

## **RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS: 2013-2014**

### **Village Adoption Studies**

#### **1. Introduction (background of the study)**

Ardhaveedu mandal is one of the drought prone mandals of Prakasam district, with 33 hamlets under 13 revenue villages under its jurisdiction, situated between two parallel hill ranges and numerous hillocks. Mohiddinpuram village in the mandal is flanked by the biggest Cumbum lake, two village tanks and famous Nallamala forests. In spite of its proximity to these natural resources, this village lags behind agricultural productivity and other economic activities compared to its neighboring mandals. Forest and water based livelihood opportunities have not been created due to lack of awareness and self initiatives from villagers. Thereby most of the landless poor to a large extent depend on the wage employment under MGNREGS.

The idea behind for the adoption of this particular villager is, with little efforts like awareness programmes about specific crops, small interventions like capacity building and impart training in some economic activities may bring desirable changes in the village environment.

#### **2. Study area**

Mohidinpuram GP of Ardhaveedu mandal is located with geographical coordinates of 14° 72' latitudes and 79° 97' longitudes. Village is surrounded by hillock on west, agriculture fields on east, water bodies (almost dry, except in rainy season) on north and south directions. Mohidinpuram is connected by all weather roads and is 13 kms away from mandal head quarter and 15 kms away from Cumbum, another small town. The district head quarter (ongole) is 71 kms away, from the village. Gundlakamma is the only rivulet which provides seasonal water for irrigation and it merges into famous Cumbum Lake.

As per 2011 Census total population of village is 2171, out of which males are 1118 and females are 1053 living in 560 households. Out of total population SCs are 124, BCs are 871, remaining 1176 belongs to OC category. No ST family resides in the village. Except a few landed rich and employees, rest of the families in the village have BPL cards.

People of the village belong to 14 sub castes ( 1. Brahmin 2. vaishya 3. reddy 4. muslim 5. yadava 6. balija 7. uppara 8. bestha 9. dudekula 10. pichchiguntla 11. mala 12. chakali 13. mangali 14. madiga) of major castes have been living peacefully with communal harmony. Village has two churches, four temples and one masjid. SCs are staying outside of the main village. Among BCs, bestha, (fishers) population is high.

Twenty years before fishing is the main activity in this village catering the surrounding five villages. Out of 2171 population, 600 people belong to Bestha (fishing) community. For last 10 years there was gradual shift from fishing to labour works. By vocation they are fishermen but mostly they earn on labour work only. This is because of lack of water in kuntas and lakes in and around the village. They can do fishing only when the kuntas are filled with rain water. Otherwise they need to shift their work from fishing to any other readily available work.

Even though main occupation of the people is agriculture, their income comes from milk selling, fish catch, as a MGNREGS labour and small business like small shops, tailoring etc. For some families agriculture is the main source of income. Water scarcity, high wages for agriculture labour and threat from wild animals are three main factors discouraging the agricultural activity in the village.

Major source of irrigation is ground water which is available at 400 to 500 ft. depth. Jampaleru, a small rivulet flows only in rainy season, which supplies water for few farmers whose fields are along the river. The rain fed farming is primarily for meeting the home consumption requirements of the farmer, demands of the local market and fodder for livestock. Farmers cultivate crops like rice, jowar, finger millet, red gram, green gram, and pigeon pea, green chilly, for domestic consumption and tomato, sunflower, groundnut and cotton as cash crops. The entire rainy season (June - November) is utilized for rain fed cultivation. During summer season, even if water is available for agriculture in small piece of land, farmers keep their land fallow, because of the crop damage by wild animals. Protection of crops from animals needs additional investment on fencing and watchmen and it makes cultivation unviable.

Thirty nine SHG groups, consisting of 10-12 members in each group are functioning in the village. Some groups have availed loan facility and established grinding machine, sewing machine, chilly powder machine, pottery, kirana shop, bangles and artificial jewelry, fertilizer distribution centre, cement bricks, cable connection centre, milk collection centre, and small

hotel individually. Other members are availing loans to meet other expenses for marriages, education etc.

### **3. Methodology adopted:**

#### **Interaction with villagers**

- Initially, we involved personally and participated in village activities like celebration of their festivals
- Organized competitions like games and sports for school children, Rangoli for SHG women groups.
- The local school headmaster was inspired with these activities and involved us in their school activities and made us judges for their competitions and guests for distribution of prizes
- In our next programme, the headmaster made arrangements and encouraged people to participate in elocution on the topic '**ma illu, ma vuru, ma desam**'
- As a token of memory, we received a 'momento certificate' from villagers
- After going round the village it is felt that the solar street lights might perhaps be the best option to cover the gaps between electric lights. With this idea, we have made a plan to install solar street lights to built confidence among the villagers that the village adopted by NIRD gears up towards development.

#### **Training at NIRD and Training Locally**

- Some of the villagers came to NIRD and have undergone training on Mushroom cultivation, Vermicompost, Jewelry making, hand paper bags et. During this, two boys from the village have undergone the training on '**Maintenance of solar lights**'.
- Awareness campaign on Sericulture was held locally as the villagers showed interest to learn the same. Five days training on '**Cultivation of Mulberry and Silk Worm Rearing**' by Jyothi Chawaki Rearing Centre, Cumbum, Prakasam District was initiated for the farmers.

#### **Data survey**

- During our visit, household survey covering 600 households was made
- The survey shows the socio economic status of villagers which further gives us to make some more interventions in future

#### **Focus Group Discussions**

- Fishermen are the major community in the village. The issues they have are presented in the form of a letter by the fishing association. Based on the problems expressed in the letter the

NIRD authorities together with the authorities of NFDB launched a direct discussion with the president of the fishermen and assured them to make immediate measures which would solve their problems. For this purpose the officials from NFDB are going to make a visit to make a survey of the lakes and other factors to mobilize the loans to the concerned fishermen.

- The local SHG groups also came for discussions and showed interest on certain aspects.

#### **Formation of Farmers Clubs**

- There is proposal to form two farmers clubs. One is the farmers club for the entire village and another is exclusively for women to be in the 'Women Farmers Club'.

#### **Involvement of local school children**

- In our future task of 'home tree' we want to distribute saplings of one to each house to spread the plantation all over village. This programme waits for arrival of monsoon.

#### **Listening to the seniors**

- The senior citizens in the villagers were gathered and made an informal talk about the village and the possible measures to be taken towards upgrading the village. They have requested to establish a small library for news papers and children story books, where they can spend their leisure time. These talks infact gave us good insights to make better future plans.

### **4. Interventions made**

- Have gained the villagers confidence by self involving in their village celebration activities
- Have installed solar street lights initially at 15 locations which gave rise to install all over the village by the Grama Sarpanch . there was a lot of demand for home solar electrification.
- Installation of drinking water plant has to be made shortly.
- Fishermen were assured to get subsidy of Rs.1000 on purchase of each vehicle along with containers, material for nets to catch fish and desiltation of fishing tanks etc.
- Some more solar lights and home solar equipments were proposed by the villagers and this may be planned in future programmes under subsidy distribution from NIRD

### **5. Innovative approaches/ Experiences**

- The villagers in Mohidunpuram get involved if we involved ourselves in their activities and learnt that they were more enthusiastic to participate in village development activities.
- School students, though were asked to speak in telugu on the topic given for elocution, they preferred to speak in English only.

- Unidentified and unnoticed talent group is there in village such as a very good singer, a boy with a state level tournament player have withdrawn to go further due to lack of support and encouragement. Sometimes, this might perhaps be a national loss.
- After installation of 15 solar lights donated to the village by NIRD, the sarpanch of the village decided to go for the entire village replacing the electric street lights in view of the minimal maintenance and expenditure involved in solar lights.
- The invitation from the school inviting us for the village activities is a good experience and receiving a momento certificate is an encouraging item for us.

## 6. Conclusions

- We found it is difficult to mobilize the people for training programmes, meetings etc. because of local politics. SHG women are not willing to participate in the village level meetings. Villagers are looking for free and subsidized incentives.
- The village like any other village has drinking water problem and the water giving rise to the bone related disease to the villagers demands the immediate attention to install a water plant unit.
- The installation of solar street lights brought interest to start home lights replace with solar home lights to most of the villagers. Participation of villagers in training at NIRD has filled enthusiasm and anxiety among villagers to take up some fetching activity. Rearing cocoons in sericulture training at local level encouraged to start the programme immediately.
- Because the farmers in village are mainly involved in agriculture they feel disturbed to participate in many other training programs such as soya products training, handmade leaf plate training, artificial jewelry making etc.
- After adopting the village the development has been continuous without breaks and hope that it would continue further and reaches the peak of the development.

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