

# RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS 2014 - 2015



**National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj**

Ministry of Rural Development , Government of India

**Rajendranagar, Hyderabad - 500 030**

## **VISION**

- The vision of NIRD&PR is to focus on the policies and programmes that benefit the rural poor, strive to energise the democratic decentralisation processes, improve the operation and efficiency of rural development personnel, promote transfer of technology through its social laboratories, technology park and create environmental awareness.
- As a "think-tank" for the Ministry of Rural Development, NIRD&PR, while acting as a repository of knowledge on rural development, would assist the Ministry in policy formulation and choice of options in rural development to usher in the change.

## **MISSION**

- To examine and analyse the factors contributing to the improvement of economic and social well-being of people in rural areas on a sustainable basis with focus on the rural poor and the other disadvantaged groups through research, action research, consultancy and documentation efforts.
- To facilitate the rural development efforts with particular emphasis and focus on the rural poor by improving the knowledge, skills and attitudes of rural development officials and non-officials through organising training, workshops and seminars.

# RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

2014-15



**NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND PANCHAYATI RAJ**  
(Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India)  
RAJENDRANAGAR, HYDERABAD - 500 030

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Director General

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Hyderabad

## **FOREWORD**

It is indeed a great pleasure to present the Research Highlights for the year 2014-15 to the readers. National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, as part of its mandate, takes up research studies on various important aspects of rural development, poverty alleviation and Panchayati Raj. The purpose behind undertaking research studies is to gain first-hand insights about the needs and priorities of the rural people, the process of rural transformation and implementation of various flagship programmes of Government of India. The findings of the research are used to come up with policy advocacy and accelerated rural transformation.

In order to facilitate wider dissemination of the findings of the studies, the annual publication of the Research Highlights is brought out by the Institute. I trust the publication will provide adequate glimpses of the research conducted by the Institute. The findings of these studies will be useful for the policy makers, academicians and rural development functionaries to understand the ground realities.

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**(W.R. REDDY)**



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## **EFFICIENCY OF SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT AND MONITORING COMMITTEE: A STUDY IN KARNATAKA**

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### **Background**

Education is the most crucial investment in human development and strongly influences the improvement in health, hygiene, demographic profile, productivity and practically all that are connected with the quality of life.

In order to achieve Universalisation of Primary Education (UPE), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan was launched as an integrated approach in a time-bound manner. A major achievement in recent years has been the establishment of Constitutional and legal underpinnings for achieving universal elementary education. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 became operative from April 1, 2010.

In consonance with the Central Act and the Karnataka Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Rules 2010, School Development and Monitoring Committees (SDMCs) were constituted in Karnataka. SMCs constituted under free and compulsory education (FCE) shall be called SDMCs. There were a total of 47,505 schools in Karnataka in January 2014. Out of these 44,672 were government schools and 2807 were government-aided schools. SDMCs were formed in all the 47,505 schools. Though RTE promotes school management committees, the

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concept replicated from Karnataka, some significant variations between SMCs and SDMCs are there. Against this backdrop, a study was designed with the objectives given below:

### **Objectives**

- to study the existing system of SDMCs
- to appraise the functioning of SDMCs in providing quality education
- to assess the knowledge of the members of SDMCs
- to examine the improvement in education in terms of educational indicators
- to ascertain the satisfaction of the children in learning.

### **Hypotheses**

- SDMC is a determining phenomenon for enriching quality education and ensuring community participation
- School development plan is an inevitable component for the functioning of schools

### **Methodology**

#### ***Coverage rationale and sampling design***

The study was conducted in Karnataka. Two thousand and thirteen respondents were drawn from different categories of stakeholders related to functioning of SDMCs, directly and indirectly. Two districts were selected based on their educational index in Karnataka. One is Yadgir from the lower performing district and the other one is Udupi from the higher performing district. 30 schools across government, private and private-aided were selected. According to Karnataka SDMC Act, except private schools which are unaided, all other schools have to form SDMCs.

Therefore, the selection of schools is spread over to primary, upper primary and high schools of all three management categories. Thus, 3 primary schools in each district, 6 upper primary schools in Yadgir, 7 in Udupi and 6 and 5 high schools, respectively, in each district were covered. The selection of schools provided equal distribution to the medium of instruction; Kannada (7 in Yadgir, 8 in Udupi), English (4 in Yadgir, 5 in Udupi) and Urdu (4 in Yadgir 2 in Udupi). The total sample size of 2013 included 3 major categories. They are SDMC core groups (311); non-SDMC members (772) and inclusive partners such as students and officials (930).

**Category-wise Distribution of Sample Schools**

School Type	Government		Private		Aided		Grand Total	
	Yadgir	Udupi	Yadgir	Udupi	Yadgir	Udupi	Yadgir	Udupi
Primary	3	2	-	-	-	1	3	3
Upper Primary	3	6	1	-	2	1	6	7
High School	4	1	1	2	1	2	6	5
Total	10	9	2	2	3	4	15	15

**Interventions**

The Karnataka SDMC model bylaws, 2006 spell out the method of election, functions of the president and secretary, and powers and functions of other members. 29 functions are listed which can be clarified under 5 major themes such as preparation of plan, monitoring, review, promotion of education and ensuring services like health, sanitation and mid-day meal (MDM).

Training was imparted at every level to develop the State level master resource persons. Below, cluster resource persons and block resource

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persons were created. The block education officer has to train the SDMC members. A uniform schedule was given for training of the most important aspects of SDMC in preparation of school development plan. The government of Karnataka identified 158 indicators that are grouped under seven major areas for the preparation of school development plan.

1. School Information
2. School Environment
3. Clean & Green School
4. Teaching-Learning Process
5. Teacher's Academic Development
6. Leadership Qualities of Head Teachers
7. Community Participation

In addition to the semi-structured questionnaire, personal observation of the researcher with the help of a checklist and focus group discussions are adopted for data collection.

##### **1. School Information**

A successful conduct of the school activities depends mainly upon the availability of infrastructure. The physical infrastructure refers to building, grounds, furniture and apparatus along with equipments essential for imparting education. A learning atmosphere and location has enormous significance. The school must have to be located away from a noisy, public crowd and polluting atmosphere. The school attendance motivation and school achievement have correlation with the infrastructure availability in the schools.

As regards the provision of toilets to boys and girls cent per cent achievement is registered. But making the toilets children-friendly by ensuring safety norms and cleanliness is the major concern. Mid-day

meal is being served in all the schools therefore kitchen is part of the school building. Standard menu is given by the State for the preparation of mid-day meal. The verification of kitchen infrastructure provides mostly unhygienic conditions especially in Yadgir. As regards providing safe drinking water in the school premises, once again it is an area of concern. Purified water supply is available only in 27 per cent of schools in Yadgir and 67 per cent in Udupi. All the schools have put it into usage except a negligible size of schools in Yadgir.

The observations with regard to availability of garden, compound wall, meeting hall and room to head teacher deserve progress.

A majority of the children even today go to school by walk. Bus conveyance is rare and is not timely. The available bus service is mostly by private services, only to an extent of 20 per cent government bus services are available. Effective functioning of school requires support services that include peon, clerk, administrative office and accounts personnel. To some extent Udupi has got the factors covered under the area. SDMC has a wide range of opportunities to fill the gap existing in respect of services, structure and facilities.

## **2. Social Environment**

Many class rooms are found often crowded by two to three sections clubbed together in a place of single teacher availability. More importantly in Yadgir, schools were either surrounded by drainage or unclean outlook with foul odour around.

Inappropriate selection of school site and school design affects the teacher's productive and child's learning ability. The school and the class room have to ensure adequate natural light and air. The location has to display a peaceful and friendly atmosphere, which could demonstrate a powerful message to children for inculcating good habits, character, attitude and behaviour. A comfortable structure that could protect children from all seasons' vulnerability is required for stimulating learning and promoting creative thinking.

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The indicators covered for examining the area are surroundings, space in the class, lighting, shutters to windows/doors and child-friendly classrooms. The personal observation with regard to school environment is that most of the primary schools in Yadgir are in an inferior condition. High schools in Yadgir are in a favourable ambience. All schools in Udupi are having acclamatory set up.

### **3. Clean and Green School (swachh vidyalaya)**

Clean and green concept can be effectively addressed when all efforts of the staff and students are geared towards adopting environmentally sustainable principles at all levels, from planning and decision-making to execution in the schools. A clean and green school promotes judicious use of resources. The enactment of RTE advocates environment-friendly schools.

Further RTE promoted guiding principles for the SDMC to include actions in school development plan (SDP) for promoting clean and green concept in the respectable sectors. Towards building a clean and green school obviously practicable and feasible activities that ensure enriching teaching-learning opportunities are required. Children if sensitised will display active participation. A simple five indicators are identified for examining the concept. (i) Dustbin/ garbage use, (ii) Safe drinking water, (iii) Clean toilets, (iv) Hygienic kitchen and (v) Garden.

A majority of the schools in Yadgir do not have such practices. But two high schools have the practice of using dustbins in the corridors but not in the class room. All the primary schools are in the below minimum standard of clean concept. In Udupi, clean and green concept has been well adopted, except in 2 primary schools where the practices are at satisfactory level.

#### **4. Teaching-Learning Process**

In a broader sense the teaching and learning process can be better understood only by assessing the progress and achievement. Two principal functions of assessment are amount of learning and assessment of teaching that involves formative, diagnostic, summative and evaluative methods. Assessment encompasses the ongoing process of monitoring and reporting. Providing a feedback-based radical or scientific evolution method might not be possible for the SDMC. More specifically the members belonging to elected group and the connecting members comprise mostly a background of illiteracy. Considering the limitations, the indicators identified for this purpose are peer assessment, co-teacher assessment, inter-school assessment, involving educated youth in the community, involving retired/educated parents/officials in the community and special classes.

#### **5. Teacher's Academic Development (TAD)**

There has been significant correlation between the teacher's academic development and the school as well as the performance of the student. Teacher's academic development therefore is an important matter of student's learning. TAD is systematically related to observable indicators. Teacher's competence particularly the qualification is as per the NCTE regulations. Teachers shall complete TLM developed by DIET. Importantly no teacher shall impose corporal punishment or mental harassment as a method of disciplining the child. Teacher's competence is based on pupil-teacher ratio. As per RTE, primary school shall have a ratio of 30:1, upper primary a ratio of 35:1.

Enrolment of teachers in Yadgir shows poor compared to Udupi in the availability of teachers- getting posts sanctioned and the posts filled-up. Pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) is 36:41 in Yadgir and 20:29 in Udupi. PTR is combined for all three categories. Government primary schools have single teacher.

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Trained teachers are 39 per cent in Yadgir and 44 per cent in Udupi. Average experience of teachers is 14 years in Yadgir and 21 years in Udupi. Performance review as reported by head teachers is 73 per cent in Yadgir and 93 per cent in Udupi. The hired services are 47 per cent in Yadgir and 73 per cent in Udupi, which indicated that Udupi has got good number of hired services. It is a good sign of effective functioning of SDMCs.

### **6. Leadership Qualities of Head Teachers**

The most distinguished feature of an effective school functioning is quality of leadership of the head teacher. Professional and coping skills, monitoring and supervision, positive reinforcement and goal setting and achievement of the head teacher are taken into consideration for quality of leadership.

The assessment of knowledge on RTE amongst the head teachers is positively significant (87 per cent in Yadgir and 93 per cent in Udupi). Data with regard to training of head teachers in SDMCs reveals that only 40 per cent in Yadgir and 60 per cent in Udupi were trained and all those trained expressed that the training was helpful. There has been no tussle between the head teacher and the SDMC president anywhere in all the 30 schools. The interference of SDMC president who is mostly with political background, undoubtedly created professional imbalance amongst the head teachers. Without the SDMCs, the head teachers might have led the entire functioning as per their convenience. However, the head teachers have been coping up with the extra wheel attached to the school education for a speedy journey of educational achievement.

### **7. Community Participation**

Community participation in education has taken a bewildering array of forms over the years.

- Involvement through the mere use of a service (such as enrolling children in school or using a primary healthcare facility);

- Involvement through contribution (or extraction) of money, material and labour;
- Involvement through 'attendance' (At parent meetings at schools), implying passive acceptance of decisions made by others;
- Participation in the delivery of a service, often as a partner with other actors;
- Participation as implementers of delegated powers; and
- Participation in 'real decision-making at every stage', including identification of problems, study of feasibility, planning, implementation and evaluation.

## **Results and Discussion**

The data with regard to the contribution of SDMC members highlighted that a majority of them were contributing suggestions. However, data regarding implementation of suggestions / ideas given by members showed that 96 per cent in Yadgir and 61 per cent in Udupi. Surprisingly, Yadgir is having upper hand in implementation of suggestions. Nevertheless, a greater degree of Udupi members helped in augmentation of infrastructure by supervising properties, fund raising, financing and keeping a vigil over encroachments. Truthfully, 60 per cent in Yadgir and 93 per cent in Udupi agreed that the members review the SDMC report. But 67 per cent in Yadgir and 93 per cent in Udupi made attempts to ensure mid-day meal and extended cooperation for health-immunisation programme.

Quality Education: Kannada and Urdu teachers are more in Yadgir; whereas English teachers are high in Udupi.

One of the duties of SDMC is to ensure non-discrimination of special children. 20 per cent in Yadgir and 73 per cent in Udupi helped towards the goal. RTE insisted upon cocurricular activities. Singing was the common competition in all the schools, followed by drawings at 87 per cent in

Yadgir and cent per cent in Udupi, essay writing was equally ranked. Conducting of science exhibitions was 67 per cent in Yadgir and 87 per cent in Udupi. Lastly, poem telling scored at 60 per cent in Yadgir and 73 per cent in Udupi. Sports activity cannot be neglected as students require physical exercises. Both districts have cent per cent achievement in general sports activities like running, relay and kho-kho conducted every day. However, inter-school, inter-district and intra-district competitions are held. The head teachers acknowledged that the teachers were regular. Daily and weekly assignments are given to the students systematically and teachers do take responsibilities of correcting the exercises given by them. All other teaching and learning aids are used. Students agreed that experiments in the science lab have been held. Information Technology tools such as computer classes have been put in use. Study tours / camps have been organised, Guides/Scouts/NCC/NSS activities are conducted for interested students. Yadgir organised more special teacher programmes and special coachings. Bridge courses were held for weak students. Udupi SDMC reported to have not missed any non-school going children, whereas Yadgir reported to have made efforts to the extent of making door-to-door visits, talking to parents of those children and providing counselling to them. The gram panchayats supported the effort of SDMCs. Local level associations such as youth clubs, self-help groups, and political parties also rendered help in this regard.

The decisions of the students are more valid and significant for drawing conclusions and suggestions. All the children (900 sample size @ 30 students per school for 30 schools) agreed that they do not miss the morning prayer unless there is any compelling reason. A majority of Yadgir students are inclined towards mastering of mother tongue Kannada, whereas Udupi students are blooming with science zeal. Though the study discussed about the infrastructure facilities, the opinion of the users is inevitable and remarkably noteworthy. In the case of toilet facility 53 per

cent in Yadgir and 80 per cent in Udupi said it was user-friendly (children-friendly). Availability of water facilities was to a greater extent contributed to this. Mid-day meal was tasty and all children said the quantity was sufficient to them. Computer lab needs improvement. Science labs are good. Library facility again requires attention especially in Yadgir.

Freebees like uniforms were distributed to all the children, school bags were given to all in Yadgir, notebook distribution was higher in Udupi and geometric boxes were given to more children in Yadgir. Children going by bicycle, staying in hostels and scholarship distribution were high in Yadgir.

According to the students, the scholarship money received at the school is deposited in the bank account. Some of the girl students were of the opinion that the money was saved to be used for the next academic year. Students were fully aware of health and hygiene issues such as using toilet at home, brushing teeth twice a day, taking bath every day and trimming nails every week. Additionally, all of them fully acknowledged that they wash their hands and plates before taking meals and after using toilet. Most of them are willing to use washed cloths and look neat and clean, change their uniform daily and keep their learning material (books & notebooks) neat and tidy as much as possible. Needless to mention that students agreed that they don't litter in the school premises, use dustbins if provided. Never have the habit of spitting and keep the school premises cleanest. Interestingly, a majority of Yadgir children aim to become teachers, followed by doctors, police and district collectors. Udupi children aspire to become engineers, doctors and officers.

Education is the most important single factor in achieving rapid economic development and technological progress and creating a social order founded on the values of freedom, social justice and equal opportunity. Programmes of education lie at the base of the effort to forge the bonds of

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common citizenship, harness the energies of the people and develop the natural and human resources of every part of the country. Developments of the past decade have created a momentum for economic growth; yet, there are large deficiencies in the sphere of education, which must be removed speedily if progress is to be sustained and enduring.

## **CONSTITUENTS OF A MODEL VILLAGE: A CASE STUDY OF PUNSARI GRAM PANCHAYAT IN GUJARAT STATE**

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### **Background**

The idea of a model village is old, whereas the question that what elements make up a model village is still new - and perplexing. It is new because development is a process of continuous change in a variety of aspects of human society. Therefore, it is perplexing to determine or explain in categorical terms that a given village can be addressed as 'developed or model village'. This is the complexity about understanding and explaining development. Punsari gram panchayat in Sabrakanta district of Gujarat State is considered as a model village. What constitutes a model village or what elements go into making a model village is the focus of study.

### **Study Area**

Punsari gram panchayat is in Sabarkanta district of Gujarat. The reason for selection of Punsari GP is the typicality of a 'model village'. Punsari supposedly has, which is widely spoken about and referred to by the Prime Minister of India also as a model village for emulation.

## **Methodology**

The study has adopted Case Study Method taking a single case for analysis. Punsari gram panchayat has been taken as a case for systematically unpacking it to be able to understand and explain what constitutes a model village. This is a holistic single unit analysis.

There could be several ways of determining if a village is worthy of being addressed as a model village. One is going by the level of achievement in terms of certain normative standards and the other is by comparing it with a neighbourhood village of similar characteristics. With regard to the latter, there are many studies (Vijayalakshmi, 2003; G Palanithurai, 2005 & 2008) that have come out with the result that keeping everything else nearly constant, one factor that has invariably contributed to a gram panchayat to emerge successful is leadership provided by the panchayat president individually or along with a small team of supporters. The current study has taken the former approach i.e., going by normative standards in terms of availability of and access to facilities and services and community perception with regard to significance and usefulness of those facilities and services.

## **Innovative Approaches / Experiences**

The study of a model village can provide much interesting and relevant insights. But history is full of examples of how such studies are made for propagandistic purposes to show that their own model is the superior one in the atmosphere of political and ideological confrontation. Many researchers have taken great pains to paint their own models in as bright colours as possible – as if everything fell in place only because of and after the intervention. Development researchers and development practitioners in many instances played the game of comparing ideally functioning models of their own with other systems as they function in a less perfect reality (Pretty, 1995) that degenerates into subjective value judgments or propagandistic statements. Therefore, in studying and

emulating model villages, one needs to be wary of false comparisons and variables being unintentionally overemphasised or intentionally underplayed, etc.

In order to understand and explain what constitutes a model village or what makes people call Punsari a model village, one needs to put it in certain perspective and offer an explanation. Getting into perspective demands dispelling the misconceptions about the idea of a 'model village'. Our involvement in this study corrected certain misconceptions we had about model villages. They are given below.

Misconception- 1: The immediate perspective of a model village is 'a village complete in all respects'. For instance, the SAGY guidelines provide an exhaustive outline, which by all means, can be considered to be theoretically complete as well. It is a comprehensive framework 'to draw ideas from'. However, it is 'not a blueprint' that one should try to ground every element mentioned in it. In a study of a model village, as the study unfolds one gets to recognise that there are several facets or strata of development. These stages tend to be gradual, progressive and often overlapping. They are not admission-restricted compartments like how rural development is dimensionally captured in a college syllabus for each department to deal in a given subject matter. It is no blueprint with certain requirements one needs to fill in, in order to qualify for a village to become 'model'. In any 'developed village', by all accounts, there could be certain elements overwhelmingly present and certain elements conspicuously absent. The point is *a model village cannot be complete in all spheres of development one might wish to see on the ground*. We need a proper perspective delimiting our framework.

Misconception - 2: There is an ultimate destination which is perfect (or pinnacle of development a village must touch) to qualify for being called a 'model village'. There is no stage called the 'pinnacle of development' the definition of which describes the ultimate destination a village must

reach, so as to qualify for being called a 'model village'. One cannot say that development practitioners and professionals are directing villages towards 'that ultimately perfect destination'. It can be any comprehensive listing like it is given in SAGY guidelines, or the norms given under human development index. It is always relative and progressive, with a possibility for further perfection. It is not a run towards a finish-line. Therefore, by one scale a village could be addressed as developed and by another it could be measured as lacking.

## **Results**

The models of rural development reviewed fall under two broad categories, although several other classifications could be brought about within the two. One category is that there are mental-models of development (a dream or a vision) constructed. It could be a *minimal and normatively desirable* development consideration like in Minimum Needs Programme; or comprehensive ones like the PURA Model or the SAGY Model. There are others such as Mednipur Model and AMUL Model, which have come about 'after putting together and putting through a series of small plans' and then report how it led to achieving certain standards of development in the desired direction. What we can infer here is that (i) in the case of the former *the model got ready mentally even before grounding it*, which was later put through in action on the ground; and (ii) in the case of the latter, a series of plans led to arriving at some desirable point, which *we inductively constructed as a 'rural development model'*.

The central idea of Punsari model is: Focus on basic rural infrastructural facilities like providing safe and adequate drinking water; basic healthcare facilities; schooling of children; arrangement for regular street cleaning; household toilets for every house- which implies that Punsari Panchayat performs what Article 243 G in the Eleventh Schedule of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act demands from a gram panchayat.

Through this performance, the panchayat has secured its place as a regular 'functional' gram panchayat. Secondly, going further beyond the basics to provide next level facilities such as public address system, internet, library, CCTV cameras, banking beyond the bank hours, ATM at village level, Punsari has become a 'spoken about' gram panchayat from an outsider's point of view. The weighted average of the community satisfaction also has shown more than 4 scores on a 5 point scale indicating that people are 'fully satisfied' about the entire facilities available in the panchayat.

Enabling development to take place by persistently expanding rural infrastructure theoretically means activating 'trickledown effect' to work gradually, which has been done in Punsari. This can perhaps be viewed as a blend of the basic needs theory, along with letting the trickledown effect operate through persistent expansion of rural infrastructure. The sustainable functioning of the infrastructure created has been ensured through arrangements such as 'management by GP', 'management by SHGs', and 'management through private sector' / 'government sector involvement', etc.

## Conclusion

In trying to understand a model village, the first thing we need to be clear about is that *the very idea of a model village is notional*. It is a frame of mind / a mental state - or a composed perspective / intellection. Some villages after a prolonged engagement provide the essentials for building certain line of argument that become 'definitional of a model village'. We cannot speak about model villages sans the socio-political context. From each model village we may be able to construe 'the constituents' that illustrate or typify a model village. There cannot be one hallmark or unvarying visage which we can label as model village. However, we can recognise the attributes and document the processes that led to certain characteristics that singled a village out, as pick of the bunch.

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We are going to be imprudent in our attempt, if we attempted providing blanket-type ingredients that go into making constituents of a model village. Perhaps, what is intelligible is, we can deduce the characteristics that Punsari has to offer as constituents of a desirable pattern. And certain principles and values that Punsari considered imperative / non-negotiable during the process of creating Punsari version of development.

## **NUTRITION SECURITY AND EQUITY IN WATERSHED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES**

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Dr. U. Hemantha Kumar  
Associate Professor, CFL

Despite strong economic growth in recent decades, India bears a high burden of children with undernutrition, which is an important indicator of country's overall human capital development. Many reviews were available on the impact of agricultural interventions on nutrition security. However, Watershed Development Programme (WDP), which is one of the important agricultural interventions, was not covered in these reviews so far. The study aims to understand to what extent the increase in natural resource management and production systems, the main components of WDP, are actually translating into positive nutritional outcomes.

The study covered sixteen completed watershed programmes in four States e.g., Telangana, Karnataka, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand. Eight control villages, two in each State, were selected for comparison. The total sample was 640 households (HHs) in watershed villages and 320 HHs in non-watershed villages. The number of Small and Marginal Farmers (SMF), Large and Medium Farmers (LMF) and Landless Households covered for the study were 480, 240 and 240, respectively. The period of data collection was 2014 -15. While, the average arable land size of SMF was almost same in all the four States, the average arable landholding size of LMF was more in Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand compared to Telangana and Karnataka. The impact of WDP on reduction in cultivable waste land was more in Telangana and Karnataka compared to Chhattisgarh

and Jharkhand. The reduction in cultivable waste lands and fallow lands, while having a positive impact on arable lands, reduced the land availability for green fodder. The adequacy in availability of green fodder after the implementation of WDP was reported by only 56 per cent of LMF and 34 per cent of SMF category. Improvement in drinking water for human beings and cattle is the major priority for implementation of any watershed programme. The groundwater table in the watershed villages was in the depth ranging from 150 ft to 240 ft compared to non-watershed villages, where it was available at a depth of 275 ft to 600 ft.

The Crop Diversification Index (CDI) of SMF was 0.57 compared to the CDI of LMF with 0.52 during kharif. The same in non-watershed villages was 0.26 and 0.35, respectively, for SMF and LMF due to less area under vegetable production in these villages compared to watershed villages. Within the watershed villages the crop diversification was more during kharif than rabi. Sixty per cent of LMF in Chhattisgarh, 45 per cent in Jharkhand and 50 per cent each in Telangana and Karnataka were maintaining more than two milch animals in watershed villages. Whereas, the SMF category of Telangana and Chhattisgarh were in a better position in terms of maintaining more than two milch animals with 60.5 and 52.5 per cent, respectively. The percentage of landless households in watershed villages maintaining one or two milch animals was highest in Jharkhand with 90 and lowest in Telangana with 22.3. Compared to women in SMF category, employment generated through agricultural activities for women in LMF was less in all the four States, more so in Telangana and Jharkhand with only 80 and 95 days, respectively. Similarly the men in LMF category gained less number of days of employment with farming compared to men in SMF category, reason being the difference in cropping pattern taken up by these two categories. The income from agriculture in watershed villages was higher for LMF with 61.89 per cent followed by SMF with 58.67 per cent. The diversified cropping pattern taken by the SMF has not resulted much in increase in income due to less marketable surplus. However, the

income gain in watershed villages for these households was through livelihood diversification with livestock occupying 26.78 per cent of their total income. Livestock has become a significant source of livelihood for landless households in watershed villages with 36.35 per cent of their total income.

The per capita availability of rice was much higher in watershed villages with 185 kgs/capita/annum compared to the per capita requirement of 137 kgs/capita/annum. However, it was lower in case of wheat with 0.40 quintals/ capita/ annum for LMF and SMF, in these villages. The per capita availability of wheat was further lower for SMF in non-watershed villages with 0.25 quintals /capita /annum. The per capita vegetable requirement as per ICMR norms were 10.8 quintals/capita/annum. The per capita availability of vegetables for the LMF households in watershed villages was 15.4, 6.8, 4.56 and 4.24 quintals /capita/annum in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Telangana and Karnataka, respectively. The same for SMF category households was 8, 4.2, 5.5 and 5.87 quintals/capita/annum. These figures were much lower in non-watershed villages of all the four States. This shows that though there was an increase in vegetable production in watershed villages which has led to an increase in per capita availability, this was much lower compared to the average requirement per person.

In watershed villages the per capita consumption of cereals of LMF, SMF and landless was 2.75, 2.59 and 2.63 kg/week, which was almost on par with requirement of 2.87 kg/week. Whereas, the consumption of pulses was 13.14 gms/capita/day for LMF, SMF and landless households, which was much lesser than the requirement of 50 to 60 gms/day. The per capita vegetable consumption of LMF, SMF and landless households was 0.27, 0.29 and 0.19 kg per capita per week, respectively. However, this was far less compared to the average requirement worked out per week as per nutrition guidelines as 2.1 kg/capita/week. The per capita consumption of milk in the watershed villages was 104.85, 47.14 and 27.42 gms/day for LMF, SMF and landless households, respectively, which was less than

the per capita requirement of milk as per ICMR norms i.e., 220 gms per day. Though there was an increase in the consumption of quality food in watershed villages compared to non-watershed villages, this was much lower compared to the per capita requirement. Intra-household consumption also varies with the women consuming less quality food than men.

An increase in consumption of quality food items by men and women in watershed villages seems to have translated into a normal BMI. However, the picture was alarming in case of children in SMF and landless category with a BMI of 18.3 and 16.1, respectively. The picture was much bleaker in non-watershed villages. Anthropometric measures also indicate high percentage of stunting, wasting and underweight of the boys in grade two and three, respectively, in watershed villages. Attention to nutritional outcomes is important from child birth to till it reaches the second birthday which is crucial for cognitive development. The percentage of boys and girls with stunting, wasting and underweight was higher in this age group, even in watershed villages. In the age group of five years (sixty months) the percentage of stunting in grade two and three was 44 in boys and 67 in girls in watershed villages. The same in non-watershed villages was much more with 50 and 78 per cent. The percentage of children with underweight in the age group of five years in watershed villages was 36 and 38.8 for boys and girls, respectively. The same in case of non-watershed villages was 45 and 47.4 per cent respectively. More alarming is the fact that the children who suffer from wasting face a markedly increased risk of death and more than one-third of the developing world's children who are wasted live in India. The wasting percentage of boys and girls in grade minus two and three in watershed villages was 37 per cent each. The same in non-watershed villages was 54.7 and 54.8 per cent for boys and girls, respectively.

The priority for the implementation of any watershed programme is to improve the drinking water status, land productivity and livelihoods of its stakeholders. There was an increase in groundwater status, availability of

drinking water, net sown area and diversified cropping pattern in the watershed villages analysed. An increase in the number of days of employment was observed because of increase in agriculture and livestock livelihoods which has led to an increase in consumption of quality food items such as eggs, milk and meat. Diversified cropping pattern with vegetables led to an increase in the consumption of vegetables. However, this was not adequately translated into healthy anthropometric indices especially for the children in the watershed villages. This shows that there is a long way to go for the watershed development programmes in improving the nutritional status of its stakeholders - a natural corollary of any natural resource management programme. Lastly, nutrition specific interventions need to be mandatorily implemented in all agricultural interventions related to NRM and productivity enhancement.

## **AGRARIAN DISTRESS, COPING MECHANISMS AND RAMIFICATIONS OF DEBT WAIVER SCHEME (A STUDY IN TELANGANA STATE)**

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Agricultural development is an important component of inclusive sustainable growth approach. However, the agrarian sector has been plagued by many issues resulting in farmers taking the extreme step of suicides. The issue is far more serious in the State of Telangana which is amongst the top five States in the country in terms of number of farmer suicides, in the last ten years. The State announced the debt waiver scheme in the year 2014 in order to mitigate the farmers' distress. The study is an attempt to understand the context of agrarian distress in the State, the extent of indebtedness of the farmers, the coping mechanisms executed by the farmers and by the State, to mitigate the distress and the impact of debt waiver scheme.

Two districts in Telangana, Mahbubnagar and Karimnagar, one under rainfed and another under irrigated conditions, were covered under the study with a sample size of 1320 at the rate of 660 each under Small and Marginal Farmer (SMF) category and 660 under Large and Medium Farmer (LMF) category. Besides primary data, the study relies on secondary data collected from various sources to understand the growth of irrigation in the State, extent of lending by the banks, insurance coverage and its implementation. The vulnerability of the farmers was assessed in the context of production vulnerability, occupational vulnerability and financial vulnerability.

Irrigation is a determining factor for the growth of any agrarian economy. Growth rates in different sources of irrigation in the State of Telangana, in three different time periods i.e., 1971-85, 1985-2001 and 2001 to 2013 were analysed, based on the secondary data collected. The overall growth rate in irrigation in Karimnagar was doubled from 2.7 per cent in 1971-85 to 4.8 per cent in 1985-2001 and further to 11.71 per cent during 2001-13. This increase in irrigated area in Karimnagar district has resulted from expansion of canals during 1975-1990 with a growth rate of 12.8 per cent and the expansion of tubewells during 2001-13 with a growth rate of 15.94 per cent. At the same time, Mahbubnagar registered a good growth rate during 1985-2001 with 8.4 per cent, but remained almost constant during the last time period i.e., 2001-2013 with 8.59 per cent. The private investment in irrigation through tubewells is going up at an alarming high rate compared to public investment in the State, which is corroborated by the decline in institutional lending in terms of number of accounts of borewells and pumpsets by 917 per cent and in amount by 77.9 per cent, from 2010-11 to 2014-15.

Among the sample farmers, 42 per cent of SMF and 52 per cent of LMF depend exclusively on borewells, as compared to other sources of irrigation. Similarly, the number of farmers who depend on rainfed farming either completely or partially was about 66 and 61 per cent in case of SMF and LMF, respectively. The dependency on rainfed farming was more in case of Mahbubnagar district for both the categories of farmers. Only around 8 per cent of SMF and 12 per cent of LMF have access to micro-irrigation facilities and it was higher among the farmers of Karimnagar compared to Mahbubnagar district. It is a point of strong evidence that farmers diversify the crops to reduce their production vulnerability. Therefore, cropping pattern was examined in the context of production vulnerability. More vulnerability was, therefore, observed among the sample farmers in Mahbubnagar district where the percentage of SMF following monocropping was 68 and the same for LMF was 63. In Karimnagar, the percentage of

SMF following monocropping was 44, whereas the same for LMF was 28. While both the categories have been intensively cultivating their lands as reflected through their cropping intensity with 131.5 and 158.3 per cent in case of SMF and LMF, respectively, it is the LMF of Karimnagar who were in better condition, in this aspect compared to others. It is also examined whether this intensification was through a single crop in kharif and rabi or through multiple cropping system, through Crop Diversification Index (CDI). The CDI of SMF of both the districts and also the LMF of Mahbubnagar district was less when compared with the LMF of Karimnagar district with 0.45 per cent. The vulnerability of the households was assessed based on their dependence on single source or on multiple sources of livelihood. Majority of sample farmers i.e., about 55 per cent in case of SMF and 52 per cent in case of LMF depend only on agriculture sector. The number of households who engage in non-farm activity was limited to around one per cent in both the categories of farmers. Financial vulnerability is governed inversely by the income from various sources and diversely by the expenditure pattern of a farm family. The average monthly income of a farm family for SMF category was worked out to be ₹ 3842 and the same for LMF was ₹ 7449. This was very less when compared to the All India report on estimated monthly income (NSSO 70<sup>th</sup> round) i.e., ₹ 7348 and ₹ 10,730, respectively, for these categories. Expenditure pattern of a farm family could not be assessed holistically, without the information on the social security assistance, which is not covered in this study. This is the limitation of the study.

The major coping mechanisms being followed by the sample farmers in both the districts were diversification to plantation crops like mango and orange and dependency on livestock as an additional source of income. The land under plantation crops was seen only in Karimnagar district with 13.8 per cent in case of LMF followed by 6.8 per cent in case of SMF. The number of farmers depending on livestock in addition to agriculture was 26 and 33 per cent, in case of SMF and LMF, respectively.

This percentage was higher in Karimnagar district as compared to Mahbubnagar district for both the categories. Land leasing was seen as an important coping mechanism by the farmers in the study area to augment their production base. The number of leased-in farmers was found to be higher among LMF category as compared to that of SMF category. The major coping mechanism being implemented by the State is crop insurance. However, not even one farmer out of 1320 sample farmers was observed to be benefited out of crop insurance scheme, in the last ten years. In this context, the implementation of three crop insurance schemes in the State was examined. Between the years 2010-11 to 2013-14, under the National Agriculture Insurance Scheme (NAIS), out of the farmers covered, only 9 per cent were benefited during kharif and 21 per cent during rabi, among the loanee farmers. The same among non-loanees was 26 and 97 per cent during kharif and rabi, respectively. The number of loanee and non-loanee farmers benefited out of farmers covered in Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme (WBCIS) was 78 and 85 per cent during kharif and 17 and 58 per cent during rabi, respectively.

In Telangana, the number of accounts under direct finance to agriculture during 2013-14 was 77.14 lakh and during 2015-16 it was 64.45 lakh against the number of operational holdings of 55.53 lakh, which refers to the case of multiple lending. Majority of the sample farmers, i.e., 71.85 per cent of SMF and 62.57 of LMF depend on multiple sources of non-institutional borrowing. While, the outstanding debt burden of SMF category was ₹ 3,56,400, the same for LMF category was ₹ 8,17,600. Out of outstanding debt burden, the share of non-institutional borrowing was more by SMF with 53.6 per cent and the share of institutional borrowing was more by LMF with 68.3 per cent. Majority of the farmers i.e., 80 per cent of SMF and 67 per cent of LMF felt that the Debt Waiver Scheme would have been beneficial to them, had it been a onetime settlement. It is worked out that, out of the outstanding debt, the debt waiver scheme could mitigate 28 per cent of SMF and 12 per cent of the LMF. Therefore, around 11 per

cent of SMF and 25 per cent of LMF felt that very little relief was provided to them, keeping in view their total debts. The major support systems the sample farmers expected from the government were irrigation facility and marketing support followed by technological support through extension services. Besides these, it is also important to support them with some low-cost interventions such as shade-nets that protect the crop against unseasonal rainfall, heat waves or from any other climatic aberrations as desired by the majority (73 per cent) of the sample farmers.

## **CONDITIONS OF SMALL FARM HOUSEHOLDS AND AGRARIAN CHANGE IN ANDHRA PRADESH AND TELANGANA: A MICRO-LEVEL STUDY**

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### **Introduction**

The share of agriculture in the national income fell rapidly from 25 per cent to 14 per cent in the last two decades. While such a decline may appear to be natural during the course of economic transformation, there are at least two reasons that prompt scholars to get alarmed. First, lack of commensurate shift in terms of workforce in the economy that burdened the relatively dwindling sector with 14 per cent national income to support 56 per cent of workforce. Second, the deceleration and slow growth of the sector led to rapid decline in its share of national income. Both these factors contributed to increase in income inequality and poverty. Further, a serious aspect of this relative lower growth of agricultural sector is the fact that about three lakh farmers committed suicide, most of whom are small and marginal farmers during the last two decades, which motivated the present study.

### **Objectives**

1. To examine the nature of agricultural markets in which small and marginal farmers are operating with regard to production, credit, market surplus, costs and returns;

2. To ascertain income distribution from farm and non-farm sources among different agricultural classes;
3. To examine the employment status of agricultural households; and
4. To draw a comprehensive picture of agrarian situation of the countryside of the region in question.

## **Methodology**

The study collected data from 1076 households in seven villages of the regions of undivided Andhra Pradesh, namely Telangana, Coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema. From these three regions two canal irrigated villages, three irrigated dry and two dry villages were selected. The selection of the villages is based on multiple criteria such as coverage of all agro-climatic zones with differently irrigated villages, population size of the village is between 1000-3000 and sufficient local contacts to gain access to the sample households. The sample is about 36 per cent of the population, selected on stratified random basis that covered all castes in the villages and all size classes. Besides quantitative information, the study has also undertaken ethnographic account of the villages, historical and socio-economic background of different classes and their mobility. Change in agrarian structure and relations are drawn from time series of secondary and primary data and ethnographic interviews with the respondents.

## **Study Area**

The study villages are Achampet from Yeldurthi Mandal of Medak district, Chandaram from Luxettipet Mandal of Adilabad district, Kotarmoor from Armour Mandal of Nizamabad district, Pulimaddi and Maseedapuram from Nandyal Mandal of Kurnool district, Kalavapamula from Vyyuru Mandal of Krishna district and Mandiravalasa from Cheepurupalli Mandal of Vizianagaram district.

## Findings

- In most of the sample villages, the majority of farmers are owner-cultivators and owner-cum-tenant cultivators. In coastal district villages tenancy is up to a maximum of 60 per cent. Tenancy is mostly a fixed rent in nature; only one village with poor water resources has the system of sharecropping. In food crops like paddy mostly rent is in kind, while in cash crops it is in cash.
- As regards the nature of production across size classes two things distinctly emerged. First, marginal, small and semi-medium farmers in the given agrarian structure produce almost all different crops in the proportion of the land operated under them as medium and large farmers. Further, small peasants are no longer subsistence farmers, they indeed produce substantial marketable surplus. Second, the share of marginal and small farmers in paddy production is about 35 per cent and that of semi-medium farmers' contribution to production in paddy dominated villages is about 32 per cent, together forming about 67 per cent. The market surplus of size classes is higher in irrigated paddy dominant areas, forming about 68 to 71 per cent and progressively raised over size classes from marginal to big farmers. Market surplus of medium and big farmers is more than 90 per cent.
- There has been a significant crop diversification in the past two decades. There has been a shift in the area from food crops to non-foodgrain crops and within food crops, there is a shift from coarse grains to paddy.
- As far as productivity is concerned, crop yields in canal areas for apparent reasons are higher than in the irrigated-dry villages. The yield differences between villages are more due to source of irrigation. The yield rates among marginal, small and semi-medium are slightly lesser than the medium and large farmers.

## 32 *Research Highlights*

- The field observations reveal that there is a positive relationship between yield and size classes. This is true for most crops such as paddy, maize, turmeric, jowar, pulses, sugarcane, etc.
- The institutional credit in the villages on aggregate covered 52.3 per cent of agricultural households while non-institutional credit dependence is about 47.7 per cent.
- Liberal bank credit and subsidy policies of the state have encouraged tractorisation of agriculture. However, majority of tractors are owned by big farmers, who also enjoy additional income from hiring-out. A most notable feature in mechanisation is the arrival of harvesters in a big way. Particularly, in Telangana and Rayalaseema villages where owner-cultivation is in dominance, manual harvesting operation is completely taken over by the mechanical harvesters.
- There is a general inverse relationship between cost of production and size classes. This is expected because substitution of family labour progressively declined with the size classes.
- It is interesting to observe that all the households including the marginal hire-in labour for certain operations. Among marginal households, 14 men are hired per annum per acre and 39 women labour are hired, this together constitutes 44 per cent of labour employed on the farm. Small farmers hire-in 20 men and 44 women which constitutes 53 per cent; semi-medium farmers hire-in 26 men and 68 women, which amounts to 70 per cent; and medium farmers hire-in 37 men and 94 women which makes 80 per cent of labour; and large farmers hire-in 26 men and 72 women which makes 92 per cent of labour.
- The distribution of employment in the villages found that men on average are getting 110 days of employment and women 128 days,

which includes MGNREGS, which is quite low. The fact that emerges is employment in general in the villages is seriously low which compels the poor to look for alternative employment outside agriculture. Second, with the low farm employment, MGNREGS seems to provide a quarter of employment, a supplementary option in theory, seems to becoming a crucial in reducing distress.

- The average aggregate income of the agricultural households ranged from ₹ 1,07,222 to ₹ 2,99,267. The lowest class of marginal farmers or their near equivalent landless class, while living above the official poverty line given by the Planning Commission, have an average earning about US\$ 1 per day. If one applies the two dollar income definition then landless, marginal, small as well as semi-medium farm households, i.e., all those owning less than 10 acres, fall into the BPL category.
- At the aggregate level, there is considerable diversification in income from farm to non-farm; roughly 45 per cent of income is derived from non-farm activities. Landless labour class is found to earn the least from agriculture, only 23.19 per cent. Marginal farmers earn about 47 per cent from agriculture, the rest of the classes earn about 60 per cent from it. It is rather pathetic to observe that farm employment earnings for rural labour would fall to quarter and that of marginal can even give half of their income. However, non-cultivating land owning class derives 35 per cent of income from agriculture.
- With inadequate institutional credit the marginal and small farmers are increasingly depending on the informal credit especially from the moneylenders. The availability of easy credit has pushed up rural consumption levels, which is a dangerous outcome in the poor farm incomes. It is easy to understand how rural households can be lured to borrow higher levels at exorbitant rates of interest and

get into debt traps. Petty commodity producer households can be driven to suicides with the threat of losing the valuable land in the debt trap.

## **Policy Recommendations and Conclusion**

- There is a serious inequality in disbursement of institutional credit which should be corrected. There should be a diversification policy in agricultural credit from food crops to animal husbandry, meat and milk production. The waste land value is being taken into consideration as collateral in case of medium farmers, the policy should be extended to marginal and small farmers also. The joint liability model of farm credit which is being given in some villages should be extended to all villages at interest rates applied to landed households, with an increased loan amount than at the present so that tenant farmers can get adequate credit.
- Government should encourage agricultural cooperatives, even though the formation and sustaining is a big challenge. Government should create some model cooperatives, showcase them for replication. Such cooperatives should work with vertical integration strategies. There is a need to encourage innovative practices that can save cost of production and increase yield. However, this may not be adequate to protect the returns in the long run due to price competition. There is a need for increased economic intelligence to guide farmers towards successful diversification.
- The state policy should proceed towards some basic income guarantee in agriculture. This could be achieved in an indirect way such as setting up of educational institutions and hospitals and make admission free of cost for students from agricultural background. Particularly for removing the gender disparities incentives and freeships may be extended to girls' education, so that it hastens the social change in the rural areas.

## **EXCLUSION ERRORS AND ELITE CAPTURE: A CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF SHG MOVEMENT**

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### **Background of the Study**

In the last few decades, the mechanism of Self-Help Group (SHG) as an instrument of social and economic empowerment of rural poor has been amply validated. SHGs offer impoverished rural women not only a source of formal credit, but also a platform to access various socio-economic benefits. With the strengthening of SHG movement in the country, however, several drawbacks have been noticed which divert the benefits of the movement from the hands of the intended targets to the women in leadership positions who have been retaining power for prolonged periods of time. The Indian context of decentralisation is replete with instances of such capture of leadership positions at grassroots institutions, wherein, leaders, even among the most impoverished factions of population have enjoyed socio-political benefits on account of their leadership ranks, restricting the entry of other members into the same ambit of benefits.

Another major issue that has been identified with regard to the programme capture under the SHG movement has been exclusion of impoverished members of the society from the SHG fold. It is in this backdrop that exclusion errors in terms of finding target groups that are more prone to falling behind in the development process, despite their initial participation in various programmes along with women who either

fall out of the system or are not identified as beneficiaries due to structural socio-economic shortcomings have been scoped in this research study.

## **Objectives**

In the light of the key themes of elite capture and exclusion errors, this study has been carried out to attain the following research objectives:

- To analyse the reasons as to why poorest of the poor are left out in the SHG movement in the area under study
- To understand the democratic functioning of SHGs and their federations and the extent to which the poor are in positions of power
- To explore to what extent the rich/dominant capture these institutions and analyse the reasons for such capture
- To suggest the strategies for greater inclusion of the poorest of the poor and prevent elite capture

## **Study Area**

The study States are Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. These have been selected following the evolution of strong SHG movements in these southern States. Kudumbashree of Kerala, Indira Kranthi Patham (IKP) of Andhra Pradesh and Pudhu Vaazhvu (PVP) along with Mahalir Thittam in Tamil Nadu have developed to become exemplary instances of the gaining momentum of the SHG movement as strong tools of poverty alleviation in rural areas. Two districts from each State have been selected; one developed and another backward. Within the districts two blocks and subsequently at least three gram panchayats from each block have been studied with reference to the main questions that have arisen from elite capture and exclusion errors. Due regard has been given to selection of respondents based on levels of poverty and backward sections like SC,

ST and minorities to canvass the diverse range of factors that might be responsible for elite capture and exclusion errors.

## **Methodology**

The study was carried out using methods of structured interviews, case studies and focus group discussions. Primary data was collected with the help of pre-tested schedules, questionnaires, and secondary data from available records concerned departments and federations. Collection of primary data from the sample respondents was done with the help of a structured interview schedule. Apart from individual interviews, focus group discussions were also held. Case study was used as a tool to highlight field realities, issues and problems faced by the community. Representative case studies were collected under each setting.

Checklist was prepared and discussions were held with the officials of the concerned scheme / department at the district, block and village levels. Focus group discussions were also held with the NGOs, CBOs and elected representatives of the PRIs of selected villages.

## **Main Findings**

**Elite Capture:** Elite capture as a negative concept is contested in this study. The results of this research show that capture of leadership positions might not always be a voluntary choice or even an informed decision to retain power for the reasons of capture of assets and resources as is generally assumed under the concept of elite capture. In this study, the nature of capture offers an interesting insight into the dynamics of power capture in CBOs that are composed of homogenous groups in terms of economic resources.

The groups studied were largely composed of women from poor households who had joined these groups in order to access formal credit at low rates of interest. With leadership, certain duties and responsibilities have become mandatory, for instance, ability to take part in banking

formalities, capacity for comprehending and communicating government mandates related to SHGs, poverty alleviation and related schemes and projects to SHG members, regular time investment in SHG related activities like interacting with higher level SHG federations, CRPs, gram panchayats, government officials, etc.

This requires leaders to not only become capable of fulfilling these duties, but also be voluntarily motivated to perform these activities. The main issue that arises in SHGs where most of the members come from the poor households is that most members in the group are disinterested in leadership activities due to considerable time involvement required. Women, specifically poor women, with multiple household chores, parenting duties and livelihood activities that they need to perform to supplement the household income or the members being mostly illiterate or poorly educated with few social skills are too circumspect to accept leadership responsibilities.

This acts as a voluntary deterrent among members to take up leadership responsibilities, since members believe they will not be able to fulfill the duties with the punctuality and commitment required of them. The fact that major factors hindering leadership were cited as family responsibilities, lack of mobility and lack of family support bears testimony to this occurrence. Family members can barely be supportive of a choice that costs leaders days of work and wages when they commute to higher level SHG federations or go to banks for monetary transactions.

The interesting note to be made here is that while poverty was cited as one of the least important factors that hinder leadership, family responsibilities and lack of family support (largely due to the significant investment required of leaders that would hinder their livelihood pursuits) were cited as the major factors. This indicates that among members of an SHG where most women were poor, members did not discriminate against a woman based on poverty, rather, the economic considerations of members

compelled them to willingly opt out of accepting leadership responsibilities and instead permit women who had accepted leadership responsibilities in the past and dispensed their duties as leaders to continue with leadership. Hence, prior to the changes in election bye-laws, leaders have "traditionally" remained in power, owing to other members not voluntarily coming forward to contest their positions.

However, this being said, self interest in leadership which has been cited as the most important factor facilitating leadership, given that other members are rarely willing to join the leadership ranks owing to economic reasons, there are other reasons too why same leaders have remained in power for longer durations. Lack of educated members in the groups, experience levels of old leaders, their level of articulation among other reasons have also been cited for re-electing same leaders. Given the level of poor social skills, lack of time commitments and education inadequacies among other members, women who are willing to invest even a fragment of their efforts are soon seen as popular candidates for leadership.

Another reason behind same leaders continuing to dispense the responsibilities of leadership is the cumbersome process of fulfillment of documentation of new leaders. Once a new leader is chosen during elections, her name must be updated in the SHG records as there is a change in the signatories. Furthermore, her details must also be updated in the bank transactions since leaders are responsible for the monetary transactions on behalf of the SHGs. There is resistance from banks in making these changes since bank officials are better acquainted with old leaders and there is a lack of trust associated with the new leaders.

In such a context to say that leadership is always an involuntary choice prompted by other members in the group would, however, be fallacious. Though largely intangible in terms of financial improvements or accumulation of resources or assets, leaders stand to gain powerful social and behavioural benefits like, respect in the society, increased decision-

making capacity, self confidence, increased awareness, increased exposure and increased self-esteem. They also reserve the benefit of being more knowledgeable about financial transactions with banks and government schemes for the poor owing to their greater ambit of interaction. This leads to a situation where leaders are reserving positions of power and becoming important members of the community with better say regarding community level decisions that other members do not have. This is particularly witnessed in Kerala, where Kudumbashree has created a network of strong ward level ADS and CDS leaders who are politically active and in many cases are becoming more powerful than even gram panchayat leaders.

**Exclusion Errors:** Members who are excluded from the SHG fold are generally thought to be poor women who have not been able to join SHGs owing to certain voluntary or involuntary processes of exclusion. In this study, the women who were not part of SHGs were mostly impoverished and had voluntarily opted out of SHGs. The reasons for women not joining SHGs were mostly economic and self-exclusionary like poverty and lack of savings to make regular thrift. Several other reasons were cited across the States which also indicated to the nature of this exclusion by default.

Regular attendance to SHGs is an important norm that all members of the group must follow; however, most of these non-members are casual wage labourers, who during off- season have to temporarily migrate to other places in search of work. The regular attendance norm is also hampered by reasons like migration post marriage and illness of either self or members of the family. Female familial obligations in rural India being much more than the male members of the society, in impoverished households this manifests as a major restriction in joining SHGs. In households where earning two square meals a day becomes difficult, in such families, regular savings is not a voluntary choice. Hence, the lack of interest portrayed by many non-members might be attributed to this inability to make regular savings.

The fact that poverty is the prime reason of self-exclusion of women from SHGs is further corroborated by the fact that earlier drop outs of SHGs from this sample of non-members cited poverty and lack of savings as the major reasons for being compelled to leave SHGs, of which they were once a part. Other reasons for women dropping out of SHGs like lack of interest, migration for various reasons, inability to attend regular meetings due to chronic illnesses and increased burden of work are all reasons that coincide with the reasons cited by the same women for not joining new SHGs.

However, despite economic and social compulsions faced by these women a majority of these women have expressed the desire and the need to join SHGs. This coincides with the intensive social mobilisation and awareness campaigns that have been undertaken by several State programmes like Kudumbashree and projects like PVP in Tamil Nadu. However, the lack of awareness among SHG non-members shows that there is still a lot of affirmative action that needs to be undertaken by the State programmes along with other State and non-State players to spread awareness about SHG benefits and processes across all categories of women. Currently only 33 per cent of the non-members in Andhra Pradesh and 35 per cent of the non-members in Tamil Nadu in our study sample had awareness about SHG loan details. This dauntingly low level of awareness among women is an issue since it shows that social mobilisation processes have not been able to spread the requisite level of awareness required for women to join SHGs. The choice of joining SHGs presents itself once the women have all the pertinent information like rate of interest, maximum loan amount, repayment period and regular thrift amount, which would help them gauge their economic capacities to be actually able to conform to the SHG norms.

In both instances of elite capture and exclusion errors, the importance of State level programmes in creating veritable mandates and implementing policies that can restrict capture of leadership positions by

promoting democratic processes in SHGs and the strength of social mobilisation for extension of programme capture in the case of excluded members from the SHG fold have been duly noted.

The need for strengthening livelihoods as a tool to attract more members within the SHG fold and making poorer members within SHGs more economically self-reliant has been realised.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

- The Kerala model of SHG network is deemed the most effective one for several reasons. The primary ones being a strong social mobilisation initiative and binding programme mandate that must be followed at all SHG levels across the States. With regard to rotation of leadership however certain recommendations seem necessary. At present there is no mandate on the number of terms that can be held by SC and ST leaders within SHGs and higher level federations. This must be ratified since other members within the groups must learn the responsibilities of leadership as well. Furthermore, the total number of terms that can be held by a leader at all levels must be restricted to three in her lifetime. Currently, a leader may hold two consecutive terms and then re-enter as leader following a gap of one term. This threatens the chances of leadership to other members in the group.
- In Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, though there are guidelines which promote regular elections and rotation of leadership there is no stringent mandate requiring leaders to pass on their experience to other members in the group, as a result of which same leaders are being re-elected. This calls for a more binding mandate like Kudumbashree that restricts the terms of leadership at the SHG level.

- Across all the States, there is no mandatory leadership experience level required to become first or second leaders at the top of the leadership hierarchy. This leads to a situation wherein many leaders at the top are found to lack the experience and domain expertise required to fulfill leadership responsibilities. This must be remedied by making it mandatory for leaders at the higher ranks of SHG federations to have at least one term of leadership experience at the lower tiers of SHGs.
- Continuous capacity building of leaders at all levels is required in order to strengthen the SHG movement, especially in States like Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu where leaders not only lacked expertise in aspects other than credit networking with banks but also experience and knowledge regarding leadership duties, SHG norms, and State level schemes for the poor. They also need to be sensitised on the necessity to bring the out of SHG poor women into SHG fold.
- Elections across all the SHGs in the States should take place at a particular time and they must be supervised by at least one member from the higher level federations to ensure that elections are taking place transparently and that rotation as per the mandate are taking place. At the same time, elections across all the tiers of SHGs throughout the State should not be taken up at once as is the case with Kudumbashree. As all the leaders change at once the same time, the lack of experienced leaders might affect the smooth functioning of the programme.
- In Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu a level of misunderstanding and lack of trust was apparent between the new SHG leaders and banking officials who often refused to change the signatories in SHG passbooks because old leaders who had been in position for long durations of time had developed rapport with the banking officials.

New leaders were seen with eyes of mistrust by banking officials. This issue must be remedied if the functional transfer of leadership responsibilities from old to new leaders is to take place. The higher level federation members must provide assistance in the paper work deemed cumbersome by many SHG leaders and must vouch for the new leaders wherever required.

- In the case of identification of the poor, PVP's model of Participatory Identification of the Poor (PIP) is effective and hence is recommended to other States as well. However, even PIP process suffers from the problems of lack of updation of the PIP list. Once prepared, the PIP list must be made available at all local meeting points in the village and LSGs for appraisal and account. PIP process should be taken up on a continuous basis once in a year.
- Active initiatives must be taken to ensure that members on the PIP list are brought into the SHG fold. From our case studies in Tamil Nadu it is apparent that this is not complete.
- Inclusion of poor women into the SHG fold can only take place through continuous awareness campaigns and regular social mobilisation processes. The Neighbourhood Activities Nourishment through Massive Action (NANMA) campaign of Kudumbashree and PIP process of PVP are the steps in the right direction. But they should be taken up on a continuous basis.
- For women who can't make regular savings on a weekly or monthly basis, considerations must be made for the amount of thrift and the frequency of savings if the thrift habit is to be inculcated at all.
- Among the several committees that are formed at higher level SHG federations, one sub-committee must be specifically involved in initiating mobilisation processes to include the PIP list members

into SHGs. In the case of formation of new SHGs with these previously excluded members, the committee must monitor these groups post formation and provide assistance during the initial stages of membership. Incentives might also be promised based on certain pre-set targets to both the SHGs as well as the higher order federations which provide assistance in their formational stages. Since there is also a high possibility of defaults and drop outs, this committee must also monitor the activities of these SHGs in the formational years until they reach enough maturity to stabilise and continue.

- The programmes also must focus on implementation of various social schemes such as ASRAYA of Kudumbashree which aims at improving the lives of vulnerable women within the SHG fold or disabled SHG federations of IKP in Andhra Pradesh to strengthen the social base of the SHG network.
- Likewise, the programmes also should address the issue of poverty and lack of regular savings which seem to be the major reason for keeping the poor women out of the SHG fold. This should be done through various livelihood initiatives, such as Joint Livelihood Groups of Kudumbashree, Common Livelihood Groups of Mahalir Thittam and Pudhu Vaazhvu and MSP operations of Andhra Pradesh.
- Keeping in view the successes of healthy SHG federations like the Godavari Mahasamakhyia in Andhra Pradesh, in order to promote economic development in SHGs, the common livelihood groups under SHG federations should be sub-federated separately. This would allow a more focused approach to livelihood development under SHGs and would allow group members to be able to reap the benefits associated with economies of scale, once production activities, marketing and sale are scaled up at different federation levels.

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- The senior level personnel and their team in charge of planning and implementation of the SHG related programmes should be given a minimum tenure of 5-6 years, so that they are able to take the programme forward.

## **EFFICIENCY, EFFECTIVENESS AND IMPACT OF COMMUNITY BASED MONITORING SYSTEM (CBMS) FOR ACCESS TO BASIC MINIMUM SERVICES- A STUDY OF DIFFERENT MODELS**

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### **Background of the Study**

Community participatory systems are prominent mechanisms for building local capacities to address developmental and social concerns. It is widely believed that Participatory Monitoring System (PMS) can help community organisations improve their internal learning and governance. However, the processes of programme monitoring and evaluation as practised by many organisations lack the elements of community participation and its contribution to community learning. This approach means everyone who is affected or benefitted by a service can be involved in deciding how to successfully implement the project. The present study was carried out to understand and document the initiatives, approaches, strategies and achievements of community-based monitoring systems functioning in certain regions in India for the purpose of wider dissemination and replication. The following models were selected for a detailed study.

### ***Interventions of the CBMS Models Selected for the Study***

***Kottathara Resource Group (KRG) Model*** : The CBMS is being implemented in Kottathara Panchayat of Wayanad district in Kerala to provide the gram panchayat and local communities with a participative and evidence-based information system on access to basic minimum

services for need-based policy formulation and monitoring. The CBMS aims to contribute to the reduction of inequalities in health and access to basic minimum services.

***Growth Centre Network Model*** : This was a self-sufficient local economy at the level of the village/ cluster of villages experimented in Thiruvellore district in Tamil Nadu. This was achieved by building Kuthambakkam village as a model by establishing rural industries using appropriate technologies through motivating and strengthening of panchayat members and people through gram sabhas. The primary approach was plan development with the people and making it as people's plan. Then, mobilising the resources through people's participation and executing all the developmental programmes with the people's committee.

***SARD and BBA Model for All-round Development of the Village***: For the NGOs like the Society for All Round Development (SARD), the notion of community participation is based on the belief that the local community needs to be empowered and enabled to sustain the changes occasioned by any intervention and hence, the community's active involvement is integral rather than incidental to the scheme of things. SARD is working in the Deeg and Kaman blocks of Bharatpur district of Rajasthan and stands as a good model of participatory development with education as a key intervention. The CBOs have played an important role in influencing community attitudes, garnering support for the SARD-run Quality Education Centres (QECs) and soliciting contributions from the community.

***The Lokmitra Model*** : Lokmitra, an UP-based NGO, works to improve the services provided by the government with a strong focus on strengthening local self-governance. Its operational area includes the districts of Raebareli, Pratapgarh, Jaunpur and Sitapur in Central-Eastern Uttar Pradesh. Primary education, Early Child Care and Development (ECCD), women's leadership and empowerment are some of its areas of

work. As far as primary education is concerned, Lokmitra's experiences have helped to develop a policy framework through decentralised governance and community ownership. Lokmitra has built this strongly in its service regions; it acts as an enabling process for effective discharge of people's entitlements.

### **Objectives**

- To study the structure and process of Community Based Monitoring System evolved in selected participatory models
- To analyse the strengths and weaknesses of CBMS selected for the study
- To study the efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of CBMS in different models
- To examine the impact of CBMS on people's access to basic minimum services

### **Data Collection Methods and Analysis**

The present research was conducted in four different models; one each from Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. Personal interviews with semi-structured interview schedules covering study objectives were administered covering 10 per cent of households. Opinions of the respondents were also collected on the effectiveness, impact of methods, strategies followed and processes of monitoring. Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques like Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Stakeholder Analysis were used.

### **Findings of the Study**

- In general, male population is more interested to participate in the socio-cultural activities as well as political events happening outside

the family. Out of 532 respondents, 66.2 per cent are males and remaining 33.8 per cent are females. State-wise data distribution also shows in all the four States majority respondents are males only. The age particulars of the study reflect, 49.2 per cent respondents were in the age group of 41-50 years, followed by 32.7 per cent between the age of 31-40 years. Education is the major motivational factor for participation in any development activities of the institutions. Among the study population 80 per cent are literates, but the levels of education are very low.

- Occupational status of the respondents shows 34.8 per cent were farm labours, followed by 23.3 per cent engaged in industrial labour activities. Income particulars of the sample households show that 41.0 per cent received annual income between ₹ 24000 – ₹ 36000 and around 29 per cent have got annual income between ₹12000- ₹ 24000, followed by another around of 29 per cent of respondents received between ₹ 36000- ₹ 48000.
- In the study area, around 53 per cent of the respondents are landless. Among the landholding families only few are having wet lands but majority have dry lands. The status of household assets possessed by the sample respondents shows majority members have some form of assets.
- The main purpose of the community-based organisations and their sub-units is to encourage and motivate people to participate in the local democracy for participatory decision-making. All the respondents in all the States reported that they participate in the gram sabha meetings without fail. Except some (19 per cent) in overall other respondents (81per cent) participate voluntarily.
- In Kerala all the sample respondents participate on their own interest. In other States around 75 per cent respondents participate in the

meetings without external intervention. Regarding nature of participation in gram sabha meetings around 41 per cent participate with full involvement by discussing in detail about various activities of the GP, especially in the implementation of State and Central Governments' welfare and development schemes.

- Around 30 per cent of the respondents participate partially in the GP meetings due to their low awareness and their low capacity to understand the issues. Around 35 per cent of sample population, majority from Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan, participate in planning and implementation as well as monitoring of the development schemes and also in the planning of own activities of the GP.
- As regards the status of membership of sample respondents in various committees of gram panchayats, 75 per cent were holding membership in any one of the committees earmarked for different purposes.
- The views of the sample respondents reflect that lack of personal interest influences the attendance in the gram sabha meetings, reporting only 35.2 per cent. In Tamil Nadu and Kerala, gram panchayat leaders made enormous efforts in educating and motivating people to join the initiatives of GPs in fulfilling the basic needs and creation of supporting infrastructure in the villages. But in the States of Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, NGOs/CBOs played vital role in mobilising and motivating the people.
- The people monitor the projects through a number of forums like SHGs (20.5 per cent), ward committees (27.6 per cent), NGOs (13.2 per cent), community forums (12.4 per cent) and village sangas (8.8 per cent). In addition, individuals on their own also monitor the projects without any external intervention.

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- In majority of cases only committee members, especially vigilance and monitoring committees, would do proper monitoring exercises; very few members or representatives of village organisations participate in the monitoring process.
- During the project implementation the people see the works carried out by the GP and verify the implementation as per the guidelines and specifications provided in the scheme plan. The financial auditing has been carried out during gram sabha meeting.
- Around 37 per cent members of the CBMS cautioned the implementing GP to correct the mistakes in responses related to reaction on misappropriation. Around 21 per cent respondents make complaints with the higher authorities. As per the views of majority, after initiation of community-based monitoring, chances for misappropriation have been reduced in almost all the sample panchayats.
- After the introduction of CBMS, transparency in administration has been improved. The responses were reported as 'Good' (46.1 per cent) and 'Very Good' (29.1 per cent). Similarly maintenance of accounts also improved as reported positively by all the respondents.
- Conduct of meetings periodically as per the guidelines have been noticed and supported by 93 per cent respondents, by viewing 'Good' by the majority and 'Very Good' by around 30 per cent.
- The CBMS paved the way for making complaints and timely redressal of grievances to all the people in the GP. Fund mobilisation and utilisation also have cent per cent positive responses which show improvement in delivery of basic services.
- Overall responses from all the States reported positive impact by the intervention of CBMS in creation of awareness.

- The awareness on the 'People's Right' is known to 66 per cent, conduct of periodical 'Elections' is known to 70 per cent, provision of 'Basic Services' as a mandatory function of the GP is known to all the people.
- The CBMS interestingly played an important role in creating awareness among the people on various aspects of functioning of gram panchayats. Better awareness noticed on the functioning of 'Committees of Panchayats' (86 per cent), 'Gram Sabha' (70 per cent), 'Planning' at the GP Level'(85 per cent), 'Funds Availability' (71 per cent), 'People's Role in Programme Implementation'(72 per cent), 'Social Audit'(cent per cent), 'RTI'(cent per cent) and 'Implementation of MGNREGA by GP'(67 per cent).
- The performance level of gram panchayat after the intervention of CBMS in implementation of rural development programmes as per the guidelines shows better as acknowledged and appreciated by around 84 per cent respondents.
- Changes after the introduction of community-based monitoring system in the functioning of panchayat and its impact on various aspects of households have not made any direct intervention on the livelihoods of the people but created indirect effects through timely delivery of basic necessities and enabled the panchayats to give priority to build new infrastructure and strength existing public amenities.
- Better performance of panchayats enabled the local people to benefit in multi-dimensions like getting better education, participation in political democracy, getting of more employment through programmes like MGNREGS, better healthcare, enhanced social mobility, access to the government mechanisms and ultimately

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increasing the awareness level and bargaining power of the local community.

- There is not much change in the political carrier of the people due to CBMS, but it created better change in social, economic, health, educational, agriculture and availing of employment opportunities.

## **INDIGENOUS TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE IN COMMUNITY SEED BANKS**

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### **Background of the Study**

Access to seeds is a critical need of every farmer. Lack of access to quality seeds places livelihoods, survival, sustainability and food security at stake. With the adoption of modern agriculture practices the farmers have been relying on high yielding variety of seeds every year which often demanded heavy agricultural inputs and most often it turned out to be spurious seeds adding agony to the farmers. Dependence on such exotic seeds also hampered conservation of traditional seeds and redundancy / disappearance of many indigenous varieties as they advocate the adoption of unsustainable practices such as monocropping techniques which cannot secure basic subsistence of a family. Small and marginal farmers can ill afford all such practices. By such mounting dependencies on big seed companies, every year the farmers faced insecurity on shortfall of seeds and crops too. Use of indigenous seeds in association with withdrawal from non-organic agriculture practices has many advantages including savings in monetary terms. Today more than 83 per cent of the farming community in India comprises small and marginal farmers. Therefore, there is a great need for free and easy access to indigenous seeds. The only solution to overcome this gigantic and herculean problem is through encouraging Community Seed Banks (CSBs), which are places of storage where indigenous seed varieties are conserved and managed by community members. These interventions provide the farmers with free and easy access to traditional seeds effecting through an exchange system giving access

to the seeds on the condition that a farmer returns twice the amount of seeds that he or she borrows. This system not only reduces the farmers' dependence on seed companies but also helps them in conserving agrobiodiversity in their farms.

## **Study Area**

The study areas selected for the research activity are Andhra Pradesh (Now Telangana), Karnataka and Maharashtra.

## **Methodology**

Green Foundation in Karnataka, Deccan Development Society in Andhra Pradesh and Navadhanya in Maharashtra are the successful organisations involved in preserving this technology as Indigenous Tradition Technologies. The States were chosen keeping in view the larger participation of women and small and marginal farmers in the preservation of Seed Bank Technology.

As this study documents the Indigenous Traditional Knowledge of CSBs in the three successful NGOs a purposive sampling of the small and marginal framers who have experience in the participation of the system for more than two years were selected and also the SHGs promoted by the NGOs and involved in the CSB activity for more than two years were selected for the study.

Two specific sample frameworks were worked out for the study. One sample framework for Control Group comprising the small and marginal farmers and the SHG members promoted by the successful NGOs was considered. This is based on a purposive sampling where the sample so selected is predetermined through variables like years of involvement in the CSB activity, NGOs promoted CSBs, etc. Second sample framework for the Experimental Group was based on the selection of the sample where there is no involvement of any NGOs in the formation and promotion of CSBs.

From each State two districts were selected and from each district two blocks were selected and from each block a sample of 4 farmers involved in the CSB activity under the NGO were randomly selected, this constituted the control group and 6 farmers who were not under the leadership of the NGO were randomly selected for the study which constituted the experimental group. Similarly 4 SHG members from the control group and 6 SHG members from the experimental group from each block were selected for the study.

Therefore, the sample size for the study is 48 small & marginal farmers (16 /State) in the control group and 72 small and marginal farmers in the experimental group (24/State). The total size of sample is 120 small and marginal farmers and 120 SHGs across three States.

### **Interventions Made**

The research study examined in detail the storage techniques and technologies adopted traditionally and indigenously by the community with the following interventions:

- ◆ Peoples' participation and strategies adopted by the community to provide access to good quality seeds
- ◆ Seed storage technologies
- ◆ CSB activities handled by women like maintenance of records and selection of quality seeds from those returned
- ◆ Role of CSBs during drought & failure of crops /in the wake of natural calamities
- ◆ Coping mechanisms of CSBs during drought & natural calamities
- ◆ Quantification of seed requirements
- ◆ Analysing seed viability and replacement strategies
- ◆ Role of community in the preservation of crop biodiversity

- ◆ Impact of technology in sustaining farm practices
- ◆ Livelihood interventions
- ◆ Sustaining food security
- ◆ Issues leading to redundancy / disappearance of indigenous varieties
- ◆ Impact of technology on productivity of the farms (small and marginal farmers) in monetary terms
- ◆ Access to traditional seeds and interventions for conserving crop biodiversity in their farms (sustainable agricultural practices)
- ◆ Management of CSBs by women self-help groups (SHGs)
- ◆ Empowerment of women farmers and leadership roles
- ◆ Policy aspects in the State of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra in the promotion of CSBs
- ◆ Issues on Seed Legislation and Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers Rights
- ◆ Possibilities for investment by public and private sector units for development of new plant varieties
- ◆ Formulation of the scheme on Seed Crop Insurance to cover risks in seed production
- ◆ Marketing & fair trade practices for the promotion of quality seeds.

### **Innovative Approaches/Experiences**

#### ***The study examined in detail in the following aspects:***

- ◆ Adequate and timely supply of quality inputs such as seeds
- ◆ Issues on Seed Legislation and Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights
- ◆ Possibilities for investment in public and private sectors for development of new plant varieties

- ◆ Formulation of the scheme on Seed Crop Insurance to cover risks in seed production
- ◆ Use of Seed Bank to meet seed requirements in the wake of natural calamities
- ◆ Access to good quality seeds and livelihood interventions and food security
- ◆ Issues leading to redundancy / disappearance of indigenous varieties
- ◆ Impact of the technology on the productivity of the farms in monetary terms to the small and marginal farmers
- ◆ Access to traditional seeds and interventions for conserving agrobiodiversity in their farms
- ◆ Management of the CSBs by the women self-help groups (SHGs)
- ◆ Empowerment of women farmers and leadership roles
- ◆ Sustainable agricultural practices
- ◆ Policy aspects in the State of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra in the promotion of CSBs.

## **Results**

Application of the indigenous traditional knowledge and technologies in community seed banking have elicited the coping strategies in farming communities in times of crisis such as drought / crop failure.

Traditional varieties of seeds were drought-resistant, consume less water, possess a very high resistance to pests and contain high nutrient content. They were also unique for high rate of germination.

The CSBs have impacted the regular seed agencies, either by replacing them or making them dormant.

Subsequent observance of this technology in many States by small and marginal farmers and its successful practice paved the way in the promulgation and the constitution of National Seed Policy in the new agriculture policy: 2000.

These CSBs are managed by women members of the community.

This system not only reduced the farmers' dependence on seed companies, incidence of spurious seeds and relieved them of higher input costs but also helped them in conserving agro-biodiversity in their farms.

Diffusion of Indigenous traditional knowledge is based on sharing the legacy through kinship, traditional relationships and cultural practices. It helped the exchange, conservation and use of knowledge.

Traditional seed varieties are not available in the market and the farmers are indulging in exchanging of seeds within the village or with the neighbouring villages which plays an important role for not only supply of seed but also helps in diffusion through seed exchange, which affects diversity in the crop.

## **Conclusion**

Community Seed Banks (CSBs) have played an important role in conservation of indigenous seeds and use of organic fertilisers for the farming community belonging to small and marginal farmers in India's agricultural sector providing free and easy access to traditional seeds to the farmers. Nevertheless, these community systems of seed supply are increasingly coming under pressure such as droughts, crop failures, conflicts, difficult storage conditions, and poverty which are eroding the quantity of seed to farmers.

## **A STUDY OF SUSTAINABILITY OF MGNREGS ASSETS IN SELECTED DISTRICTS OF INDIA**

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### **Introduction**

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) was rolled out on 7th September 2005 with the objective of providing 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a year to the rural poor that they can expect to earn a living wage with dignity. MGNREGS is the largest public works employment project in the world.

MGNREGS gives the government an opportunity to address the prolonged issue of rural infrastructure neglect by creating watershed development, restoration of water bodies such as tanks and canals, activities aimed at forestry, land development and soil erosion, flood control, construction of roads, drought proofing measures like afforestation, etc. MGNREGS does not just give employment to rural poor, but also creates community assets which are useful for the villagers in the long run. However, it is very critical to create assets that are useful to the community.

The recent intense focus on MGNREGS has been on understanding the quality and durability of assets created as the scheme works. The question is- when do works become assets?

The research evidence over the years shows that the works completed to improve the livelihood security of the workers and the community, advancing capability and changing decisions on cropping, risk, migration and productivity are limited by two issues:

1. Much of the evidence on existing works constitutes, what is referred to as, the best case scenario for the works. Further, research has been limited to micro contexts and no large all States study has been done till date.
2. There has been some research and a widespread public perception on the possibility of 'unverifiable works'. The public perception is that works don't exist on ground. The question that has been asked is-whether works exist in all geographical/State contexts.

With a view to address the two issues highlighted above, this research study has been undertaken by UNDP to test the claims from both sides objectively on assets created or not under MGNREGS. The study has been conducted by the NIRD &PR, Hyderabad in all the 29 States of the country. Data collection in these States presented a challenge.

## **Objectives**

1. To verify and assess the productivity of works in all States
2. To elicit the beneficiary perception on assets created (water related)
3. To identify the Return on Investment (RoI) for individual assets related to agriculture.

## **Methodology**

1. Over all 2771 assets were physically verified by the research team. Out of 2771 assets 1125 assets are community assets (40.1 per cent) and 1646 assets are individual assets (59.9 per cent).

2. Users' perception is collected from the beneficiaries (2575) for the assets related to water and agriculture development. In the case of community assets, too, user perceptions were collected from the users selected at random.
3. In case of individual assets, the beneficiary perception as well as RoI is additionally collected from the 1188 individual beneficiaries.

### Study Area

Data collection was carried out simultaneously in all the 29 States of India with the help of Bharat Nirman Volunteers (BNVs), wherever the sample size was more. In each State, SIRD identified 2 BNVs with graduation, preferably post-graduate qualification. The identified BNVs were involved in data collection under the supervision of Research Associates (RAs).

### Key Findings

Assets were verified from all 29 States. However, the following 11 States showed the existence of unverifiable works. Out of 2008 assets verified across these States, 268 assets (13.3 per cent) did not exist.

Unverifiable works in different States are as follows:

**Table 1: Unverifiable works in the States**

State	Total Works	Unverifiable Works	Percentage of Unverifiable works
Telangana	433	196	45.3
Nagaland	92	28	30.4
West Bengal	264	19	7.2
Chhattisgarh	27	13	48.1

(Contd.....)

**Table 1 (Contd.....)**

Assam	14	2	14.3
Bihar	11	2	18.2
Jharkhand	25	2	8.0
Madhya Pradesh	172	2	1.2
Tamil Nadu	61	2	3.3
Kerala	286	1	0.3
Tripura	623	1	0.2
Total	2008	268	13.3

*Telangana (45.3 per cent, 196 works out of 433), Nagaland ( 30.44 per cent, 28 out of 92), West Bengal ( 7.24 per cent, 19 out of 264), Chattisgarh (48.14 per cent, 13 out of 27) and less than 15.45 per cent of unverifiable works were found in Assam, Bihar, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh and Tripura.*

### **Status of assets**

*Around 68.45 per cent of assets were found to be in good condition, 19.4 per cent were partially damaged, and the remaining 13.45 per cent assets were fully damaged.*

### **Quality of works**

*One-fourth of the beneficiaries reported that the quality of works was very good and 19.45 per cent beneficiaries reported that the quality of works was average and another 24.5 per cent beneficiaries said the quality of works was low.*

**Table 2: Quality of Assets Created**

Variables	Frequency	Per cent
Very good	1960	76.1
Average	492	19.1
Low/Bad	50	1.9
DK/CS	73	2.8
Total	2575	100

### ***Maintenance of assets***

On the whole, 68.45 per cent of the assets are maintained by the beneficiaries. In community works, only 52.45 per cent assets are maintained by the community. In individual assets, more than three fourth (78.74 per cent) assets are maintained by the beneficiaries.

### ***Awareness of beneficiary in selection process***

Overall 84 per cent beneficiaries are aware about MGNREGS's planning process of works. Most people are unaware of the process of planning in the States namely, Haryana (88.24 per cent) Nagaland (85.04 per cent), Odisha (85.74 per cent), Punjab (83.34 per cent), Tamil Nadu (70.04 per cent), Gujarat (46.45 per cent) and Himachal Pradesh (32.54 per cent).

### ***Participation of beneficiaries in selection of works***

All over the country 82 per cent beneficiaries participated in selection of works. Non- participation is high in Gujarat, Haryana, Manipur, Odisha, Punjab, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu and Nagaland.

### ***Satisfaction on MGNREGS***

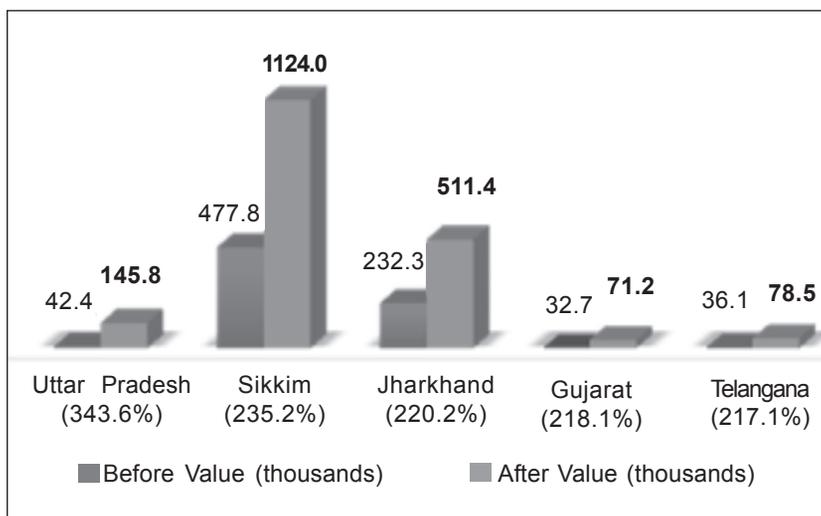
At the national level, 247(9.6 per cent) beneficiaries reported that they were dissatisfied and another 459 beneficiaries (17.8 per cent) were partly satisfied out of 2575 beneficiaries who were interviewed. All together one-fourth of the beneficiaries are not happy with MGNREGS implementation.

### ***Return on Investment (RoI)***

***Land development*** :The study found that, 55 per cent of land development has been observed (2931.7 acres out of 5325.5 acres ) through MGNREGS land development activities.

**Increased land value :** The study shows that on an average the land value has increased 180 per cent i.e., on an average in India ₹ 20,72,786 worth land has increased to ₹ 37,42,225/- through MGNREGS land development activities.

**Figure 1: Change in Land Value**



### ***Change in cropping pattern***

The Return on Investment is analysed only for the individual assets related to water and agriculture development. Through MGNREGS works the cropping pattern has changed for about two-third of individual beneficiaries (70.0 per cent). The drought-proofing works (44 per cent), other public works (40 per cent) had lesser impact on change in cropping pattern compared to other types of works.

### ***Farm productivity***

Around 57 per cent beneficiaries felt that there is a significant increase in productivity.

### ***Shift from dryland farming to irrigation farming***

Among 1188 individual beneficiaries 527 (44.4 per cent) reported shifting from dryland farming to irrigated farming. The individual land development works have benefited the farmers largely.

### ***Area under cultivation***

The individual farmer has reported that totally 368.6 acres of un-cultivable land has become cultivable through MGNREGS land development work. Further 1404 acres of land has got irrigation facilities through the land development and water harvesting work. On the whole, 7 per cent of land has become cultivable through MGNREGS land development activities.

### **Conclusion and Policy Suggestions**

1. Among the ghosts / unverifiable works, majority are individual works rather than community works. Therefore, to address this issue gram sabha should ensure that all completed works (cent per cent) should be authenticated by the beneficiary in a public hearing/meeting.
2. In most of the States, social audit practices are not effective and not carried out according to a schedule. The States need to ensure that each asset created should pass through the social audit exercise. Wherever unverifiable works are listed, respective States can take a special initiate or drive to identify these works by doing special social audits and recover the complete money spent on such unverifiable works.
3. In case of community assets, to ensure proper maintenance and good condition of assets user groups can be formed who can be entrusted with the task of monitoring the use and maintenance of the assets thus created.
4. To ensure that the individual assets are maintained properly in a timely manner, the GP should have an MoU with the individual

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beneficiary with a clause of ensuring that if the asset is not maintained or not used the beneficiary should repay the expenditure.

5. Land value has increased due to individual land development activities. More focus and priority should be given to building individual assets.
6. Agriculture related drought-proofing works and other public works are not contributing to changes in cropping pattern and productivity. So this type of works can be less focussed.

## **MOBILISATION OF FINANCES BY PANCHAYATS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY IN SELECT STATES - KERALA, MADHYA PRADESH AND GUJARAT (2011-12)**

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### **Introduction**

The 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitution Amendment Act, 1992 conferred Constitutional status on the panchayati raj institutions (PRIs) considering them as institutions of self-government. As per the Directive Principles of State Policy, the state had taken steps to organise the PRIs endowing them with powers and authority to implement plans for economic development and social justice. For making the fiscal decentralisation meaningful and to maintain a balance between functional assignments and resources availability, the state, as per the recommendations of successive finance commissions had taken steps to assign different revenue earning handling to PRIs. The Act and rules of PRIs have been suitably amended adding new perspective to their functions and responsibilities and they are now expected to work with a broader framework for raising their resource base and become self-sufficient to discharge their obligatory functions as per the need and expectations of the people. Devolution of fiscal powers to PRIs has provided fruitless results. The issues of fiscal autonomy of these institutions are writ large, notwithstanding the recommendations of Central & State Finance Commissions.

Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India constituted a sub-committee in August, 2007 and modified some of the guidelines of centrally sponsored schemes to provide centrality to PRIs. The sub-committee had taken several significant decisions to strengthen PRIs by way of preparation of activity mapping, financial devolution to match functional devolution, capacity building of PRI members and incentivisation to States for progress on panchayati raj. Some of the recommendations put forth by the sub-committee are:

- ◆ Panchayats must be involved in identification of the beneficiaries and selection of priorities and location for the development for all the programmes of Central and State Governments
- ◆ Parallel bodies must not continue nor formed for any scheme
- ◆ The existing parallel bodies should be converted into sub-committees of the panchayats at the appropriate level
- ◆ Gram sabha should be the source for preparation and validation of data
- ◆ Departmental functionaries should report to gram sabha on progress of schemes periodically so that validation can come from the community
- ◆ PRI members should be involved in the supervision of schemes
- ◆ CSS guidelines should provide for transfer of assets to and maintenance by PRIs
- ◆ Staffing of PRIs should be improved.

Against this backdrop, the researcher developed the objectives of study.

## **Objectives**

1. To understand the existing resources of gram panchayats
2. To study the augmentation of resources by way of taxes and non-taxes levied by the gram panchayats
3. To highlight the issues and recommendations made by 13<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission for strengthening the gram panchayats
4. To make an analysis of the primary and secondary data to assess and find better suitable measures to generate more revenue for the gram panchayats.

## **Methodology**

The study is carried out in three States, namely Gujarat, Kerala and Madhya Pradesh. The purpose of the study is to know how gram panchayats are capable of generating own resources. In order to achieve the objectives of the study data was collected through primary and secondary sources. A questionnaire has been designed accordingly. The selection of the districts was done on basis of its relative development and backwardness. After selecting the districts in the State one block panchayat was selected and then two gram panchayats in each block were selected randomly. Thus the study area consists of three States, three districts, three block panchayats and six gram panchayats.

The structured questionnaire was canvassed among the stakeholders, officials, elected representatives and a cross section of the society to ascertain their view points and perceptions about augmenting the resources of gram panchayats.

## **Study Area**

The study area has been chosen based on some important features of respective State Acts. The Kerala, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh Acts had enabling features to generate more revenue. The description of the study area is as follows:

Kerala has its own importance, particularly PRIs having capacity to levy taxes and getting grants from the State and Central governments. PRIs need additional resources and financial autonomy to fulfil their new functional obligations. For example, in Kerala panchayats can spend upto ₹ 1 lakh to take up work without any outside clearance. But in other States, the village panchayats are required to get clearance from the next higher level. The Kerala Panchayat Raj Act, 1994 has conferred powers only on village panchayats to raise revenues from local jurisdictions in the form of tax and non-tax. The Act itself provides for the payment of the net proceeds of the basic tax levied and collected by the State government in a district to the panchayats in the ratio of 37.50: 30.00: 20.00 for the village, block and district panchayat, respectively.

The Gujarat Panchayat Act, 1993 empowers the village panchayat to levy taxes on buildings and lands, tax on fairs, festivals and entertainment, pilgrim tax, service taxes/cess, like general sanitary cess, general water rate, special water rate, special sanitary cess, drainage tax and lighting tax. taluk panchayats in Gujarat are authorised to levy education cess, additional tax on panchayat taxes and additional stamp duty. The district panchayats are also empowered to levy additional taxes and fees on the taxes and fees collected by the village panchayats. One of the significant features of fiscal devolution to panchayats in Gujarat is that many revenue powers from the State government acquired statutory status. The State government transfers 5 per cent of its forest revenue and local fund cess for primary education to the district panchayats and a share in land revenue and stamp duty cess to taluka panchayats. In Gujarat Panchayat Act there is a unique feature relating to the creation of a separate legislative committee for the panchayats and analogous to the public accounts committee. This committee is known as Panchayati Raj Committee (PRC) of the house.

In Madhya Pradesh before the transfer of tax powers from the village panchayats to the gram sabha, the GPs had the powers to levy property

tax on lands and buildings, tax on private latrines, profession tax, lighting tax, special tax on buildings, tax on animals, water rate, temporary tax for special works of utility and several kinds of fees. In 2001, the State Panchayati Raj Act was modified transferring almost all revenue-raising powers of the village panchayats to the gram sabha, the former was left with the powers to levy market fees on persons exposing goods for sale in a market.

Janpad panchayats are empowered to levy a tax on theatre or theatrical performances and other performances, a development tax on agricultural land and license fees for the use and occupation of public lands or other properties. The zilla panchayats are empowered to increase the cess in respect of land held by every tenure holder and government lessee within the village panchayat area, which is being levied at the rate of ₹ 0.50 on every rupee or part thereof exceeding ₹ 0.50 on the land revenue or rent assessed on such land upto ₹10/-. The cess is leviable in addition to the land revenue or rent or any other cess or tax on such land and is collected in the same manner as the land revenue by the State Government.

## **Findings**

1. The domain of taxation provision of the gram panchayats is limited in their respective State Acts to generate revenues. It is suggested that the States should incorporate the enabling provision in their respective PR Acts.
2. One of the important findings of the study is that fund flow from a higher tier to a lower tier has become a cumbersome affair because of undue delay, technical incorporation and negative attitude. However, it is suggested that lower tiers should have adequate powers. They should be actively involved in the collection of the taxes and in development.

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3. The important observation is that tax on lands and buildings is higher in Madhya Pradesh ranging between ₹ 30,000- ₹ 50,000 per annum. But in Kerala and Gujarat it was little lower than the tax in Madhya Pradesh. It is therefore to suggest that the tax on lands and buildings should be as per the PR Act of Madhya Pradesh in both Kerala and Gujarat.
4. Kerala gram panchayats are able to generate more revenue between ₹ 15000- ₹ 30000 in a year from profession tax and trades. However, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh should emulate it and amend their PR Acts.
5. As per the study panchayats in the three States are always depending on grants-in-aid from the Centre and State Governments. This dependency of panchayats is less in Kerala. It is suggested that the gram panchayats may generate their own sources of revenue for self-sufficiency and sustainability and avoid dependency.
6. As regards maintenance of cash balance by the gram panchayats, 30-40 panchayats in Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh expressed their discontent. However, panchayats in Kerala are performing better in financial management and maintaining the cash balance.
7. Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat had their poverty problems as these two States fall under Schedule V Areas, where scheduled tribe people are in large numbers. This can be taken care by adopting the Local Innovation Strategies (LIS) and Chester Area Approach (CAA) for augmenting the resources of gram panchayats.

## **Conclusion**

After 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment the panchayati raj system has become strong and self-sufficiency and autonomy are important for effective functioning of panchayati raj institutions. Particularly the inter-governmental transfers within the context of constitutional arrangements are one of the

rationalising multi-level public finance with multi-level planning and development in Indian federal polity. Subject to the collection of local taxes as per Section 193 of Gujarat Panchayat Act, the local cess leviable on water in respect of lands, the State government will pay to the taluk panchayat within the jurisdiction of which the lands are situated. The same will also be applicable to the district panchayat as it is under section 1991 of Gujarat Panchayat Act. The taxes to be levied by village panchayat are subject to general order fixing minimum and maximum rates to be framed by the village panchayats under section 200 (1) of Gujarat Panchayat Act. The rates can be fixed by the competent authority of the local panchayats. Especially the gram panchayats may by resolution levy and collect the land revenue up to 25 paise on every rupee.

A potential and comprehensive exercise needs to be developed for resource generation by the panchayats for strengthening of PRIs. It is suggested that, there are four major aspects of resource mobilisation (i) potential for taxation; (ii) fixation of realistic tax rates, (iii) widening of tax base and (iv) improved collection. As per the study in three States there is scope for generation of own resources of gram panchayats

1. The Common Property Resources (CPR) vested in the hands of village panchayats are not properly managed and it leads to encroachments by the dominant communities in the villages. Therefore, it is suggested that the gram panchayats should identify the common property resources and make them available for the poor people based on terms and conditions for revenue generation.
2. The Central and State governments should expand the law of taxation domain of the panchayats and make it obligatory for the panchayats to levy taxes in their jurisdiction.

## **PROCESS DOCUMENTATION AND ASSESSMENT OF TRAINING FOR INTENSIVE PARTICIPATORY PLANNING EXERCISE**

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### **Background of the Study**

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 provides a legal Guarantee of minimum 100 days of wage employment in a year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work at the minimum wage rate. Planning is critical for the successful implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) as the labour budget and shelf of projects have to be prepared / identified and ratified in gram sabhas. But people's participation is largely lacking in the entire process of labour budget preparation and it remained an official driven exercise.

Under MGNREGA, in order to attract more participation in planning at the gram panchayat (GP) level, especially for works planning, the Government of India introduced the process of Intensive Participatory Planning Exercise (IPPE) in the selected backward blocks of the country. The main objectives of IPPE are : i) Assessment of labour demand, ii) Identification of works to meet the estimated labour demand and iii) Estimated cost of works and wages. This process of planning and identification of projects were to be taken up in a participatory manner at

the habitation level, reflecting the needs and aspirations of the local people, while ensuring maximum participation of women, SCs / STs and the poor. In this backdrop, a study was conducted by NIRD&PR with the financial support of UNDP to assess the effects of IPPE training on the process of conducting of IPPE. The basic research questions were to know whether the IPPE took place in the selected GPs and documentation of the process and its effect in preparation of realistic labour budget. Verification, whether the training imparted to the BPTs enabled to conduct the IPPE, was done.

### **Objectives**

1. To study and document the Intensive Participatory Planning Exercise (IPPE) process in the selected gram panchayats
2. To identify critical areas in capacity building provided to BPTs
3. To analyse and identify the suitable support systems needed for organising effective IPPE.

### **Methodology and Sampling**

The study was conducted in six States representing one from each geographical zone and based on the variations of Labour Budget Projections of 2014-15 and 2015-16. Three lowest variant and three highest variant States, namely Chhattisgarh (Highest variation in Central Zone), Odisha (Highest variation in East Zone) Uttarkhand (Highest variation in North Zone), Tripura (Lowest variation in North East Zone), Andhra Pradesh (Lowest variation in South Zone) and Gujarat (Lowest variation in West Zone) were selected. The districts and blocks were selected with the same criteria from each State. From each block two GPs were selected. Depending upon the number of IPPE blocks, either one or two blocks were selected in some districts. The respondents were selected on the basis of available list of active job cardholders at the GP level and required number of sample was arrived by taking confidence level as 95 per cent

and confidence interval as 5 per cent. Sample was selected based on simple random by selecting every 5<sup>th</sup> name of job cardholder from the GPs muster roll. Replacement was adopted for non-existent or non-available selected samples to arrive at required number of samples for the study.

## **Major Findings**

### ***Awareness about MGNREGA***

- ◆ The awareness levels on the scheme provisions show that 69.5 per cent of the respondents know about their right to work under MGNREGA, 66.6 per cent are aware of minimum 100 days guaranteed employment in a year and 54.2 per cent know that they have to submit application for getting work. Around 51 per cent have reported of having awareness on the entitlement of unemployment allowance. Around 49 per cent respondents know the type of works to be undertaken in MGNREGS. Around 48 per cent know gram sabha's role in work identification. Around 40 per cent of beneficiaries know social audit, time limit for provision of employment after submission of application, right to raise questions during the process of social audit, work site facilities and time limit for payment of wages. There are significant variations across the States regarding awareness on the scheme provisions.
  
- Labour budget preparation was one of the important components in MGNREGA. Awareness and knowledge on the process of labour budget for the people will serve better planning and implementation of the works. It was reported that, 43.1 per cent were aware about the labour budget and another 41.2 per cent knew that the labour budgets have to be approved by the gram sabha. Such percentage is high in Sepahijala district of Tripura and Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh.

- ◆ The overall score of awareness is calculated for the above components and the highest score with 83.4 per cent was seen in Kurnool district and low levels of awareness with 18.2 per cent was among sample respondents in Valsad district .

### ***Intensive Participatory Planning Exercise (IPPE)***

- ***Awareness about IPPE:*** Around 44.3 per cent of job cardholders were aware about the IPPE process conducted in the year 2015-16. Awareness levels on the IPPE were high in Kurnool and Sepahijala districts.
- ***Process of IPPE:*** The main focus of the study was to understand the process of IPPE and its impact on the process of participatory planning in preparation of shelf of projects under MGNREGA. Out of 595 samples reported for the conduct of IPPE, 521 (87.6 per cent) respondents reported that BPT members had conducted meetings with villagers before starting the IPPE and explained the importance of planning.
- ***Planning through PRA:*** In the process of IPPE, planning through PRA is specified, identifying the permissible works under MGNREGS using techniques like social mapping, resource mapping and transect walk. Planning for convergence possibilities through discussion with people is also to be explored. Regarding this 62 per cent of the respondents said that the PRA techniques were conducted by BPT members. Around 80 per cent respondents agreed that identification and planning of works were done through discussions with villagers. Around 66 per cent reported the planning process was done at the GP level.
- ***Demanding of individual works:*** Due to IPPE process, demanding of individual works found reasonably good in Tripura and Andhra Pradesh.

- ***Inclusion of vulnerable households in planning:*** Inclusion of vulnerable sections like SCs, STs, houseless, landless, women-headed households, physically and mentally challenged is one of the most important objectives of the IPPE. Thus the IPPE provided an opportunity for the marginalised to join with the gram panchayats in the decision-making process and getting better access to the benefits of MGNREGS. It was reported that the inclusion was good in Bilaspur district of Chhattisgarh, Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh and Sepahijala district of Tripura. In Koraput district of Odisha the inclusion of vulnerable sections was not given priority.
- ***Training of BPT on IPPE:*** Around 85.2 per cent members reported that they were given training on IPPE. All the members in Odisha, Uttarkhand and Tripura and more than 80 per cent in AP and Gujarat, 60 per cent in Chhattisgarh attended the training. Unfortunately 40 per cent of the members did not attend the training but were members in BPT and facilitated the IPPE.

Overall findings of the study reflect the IPPEs conducted in sample panchayats have created better impact on mobilisation of people for planning, encouraged people in intellectual discussion and demanded works to fulfill their needs. The study reveals the process of conduct of IPPE was done as per the guidelines prescribed by the government. Among the sample population 43 per cent respondents were satisfied and 11.3 per cent were highly satisfied with the process of IPPE conducted.

## **Recommendations**

- i. The pre-planning or the preparatory phase of IPPE i.e. awareness creation, sensitisation and training of the facilitators has to be strengthened.

- ii. 'People Maximum Reach' programmes have to be framed to attract more participation in the planning process. The ultimate aim is to make people understand the importance of IPPE, benefits expected and the necessity of people's participation.
- iii. Periodical trainings with innovative participatory methods on social mobilisation have to be imparted. In addition, attitudinal and behavioural training also have to be conducted for the planning team, elected representatives and also to the job cardholders in encouraging their positive participation.
- iv. Honorarium to the BPT members for the conduct of IPPE process should be ensured.
- v. Around 50 per cent of the BPT members requested for more number of trainings up to 3, increase of duration atleast up to 5 days, restriction of only 25 trainees in a batch, coverage of PRA contents with field exposure, sufficient time for field, document verification and coverage of attitudinal and motivational contents. Familiarisation of the trainees on MGNREGA works like identification and prioritisation of works, preparation of labour budget, documentation of IPPE process, etc., to be done. More practical classes on the exercises related to PRA, household survey, filling of demand estimation formats, etc., to be given more emphasis in the training.
- vi. More than 50 per cent opined that the IPPE was carried at the GP level and suggested to conduct it at the ward level or hamlet level and consolidation has to be done at the GP level.
- vii. Circumstances and opportunities to be ensured to conduct fair and free IPPE process without political conflicts. Proper documentation, specifically on the participation of weaker sections and their contributions to be captured with video

evidences and also tracking to be ensured. Verification on whether poor people's voices or grievances are included in the shelf of projects and has it been mentioned in the action taken report is also to be ensured.

- viii. The fund release has to be linked with the convergence plan made in the IPPE process with the indication of percentage of finance drawn from different schemes along with MGNREGS.

## **MANAGEMENT OF HEALTHCARE SERVICES BY WOMEN-HEADED PANCHAYATS: A CASE STUDY IN KOKSARA BLOCK OF KALAHANDI DISTRICT, ODISHA**

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### **Background of the Study**

Improvement in the standard of living and health status of the population has remained one of the important objectives in Indian planning ever since India gained independence. As part of the community development programme India was one of the pioneers in health service planning with a focus on primary healthcare to promote, prevent, curate and rehabilitate health services to entire rural population.

Close to 700 million people live in rural areas where the condition of medical facilities is deplorable. In the context of maternal health and reproductive healthcare, which are the major concerns of human development goals, the important question is about the reach, accessibility, and affordability of these services to the people living in rural areas. As such the well-being of the villagers depends to a great extent on the efficacy of the gram panchayat.

Primary healthcare is a subject of local self-governments. Discussions of health issues in the gram sabha will lead to improved health for both men and women and reduce their private health expenditures as well. As panchayats are linked to block and district councils, these

institutions have a decisive role in the programmes for reproductive health, child health and nutrition through community participation.

Women PRI members take an active role in polio eradication, organising health camps and mobilising women for access to health services, besides playing an important role in reproductive, child health and nutrition by working closely with adolescent girls and women. Women who have been in positions of power are more likely to promote girl child education and child health in the form of immunisation. Beaman's (2006) study showed that seat reservations for women in village governments are positively related to a child between the ages of 1 and 5 being fully vaccinated. They also identified a statistically significant relationship between reserved seats for women in village governments and more water taps and hand-pumps. This means that women invested more in terms of funding and delivery of safe drinking water relative to men.

Thus in view of the importance of health as a critical input for human development, the present research study aims to look at the different ways the gram sabha members function in many areas of women and child health and implement the government health programmes in the villages to understand the dynamics from a gender perspective. Two villages under female-headed panchayat and one village under male-headed panchayat have been studied to understand the overall management of health services in the villages.

## **Study Area**

The study has been conducted in three villages in Koksara block of Kalahandi district in Odisha. Though there has been considerable progress in the health status in Odisha in the last 5 years yet when one looks at the major States in Eastern part of India the human development indicators in the State are quite low when compared to other major States of India. Nearly 80 per cent of the population in Odisha lives in rural areas.

According to National Family Health Survey II figures, more than 90 per cent households in rural Odisha do not even have proper sanitation facility and close to 80 per cent do not have proper toilet facilities at home. The indicators for infant and maternal mortality remain high and there is still a huge gap between the performance of Odisha and the nation.

Kalahandi is located in south west part of Odisha, which is a backward district in terms of health and other development indicators. Though there has been some improvement in the health indicators yet figures are comparatively high as against the State average. Kalahandi is among the 20 high IMR districts in Odisha. Further the maternal deaths in Kalahandi are higher than the State average as per NRHM Report 2013 for Orissa. The demographic characteristics of the district reflect that it is predominantly rural and has a high concentration of weaker sections, i.e., ST and SC communities and more than 90 per cent of the population live in rural areas.

## **Methodology**

After many deliberations with the local NGOs working in the area, Koksara block was selected for the study. Koksara is one of the towns in Dharamgarh sub-division in Kalahandi district of Odisha State. It is 49.2 km away from its district headquarters, Bhawanipatna and 333 km away from State capital, Bhubaneswar. Koksara block is situated in the western part of Kalahandi district having Nawarangpur as its neighbouring district in the west and Jaipatna, Kalampur, Junagarh and Dharamgarh as neighbouring blocks. The block, from where 29.95 per cent families migrate to different places to seek casual labour, leads the list of all blocks with respect to migration. There are 20 gram panchayats (GPs) in Koksara block, out of which 10 are female-headed and 10 are male-headed. There are a total of 130 anganwadi centres in the block and 130 ASHA workers posts have been sanctioned for better implementation of health facilities in the rural areas especially for better implementation of Malaria Programme in Koksara block as there are high risk areas.

Three villages in the Koksara block were randomly selected for the study. As mentioned above, two villages under female-headed gram panchayat and one under male-headed gram panchayat were selected. Out of the two villages under women-headed panchayat, one village, Birimuhaan, located far away from the block headquarters (hilly and forest area and mostly with tribals) was selected and another village (Phupgaon/ Khuntia - mostly with OBCs and SCs) located slightly closer to the block headquarters was selected for the study. One village headed by a male sarpanch was purposefully selected for comparison. All the villages under study were primarily tribal dominated villages. Except a few upper caste families the entire village is dominated by OBCs, SCs and STs.

### **Tools of Data Collection**

The information was primarily gathered through face-to-face interviews with the sarpanch, ward members, anganwadi workers, community leaders, ASHA workers and representatives of women SHGs to understand the health situation in the village through a well-structured interview guideline, developed as per the objectives of the study. Key informant (KI) interviews, field observations and focus group discussions also formed part of the study. KI interviews were held for a deeper understanding of health issues in the community, involvement of the panchayats, specific cultural practices involved with regard to health, reach of government health schemes and acceptability. All the information was mostly recorded through voice recorder and later elaborated in the form of notes. FGDs were also conducted with the community women and the panch members. Two FGDs were conducted with married women aged 25 to 35 years and one FGD was conducted with the panchayat members. Individual interviews were conducted with the sarpanch, anganwadi workers, ASHA *karmachari*, ANM, Block Development Officer (Koksara Block) and other NGOs. Interviews were mostly conversational with movement from one topic to another based on probes.

## **Interventions**

While interviewing discussions were held to generate awareness about hygiene and healthcare in the community. The researcher, based on her experience and reading, shared many tips with the PRI members and the women during FGDs that was highly appreciated by the community. They wanted government interventions to happen in small groups and exposure visits so that people would understand the benefits of hygienic and nutritious food intake. The message was communicated to the block officials to hold periodic meetings on health awareness that would benefit the local community.

Out of pocket expenditure is high in the area for seeking health services, as public health facilities are located distantly. No direct interventions have been made so far. There is a need to integrate the PRIs in the delivery of health services in the villages and a need for more effective IEC was felt.

## **Findings**

No significant differences were observed in the overall monitoring and delivery of health services in the villages by gender of the head of the gram panchayat. Panchayats at the village level played a minimal role so far as their involvement in management of health services is concerned. Due to unhygienic living conditions and unhealthy eating habits of the people a number of health problems among children, adolescent girls and lactating mothers are prevalent in the area. No initiative or intervention was undertaken by the panchayat for creating awareness on sanitation, environment cleanliness, or on prevention of diseases.

Health is not considered a primary concern for the development of the village, hence specific initiatives to create awareness are therefore not conducted. No Village Health Plan has been developed to assess the health priorities of the community. There is no village health register. No

periodic meetings or discussions are held with the anganwadi workers and other health functionaries in the village as health is considered as the primary responsibility of the ANM only. In the absence of continuous and regular interaction between the PRI members and the health functionaries in the villages, the ANM, ASHA and the AW worker conduct their meetings independently. In the opinion of the sarpanch in the Phupgaon village, most of the activities concerning women and child health were entirely carried out by the ANM (Auxiliary Nurse Midwife) and the ASHA *karmachari* along with the anganwadi workers.

Interestingly, the Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Committee (VHSNC) is almost non-functional. The panchayat members (including the female and male ward members) could barely speak on VHSNC, a committee that is expected to take collective action on issues related to health and its social determinants at the village level or on the role of GKS (Gaon Kalyan Samiti) and the way they are linked with delivery and management of health services.

No effort has been made to discuss problems of the community related to health and nutrition to create awareness in the village about the available health services and their health entitlements. According to the District Level Household and Facility Survey (2007-2008) only 3.3 per cent villages in Odisha formed health and sanitation committees and only in 11 per cent villages the pradhan or any of the panchayat member was aware of the untied fund.

However, with regard to drinking water facilities, it was found that there have been initiatives to provide safe drinking water as far as possible by the panchayats. A number of tubewells have been installed at several points in the village for provision of clean drinking water.

In two of the villages under female-headed panchayats, there was no provision for drinking water in the sub-centres, though request letters have been forwarded by the sarpanch to the Block Development Officer.

Yet no action had been initiated at the time of the interview. In the absence of a sub-centre in one of the villages the ANM works from her residence. The funds are yet to arrive for construction of the sub-centre in the village. The female sarpanch was not very vocal when asked about the efforts the panchayat has taken regarding this. However, the male ward members said that they were waiting for the funds to arrive for construction of the sub-centre.

With regard to maternal and child health concerns the findings show that women sarpanches as such are not very motivated and enlightened on these issues. Hence the extent of involvement in terms of monitoring the work related to MCH services was considerably lower. Neither any meeting with village women was organised, nor was any initiative taken by the elected women leaders regarding this. As mentioned earlier, health as such was never dealt with so much of importance like development issues such as housing and old age pension schemes.

What was observed was that there was some kind of disconnectedness between the panchayats and the health workers in the villages. No initiatives were undertaken to create awareness on possible health problems related to women and children, or even camps were not organised to discuss many such issues with the community. People are generally ignorant about many illnesses and diseases that can be effectively controlled in the community by following simple measures such as maintaining proper hygiene and cleanliness.

It also came to light from the FGDs with the community women that there is a need to create awareness among adolescent girls and pregnant women about anaemia which is prevalent in the community.

Some of the common illnesses in the area affecting men, women and children are malaria, diarrhoea, tuberculosis, and bone problems due to consumption of unclean water. Malnutrition and anaemia are common among young children, adolescents and lactating women in the entire

block. Neo-natal deaths among children occur primarily due to diarrhoea. The panchayat members expressed concern about this. On being asked if they have undertaken any initiatives with the health department concerning these illnesses, it was said that ASHA and ANM take care of all this and there is no direct involvement of the panchayat. The sarpanch rarely intervenes in these matters. On being asked, the reasons for lack of interest, it was reported that, health is not considered a primary concern for the development of the village. As such, community men and women show little interest on such issues. The primary concerns are linked with benefits like IAY (Indira Awas Yojana), old age pension scheme, widow pension scheme, road construction, etc.

Open defecation is commonly prevalent. The community men and women in general are averse to having toilets at home. In the opinion of the block officials the community people do not feel a sense of ownership and therefore do not even take an interest in maintaining the toilets constructed through NGO interventions. Also there is lack of awareness among lactating mothers about nutritional food and hygiene.

Approaching a female sarpanch for specific reproductive problems or concerns related to construction of toilets or reproductive health issues is easier for community women. It also came to light that some women suffering from specific health problems, refrain themselves from talking to a male sarpanch to ask for help as they feel embarrassed. Besides, there is no one to explain them well or anyone to give correct advice. As a result certain illnesses are ignored and neglected, because of which they suffer silently and die.

According to one of the ward members, some specific amount for health comes under the untied funds, which is completely handled by the ANM and ASHA, and the panchayat is not directly monitoring that. The sarpanch is not even aware of the way the funds are used and for what specific purpose they are spent. They do not even know much about NRHM

and its work. Gaon Kalyan Samiti (GKS) is there but no regular meetings are held. Sometimes the sarpanch is not even intimated about such meetings and not aware of the way the money is spent. Even if she asks, the ANM does not show much interest. But since the public do not complain, it is assumed that things are working well. The researcher felt that the sarpanch does not take interest to oversee the work of village health and nutrition functionaries such as the ANM and the ASHA, the AWW and is also not involved in managing the local sub-centre which is accountable to the gram sabha.

The findings show that there is minimal awareness amongst the panchayat members about their roles and responsibilities in the management of health services in the villages. Participation and involvement in matters related to health is minimal.

Traditional healers such as quacks commonly known as "*kabiraj*" in the area are approached frequently for common illnesses due to absence of formal health service providers close by. There is a strong belief that medicines supplied from public health centres free of cost will not cure illnesses. Absence of proper public transport facility makes it difficult and time consuming to approach doctors in the block. Moreover, in the absence of a proper house for the ANM in the panchayat headquarters, the ANM does not visit the sub- centre regularly.

There is general ignorance about health and hygiene issues in the community. Villagers lack simple and basic understanding about why mosquitoes breed, how they can be avoided, why malaria spreads and what should be done about that. It was felt that perhaps an "exposure visit" to another village will bring about a change in the attitude of the people towards sanitation and hygiene.

Children in the 0 to 3 years age group rarely come to the anganwadi centre and even if some of them come they are not registered. Low literacy

levels are attributed as a primary reason for not accepting health as a development issue. Absence of toilet facility and drinking water facility in schools and AWCs is found in tribal villages.

BDO insists on the panchayats to call ANM, ASHA and AW to the meetings to have an open dialogue with them, and they have been asked to keep the health as an agenda in their meetings, but such meetings are rarely conducted and no proper agenda or plans are followed.

It was pointed out that most of villagers in the area live under poverty. They do not possess any land. There are more number of households and less land. So where is the question of constructing toilets and asking them to use. Irrespective of the gender of the sarpanch, no specific target-oriented initiatives towards preventing illness caused due to unclean and unhygienic practices have been initiated. Neither any attempt to organise the community nor creating awareness have been undertaken.

Lastly, lack of community involvement in environmental hygiene, health, and sanitation was noted by the researcher. On a positive note home deliveries have reduced considerably and maternal and infant mortality have come down to some extent.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Based on the above findings, it is observed that there are no significant differences in the rendering of health services by both male and female sarpanches. Limited awareness about modern health practices and about hygienic practices among the panchayat members at the village level makes it difficult to render proper services related to health. PRI members are not empowered with the understanding and mechanisms required for them to play their role in governance of health and enable communities through their leadership to take collective action for the attainment of better health status in the village. Owing to their educational backwardness and lack of awareness the community people are reluctant to readily accept modern

practices and habits related to health and hygiene. Everything is left in the hands of the ANM and ASHA. Gram sabha members are more concerned about issues related to welfare schemes.

It was found that the villagers lack simple basic understanding about safe drinking water, proper sanitation and adopting correct hygienic practices and the panchayats at their level do not take any initiatives to create awareness regarding this.

In view of the above, the researcher feels that it is important to sensitise the gram sabha members so that they play a more proactive role. The need is to generate awareness first and then talk of development. Health workers alone cannot bring improvement in health status of the community. Generating awareness and accepting innovative ideas can only come through increased levels of literacy in the community. As the Census 2011 data shows the literacy levels in the entire block is only 48.38 per cent, with male literacy at 60.68 per cent and female literacy at 36.37 per cent. In such a scenario, introducing changes and community's readiness to accept change will take time.

Health camps can be organised once in a quarter, when people feel free to discuss their health concerns. People should be informed well in advance about such camps through microphones and big banners. Information should be given about the day and time of doctor's visit. A person who is well acquainted with the local dialect should talk to the community so that everyone understands and feels comfortable to discuss their health concerns.

A woman sarpanch should be extended all the support in widening her democratic leadership which would give the responsibility to execute the key issues of health, sanitation and welfare of weaker sections. Sensitising the villagers for demanding quality health services especially for women and evolving a gender-sensitive environment in the village is

important. The intense mobilisation of the community would certainly lead to the demand for appropriate maternal and child health services. This would develop a sense of ownership among the village panchayat members and motivate them to take further action for improving services. Female and male members in the gram sabha should be trained and sensitised towards maternal and child health issues.

Further the Village Health and Sanitation Committee (VHSC) has to be more proactive in its functioning. Preventive healthcare is mostly ignored in rural areas where it is often considered unusual to visit health personnel / centre when a person is maintaining normal health. In view of the fact that rural areas lag much behind the cities, rural health needs focus and attention of the policy makers, researchers and social activists. Moreover, participation of both men and women in discussions on health-related issues in the gram sabha meetings leads to reduced chances of them falling ill.

ANM can organise health camps with the help of the gram panchayat in the villages under jurisdiction. Exposure visits to other developed villages could be one way to generate awareness to understand the value of clean environment.

Awareness about the benefits of having a toilet at home should be generated instead of just providing money for construction of toilets. It is important to create demand among the community people. Panchayats have to start playing a more strong and active role in such issues. Preventive and promotive healthcare can be improved only by enabling the community to take charge of its own needs, on the one hand, and to utilise the healthcare services available at the government service terminals in a better way, on the other. This requires a huge community mobilisation, which could only be organised by the Panchayati Raj Institutions.

A large scale community-based quantitative study across States would show a better picture of the functioning and management of health services under female and male headed panchayats to understand the different dynamics and mechanisms involved in the delivery of primary health services in the villages from a gender perspective.



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