the many development challenges facing our country. Our experiments with running in-house fund-raising operations in Bangalore and New Delhi have paid off and we would be opening six new fundraising offices, on similar models in the next six months. These offices would be located at Mumbai, Pune, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, besides multiple operations in the existing cities. “In the next five years, we are also going to test various new techniques of fundraising, like internet and web, direct mailing, Trailwalker, special events, tele-facing and direct response television, which were not used by us till now. Brand awareness and communicating with donors are provenly crucial for connecting with larger numbers of people. We would be dedicatedly working on these aspects in the years to come to make Oxfam India a household name,” informs Nisha

## **About Oxfam India**

**Oxfam India** is a newly created Indian non-governmental organization integrating the 60-year-old India operations of 6 separate International Oxfam affiliates working in the country. It came into being on 1 September, 2008 with an Indian staff and an Indian board.

It is a member of Oxfam International, which is a global confederation of 14 Oxfams (Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hong Kong, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Netherlands, Quebec, Spain, and the US). Two new Oxfams are currently forming including India and Japan.

The Oxfams are rights-based organizations that fight poverty and injustice by linking grassroots programming (through partner NGOs) to local, national and global advocacy and policy-making. All of Oxfam’s work is framed by our commitment to five broad rights-based aims: the right to a sustainable livelihood, the right to basic social services, the right to life and security, the right to be heard and the right to equality: gender and diversity.

Oxfam India's vision is to create a more equal, just, and sustainable world. The overarching vision of Oxfam India is ``right to life with dignity for all“. Oxfam India will fulfill its vision by empowering the poor and marginalized to demand their rights, engaging the non poor to become active and supportive citizens, advocating for an effective and accountable state and making markets work for poor and marginalized people.

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