



SITARAM RAO LIVELIHOODS INDIA CASE STUDY COMPENDIUM 2012

Enhancing Livelihoods of the Poorest of the Poor



ACCESS Knowledge Series



ACCESS Development Services is a national level livelihoods promotion organization with focus on incubating innovations and sustainable models for livelihoods promotion of the poor. Set up with in March 2006, ACCESS is structured uniquely to work at all levels of the value chain - implementing programmes on the ground, working with Civil Society organizations, Government Departments, Corporate sector, and Multilateral / Bilateral agencies as also undertaking a few national initiatives to influence and support policy initiatives and strengthening the enabling environment. To optimize its resources and maximize the results of its Interventions, ACCESS believes in partnering with key stakeholders in the sector in order to develop mutually reinforcing strategies, bring convergence of competencies and build consensus on key issues.

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Ms. Janet Heisey
Director Asia Program
Trickle Up, New York

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CONTENTS

<i>Foreword</i>	vi
1 Sustainable Livelihood Intervention with Kotwalia Tribe in South Gujarat	1
2 AAGAS: A Community Endeavour for Bio-Conservation and Employment Generation	21
3 Leveraging Traditional Indian Rural Practices and Existing Capabilities to Enhance Livelihoods	39
4 Baripada Mudhi	53
5 From Nomads to Artisans	73
6 Fighting Poverty through Fashion - A Case Study	101
7 When a Single Path Diverges: Learning from Trickle Up's Livelihood Program	111
8 Prevention of Migration among Tribal Group through Special Project	123
9 Identifying Innovative Options for Sustainable Livelihoods of Poorest of the Poor	139
10 Approach to Establishing Efficient Tribal/ Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group owned Marketing Institutions	149
11 Rozgar Dhaba - As the part of Panchayat	161

FOREWORD

According to 2010 estimates, 37.2% of Indians live below the country's national poverty line. Government and multilateral and bilateral organizations are putting much effort into programmes for poverty reduction. However, the poorest of the poor are still bypassed by most mainstream development programs.

The poorest of the poor face situations of social exclusion and limited rights and capabilities. They face fundamentally different set of deprivations as compared to the poor. In other words, different approaches are required to alleviating extreme poverty. There are many NGOs who have been able to temporarily relieve them of their struggle for survival with services such as education, water, healthcare, etc. but have not contributed to alleviate their state extreme marginalisation and chronic poverty. The biggest challenge that the poorest of the poor face is the lack of a stable income. Enhancing sustainable livelihoods of the poorest of the poor is a significantly important step towards reduction of extreme poverty.

ACCESS Development Services, instituted and mandated to serve the poor and help them overcome poverty and live with dignity, has been making significant efforts at all levels of the development value chain to impact and improve the livelihoods of the poor, specially small and marginal farmers. While working on-the-ground, ACCESS also realizes the critical significance of assimilating learning and disseminating the same for the benefit of the entire sector. Through initiatives like the Livelihood India Conference, the State of India's Livelihoods Report and various policy retreats and visioning exercises, ACCESS has been attempting to contribute towards dissemination and sharing of best practice for the benefit of the sector, and has started to increasingly play the role of a knowledge repository.

It is with this perspective that ACCESS initiated the Sitaram Rao Livelihoods Case Study Competition in 2009. Eliciting cases around one specific theme each year, for 2012 the theme is **Experience in Enhancing Livelihoods of the Poorest of the Poor**. This year the competition has been supported by Ford Foundation and Oxfam India. Fr. Arrupe Center for Ecology and Sustainability, XLRI was ACCESS' technical partner in the process. ACCESS received 130 case study abstracts as a part of the competition, each narrating a unique experience. Out of these 74 case study authors were invited to submit their full

case studies. It was indeed a hard task for the Jury to pick the ten best cases. Jury members for the competition included PVS Suryakumar, CGM, NABARD; Ms. Vanita Suneja, Economic Justice Lead Specialist, Oxfam India; Prof. Ashok Kumar Sircar, National Programme Director, Landesa India; and Dr. Shambu Prasad, Professor, XIMB.

While all case studies were remarkable in the insight they provided towards addressing livelihoods issues, 3 case studies were ranked as the best by the jury. The best case of the competition was the case titled, "Sustainable Livelihood Intervention with Kotwalia Tribe in South Gujarat Region" by Charu Chandra and Yogesh Chandra Bhatt. The second position was given to Shailendra Singh Bisht and Surajit Ghosh Dastidat for their case study, "AAGAAS: Growing Organically for a Sustainable Future". And the third position to Vinod S Kapur and Anisha Singh for the case study, "Leveraging Traditional Rural Practices and Existing Capabilities to Enhance Livelihoods".

All the case studies relate to examples of interventions that have successfully strengthened the livelihoods of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups - Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes and women. The case studies largely include initiatives by civil society organisations who have tackled severe constraints of these groups. Some of the initiatives included here are examples of successful interventions under Government Programmes such as ITDA and NREGS and many cases provide examples of successful collaboration with private sector agencies.

Of the interventions that targeted scheduled tribes are case studies from MART, AKRSP and AAGAS. Karan Girdhar and Richa Singh provide an interesting example of collaboration between different agencies that have effectively rehabilitated the Kondh & Kutia Kondh groups in Kandhamal district, Orissa by providing marketing services for their products - Niger, Castor, Siali, Arhar, Hill broom and Mahua. The second study targeting ST communities from Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (India). The case provides a unique example of empowering Kotwalia (PTG) Tribe in south Gujarat Region and shows how a traditional art of a community can be beautify with professional interventions to ensure the win-win situation for all. The case proves that sustainable social enterprise is possible with poorest of the poor community if the team has a strong dedication and community has a shared vision for its development. The third case relating to strengthening the

livelihoods of STs is from AAGAAS. The case study provides an example of bio-conservation and employment generation through mountain tourism, craft promotion, bamboo ringaal conservation to create local institutions for inclusive growth for the poor tribals and weaker sections of the society through timely access to credit and links to markets. The fourth case on ST interventions has been written by Karan Girdhar, State Project Manager (NREGA). In this case the Chenchu tribe members have been empowered to incorporate a working culture and enhance livelihood and income generating activities among the tribe under MGNREGA and thereby avoiding migration as a livelihood strategy. By giving assured wage employment round the year, the project has successfully created livelihood assets for the community and ensured sustainable income generation for the community.

The second group of cases broadly relates to interventions for empowering women's livelihoods. These examples are from two agencies, SAMPARK and Unnayan. SAMPARK has empowered women through village level workshops, training, awareness camps, educational tours, Gramotsav, street plays, video shows etc to preserve their traditional collective work culture. It has also supported women's participation in Panchayati Raj. The second case is by Binayak Acharya & Vinayak.V who have described Unnayan's intervention in Tambakhori village where livelihoods have been strengthened for the most deprived by successfully marketing Mudhi (puffed rice produced by women at their homes) in local markets. Unnayan facilitated formation of Mayurbanj Mahila Association (MMA) which now has good access to rural as well as urban markets. The fourth case targeting women is from Sabala, a voluntary organisation, which has organised the women into SHGs and also established a Craft Development Center (CDC in 1999) as a common facility center for raw material bank storage, design development, product development and marketing. CDC is now operating as an enterprise without external support and is generating regular business for more than 350 women artisans. This case study presents Sabala's journey in promoting sustainable livelihoods for a nomadic community.

Other cases relate to interventions targeting vulnerable groups such as rag pickers, youth and poor families. Ananya Kulkarni and Anita Ahuja have written about an initiative by Conserve India in Bahadurgarh, Haryana to help rag pickers by providing them with skills training and also supporting the marketing of goods produced by them. This has increased the income of rag-pickers from Rs.50/- a day to Rs.200-300/-. Vinod S Kapu and Anisha Singh provide an interesting case that summarises the impact of Keggfarms' promoted Village Bird called

KUROILER in alleviating chronic poverty among the poorest of the poor by ensuring stability of income. Vinod Pandey provides an example of Rozgar Dhaba, an innovative part of Caritas India innovative project LIFE- Livelihood Initiation For Empowerment. In this case study, Rozgar Dhaba, a livelihood promotion center has officially become part of the Panchayat and is also serving community livelihood needs in 20 villages of Ajmer, Rajasthan and caters to 1700 farmers from backward communities. Rozgar Dhaba empowers the community by building skills in various trades to help them build livelihoods on their own. The initiative has links with universities and technical institutions (like MDS University & KVK/NABARD) for the certification of skill development trainings and establishment of center for employment assistance in the form of Rozgar Dhaba .

We are very enthused by the tremendous response that has been received to the Case Study Competition this year and hope that this endeavor will be found valuable by the sector.

Vipin Sharma
CEO
ACCESS Development Services





Sustainable Livelihood Intervention with Kotwalia Tribe in South Gujarat

Charu Chandra and Yogesh Chandra Bhatt

Tribal communities embody the most original living identity of any given geographical area. Their way of living, culture, heritage, livelihood, economy, and social practices gives a clear idea about ancient history of that region. In the region of South Gujarat, a number of tribal communities still have an impact on the society with their unique identity. Their distinctive practices, which have been preserved for over hundred years, set them apart.

But with every passing day, the tribal groups are struggling hard to maintain their identity. This is because of several reasons: radical changes in society, unstructured employment, penetration of mass communication, and so on. At the same time, there have been a few helping hands that have provided constant support to nurture the tradition and heritage of native tribe communities.

Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (India) [AKRSP(I)] is one such organisation. Its work with Kotwalia is an example of how a development initiative can bring a positive change in the lives of tribal communities who are far removed from the mainstream society. This is especially significant in a scenario where tribal groups are struggling for basic amenities like food security, shelter, social inclusion, and are hesitant to approach hospitals. Such initiatives are a silent but powerful call to introduce development interventions that enable upliftment of the poorest of the poor.

It was not that in the past the tribals did not have any employable skill; in fact, they were once most skilled of communities. But they found it too hard to match their traditional knowledge with the rapid change in market and fast moving demand and supply situation.

Traditionally this community makes small bamboo products and sells it to other communities. It has been a journey of evolution for AKRSP(I) to identify the most suitable initiative that was acceptable to the community. This case study describes the different phases; starting from identification of people for bamboo training to initiation of Common Facility Centre (CFC). The case presents the large impact of the Bamboo project on the community and how in a brief period, it has received a number of benefits through the bamboo project intervention. There are several challenges faced by the implementing team and community, but it is functioning successfully and now the team has a shared vision about its future.

This case is a unique example that how the traditional art of a community can be enhanced with professional intervention so it ensures a win-win situation for all. It proves that a successful sustainable social enterprise is possible with poorest of the poor community if team has deep dedication and the community shares the vision for its development.

Socio-economic status of community before intervention

Kotwalias are one of the Primitive Tribal Groups in southern Gujarat. Historically this community has never owned land or any other natural assets. Only 6% of total Kotwalia families hold agricultural land; out of them, 66% families have land of upto 1 acre (*Secondary Data, Tribal Development Department, Gandhinagar*). From ancient times, Kotwalias have been considered as untouchables. Other tribal communities do not share water, food, assets and also avoid close social relationships with them, not even inviting them to social events. They were given spaces outside the village areas to build their houses, and not allowed to participate in the village discussions.



Picture 1: Kotwalia woman weaving a basket

Kotwalias have expertise in bamboo craft which traditionally is the major source of income for them. With every passing day, it was realized by the community that it would be difficult to continue this occupation with dated practices and limited exposure. And this soon will force

them to shift completely from their traditional occupation to contract labor in agricultural fields. In short they were confronting structured unemployment.

Over time, migrating to find work on sugarcane fields become their major seasonal livelihood. Over 95% of total Kotwalia families migrate during winter season for sugarcane harvesting (*Secondary Data, Tribal Development Department, Gandhinagar*) where they work as bonded labour for the contractor.

Drudgery in sugarcane fields

Work on sugarcane fields is mostly done in groups as the contractors pay on piece-rate basis (starting from sugarcane cutting to truck loading). To become a group member, it is necessary to take an advance loan (without the loan, there is no job security) from sugarcane contractor and repay double the loan amount. The only method of repayment is to work in the sugarcane fields. Their wage is paid at the end of the sugarcane cycle (the sugarcane cycle lasts generally for 8 to 10 months).



Picture 2: Life in sugarcane fields

It was thus very clear to Kotwalias that they need to do something to ensure survival. With their present skills and outreach, sugarcane work was the only choice for them. Over 97% of total Kotwalia families migrate for than 4 months and in over 95% of cases, more than 2 members of the members migrate (*Secondary data, Tribal Development Department, Gandhinagar; 2012*). If due to any unavoidable reason, a Kotwalia quits

in between, the contractor does not pay for time worked, and further the previous loan amount is hiked by four times. These conditions compel the whole family to migrate along with cattle. The kids help their parents by taking care of young siblings and fetching water from distant sources. They have abysmal living conditions, living in 3 feet by 6 feet plastic tents without any basic amenities like drinking water, sanitation, and electricity. They usually reside in nearby fields so that they can stick to the timings of the contractor - generally they work 14-16 hours in a day and gets an average of Rs. 40 per day. With no specified work timings, they work when needed as otherwise they are punished physically, mentally or financially.



Picture 3: Responsible kids during migration

In case anyone fails to work due to ill-health he/she has to pay Rs. 20 and 2 Kg grains per day as penalty. Contractors also charges rent (Rs. 20 per day) for plastic tent. These appalling living conditions have reduced their life expectancy as data shows that 90.1% of total Kotwalia population is below 50 years *Secondary Data, Tribal Development Department, Gandhinagar.*

Consequences of migration in Kotwalias life

Generally Kotwalia families return to their villages in the monsoon season and commence their traditional business i.e. preparing bamboo baskets and selling it to neighboring agriculture community. To make the basket,

they use green bamboo which they bring illegally from distant forests. If caught, they are threatened, beaten and harassed by forest officials. Therefore this livelihood is not sustainable - it is fraught with danger, and is dependent on others. The long migration period also restricted their access to welfare schemes and other government support like health card, ration card and voter card.

Thus, migration and insecurity in their livelihood makes their life instable as discussed below:

Literacy rate

Kotwalia community has very low literacy rate of only 29%. Around 19% are educated upto 5th standard, 7% upto middle school (upto 8th), 2% upto secondary and rest 0.55 % are in higher levels of schooling (***Secondary Data, Tribal Development Department, Gandhinagar.***) Migration is the major reason for the children dropping from school as they start helping the parents, giving rise to another problem, child labour.

Poor housing facility

As they do not have enough land to construct house, they prefer to reside in small bamboo houses. About 88% of total Kotwalia families possess a single room house (***Secondary Data, Tribal Development Department, Gandhinagar.***) For constructing their houses, they basically use bamboo mat and cow dung mixed with soil to strengthen wall and protect against external environment. Average family size of Kotwalia is 6-8 members. The entire family resides in very limited space. 93% of all Kotwalia families are residing in less than 300 sq feet area (***Secondary Data, Tribal Development Department, Gandhinagar.***) Their limited earnings make it hard for them to build proper houses.



Picture 4: Poor housing facility of a Kotwalia family

Poor nutrition uptake

Large family sizes and lack of productive assets causes malnutrition in the community. Absence of proper nutrition and care during pregnancy period is leading to high rates of maternal mortality and child mortality.



Picture 5: People suffer skin disease during migration in sugarcane field

Their lifestyle is also leading to health issues often due to unhygienic food. They have been unable to avail of the benefits of different government schemes or the PDS program even though they are eligible. This is largely due to their constant movement.

Child marriage

Early marriage is a common feature in the community; the average age of marriage for a boy is 17 years and for a girl 15 years (Baseline survey). Love marriages are very common and in many cases boy and girl leave their respective homes and return after some time. In case of love marriage, boy's family has to pay dowry to girl's parents. In case of arranged marriages, the couple start living together after ring ceremony, some choose to have a marriage ceremony while others don't.

Saving and credit

Earlier the only source of credit for Kotwalia tribe was the sugarcane contractor, having an annual interest of 100 to 150 %. To repay the loan amount they were forced to work in sugarcane fields.

These dismal circumstances of the Kotwalia community prompted AKRSP(I) to intervene positive changes in their life.

AKRSP(I) Intervention - bringing the spark of change

In order to provide assistance, AKRSP(I) started an engagement with the Kotwalia community. Since 1998-99, AKRSP(I) has intervened through formation of Self Help Groups (SHGs). The basic purpose of the SHG was to initiate the habit of saving among Kotwalia community and bring them out of vicious cycle of debt. From the initial phases to present day, AKRSP(I) has experienced both successes and challenges.

Initial phase of learning

For providing better options than working on sugarcane fields, and to diversify the livelihood activities of Kotwalia, in 2002, AKRSP(I) did a pilot project by providing cattle to 4 families. This community had no previous experience in rearing cattle so it was very challenging for both the Kotwalia community and AKRSP(I). After initial hiccups, the activity was successful, and thereon attracted more families. Unfortunately this could not be sustained as they could not arrange fodder in the dry season. Some felt that livestock rearing was too difficult an activity while others failed because their animal died.

Along with animal husbandry, AKRSP(I) also initiated group farming as a pilot with one Kotwalia group consisting of 11 families on 11 Acre mortgaged land from the Panchayat. The rent of the land was fixed at Rs. 15000 annually. The first year of pilot project went very well and farmers could ensure good yield. Though this boosted their confidence, unfavorable climatic conditions next year caused losses. Low risk bearing capacity forced them to continue with their work on sugarcane fields. Though AKRSP(I) tried to convince community to adopt farming activity, no one was willing.

Continuous effort with community

In 2004-05, AKRSP(I) took up a new initiative with the Kotwalia community i.e. fisheries. Under this initiative some Kotwalia youth were trained, and the Tribal Department allotted tools and kits along with ponds. This too not be sustained as a result of poor knowledge about fish rearing and product marketing .

Shoots sprout from roots

After much brainstorming and drawing from previous experiences, in 2006, AKRSP(I) started working on utilizing the traditional skill of Kotwalias. As a pilot project, AKRSP(I) facilitated 3 months training to 30 Kotwalia youths on making bamboo furniture. Consistency, good product quality, and innovation on furniture designs led to exciting offers from the market. They restricted themselves to certain products inspite of demand for decorative items due to their limited exposure. Over time, good market demand has ensured good earnings. This has encouraged other Kotwalia youth to learn bamboo furniture work for securing a good livelihood. While some learn making Bamboo furniture from trained artisans, others have requested AKRSP(I) to conduct training sessions, In 2008, AKRSP(I) proposed, in a concept note to Tribal Development Department, Gandhinagar, a programme which would cover six Kotwalia villages of Bharuch District. The three major components of the project were:

- Training 150 Kotwalia youth
- Facilitate production tools and kits in groups of 5.
- Ensure product development and marketing

Before implementation of project, few criteria were set for selection of candidate:

- All the candidates must be from poor family
- Participant age group must range 18 to 40 year
- Preference would be given to persons with prior experience on bamboo work or carpentry
- Participants must be willing to work in group
- One participant from one family

After candidate selection, a 90-day training program was conducted for 25 participants on:

- Information about different tools and machine and its uses
- Handling of different tools and machines
- Designing product diagram
- Different measurement for manufacturing furniture
- Quality control
- Sensitization on importance of group and group work

After completion of training, tools and kits were provided in groups of five members each. Artisans started production at their village. Final product collected from the villages was stored and marketed from Netrang, Bharuch District.

Initially AKRSP(I), as the facilitating agency used Government. exhibitions as prime outlet for sales, but after a few large shops showed interest, the products were also sold through them. The team learnt with wider exposure that the bamboo products are a niche category that is preferred

by a certain type of high income customer; so focus was increased on ensuring good finishing and high quality of products.

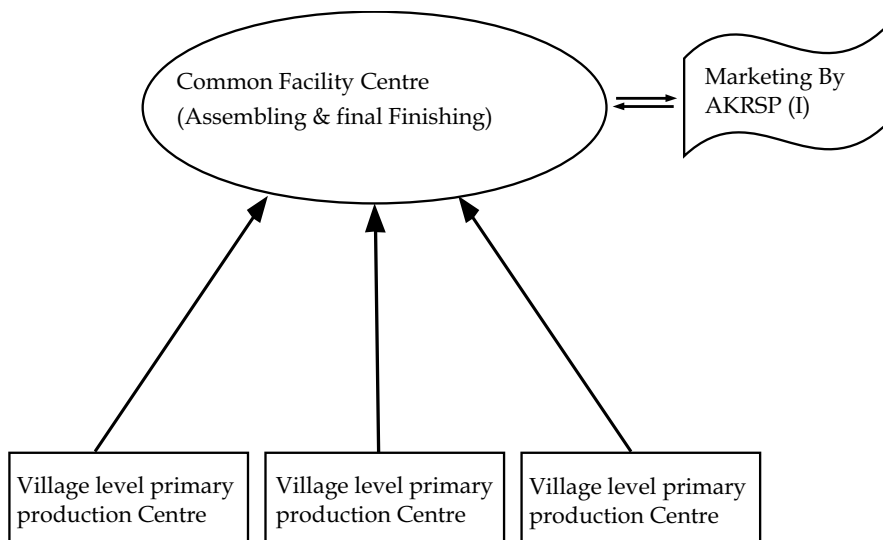


Figure: 1: Livelihood model of AKRSP(I) for Kotwalia youth

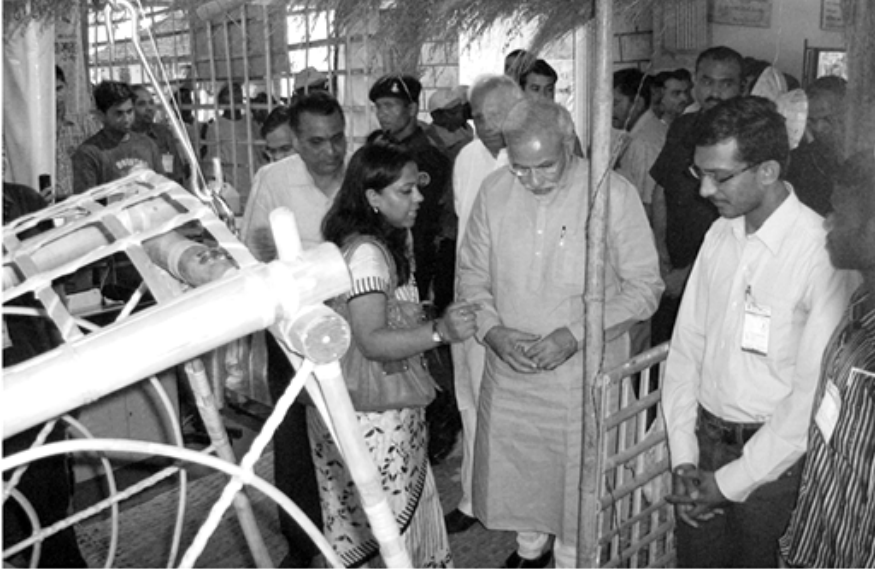
In 2010, AKRSP(I) took up an initiative to improve the quality and quantity of bamboo products by opening Common Facility Centre (CFC). It was decided by the community and AKRSP(I) that the basic work will be done at village level and the assembling and finishing would be done at CFC. By doing this, the final product would be standardized and quality improved as per market standards. Simultaneously it was decided that bamboo produce will be placed in market under the brand name of “Vinan”. It was soon evident that the launch of CFC was most valuable step taken by AKRSP(I). Within very short span of time “Vinan” products received positive response and good demand. The prices doubled within six month, and this intervention energized the Kotwalia youth.

Visible impact of bamboo project

Overall, this project has brought about a visible change in the Kotwalia tribe’s life; now they have more choices and wider exposure. For analyzing the impact of bamboo intervention in Kotwalias daily life, a small study has been conducted our targeted 35 artisans who were trained in bamboo project. Outcome of that study has given below.

Livelihood Generation

The main objective of this intervention was to provide a sustainable livelihood opportunity and break the vicious cycle of poverty and sugarcane labour work. Out of a total of 150 artisans, 121 or almost 81% of trained artisans, have opted for bamboo furniture and craft. Around 31 have given up working on sugarcane harvesting permanently.



Picture 6: Stall decoration by team in Gujarat event attended by CM

At present, 31 Artisans are working at CFC, and 50 artisans are working in “village level production centre”. Around 35 to 40 artisans still work with the sugarcane contractor as they are caught in the debt trap. Earlier they were earning an average of Rs. 8, 000-10, 000 per year now, they are earning Rs. 36,000-40,000 per annum. There is thus a sharp increase of upto four times in their income

Migration status

Before intervention out of total of 35 artisans, 34 worked in sugarcane field but after intervention only 13 artisans are migrating. The migration period has also reduced significantly as shown in Table 1.

Migration Duration		
Duration in months	Before Intervention	After Intervention
1 to 3	1	4
4 to 6	15	10
7 to 9	17	8
10 to 12	1	0
Total	34	22

Table 1- Migration central align duration of kotwalias to sugarcane field
(Source: Primary data)



Picture 7: Artisans working in Common Facility Center

Saving and Credit status

Availability of credit was a major problem. Sugarcane contractors were using this as an opportunity to use them as bonded labor. AKRSP(I) and the community mutually decided to have a saving-credit provision for the artisans. Currently, out of the total net profit, 40% amount is kept as a revolving fund which is available under the loan facility scheme. It was initiated with corpus of Rs. 1 Lakh. Results from the study, given in Table 2, indicates that only 2 artisans have taken loan from the contractors .

Amount of loan from Sugarcane contractor		
Source of credit	Before Intervention	After Intervention
0-5000	3	0
5000-10000	23	1
10000-150000	2	1
15000-20000	2	0
>20000	1	0
Total artisans	31	2

Table 2- Loan amount from sugarcane contractor before and after Intervention

(Source: Primary data)

Under the loan scheme, artisans are provided a loan with 12 percent interest rate. They contribute Rs. 50 as monthly saving. Now the groups have formal links with banks. 22 artisans now have a bank account with Development Credit Bank (DCB).

An individual artisan can avail loan of upto Rs. 25000 for different purposes like repair and maintenance of house, marriage, child delivery, and emergency health issues. Other purposes like social functions, health issues, and any other emergency, he or she can avail loan Upto Rs. 15000. In the festive season and to celebrate social events, loans of Upto Rs. 5000 is approved.

Credit availability from different sources		
Source of credit	Before Intervention	After Intervention
Sugarcane contractor	31	2
Vinan corpus	0	29
Relative	3	1
Banks	0	0
Friends	1	0
Group saving	0	3
Total artisans	35	35

Table 3- Credit availed from different sources after intervention

(Source: Primary data)

As Table 3 indicates, now artisan prefers Vinan corpus over any other credit source.

Artisan groups have 100% credit recovery and saving record. AKRSP(I) has repeatedly reinforced to all artisans the importance of utilization of savings for productive purposes and reducing consumption related expenditure for a secure future.

Before Intervention, the Kotwalia community lacked knowledge and wider exposure to get the benefits of government schemes.

Government entitlement (number of beneficiaries)		
Entitlement	Before Intervention	After Intervention
PDS Ration card	27	35
Voter ID	15	32
Pan Card	0	16
Artisan card	0	18
Health card	13	22
Linkage with NGO hospital	0	31

Table 4-Government benefits availed by artisans after intervention (Source: Primary data)

Now they are able to participate in various government schemes like BPL Card, artisan card, voter identity card, and health card. Last year following cards were issued: 5 BPL cards, 31 artisan cards, and 10 voter identity cards. They are also now associated with the Seva Rural Jhagadiya (Bharuch, Gujarat) for medical aid at low cost. Linkages with the local government hospital has now resulted in availability of common medicines like iron pill, calcium pill etc at CFC itself.

Identity to their produce

Since the last two year Kotwalia produce are sold under the brand name “Vinan” (Vinan is word commonly used for bamboo produce weaving in Kotwalia dialect).

Child education

Right from the beginning of the project, AKRSP(I) has been conducting various workshops on education for Kotwalia’s children and linked them to various schemes of Tribal Development Department. Table 5 shows that initially no Kotwalia family took loan for educational purposes but after CFC Interventions, loans have also been used for education. This is one of the most significant impact of the project - families are now more established and so children can continue their study without any disturbance. Families also now have income available to support education of the children and provide study material and uniform. The

AKRSPI (I) team in CFC always supports education and health related expenditures



Picture 8: Education workshops for Kotwalia children

Use of loan for different purposes		
Source of credit	Before Intervention	After Intervention
Consumption purpose	27	0
House repair and Maintenance	4	9
Health issues	3	7
Festivals	1	4
Children's school dress	0	6
Chick for household business	0	4
Others	0	5
Total artisans	35	35

Table 5- Loan use for different purposes before and after Intervention (Source: Primary data)

Expenditure on education		
Expenditure (Rs)	Before Intervention	After Intervention
0	19	12
Upto Rs. 500	13	17
Rs. 501-1000	3	4
Rs. 1001-2000	0	2
>Rs2000	0	0
Total	35	35

Table 6-Expenditure on education before and after intervention
(Source: Primary data)

Change in annual income

The artisans who continuously work in CFC are earning income which is sufficient and secure. There has been a significant change in income as clearly indicated in Table 7.



Picture 9: Different bamboo products developed by artisans

Change in Annual income (nominal income)		
Average Income	Before intervention	After intervention
0- 5000	4	0
5000-10000	27	1
10000-15000	3	3
15000-20000	1	5
>20000	0	26
Total	35	35

Table 7- Change in is annual income after intervention.
(Source: Primary data)

Fight against alcoholism

Alcoholism is the biggest social evil among Kotwalias. 30% of Kotwalia families are spending Rs. 2000 to 5000 and 45.58% of total Kotwalia families are spending Rs. 500- 2000 per annum on intoxicants (Secondary data, Tribal Development Department, Gandhinagar). To fight against alcoholism, an organization “Alcoholic anonymous” is being contacted. Now they are working on eradication of alcoholism among Kotwalias.

Productive asset creation

A total of 9 artisans have taken a loan for repair and maintenance of their house, 1 has bought a motorcycle, 3 artisans have purchased clothes, 4 send their kids to school, 7 artisans haven taken a loan for treatment, 1 artisan for his marriage, 4 artisans have bought poultry (chicks) for starting enterprise.

Success factors in bamboo project intervention

Like any other initiatives and community work, this project has also seen many up and downs since its beginning. The Tribal Development Department (TDD) supported project came to an end in October 2010. But the success of the project motivated AKRSPI (I) team and community to promote it at a larger level. There are certain factors which contributed significantly to convert the project into a program, and they are described below:

Traditional Knowledge on bamboo

Bamboo is naturally available material, but not easy to mould because of its natural structure. Specific skill and expertise is required to work on bamboo. Given the long association and competence of Kotwalia community with bamboo craft, it was convenient for them to adopt bamboo furniture and craft as a livelihood. After initial experiences with

other forms, AKRSPI (I) identified the community's core expertise and interest in this art form. The Kotwalias also feel proud of their traditional occupation and expertise, which facilitated its acceptance by them.

Addressing core issues

Working on sugarcane fields was never a choice for community. They were eager to come out of vicious cycle of poverty but did not know how. Through this bamboo project AKRSP(I) provided them with a better livelihood choice. It brought three significant changes - it ensured their livelihood, encouraged financial inclusion, and most important provided stability. The high level of ownership by the community proves their satisfaction with it.

Fund availability at crucial time from TDD

After the successful pilot project in 2006, funding was needed to replicate it and benefit the community at a larger level. TASP (Tribal Area Sub Plan, Bharuch) appreciated the effort of AKRSP(I) and in a timely intervention, provided funding to expand the activity.

Community ownership and integration with professional staff

In this program, there was great clarity in roles and responsibilities of staff and community. Community was involved in production activity and professional staff acted as facilitators. There were no problems in communication. All the critical issues, like what to produce, how to produce, and when to produce, are taken after discussion in open forum. All are accountable to each other, leading to higher levels of trust. They also own the business in financial terms. Currently, the community uses joint accounts and is an operating signatory. This has built their confidence and brought transparency in system.

Critical challenges

No program is perfect and there are always opportunities to improve it. Although this bamboo initiative has achieved much, there are still a number of challenges. Few critical challenges are given below:

Inconsistent availability of manpower

The Kotwalia community is engaged in working on sugarcane fields for 8 to 10 months of a year, and consequently families are scattered in different geographical locations. One of the biggest challenges for AKRSP(I) was to engage with the Kotwalia youth and convince them to take up

bamboo craft as a regular activity. Though they were working on bamboo seasonally, they did not want to lose their association with the sugarcane contractors as they did not believe that the bamboo business would be a sustainable form of livelihood for them. They also hesitated as the bamboo handicraft business is largely dependent on market response. Another challenge was that none of the community members wanted to leave in the middle of the sugarcane harvesting cycle so AKRSP(I) had to wait till the season was complete.

Conceptual clarity and 3Rs (Role, Right and Responsibility)

One major challenge was to make them understand the bamboo project, its sustainability aspect, the role of community, and most important convince them on how the community would benefit through this intervention.

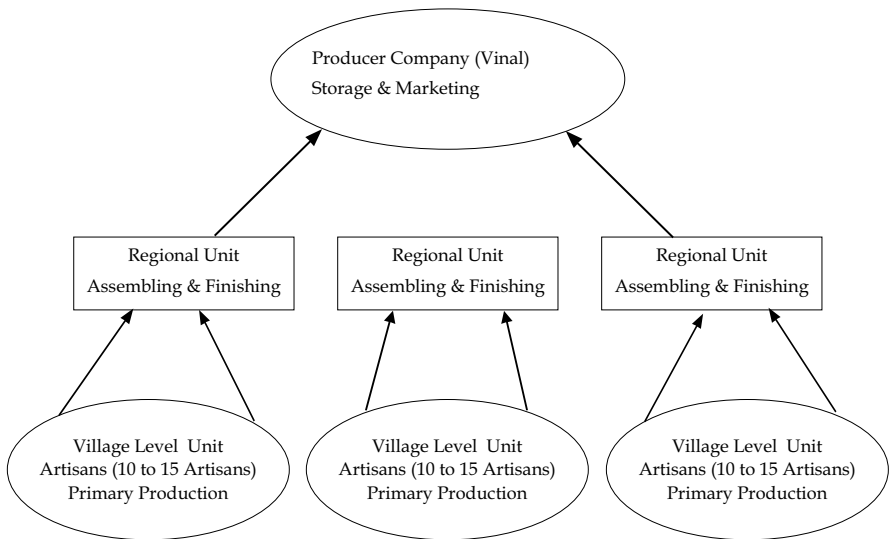
The community was doubtful as a result of their past failed experiments with AKRSP(I). AKRSP(I) knew this, so they did an intensive gap analysis of previous program and clarified the doubts of the community on their doubts and proved the viability of the initiative. In initial phase AKRSP(I) organized a number of exposure visits to build confidence of community as well as the team. Both realized that many organizations are working very successfully on bamboo like "Sampoorna Bamboo Kendra" Amaravati, Maharashtra and "Centre for Indian Bamboo Research and Technology" (CIBART Vyara, Gujarat). This helped develop an understanding of future of bamboo initiative, its scope, and sustainability of project

Accountability

Community accountability was an issue in the initial phase of project. Accountability for tools and kits maintenance, physical production security and maintenance, timely delivery of products to customer and so on, needed to be with the artisans. AKRSP(I) had to remind the community about their ownership during the early days, but with time it has ceased to be a problem.

Moving ahead

AKRSP(I) is moving ahead to create a producer company as an apex organisation promote bamboo craft and furniture. It is planned that at the village level, informal groups will carry out primary production, assembling will be done at the regional centers, which is at present in Netrang, Bharuch, and finally storage and assembling of final product will be done by the Producer Company, which will ensure that marketing is done in different part of Gujarat and other states.



To ensure the success of the producer company, AKRSP(I) is preparing a five-year plan. This plan includes different strategies for business promotion, community development and exit protocol of AKRSP(I).

This plan majorly focus is social development. There will be a regular training schedule on different aspects to enrich basic knowledge on material identification, material purchase, design of produce, accounting, marketing and management. Different teams will also be identified who will be made responsible for different functions. AKRSP(I) is also planning to expand the project to other areas, although within the same community, to increase the number of artisans. Partnership with different agencies like IIT and NID will be undertaken to support different aspects like designing, tool development etc. In addition, associations with other craft promoting agencies will be put in place for marketing. A website will also be developed to cater the demand of the online customer.



AAGAS: A Community Endeavour for Bio-Conservation and Employment Generation

Shailendra Singh Bisht and Surajit Ghosh Dastidar

It was a bright sunny morning on 1st May, 2012. Jagadamba Prasad Maithani (**Refer Exhibit 1**), Chairperson and Founder of The Alaknanda Ghaati Shilpi Federation (AAGAAS) was nostalgic as he looked at the serene view of the Himalayas from his office window at Pipalkoti, a remote central Himalayan village in the Chamoli District (Uttarakhand) of Northern India. It was exactly 10 years ago that he had founded AAGAAS to work for the socio-economic development of the poor rural mountain communities in Uttarakhand State of Northern India.

Over the years, AAGAAS has been involved in a number of projects (**Refer Exhibit 2**) and has been active in 54 Gram Panchayats, 800 Schools and 4 Districts in Uttarakhand. The focus areas have been: promotion of ecotourism, hill craft promotion, organic agriculture and nurser raising. Maithani was happy with what AAGAAS had achieved in the last 10 years. However, he was also concerned about its future. In the last 5 years, the livelihood and employment options for the people of Chamoli district have increased manifold thanks to new hydro power projects, road construction projects and the growing hospitality industry. This has resulted in more and more people migrating to take advantage of these opportunities in a bid for better livelihoods. Maithani thus has been finding it difficult to recruit and retain good quality people to take AAGAAS forward. It has been increasingly challenging for him to attract funding as even large non-profit organisations are looking for sub-million rupees projects.

Background

Uttarakhand became the 27th state of India when it was formed on 9th November 2000 from the state of Uttar Pradesh in Northern India. It marked the end of a long struggle for the people of Uttarakhand who had been fighting for their separate state. The state is located at the foothills of the Himalayas and is surrounded by China (Tibet) in the north, Nepal in the east, the state of Himachal Pradesh in north-west and the state of Uttar Pradesh in south. Pipalkoti is located in Chamoli district in Uttarakhand and has been deprived of the economic and industrial development owing to its geographic remoteness, difficult terrain and sparse population. In Chamoli, 87% of the population live in rural areas and 20% of them are Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (SC/ST). The region was beset with socio-economic problems which was aggravated by migration by the community's young men, subsistence agriculture, lack of market access and unfair burden on women folk to run their hearth and homes. Over a

quarter of the 32,384 Below the Poverty Line (BPL) families in the district were Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (SC/ST) whereas in Dasholi Block of Chamoli District, SC/ST BPL households were more than one-third. These lower caste groups lacked access to their traditional livelihood options which were consistent with local ecology. They had been forced to seek manual labour in the large infrastructure projects in the area or compelled to migrate to plains and seek low-wage work in unorganized sectors.

A group of young students led by Maithani from the town of Pipalkoti decided to check this exodus and find sustainable livelihood for the people of Pipalkoti and the community at large. The result was the birth of AAGAAS, literally meaning "Giving a Call". The call was for their community to look into their immediate surroundings, their ancestral heritage and strive towards sustainable utilization of their existing resources in an effort to revive the traditional economy.

AAGAAS was founded in the year 2002 and was registered in 2004 under the Societies Registration Act, XXI, 1860. AAGAAS started with the idea of promoting community-based tourism, bio-diversity conservation and promotion of lesser known and completely unknown trekking routes around the Kedarnath Wildlife Sanctuary, Valley of Flower, National Park and Pipalkoti town. The locals were keen to develop their skills, knowledge and capacities in conservation of the local environment. The objective was to create local institutions that foster inclusive growth for the poor tribals and weaker sections of the society through timely access to credit and links to markets.

Project funding

AAGAAS along with the Society For Community Involvement in Development (SFCID) approached the Global Environment Facility of United Nations Development Program (GEF/UNDP) Small Grant Program (SGP) for funding. They were given a grant of INR 9,00,000 (USD 22,500) along with a co-financing amount of INR 18,32,000 (USD 40,800) to be utilized over a period of three years (2004-07). The project would cover the areas of Pipalkoti, Chamoli, Garhwal around Nandadevi Biosphere Reserve and Valley of Flower National Park in Uttarakhand. The project would benefit 45 villages, 2 blocks and 1 district. The community would be involved in proactive action-based project for local bio-diversity conservation, promotion of ecotourism, dissemination of rural technologies, and creating employment opportunities for women and the local community. One of the thrusts areas in the project was on conservation of the lesser known and unknown treks (both low altitude and high altitude) around Pipalkoti (Chamoli).

Project activities

1. Establishment of Bio-Tourism Park (BTP) Level 2

AAGAAS established a Bio-Tourism park (BTP) at Pipalkoti town on the national highway with 5 tourist huts (**Refer to Exhibit 3(A), (B), (C)**). The BTP activities were twofold in nature: Mountain Tourism and Ecological conservation.

Key activities of mountain tourism included the following:

- Promoting sustainable rural eco-tours for tourists using local resources
- Community participation and developing a say in mountain tourism activities
- Awareness generation on climate variations and bio-diversity conservation
- Community mobilization towards a cleaner environment
- Infusing tourism of the area with the indigenous culture, cuisines and traditional knowledge
- Promoting treks and lesser known destinations around Bio-Tourism Park

Key activities of ecological tourism included the following:

- Protecting rare and endangered flora and fauna
- Establishment of a mother nursery to protect to preserve the genetic bio-diversity
- Introducing new mountain-friendly and economically viable plant species
- Promoting and establishing community-managed nurseries

The local communities joined together and gave the land on lease to form the Bio-tourism Park. This 'institutional approach' had instilled in the local community and a sense of ownership.

This initiative was successful in achieving its objectives. Sustainable rural eco-tours were promoted for income generation using local resources. Indigenous culture, cuisines and traditional knowledge was linked with tourism. Local handicrafts and lesser known treks and destination around BTPs were also promoted (**Refer to Exhibit 4**). Local communities and tourists in BTP were made aware of waste management techniques and measures for preservation of biodiversity through various awareness programmes. 17 families were introduced to Bio-dynamic compost preparation. Rare medicinal plants like *Dactylorhiza hatagirea* (Salam Panja), *Aconitum heterophyllum* (Atis), *Nardostachys jatamansi* (Spikenard), *Saussurea lappa* (Kuth) and *Picrorhiza Kurroa* (Kukti) along with 340 local fruit, fodder, ornamental plants and bamboo were planted inside the BTP. More than 200 trees were planted in the forest

area surrounding BTP and more than 3400 trees were planted along the mountain slopes.

Local craft promotion

(a) Badrinath Prasad Tokari Programme

During the summer months of May and June every year (known as the *yatra season*), lakhs of pilgrims and tourists visit the Himalayan shrines of Badrinath and Kedarnath, both in Chamoli district. While visiting the temple, the pilgrims are given a plate (*thaali*) containing prasad for Rs. 50 or Rs. 101. While returning, the seller retains the *thaali* and bundles up the prasad up in a polythene bag for the pilgrims to take back with them. These polythene bags are often thrown away later, causing large scale pollution in the area. Maithani had the innovative idea of replacing these polythene bags with local-made ringaal bamboo basket (**Refer to Exhibit 5 (A) and 5(B)**) which are bio-degradable. Subsequently, AAGAAS entered into an agreement with the temple communities to supply ringaal bamboo baskets to the pilgrims. This helped the local artisans to gain employment and the problem of polythene bags was also resolved. Maithani noted *“Last year we managed to supply 45,000 baskets whereas the demand is much bigger. Each basket costs between Rs. 35 to Rs. 50, depending on the design and size.”*¹ This initiative eventually came to be known as “Badrinath Prasad Tokari Programme”.

Maithani recollected:

*“This initiative started with 78 Self-Help Groups (SHG) all women, including crafts persons from 26 village, some of whom have been weaving for generations.”*² AAGAAS provided training on making Ringaal bamboo handicrafts, carpet and other natural fiber-based craft. Most of the 275 artisans that AAGAAS trained belonged to the most disadvantaged Schedule Caste community. The key focus of training was skills upgradation and development of products. A range of low cost, eco-friendly, high demand, well-designed craft products like bamboo furniture, lamp shades, baskets, dustbins (**Refer to Exhibit 6**) have been developed. Many of these products are selling very well in local and niche markets in urban centers. In recognition of their efforts, AAGAAS was honoured with a recognition award by World Bank in 2005 and was affiliated to Earth Charter International in 2010.

(b) Establishment of ‘Aajivika Vatika’

AAGAAS along with the Uttarakhand Bamboo and Fiber Development Board (UBFDB) set up a nodal training center named ‘Aajivika Vatika’ (meaning Livelihood Garden) for bamboo ringaal conservation and craft promotion. The long-term objectives are (1) Establishment of a community managed nursery, (2) Establishment of Jahnvi Kisan Nursery, (3)

¹ “Green Worshipping”, Consumer Voice, June 2009

² “Green Worshipping”, Consumer Voice, June 2009

Development and propagation and Himalyan Bamboo development and (4) Bamboo based housing for tourism.

More than 1,26,000 saplings of Ringal , bamboo, broad leave fodder plant and temperate grasses have been planted. They are managed by school children, village panchayats, forest panchayats, Mahila Mangal Dals, social army group and rural artisan community.

In addition, the following activities were undertaken

- Identification of potential craft clusters
- Training in design diversification
- Training on value addition for the products
- Establishing market outlets
- Visits of craftsmen from Indian Institute of Craft and Design, Jaipur and National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad
- Developing master craftsmen as teacher of trainer

From 2006 onwards, AAGAAS has also been instrumental in organizing the annual Pipalkoti Dev Ringal Mahotsav (**Refer to Exhibit 7**). Apart from this, AAGAAS set up two cooperatives: Alakananda Self Reliant Cooperative and Himalayee Self-Reliant Cooperative for marketing and promoting its products across the country and abroad.

Promotion of natural fiber based products

The project called "Himalayan Nettle Fiber" is a community-based approach to sustainable harvesting of nettle fiber and marketing of nettle-based products. Himalayan Nettle (*Girardinia Diversifolia*) is a grass species found in the upper reaches of Himalayas. Different pockets of Uttarakhand traditionally use the plant fibers like nettle, agava sisalana and industrial hemp for making domestic products like ropes and other rope-based products like slippers and lamp shades (Refer to Exhibit 8). The women of Bhutia community are experts in fiber extraction and weaving activity. The project started with identification of 17 villages in Dasholi and Joshimath block where nettle fiber seeds could be sown. These villages were divided into two clusters. There were then formed into Fiber User Groups (FUG's) which were of two types – Resource Cluster and Weaving Cluster. Nettle fiber seeds were sown in the villages of Tangani Malli, Irani, Pagana, Jhinjhi, Kuhed and several others (Refer to Exhibit 9). A natural fiber training program was conducted for the FUG's which imparted knowledge and skills for nettle fiber processing. A degumming unit was also established as part of this project.

Establishment of mother herbal gardens

A mother herbal garden was established inside the Bio-Tourism park at Pipalkoti. It was set up in association with Jagaran Jana Samiti, Udaipur. These nurseries were later registered with Uttarakhand government's

horticulture department. Ringaal saplings along with lemon grass, aloe vera, tulsi, neem were planted (**Refer to Exhibit 10(A) and 10(B)**).

Key activities included

- Development of mother herbal garden/nurseries
- Cultivation of threatened medicinal plants
- Training of women SHGs on cultivation practices
- Seed collection through SHGs
- Identification of Traditional Health Practitioners (THP)
- Documentation of Traditional Health Practices
- Linking THPs with mother herbal gardens
- Encouraging THPs to develop their own herbal gardens
- Linking with established pharmacies for buy-back arrangement

Awareness generation and community participation

The project generated a lot of awareness among the local communities for a greener and cleaner environment. They were also closely involved in village development plan and mountain tourism activities. Necessary training was imparted to the local guides, porters and cooks for mountain tourism and trekking activities. Local SHGs also helped with the development of tourism facilities like tents, rucksacks, carry mats, rock climbing kits, organic food and fresh fruit juices.

Besides these, they worked on various projects and training programs for improving the life of the Rudia community, the natives of Chamoli.

Impact of the project

Socio-Economic impact

A total of 114 SHGs were formed during the project tenure. This included more than 1100 women and youth from tribal communities like Bhutia and Rudia, BPL families, artisans and farmers. More than Rs. 5,00,000 were accumulated as savings in SHGs.

15 unemployed youth were trained and were given employment in the Bio-Tourism park. 30 craftsmen were trained in bamboo craft. Around USD 1100 worth of bamboo products has been sold through sale outlets in BTP. In the mother herbal garden, 50 women and youth were trained and employed.

The BTP has been visited by around 450 students and tourists. This had generated an annual income of Rs. 75,000 to the local people. An eco-tourism committee has been formed by the locals. Around USD 99,000

was raised as co-financing from the community, the private sector and the central and state governments.

The Badrinath Prasad Tokari Programme has helped several BPL families to earn Rs. 800 to Rs. 2,400 a month from the ringaal basket sales. The master craftsmen earn anything upto Rs. 500 everyday for their skills. Till date more than 1000 persons have been imparted training on Ringaal bamboo handicrafts, carpet and natural fiber based craft. Now the state government of Uttarakhand has also joined in, which will not only generate further employment but also contribute towards sustainable tourism. The fate of more than 12000 artisans changed for the better with the revival of the traditional Ringal Crafts and promotion of Ecotourism by AAGAAS.

In all, the project has benefited more than 3240 families in 3 blocks and 54 villages.

Gender empowerment

Women of the tribal Bhutia and Rudia community and other weaker sections of the area were closely involved with the project. Women SHGs have monthly savings collected. This empowered the women to form micro-enterprises. Women are also taking the initiative of organising SHGs.

Sustainability

The project generated Rs. 3,35,000 (USD 4500) as revenue in three years of which USD 1500 of profit was generated only from BTP. An amount of USD 35,800 was generated through co-financing from the World Bank-Development market place award along with Sir Ratan Tata Trust (SRTT), Mumbai and Department of Cultural Affairs, Government of India. Local involvement in the project in SHGs with the support of AAGAAS would help to sustain the project.

Challenges

A number of developmental activities in the district has resulted in a lot of alternative employment options. In the last 5 years, the entire employment scenario in the valley had changed because of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS). This scheme guarantees one hundred days of employment per household at the statutory minimum wage to adult members of any rural household in a financial year. In addition, the upcoming hydro power projects like the 444 MW Vishnugad-Piplakoti project at Pipalkoti is expected to generate a lot of employment for the people of Pipalkoti. The project is

planned to be completed by June 2013. Apart from this, numerous road construction projects in the district of Chamoli are also a major source of employment for the local people. Furthermore, the famous pilgrimage spots of Badrinath, Kedarnath, Tungnath and Joshimath of Chamoli district make it a popular destination for tourists and pilgrims. So the economy of the region has largely thrived, albeit seasonally, on tourism and hotel industry. All this has resulted in Maithani losing a lot of trained people who had contributed significantly to the project. The reason cited is availability of better livelihood options, given that Pipalkoti was a remote location. It has thus, become becoming increasingly difficult for him to recruit and retain trained manpower since AAGAAS does not have enough financial resources to offer attractive salary.

Maithani is also concerned that he does not have any strong second level of leadership. The entire organization has been driven by his vision. There are hardly any people in the organization with the necessary leadership skills, drive and motivation to take this organization forward. It also came to his notice that some people in the organization were misguided and influenced by people outside spreading negative propaganda against AAGAAS for their own personal interest. There was discord and a lack of team spirit also as a few members of the staff had taken undue advantage of their AAGAAS affiliation in the past.

In the last 10 years, AAGAAS had developed a lot of linkages with numerous funding agencies and state run organisations like the Uttarakhand Bamboo Forest Development Board (UBFDB), Sir Ratan Tata Trust (SRTT), Himmotthan Society, Earth Charter International, National Institute of Animal Welfare, Department of Animal Health. However, funding was a major cause of concern for Maithani. The funds generated were not enough to sustain its operations (**Refer to Exhibit 11(A) and 11(B)**). Arranging funds has become competitive as bigger NGO are also applying for smaller grants.

His reminiscences were interrupted as the clock struck 11.00, and Maithani recalled that he had a meeting with the Block Development Officer of Dasholi that afternoon.

Exhibit 1



(Jagadamba Prasad Maithani, Chairperson and Founder of AAGAAS)
Source: AAGAAS

Exhibit 2

Projects Undertaken / Completed

S.No	Name of the project	No of Families	Period	Business generated (Lakhs)	Market
1	Organic pulses	38	2008-2012	INR 4.8	Metros-including Delhi, Delhi, Jaipur, Ludhiana and Dehradun
2	Ecotourism	60	2004-07	INR 1.2	School, Colleges, Pilgrim Season
3	Local craft promotion	85	2004-Going on	INR 8.4	Metros-including Delhi, Delhi, Jaipur, Ludhiana and Dehradun and at Sale points at 'yatra' route
4	Micro Insurance	112	2009-2012	INR 0.54	
5	Fruit and Vegetable cultivation	24	2004-going on	INR 3.5	Local and tourist.
6	Afforestation and biodiversity conservation	180	2009-2012	INR 4.5	Locals
7	Natural fiber	ST- Gen-	2010-going on	INR 4.2	Deharadun - Yarn Supply

Source: AAGAAS

Exhibit 3(A)



Source: www.cbd.int

Exhibit 3(B)



Source: AAGAAS

Exhibit 3(C)

Aerial View of Bio Tourism Park



Source: AAGAAS

Exhibit 4

Lesser known treks:

- Pipalkoti- Panchula Alpine meadow trek - for the age group- 14- 17 .Gentle trek- of around- 14 KM- 4 Days package- @ 800 Rs. /Day / Person- excluding - travel from Deharadun, Rishikesh to Pipalkoti.
- Pipalkoti - Lord Curzon Pass trek- A high altitude trek with - great exposure towards - Flora , Fauna and Scenic beauty- 7- 8 Days- @ 1000Rs/Day/Person is of 80-100 Km.
- Pipalkoti to Rudranath Trek via Bemaru - Toli taal tek- 75- 80 Km Suitable for the youth- 5 Days @1000 /Day.
- Pipalkoti to Bansi Narayan - Pandav Sera trek- 110-120 Km. @ 1200 Rs/Day- with a beauty of alpine meadow, biodiversity and different topography.

Source: AAGAAS

Exhibit 5 (A)

Ringaal Basket



Source: AAGAAS

Exhibit 5 (B)

What is so special about 'ringaal'?

The Ringaal's scientific name is *Arundinaria Falconeri*. While it is found in jungles across the Himalayas, it has an especially strong presence in the Chamoli, Uttarkashi and Bageshwar regions of Uttarakhand. There are seven different varieties of this bamboo plant and the most popular among them for making products to sell is the 'dev ringaal' variety, known for its elasticity and shiny appearance. Other subvarieties of the bamboos are used to make roofs or baskets for fodder collection. In the last few years, the bamboo plant has seen 'flowering'. Flowering of the bamboo leads to the dying of the plant but nature has its own way of sustenance as not all species of the bamboo flower during the same year. The fact that they flower at different times leads to their survival.



Source: "Green Worshipping", *Consumer Voice*, June 2009

Exhibit 6

Bamboo Furniture



Source: AAGAAS

Exhibit 7

Ringaal Mahotsav



Source: AAGAAS

Exhibit 8



Source: AAGAAS

Exhibit 9

Details of Aagaas Fiber Users Group List 2010

Sl.N.	Name of FUG	Village Name	No. of Member	Account No.	SBI's Name	Running Defunct	Date of Formation	Current Balance
1	लक्ष्मी ऊन एवं प्राकृतिक रेशा उत्पादन	Vijay Nagar (Pursari)	8	31015396960	Chamoli	Running	7.1.10	2400.00
2	दुर्गा ऊन एवं प्राकृतिक रेशा उत्पादन	Vijay Nagar (Pursari)	9	31015317501	Chamoli	Running	7.1.10	2575.00
3	शिखर ऊन एवं प्राकृतिक रेशा उत्पादन	Kauriya	7	31086687672	Pipalkoti	Running	9.3.10	1130.00
4	बालगंगा ऊन एवं प्राकृतिक रेशा उत्पादन	Baajpur (Golim)	5	31036118717	Chamoli	Running	1.2.10	1500.00
5	एकता ऊन एवं प्राकृतिक रेशा उत्पादन	Baajpur (Golim)	6	31041488567	Chamoli	Running	1.2.10	1700.00
6	इन्द्रामती ऊन एवं प्राकृतिक रेशा उत्पादन	Kuhed	6	31035585998	Chamoli	Running	9.2.10	1700.00
7	सरस्वती ऊन एवं प्राकृतिक रेशा उत्पादन	Amarpur (Gadora)	8	31080394630	Pipalkoti	Running	4.3.10	1700.00
8	गरुड गंगा प्राकृतिक रेशा उत्पादन	Jalgwad (Pakhi)	6	31046716678	Pipalkoti	Running	4.1.10	1700.00
9	राज राजे वरी प्राकृतिक रेशा उत्पादन	Tangani Malli	6	31133235851	Helang	Running	15.4.10	1100.00
10	जय माँ दुर्गा प्राकृतिक रेशा उत्पादन	Tangani Malli	5	31133685765	Helang	Running	15.4.10	1100.00
11	दुधकुण्डी प्राकृतिक रेशा उत्पादन	Irani	8	31149606433	Chamoli	Running	28.4.10	1300.00
12	सगलपुरी प्राकृतिक रेशा उत्पादन	Pagana	9		Chamoli	Running	18.5.10	
13	सप्तकुण्डी प्राकृतिक रेशा उत्पादन	Jhinjhi	8					

Source: AAGAAS

Exhibit 10(A)

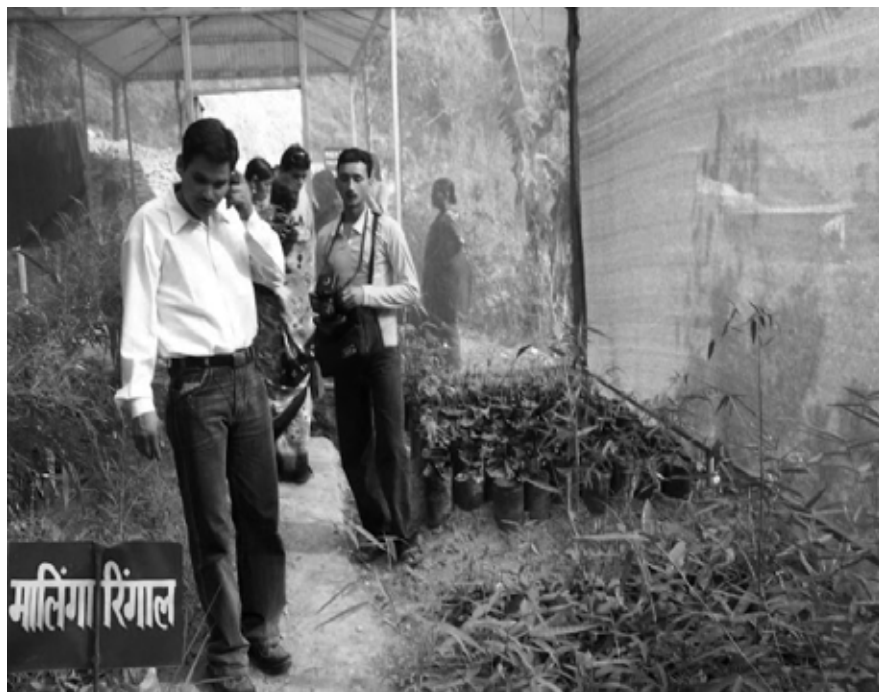
Aloe in Bio-Tourism Park



Source: AAGAAS

Exhibit 10(B)

Demonstration at Bio-Tourism Park



Source: AAGAAS

Exhibit 11(A)

Gram Panchayat	Area (ha.)	Labour component (Rs.)	Material component (Rs.)	Total Cost (Rs.)	Employment generated (person days)	Total Job card Holder involved (Nos)		
						Men	Women	Total
किरुली	2	59500	25500	85000.00	595	15	16	31
गडोरा	2	59500	25500	85000.00	595	0	17	17
नौरख	2	59500	25500	85000.00	595	22	40	62
दिगोली	2	59500	25500	85000.00	595	7	17	24
बेनल	2	59500	25500	85000.00	595	9	6	15
पोखनी	3	86452	40450	127000.00	864	8	4	12
टंगणी मल्ली	3	86452	40450	127000.00	864	5	17	22
योग	16	470404	208400	679000	4703	66	117	183

Source: AAGAAS

Exhibit 11(B)

Convergence of funds from other sources

SN	Activities	Unit/no	Name of source	Funds from other sources (Rs.)	Community contribution (Rs.)		
					Labour (Rs.)	Cash (Rs.)	Total
1	Nursery raising	2	0	0	2800	0	2800
2	Forage crop cultivation	9	आमान कैडरेसन एल कृषि विभाग	आमान २२७ एल कृषि विभाग 70 = 297	400	0	400
3	Pre-planting works on common lands	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	Grass planting on common lands	0	0	0	5150	0	2800
5	Fodder tree planting on private land	0	0	0	10250	0	400
6	Fodder planting on private land	0	0	0	3200	0	0
7	Purchase of planting material	0	मन्रेया	195100	0		
8	Soil & water con. measures	0	0	0	0		
9	Intercultural operations	0	0	0	17100		
10	Capacity building	0	0	0	0		
11	Formation & strengthening of CBOs	0	0	0	455		
12	Fodder Preservation and Better Feeding Practices	0	कृषि विभाग	15750	0		
13	Renewable energy/Biogas	0	0	0	0		
14	Livestock camps	0	0	0	0		
15	Animal Insurance	112	ULDB	17753.05	0		
16	Livestock Health and Breed Improvement	0	0	0	0		
17	Livestock based micro-enterprises	0	0	0	0		
18	Micro Finance	0	0	0	0		
19	Honorarium/travel expenses of extension worker	0	0	0	0		
20	Stationary/documentation/Communication	0	0	0	0		
21	Other	0	00	0	0		
22		0	0	0	0		
Total		123	0	228900.05	39355		

Source: AAGAAS



KEGGFARMS

Leveraging Traditional Indian Rural Practices and Existing Capabilities to Enhance Livelihoods

Vinod S Kapur and Anisha Singh

Introduction



Meet Anjali Maiti from 24, South Paraganas, West Bengal. She is a middle aged woman who is the sole bread winner of her household comprising a bed-ridden husband and aged father-in-law. She lives in a single room kutchra hut which she shares with 50 Kuroilers! Kuroiler rearing contributes to almost 50% of her income and she gives it credit for ensuring that they have enough to eat. Since she started keeping Kuroilers, her belief in herself has increased, her social standing has improved and she is confident that her Kuroiler-based livelihood will

generate enough income even if her husband does not contribute. In her words “*Kuroiler Nahin To Jeevan Nahin*”.

Anjali’s story above aptly summarises the impact of Keggfarms’ promoted Village Bird called kuroiler in alleviating chronic poverty among the poorest of the poor by ensuring stability of income. While this is a poultry-based intervention, it derives inspiration from the belief that sustainable development is possible only by upgrading existing systems, through acceptable, manageable and affordable inputs within the capabilities of rural households. An approach that calls for adoption of practices that they cannot, in practical terms, understand or financially afford, is not likely to achieve significant and lasting results. Hence since the early 1990’s, Keggfarms is working very closely with the community, across 13 states, to provide them a high-yielding, low-cost village bird at their doorstep thereby converting a non-remunerative traditional poultry rearing activity into a means of additional and sustainable income.

Background

About Keggfarms

Established in 1967, Keggfarms is one of India's oldest poultry-centric organisations. It was set up with the intention to make a fundamental contribution to the development of poultry in India. This was translated into action by pioneering India's first Genetic Breeding Program of high yielding stock. Keggfarms was among the first companies, not only in India, but anywhere in the developing world to develop this with demonstrable results. As a result of Keggfarms' intervention, though way back in the 70's, India today stands as the only country outside the developed world, which is self-sufficient and self-reliant in high-yielding poultry and is able to compete favourably with the very best in the world. Therefore, this industry has developed on the basis of a concept that was pioneered and validated by Keggfarms.

Advent of 1990's: globalisation altered the poultry industry scenario

Things were running smoothly - Keggfarms was growing fast, respected, honoured and well-regarded - until 1991 happened. India opened up to globalisation and became ready to receive foreign investments. From a self-reliant, self-sufficient closed economy, we were suddenly exposed to global competition, and all business organisations were caught unawares.

To survive, every industry was left with primarily two choices: a) meet the global competitors, who came with the advantages of technology, a great international brand name and far deeper pockets, head on, OR b) to integrate, assimilate and become a part of the global interplay by partnering with the global players. From Keggfarms' point of view, no matter how good the stocks were, they were too small to take on global competition. Joining hands with much larger global players would result in a partnership of unequals and would have killed Keggfarms' identity which had been so proudly built over the last twenty plus years. Hence this too was not a plausible option. The dilemma remained "What was to be done?"

Village poultry: an ignored opportunity

There had to be a third option. On probing deeper, the leadership at Keggfarms realised that the Poultry Revolution in India was all about big farms, industrial farms, and large farms. It required being close to the big markets because that's where they were of use. Village Poultry was about low production as it was consumed locally. Schemes sponsored by the Government and International Development Agencies sought to introduce some kind of watered down model of Industrial Poultry into the

village environment, which was rather unsuited to reality of rural India. Even today, whilst there has been much success in commercial poultry production and the industry has grown by leaps and bounds over the last two decades, backyard poultry has neither received much attention by researchers or commercial participants, nor has the public sector made any significant breakthrough.



Industrial Poultry

Chicken is a genetic mechanism that yields highest quantity of eggs or meat at the best feed conversion ratio in the least possible time.

Profit- Sale proceeds less cost of feed, medicine, labour, power etc.

Provides occupational opportunities and sizeable incomes

Two different varieties of birds, one for eggs and the other for meat.

Host of complex viral/bacterial diseases

Village Poultry

Chicken is a natural bio converter of no cost household agricultural and natural waste into eggs and meat

Profit- Total sales proceeds

Household activity involving women, yielding supplementary incomes in their hands

The same one type of bird for both eggs and meat

Low disease incidence- Primarily Newcastle

For Bottom of the Pyramid

It is worth noting that women who grew poultry in the villages were at the very bottom of the economic and social pyramid. The more affluent villagers usually owned cattle and it was the poorest and often the lower castes, landless labour, tribals and other marginalised classes that were unable to own cattle of their own; thereby resorting to less capital intensive Village Poultry Farming.

Traditionally practiced by a number of rural households

Government statistics suggested that there were close to 300, 00,000 (three crore) households in rural India raising poultry traditionally. Assuming a household of 6 persons per household, it translates into 1800, 00,000 (18 crore) people in India, who, in one way or the other are associated with rural poultry.

Additionally, it was an age-old women centric traditional activity but of very little financial significance.

KEGGFARMS niche: Linking business with pro-poor development through traditional practice of village poultry

Motivated by the possibility of being able to establish a niche for themselves, Keggfarms continued to study the Village Poultry Industry. The more they explored it, the more they found it exciting and challenging. Initially it was perceived purely as a business activity.

However the discovery of possible social impacts through this activity led to the emergence of a greater purpose. It no longer remained just a task but became a mission and a cause. **From a pure business-oriented entity, in the early 1990's Keggfarms re-established itself, this time as a social enterprise.** The aim was to devise a pro-poor, rural-specific business model, which could potentially convert the poorly remunerative traditional poultry into a significant and sustainable livelihood opportunity.

Challenges as a business

- There was no successful precedent in this area, only a long list of failures, and this heightened the risk inherent in such an untested mission.
- The resource limitations of Keggfarms were a significant constraint.
- Keeping the organization motivated enough to sustain this adventure through uncharted waters was in itself a huge task
- The venture had no guidebooks to refer to and much of what is found in research papers was not particularly relevant.

"Keggfarms have the experience of breeding in India since 1970; we have options; we have the experience of seeing India, and we know this country. We know poultry. Can we use our skills, experience, facilities -all that we have- and turn it around to a sector where we could create a niche for us; our own identity; where we could probably get away from this huge international interest? May be not, may be yes, we'll see!"

**Mr Vinod S Kapur,
Chairman, Keggfarms**

Challenges as a technical model

- Genetic Development of a hardy village-specific poultry that could deliver significant gain in production in hostile and resource-poor foraging village conditions
- Creation of a Cost Effective Delivery System of 'Started' chicks to the doorstep of households in remote villages, even in very small numbers
- Devise a System to minimize Early Chick Mortality and provide modicum of immunization.

Despite the seeming absurdity of the mission, the leadership at Keggfarms strongly believed in the worthiness of this mission. This is what provided organisation-wide energy and inspiration to take the challenges head-on. And what followed, as they say, is history.

The Kuroiler model: innovations to convert an incidental women centric activity into a remunerative household activity

Inventing kuroiler: Product innovation through appropriate technology

Having decided to venture into rural markets, the next step was to have a product that would sell itself in Indian villages. Keggfarms was formally recognized by the Department of Science and Technology as an RandD Centre, and it developed a rural specific multi-coloured dual purpose bird through selective and controlled crossing of high yielding indigenised poultry germ-plasm. Branded as KUROILER, it is not only capable of thriving in harsh village conditions but also produces 140-150 eggs and attains the body weight of well over 3 Kgs by principally scavenging on village household agricultural and natural waste. This bird enabled the village households to achieve almost 4 times higher production both in terms of Eggs and Meat than the non-descript poultry stock and yet essentially needed similar sustenance. In addition, it ensured that the bird retained its colour, agility and disease resistance abilities.



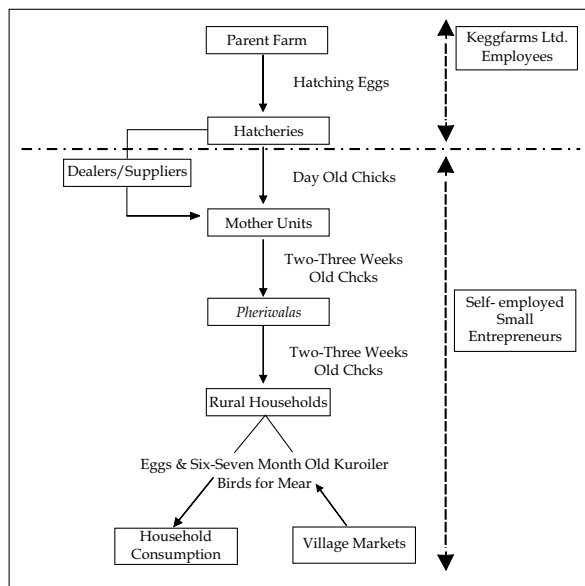
Table 1: Comparative Features Between A Non-descript Bird and Kuroiler

FEATURES	Non-Descript Desi Bird	Kuroiler
Colour	Multi-coloured	Multi-coloured
Egg Production in field conditions	40 Eggs	150 Eggs
Egg production commences	32 weeks	24 weeks
Body weight potential.	1 Kg. - 1.1 Kg.	3.5-4Kg.
Feeding	Household, agricultural waste;	Household, agricultural waste
Housing	Rudimentary shelter	Rudimentary shelter
Potential Income`	Marginal	Substantial

Innovative distribution channel involving community members through voluntary interdependence of all Stakeholders

The biggest innovation was the development of the delivery chain. The system effectively enabled gains of modern science and technology to percolate down to remote village households at the very bottom of the pyramid. This was achieved by adapting the traditional practice of village vending to be extended to Kuroilers and creation of Mother Units in locations which were practical to reach from the centres of Keggfarms production and were accessible to the vendors. The various players in the delivery chain and their key responsibility are enumerated below:

Figure 1: Kuroiler value chain



The various players in the delivery chain and their key responsibility are enumerated below:

The supplier/ dealer: This person is involved in identifying potential mother unit (MU) owners to take up chick rearing and coach the

existing MU owners to produce quality chicks (2-4 weeks old). He/she also manages demand and supply at the MU level; keeping track of the demand and ensuring supply of DOCs (Day Old Chicks) via the Keggfarms' field representatives. Where relevant, he also communicates availability of ready chicks to the pheriwalas. He is also the source for technical advice.

Mother Unit: The Mother Units purchases DOCs from the dealer/supplier and rears them for an initial period of two weeks. In some areas, the MU retained the chicks for upto 4 weeks and herein quality brooding management ensures that healthy chicks reach the households. Vaccination is also taken care of here.

Pheriwalas: Pheriwalas purchase the chicks (10 days onwards) from the Mother Units and sell them to the farmer households. The Pheriwalas is the sole agent in the chain interacting directly with the farmer households and addresses any complaints/problems with health of the birds, mortality etc. S/he provides inputs to rearers based on dialogue with the dealer for technical backstopping or seeks guidance from medical storeowners. A pheriwalas is free to purchase chicks from any mother unit and is not assigned one particular MU owner.

Key impacts: poverty alleviation, women empowerment and food security

Keggfarms is the only organization, anywhere in the world, that successfully addresses the rural poultry market in significant numbers on a commercially sustainable basis.

While the figures tell the story of more and more people growing Kuroilers, how the activity become an economic activity is another story in itself.

Box 1: Key Kuroiler Impact Figures

Number of Poor Households Reached	: One Million
Number of States Reached	: 13
Additional Income Generated	: INR 450 million
Number of Micro entrepreneurs established	: 5000

Keggfarms has experienced sustained growth in demand. This continuing increase in Kuroiler placements, now approximately 20 million per year on a cash basis by rural households and small farmers, without any aid is the ultimate measure of benefits that the rural households and small farmers are reaping from this stock when compared to self-generated non-descript local poultry stock. Competition has also started emulating the Keggfarms

Model. A whole new economic activity has emerged which did not exist till it was started by Keggfarms. The key outcomes are as follows:

Contributing to household income: Rearing the hardy Kuroiler bird is seen as a viable option to earn an income. Since the investment is low and the returns higher, it has been within the reach of most to make the investment.

Gender Empowerment: Since Village Poultry is mainly a women-centric activity; increased remunerative capacity through Kuroilers improved the financial and social standing of women. It also helped them provide significant inputs for family education, health and welfare.

Providing livelihoods: Dealers, Mother Units, Vendors and Small Farmers emerged as micro-entrepreneurs located in rural or peri-urban India thereby stimulating the local economy.

Nutrition and food security: Ready availability of eggs and chicken meat for which the village population is otherwise dependent on expensive retail outlets in the city significantly aids provision of nutrition.

Environmental effect: Kuroiler is used as a bio-converter not because it's a chicken but because it has the ability to convert rubbish into food. There exists no parallel example in the whole world of such a bio-converter.

Validation of impact by external parties

The Keggfarms intervention has been studied and reported upon both by National and International agencies.

The Govt of India, Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying, set up a committee headed by a senior technocrat from NABARD to study the rural poultry scenario with a view to include this sector in the venture capital fund of the department in the Tenth Five Year Plan. The study revealed that Kuroiler farming in the traditional style was being extensively practiced in villages with substantial benefits to rural stakeholders. NABARD presented bankable and venture capital funding for Kuroiler farming projects in rural areas. In 2009, a joint venture of FAO and NDDDB (SAPPLPP) studied the impact of the Keggfarms model of Kuroiler farming in rural India. Results indicated that very substantial benefits were accruing to rural stakeholders.

Enabling factors

The key factors which have been instrumental in making the KUROILER MODEL a significant success can be enumerated as follows:

a) Creating solutions to suit the environment: Village specific product based on traditionally practised systems and setting up a strong delivery chain

The industrial poultry model tried to take an urban concept developed in developed nations and adapt it to the village environment. It was not focussed on creating solutions that were suited to the environment and its requirements. Keggfarms, however, approached the issue bottom up. The Keggfarms Model is not a modified version of something implemented in the West. It is totally rooted in Indian 'cultural roots' with 'culture' Indian systems, and the Indian way of life. It focussed on upgrading the existing systems through acceptable, manageable and affordable inputs within the capabilities of the existing village poultry rearers.

The R&D was done to develop a highly village specific poultry bird to deliver significant gain in productive performance in hostile, resource-poor villages in foraging conditions, exactly like the traditional birds did. It was a product that would sell itself in the Indian villages. The second solution was the innovative delivery chain developed by the company. This chain facilitates a commodity serving the poorest in a financially sustainable manner without the support of any external agency.

b) Sustained conviction in the concept backed by risk taking courage and ability

Turning from a business enterprise to a social enterprise was a total change in direction for Keggfarms. It meant completely phasing out its industrial products and switching to Kuroiler. It meant changing the production system, its geographic locations, and markets—almost everything. The company shrank to 50% of its size, before starting to grow again. Key decisions were required to be taken as it was almost like turning a huge ship by a complete 180 degrees. The company withstood all financial deficits, for as long as it took. Suppliers were taken into confidence and extra credit gained from them. Some fixed assets also had to be sold off. It took twelve years to structure and achieve financial sustainability. It took twelve years of undeterred conviction, national pride, and self-confidence to turn the story around.

c) Inspirational leadership

Sustained employee morale was another key factor that ensured this transition for Keggfarms. The change was ushered in gradually and in a local context. There were no behind the doors decisions and each employee was taken into confidence. Secondly there were no dismissals or retrenchments. Thus, regular communication, no behind the door decisions and involvement of key staff in drafting the strategy were the main pillars to keeping the company together. Most importantly, it was the affirmation of confidence from the leadership, a positive attitude and a never-say-die spirit which instilled faith among the employees and ensured sustained levels of personal motivation.

Sustainability and replicability

The Kuroiler practice showcased how the private sector can create a viable business model; build rural market acumen and doorstep delivery mechanisms in a sustainable manner by utilising the traditional knowhow of women. The key elements which make this model sustainable are as follows:

- **Right technology to create a product:** the product was an upgrade over the existing available product in the villages and not a completely new product. The resultant product was a dual purpose bird which was as hardy as a local village bird but still produced many more eggs and grew faster than desi(local) birds. In addition, it ensured that the bird retained its colour, agility and disease- resistance abilities.
- **Interdependence of agents in the delivery chain:** each link in the delivery chain depends upon the other. This inter-dependence of agents is the key to its sustained viability. This has been made possible because the guiding principle behind setting up this system is that there must be 'profit for all' so that it remains meaningful for the local community to engage in.
- **Working within the rearers resource base:** rearers valued the kuroiler business because of low rearing costs and the fact that the enterprise fitted well within their limited resource base, social hierarchies, anxieties and gender-based household dynamics. These elements have been critical for ensuring the sustainability of this initiative.
- **Pro-poor approach:** the model reaches out to some of the poorest households in rural india where livelihood options are very limited and village poultry is a critical livestock asset. By ensuring valuable additions to the bird and door-step delivery mechanism, the model ensures sustained interest among the poor to keep kuroilers. The model has also demonstrated its impact on ground by increasing food security and income .

Kuroiler can be used extensively across India, other Asian countries and Africa for production of eggs and chicken meat by village households in the traditional no cost manner. These chickens convert the agricultural and natural household waste to eggs and chicken meat than the local birds, far more efficiently.

Going forward, Keggfarms is looking at extending the model in international markets. They would provide the basic product material but the total solutions will have to be modified in each country depending upon their native systems and practices to reach their local populations.

Box 3: Successful Experiments to Replicate the Kuroiler Model:

- a) A trial conducted under supervision of Arizona State University and Uganda with replicated multi location trials in Uganda, proved conclusively that Kuroiler had the potential of yielding almost 3.5 times higher income than the local birds.
- b) Keggfarms is now exporting Kuroiler Hatching eggs to Ugandan Government and will supply Kuroiler Parent Stock, so that they can produce Hatching eggs locally. Likewise in Burundi.
- c) Ethiopia has reported huge success and total acceptance of the Kuroiler by village households
- d) Indian and State Governments have adopted the Kuroiler model for promotion of village poultry

Awards and accolades

Today, Kuroiler is an acknowledged tool for poverty alleviation, food security and women empowerment for rural India and even overseas. Over the last few years it has been a proud recipient of various awards and accolades as follows:

- Marico - Business World Innovations Award by Dr. Mashelkar in 2006
- EMPI - Indian Express Award for viable poultry culture micro-entrepreneurship by Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, former President of India
- CII recognition for Keggfarms' social contribution and innovation at CII Innovation Summit, Bangalore and CII Leadership Summit Delhi, 2006, 2007 and 2008
- Invited to the United Nations to address G-77 representatives to share the journey of Keggfarms

In conclusion

Despite the growth in GDP, about 250 million rural households in India still live on less than US \$1 per day. The role of pro-poor development and participation oriented projects in eliminating poverty cannot be debated enough. The Poultry sector has been no exception and the Poultry Revolution of the 1990's only sought to introduce some kind of watered-down model of Industrial Poultry into the village environment, which was out of touch with rural ground reality.

Having pioneered genetic breeding of high quality poultry stocks for the Indian environment as early as 1972, Keggfarms set out to devise a pro-poor, rural-specific business model around poultry. This led to focussed interventions in village poultry; especially since it is a wide-spread, traditional, women-centric activity carried on across an estimated 30 million rural poor households in India. The challenge thus far had really

been its non-remunerative nature as it remained a household activity. The Kuroiler Model, through its innovative product and delivery mechanism helped convert this household activity into a means of sustainable livelihood.

The Keggfarms' story is more than that of a poultry organisation, of creating a product which is in line with the practices, values, attitudes and capabilities of traditional rural population. It is a great example of the fact that it is only through aligning the mind-set to the realities of the situation that situation-specific answers emerge.

India has always been a land of traditions and a land of opportunity. The Keggfarms story is about leveraging these traditions and opportunities to develop India-inspired alternative route to sustainable growth in the country. Going forward, it might merit exploring this approach of leveraging Indian tradition for sustainable livelihoods at a national level. This can be done through key academia, policy makers, society influencers, community based organisations and other like-minded organisations spreading the word via their work on inclusive growth.

If it is being recognized the world over, it is time we sat up, proud of our ethnicity, and acknowledge its impact towards sustainable development

Mother unit



Pheriwala



Natural environment

Village haat



Upscaled product



Happy faces



BARIPADA MUDHI

A Case Study of Unnayan's Intervention at Tambakhuri

Binayak Acharya and Vinayak.V

The Mayurbhanj Mahila Association producer of the famed Baripada Mudhi of Orissa is proving to be the saviour of the marginalized families of the Rasgovindpur block of the Mayurbhanj district

Early morning, while along the dusty streets of the nondescript village of Tambakhuri, one can hear women singing songs while hard at work. The songs sung in Odiya talk about empowerment, dignity of labour and strangely enough, of puffed rice or Mudhi as it is known here. They are the women of the Mayurbhanj Mahila Association (MMA) singing whilst making puffed rice. This is the home of the famous Baripada Mudhi, popular all over Odisha renowned for its taste and for being completely devoid of additives like urea and soda unlike the factory-made puffed rice. The MMA owns the trademark for Baripada Mudhi and employs more than 120 women from seven villages of the Rasgovindpur block of the Mayurbhanj district.

Things were not always this good. Most of these women belong to Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe (SC/ST) groups and are very poor. They lack sufficient land to grow paddy on, so most of the women worked as casual labourers or were employed in making Mudhi for the landlords for a pittance of Rs 10-15 a day. Income from the male members was often not enough to make ends meet, putting the families in a financially precarious position. This compelled the women, who knew little else in terms of other vocation, to make Mudhi to earn a few extra rupees. Making Mudhi by hand is a labour intensive process which requires a lot of skill. Having no other choice, the women had to bear with exploitative working conditions. Alcoholism was rampant among the male members. Women, contributing very little to the family income, had very little say in the household, and were often victims of drunken domestic violence. Education for the children was a dream, their help often being needed at work when times were hard. The situation was evidently very dire and the families desperate.

In order to empower this marginalized section living on the periphery of society, Unnayan, an NGO based in Bhubaneswar suggested selling handmade Mudhi as a livelihood opportunity for these poorest of the poor. The aim was to ensure a secure, dignified and a sustainable livelihood.

This proposition, however, was met with a certain amount of scepticism on the part of the intended beneficiaries of this scheme. Their contention was that in an area where everybody makes Mudhi themselves, there will be no buyers of the Mudhi they proposed to sell. The situation mirrored the classic 'selling ice to Eskimos'. It was only after concerted efforts on the part of Unnayan to familiarize these women with the benefits of forming a co-operative to sell branded Mudhi, did they agree albeit with apprehension.

Initially, only 24 women came forward to sell Mudhi collectively. However, actuated by the success of these women, Mayubanj Mahila Association or MMA was formed with Unnayan's support in 2002. Initially, it catered only to the local markets. Gradually, it gained popularity in the urban markets. In 2007, Unnayan decided to acquire the trademark of the Mudhi under the name "Baripada Mudhi". Absence of synthetic substances like urea and baking soda make "Baripada Mudhi" superior to regular factory made Mudhi.

Currently, the co-operative of 120 women members covers 7 villages managing to produce and sell 65 quintals per month of which 10 quintals are sold in the urban market. The co-operative now also makes and markets ambula (dried green mango), tamarind, mustard and pulses. Each woman manages to earn a minimum of Rs. 2000 per month in about 9 man-days of work. Increased food security and a steady flow of income help them meet medical emergencies, children's education and other contingencies.

Avers Mrs. Kathibudhi Sahoo, a resident of Pakhadhar village, "we are happy now, our children go to school now and our efforts get appropriately reimbursed. Almost all of us have cows now. Mudhi is our saviour."

Selling ice to eskimos

The situation before Unnayan

Tambakhuri village like most villages on the banks of the river Subarnarekha depended on fishing as its main economic activity. Some of the villagers were subsistence cultivators of paddy. With the decrease in the water level of the river, fishing was no longer viable and those without land were the worst affected. The condition of the women in the already patriarchal society became deplorable. As it happens in many poverty stricken villages, the menace of alcoholism further compounded their problems. The incidence of domestic violence was high; children had to work to earn extra income and the women folk of very poor families turned to making Mudhi for the better-off villagers to make ends meet. It was at this juncture that Unnayan decided to intervene. Realising the precarious position of the women in their families, Unnayan orchestrated

the formation of the Sangrami Mahila Mandal a Self-Help Group (SHG) in 1996. "Sangram" means warfare, the women were waging a war against poverty. The SHG boasted of a membership of fourteen women from the most deprived families. The population distribution of Tambakhuri village is shown in table 1.

No of households	Total population	Males	Females
127	724	369	355

Table 1: Population distribution of Tambakhuri village as per census data 2011

The Chambers' five dimensions of poverty are used as a tool to assess the poverty in a society. Unnayan observed that the women of Tambakhuri seemed to lack in all the five dimensions as show in Figure 1 and hence needed intervention.

Poverty	Isolation	Vulnerability	Power lessness	Physical Weakness
They had a lack of adequate income or assets	They were socially isolated due to the peripheral location, lack of access to goods and services and were ignorant about the outside world in general	These women were vulnerable to any kind of emergencies or contingencies like loss of Income, famines, floods etc and there was a chance of them becoming poorer	They were powerless within the existing social, economical, cultural and political structure present within the village as a whole	The women in question were physically less active than their male counterparts

Figure 1: Chambers five dimensions of poverty in Tambakhuri

The initial interventions

The members of the SHG came from SC and ST families who did not have any other livelihood options. They were mostly widows, domestic helps and casual labourers. Most of them belonged to the SC community (some of whom were harijans) followed by those belonging to ST and OBC communities.

The group, with help from Unnayan, decided to make 'Khallipatra' i.e. plates made from leaves. For this initiative they took loans from State Bank of India (SBI) under various schemes. Unfortunately this venture faced a lot of problems of storage and rising electricity bills from the usage of machines. They had also not factored in the dubiousness of middlemen who short-changed and duped the women at every possible opportunity. Ultimately the intervention failed and Unnayan had to explore other options.

Baripada Mudhi and the MMA

Mudhi or puffed rice is a staple in Northern Orissa. It is ubiquitous in the region and every household prepares its own Mudhi. While most women normally make Mudhi for household consumption, Mudhi making is a source of income for the poor, especially so for women-led households which had no other source of income or income-generating assets.

Mudhi making therefore was not a primary livelihood activity. Furthermore, making Mudhi was a very exploitative option especially for women who prepared it for the landlords of the village. The women were paid a pittance and the job itself did not offer much in terms of self-esteem or social status.

Unnayan after several rounds of discussions zeroed upon making 'Mudhi' and marketing it in Bhubaneswar. The idea was proposed by Mrs Rashmi Pradhan, secretary of Unnayan. She opined that there was a great demand of Mudhi in different cities of Odisha and if marketed properly could generate a steady stream of revenue. By tapping local resources and skills the dependence on middle men would also be minimal.

This proposition, however, met with a certain amount of scepticism on the part of the intended beneficiaries of this scheme. Their contention was that in an area where everybody makes Mudhi themselves, there will be no buyers of the Mudhi they proposed to sell. The situation mirrored the classic case of 'selling ice to Eskimos'. It was only after concerted efforts on the part of Unnayan to familiarize these women with the benefits of forming a co-operative to sell branded Mudhi, though not without considerable apprehension.

In year 2001, amidst much ridicule from the local villagers, the Mudhi producers and marketing cooperative was formed and named the Mayurbhanj Mahila Association (MMA). It initially consisted of 24 members, some of whom were members of the Sangrami Mahila Mandal. The model has proven to be very successful, and over the years the membership increased to over 120 members in 2011.

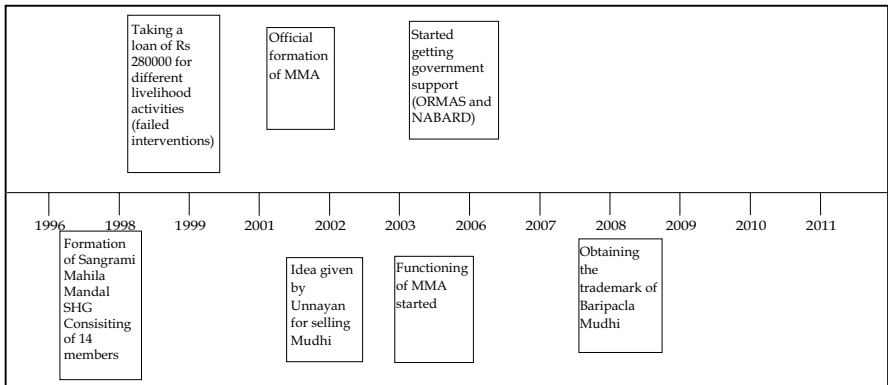


Figure 2: Timeline of Unnayan's Mudhi Cooperative Intervention

Composition of MMA

Eligibility

The MMA had originally started with 24 members (2 members coming each from the 12 self-help groups that were initially present). These members had volunteered to be a part of this initiative. After looking at their success, many women wanted to join MMA.

As a result Unnayan in consultation with the founder members decided to implement a set of rules that could be applicable to aspiring members. The basic criteria were that the applicant

- Must be from the village or from nearby villages
- Must be a member of a SHG
- Must be able to make Mudhi

Apart from this:

- i. She should be able to provide the association a minimum of 10 kg of Mudhi every week at the pre-determined price.
- ii. She will not sell Mudhi to an external vendor or sell Mudhi directly in the market
- iii. She should be attending all the weekly and monthly meetings.

The aspirants are kept under probation for three months. If they fulfil the above criteria, after three months, they are made a member of MMA. They officially register themselves by giving a onetime membership fee of Rs 50.

Governance Structure

The Mayurbhanj Mahila Association has a two tier structure –

1. General body - All MMA members by default are members of this body.
2. Executive body – The executive body consists of nine members including the president and the secretary. This body is responsible for running the daily affairs of the association as well as taking important decisions. As such no elections are held and usually the members of this body are nominated via a consensus among all the members. For being a part of this body some basic criteria are looked at. Some of them are:
 - How much Mudhi they are supplying? (Should be on the higher side)
 - Qualification
 - Helping the association in various activities
 - Attending the meetings regularly
 - Has a general interest of working for the success of MMA

Among these 9 members, one is chosen as a secretary and one as a president by general consensus among the members. The composition of the MMA is shown in the Fig 3.

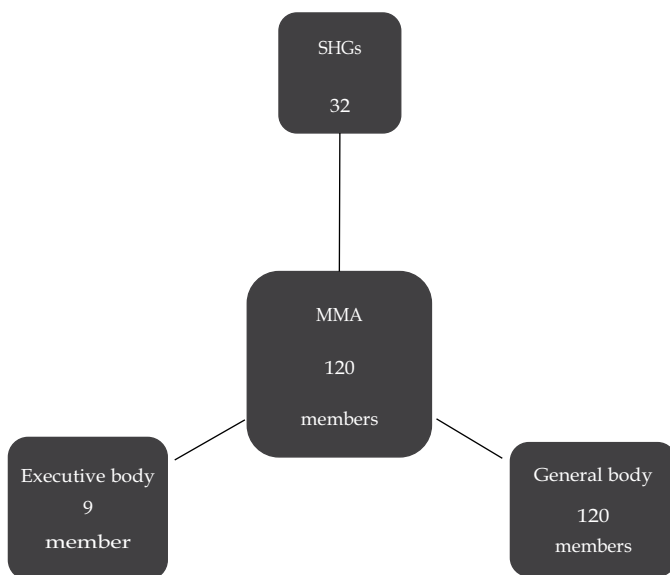


Figure 3: Composition of Mayurbhanj Mahila Association



Figure 4: Various responsibilities of the executive body

The responsibilities of the executive body entails book keeping, marketing, accounts, quality checking, procurement and storage. The members of the executive body are paid a fixed salary by Unnayan every month.

Institutional tie ups

- i. **Unnayan**-The NGO Unnayan has always been in the background, consistently nourishing the members' dreams, helping them in enhancing their skills and nurturing their needs. Right from the idea of selling Mudhi to actually operationalizing it, Unnayan has always been facilitating the process.
- ii. **OXFAM** - This is the funding agency for Unnayan's different projects. When the NGO put up the idea of Mudhi making as a sustainable livelihood for the poor women, OXFAM readily agreed to support this initiative. OXFAM provided the initial grant of Rs 5 lakh to start this project.
- iii. **ORMAS** - Orissa Rural Development and Marketing Society(ORMAS) tied up with MMA in 2006. It provided stalls for MMA to advertise its products and generate trials at various melas and festivals like the Baliyatra.

The role of Oxfam

Seeing the potential of the initiative with respect to market access, income generation and women's empowerment, Oxfam associated itself with the program within just three months of the initiative being put forward to it. The grant given by them was used for buying machines to cut paddy, stitching sacks, buying utensils for preparing Mudhi and building a storage shed.

OXFAM also tried to build capacity by training members in the following areas:

- i. Checking product quality
- ii. Marketing and promotion

Channel design

The route to market

The various players in the channel are

- Local producers
- MMA
- Production centers (Households of MMA members)
- Urban and rural retailers

The MMA believes in local sourcing to reduce dependence on external inputs. Marketing activity is also done by the members of the executive body. However, distribution of finished goods to distant markets is done by a male employee hired by the MMA.

The MMA procures paddy from local producers and sells it to its members according to demand. The members turn the paddy into Mudhi which the MMA buys from them at Rs 28 per kilo. The quality check and packaging is done by the members collectively and the finished product is ready for retail.

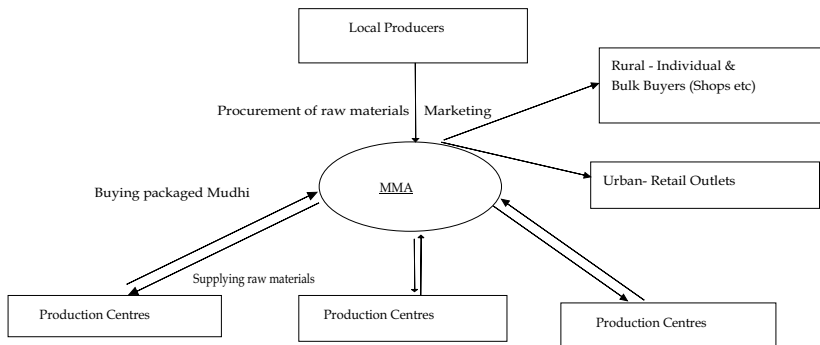


Figure 5: Illustration of the Route to Market of MMA

For poor members who cannot afford to buy paddy, the association bears the cost of the paddy and lends them the required amount. A nominal interest rate of 1% per annum for amounts less than Rs 1500 and 2% per annum for higher sums is charged. The interest is deducted upon procurement of the Mudhi from the member.

Every Wednesday the association holds a general body meeting wherein a weekly review is conducted. Each member has a passbook and an individual ledger containing information about the payments received and dues. The members can verify their outstanding and receivables against the Collection copy maintained in the MMA's office.

Products, pricing and costing – the marketing aspect

Product portfolio

Baripada Mudhi is MMA's main income generator. The Mudhi is renowned all over Orissa. The demand for the Mudhi is higher than the supply. In the year 2011 alone the association was able to sell its entire stock of 65 quintals of Mudhi.

Baripada Mudhi has the following unique selling propositions

- Produced from good quality rice
- Traditionally roasted in earthen pots over a wood fire
- No additives like urea and soda
- Food grade plastic packaging

The four Ps of Baripada Mudhi are shown in fig 6

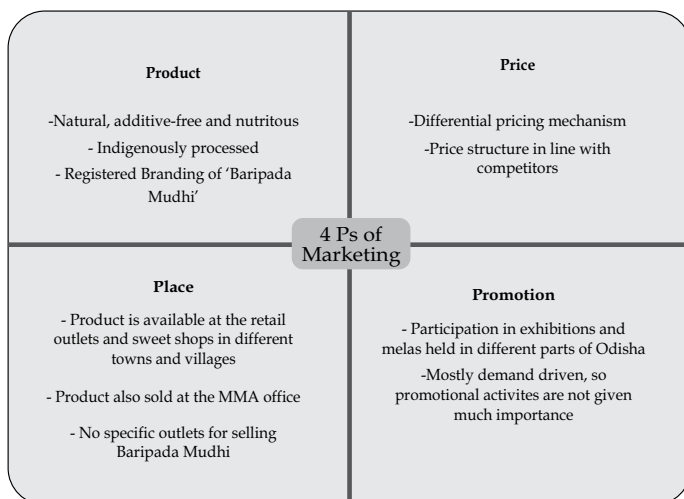


Figure 6: 4 Ps of Baripada Mudhi

Over the years the MMA has increased its product portfolio. It now produces Ambula (dried green mango), Kadkada (savory snack), roasted gram and groundnuts to supplement sales of the trademarked Baripada Mudhi. All the products are made by hand and contain no artificial additives which is the USP of all products made by MMA

Product name	Money earned by members in Rs/kilo
Ambula	0.50
Roasted Black Gram	2
Roasted Green Gram	2
Kadkada	2
Peanuts	2.50
Mudhi	5.20

Table 2: Earnings by members from making various products

In addition to the products mentioned above, the association also manages stalls during festivals at various locations and sells dishes made of Mudhi to the public.

Costing

The MMA is based on a policy-focused micro-entrepreneurship promotion through Self Help Groups, for women’s economic and social empowerment in the State. The MMA as we know started with 24 members. In the first phase, the association kept a target of 10 kg Mudhi production each from its members i.e. 240 kg of Mudhi. As the number of members increased, the total production increased gradually. The figure below shows the amount of Mudhi that can be made from 1 quintal of paddy.

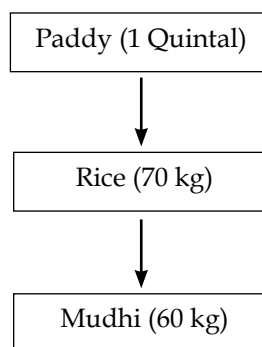


Figure 7: Mudhi yield from one quintal of paddy

The following table shows the expenses incurred for producing 60 kg of Mudhi:-

Raw Materials	Cost
1. Paddy	Rs 1100 per quintal
2. Wood, Salt, Oil etc	Rs 150
Total Cost	Rs 1250

Table 3 : Cost of production as on August 2012

Along with the 60 kg that can be prepared from 1 quintal of rice, the members also get around 30 kg of fodder. Each member gets Rs 28 for each kilogram of Mudhi she produces. The total amount that each member gets by processing 1 quintal of paddy is:

Product	Amount
1. Mudhi	Rs 1680
2. Fodder	Rs 90
Total Amount	Rs 1770

Table 4: Operating income obtained for a member

So, the net profit each member gets from processing 1 quintal of paddy is:

$$\text{Rs } (1770 - 1250) = \text{Rs } 520$$

The Mayurbhanj Mahila Association follows a system of differential pricing for its Mudhi. The price list is illustrated in the table below

SKU	Selling Price Rs/kilo
Unpackaged Mudhi	33
Plain Packaged Mudhi	34
Branded Packaged Mudhi to retailers	45

Table 5: Pricing of different SKUs of Baripada Mudhi as on August 2012

Retailers are given discounts on bulk purchases of over 1 quintal. The rates are decided based on the relationship with the retailer enabling the retailers to sell the Mudhi at Rs 40 per kilo. Sweet shops which stock branded Baripada Mudhi sell it at Rs 50 per kilo.

For every kilo of Mudhi sold 50 paise goes towards the association's fund. The fund is used to finance loans towards buying paddy for the association members.

Constraints

The Mayurbhanj Mahila Association is facing certain constraints with respect to:

1. **Production Constraints:** Non-mechanical Mudhi production requires a lot of sunlight. Consequently there is a lot of surplus production in summer and a reduced production during the rains. This impedes continuous supply to retailers who then choose to stock factory made Mudhi.
2. **Pricing Constraints:** Due to the process being much more labour intensive, the co-operative has less flexibility in pricing. This problem is compounded due to fluctuating paddy prices.
3. **Expansion Constraints:** The Co-operative is unable to expand right now due to issues in procuring land for storage space. Also even if it expands it can only support those women who have close proximity with the co-operative i.e. within a few kilometres. Replicating this model in other villages is necessary.
4. **Marketing Constraints:** Marketing management appears to be one of the biggest challenges for MMA. Since the Mudhi made by the association is handmade, the subtle cost difference between production and commodity has favoured traders who deal with machine made Mudhi. Also they are still to find out a right strategy between rural and urban markets owing to the difference in price and purchase ability in these markets.

Assessment of MMA's impact

A comparison of the living conditions of the members of the Mudhi co-operative before and after the Interventions gives a clear idea about its impact. The impact of the Intervention has been on economic, social, attitudinal and institutional levels.

Impact	Before	After
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of a stable income • Caught in exploitative relationships • Poor financial security of their families • No scope for wealth generation or accumulation of assets • No access to credit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stable income minimum Rs 2000 per month • No more exploitation • Cash in hand to meet medical emergencies and children's education • Most families of the members now own cows. Some have started side businesses of making incense sticks, pickles etc • Can access credit from banks via SHGs and MMA
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women had little or no influence in family decisions • No respect in society • Children could not attend school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciation and cooperation from male counterparts for women's ability to supplement the family income • Respected by the society • Children attend school • Increased sense of social responsibility
Attitudinal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low self-esteem • Low confidence • Feeling of helplessness and dependency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased self-esteem • Increased confidence • Independent
Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women did not attend palli sabhas (village-meetings) before • No access to institutional credit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now the women attend all the village meetings • Access to formal credit sources • Women have formed flood relief committees, welfare committees and the Mahila Shanthi Samiti for protection against domestic violence and intra village conflicts • Increased awareness on health and education

The small but regular income has influenced the lifestyle of the women in a big manner. The Intervention has had a significant impact on the attitude of the women and their families. The MMA members also have a sense of social responsibility that is reflected in their activities pertaining to rural development, at least in their own villages. Thus the overall impact on the lives of the women members and by extension their families and villages has been positive.

Impact analysis and sustainability test

SWOT Analysis

The Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats analysis yields information about the robustness of an organization’s venture and helps identify potential threats and existing weaknesses.

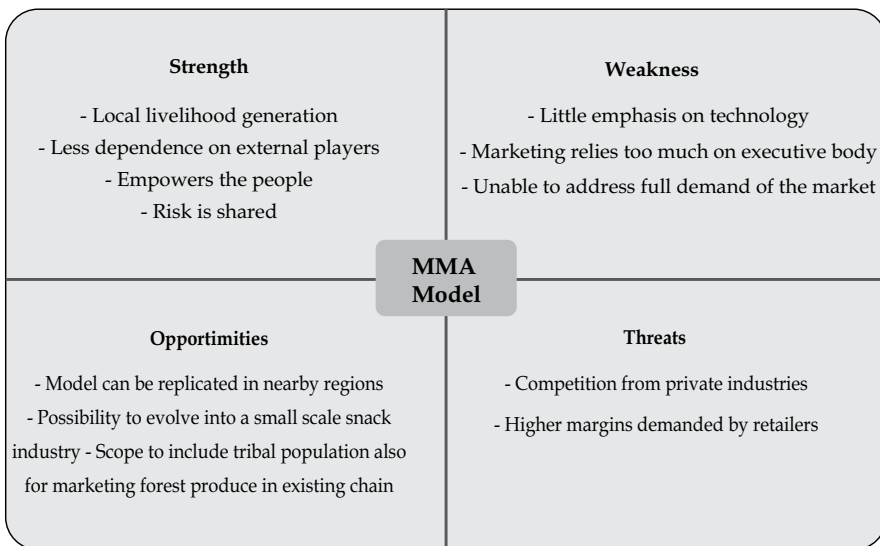


Figure 8: SWOT analysis of MMA’s model

Strengths

- Raw materials and labour are sourced locally greatly benefitting the local economy.
- Risk is shared among the members. The MMA’s fund acts as a safety net in times of trouble. The flat rate provided by MMA to its members for making Mudhi does not depend on paddy price, guaranteeing steady source of income.
- Empowers and promotes leadership among the women.

Weakness

- The SWOT analysis indicates that sole reliance on the performance of executive body in marketing Baripada Mudhi is a weakness of the model.
- The model is not able to scale up effectively to meet full market demand.
- Manual methods of production means product cannot compete on cost.

Threats

- Factory-made Mudhi is giving stiff competition to Baripada Mudhi. This is compounded by the fact that MMA is not able to give the retailers a regular supply of Mudhi.
- The margins offered by Baripada Mudhi are less than factory-made Mudhi. There is a risk that retailers might stop stocking Baripada Mudhi by pushing other factory-made brands in its place to satiate customer demand.

Opportunities

- Diversifying product portfolio by including forest produce is a possibility.
- Possibility for value addition by making and selling Mudhi based snack items.
- Replicating the model in other villages can create a stronger market presence for handmade Mudhi in the market and help stop the factory made Mudhi from capturing the market.

The threats and weaknesses exposed in the SWOT analysis are causes of concern but are by no means deal breakers. The replication of this model will ensure sustainability of the enterprise.

Nine Square Mandala Analysis

A Mandala uses the “eastern” concept of capturing the “whole Universe” in nine squares. It represents a rural house, with floor (level 1), living space (level 2) and roof (level 3). The nine fields cover nine aspects of peoples’ livelihoods. They are arranged in such a way that by moving from left to right, one is moving from inner to outer realities, or from the individual reality, via family reality, to the community reality. Moving from bottom to top may also be seen as a transition from tradition into the future. The Mandala stands out among tools to assess livelihood systems in so far as it promotes the researchers to look at the Inner Reality (leftmost column) of people. The window thus opened should help to examine different ways of asking how a rural livelihood system functions.

<p>9. Individual Orientation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preventing migration in a large scale - Increased aspiration levels - Increased desire to earn money - A desire of getting out of the house and doing something - Desire of learning something new 	<p>8. Family Orientation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social status increased - Husbands and other family members supportive of the members' participation in MMA - Social mobility : with their work 	<p>7. Collective Orientation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New systems of co-operation at the village level with the members forming several committees like peace-keeping, welfare and flood relief - Help in minimizing inter and intra village conflicts 	<p>Orientation (Roof)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future
<p>6. Inner Human Space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsibility taken by women - Curiosity to try something new - Learning from previous failures - New leadership emerging in MMA - Courage to step up and get involved - Responsibility of paying the loan amount back in time 	<p>5. Family Space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Balance of MMA's workload and family - Distribution of work in the household 	<p>4. Socio-Economic Space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provision and distribution of goods - Storage of goods - Villagers are core customers - Household economy is supported - No high financial risk involved - Women introduced to regional marketing 	<p>Space (Living space)</p>

3.Emotional Basis -Insecurity in starting phase -Anxiety of not being able to expand production	2.Knowledge-Activity Base -Experience of making different types of products -Learning the intricacies of account and operations management -Local network of SHGs strengthened -Village marketing introduced -Services: Good quality products at low price	1.Physical Base -Many members have bought livestock -Regular income from Mudhi -Built houses -Investments on physical assets like gold etc.	Basis (Foundation) • Tradition
Individual reality	Family Reality	Community Reality	

Figure 9 : Nine Square Mandala Model for Unnayan’s Mudhi Cooperative Intervention

By looking at MMA model through the ‘Mandala’ which is a monitoring tool for livelihood interventions, it was found that the MMA has a shift towards a more ‘outcome focus’, thinking about how their interventions impact people’s livelihoods. As is the case with many interventions, the MMA does not think only about immediate project outputs. Finally it was also found that, the association has granted enough space for all the partners to adapt to changes.

Base of the Pyramid Impact Assessment Framework

The Baripada Mudhi initiative has tried to improve the livelihood of the people present at the base of the pyramid. Base of the Pyramid Impact Assessment Framework will try to assess the poverty alleviation performance of the initiative and look at its impact on the economics, capabilities and relationship of three critical groups- local buyers, local sellers and local communities.

Seller (MMA)

Buyer-local
consumers

Community

<p>ECONOMIC WELL BEING</p>	<p><u>Major Effects</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased Income - Income stability - Access to credit - No new debt incurred - Increase in assets <p><u>Minor Effects</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased synergy with channel partners 	<p><u>Major Effects</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Getting good quality product - Consumers surplus (lower prices and greater convenience) - Consumers' like shop owners are affected when demand is not met with supply of mudhi 	<p><u>Major Effects</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Drop in income of traders involved in making 'machine made mudhi'
<p>CAPABILITY WELL BEING</p>	<p><u>Major Effects</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Better management and accounting skills - Skills and knowledge management - Improvement in the quality of life <p>Minor Effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Has increased efficacy and contentment 	<p><u>Major Effects</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved health by consuming natural, additive free food - Increased contentment 	<p><u>Major Effects</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased awareness about livelihood generation activities - Improved aspirations of women by looking at MMA 's success story <p>Minor Effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Greater sense of dignity and respect
<p>RELATIONSHIP WELL BEING</p>	<p><u>Major Effects</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved role in family i.e. household roles increased - More importance on family relationships - Improved relationship within the community 	<p><u>Major Effects</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Network access - Power of intermediaries ex dependency 	<p><u>Major Effects</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gender equity Relationship with environment

The BOP framework indicates that the benefits for seller, buyer and the community at large far outweigh the decrease in income of factory based Mudhi produceRs. Hence, the model is socially beneficial and holds promise to generate sustainable livelihoods if replicated properly.

The sustainability aspect

Most of MMA's commercial viability is an indicator that it can be successfully replicated by other SHGs in areas where Mudhi is a popular and staple item. MMA is in the process of taking a lead in training other groups in establishing such production cooperatives.

Road to future

Tribal inclusion

The area where the cooperative is formed has a substantial percentage of tribal population. But the tribal women are not adept at Mudhi roasting, mainly because Mudhi is not very important in their food habit and for that they do not have traditional skill. But it is remarkable to note that the tribals love Mudhi. Hence, there is a possibility of MMA including the tribals also and add forest produce to their product portfolio.

Prospective linkages

- Unnayan and MMA are trying to link the Mudhi programme with Women and Child Development Department; particularly with the supplementary Nutrition Programme (SNP) of Integrated Child Development Department (ICDS), Emergency Feeding Programme (EFP) meant for KBK districts and the Mid-Day-Meal (MDM) programmes.
- They are also trying to have a linkage with development programmes and departments like Mission Shakti, APICOL, Mahila Vikas Samabaya Nigam, SC and ST Corporation, Central Home for Women and other cooperatives who deal with development and rehabilitation of the poor.
- To popularise it in places outside Odisha, Unnayan is negotiating with NAVDANYA, a national level organisation for sale of Baripada Mudhi in different parts of the country.
- To popularize Mudhi prepared by indigenous and traditional methods, Unnayan is intending to send samples of Baripada Mudhi to various reputed laboratories like Central Food Technological Research Institute (CFTRI) and Govind Ballabh Pant University of Agriculture for its nutritional analysis.

Conclusion

Livelihood promotion for the poorest of poor should be seen with respect to the social development it effects. Different Interventions claim to empower women, include the marginalized, etc. but have not been able to alleviate their state of extreme poverty. A sound understanding of the unique deprivations faced by the poor is vital to ensure that the intervention is sustainable. Their problems need a different approach to achieve sustainable income generation. Many interventions fail to harness traditional knowledge thereby creating external dependency which in many cases brings a different set of problems.

Traditional knowledge, indigenous knowledge, rural technology and age old processes need to be given adequate importance, nurtured and protected to ensure sustainable development of the people and the society as a whole. Globally there is a shift towards harnessing local knowledge for designing interventions that have a lasting impact in the lives of the people. The case of Baripada Mudhi shows that long term food security and economic development at the household level can be ensured if traditional knowledge in food preparation is appreciated and encouraged. In this instance it uplifted the lives of the people suffering from chronic poverty. Unnayan's intervention in Tambakhori village has created a sustainable livelihood for the most deprived. The formation of MMA and its success has been a significant step towards reduction of extreme poverty. The intervention has had a multidimensional impact on the poor and marginal community at large.

From Nomads to Artisans

A case of Sabala's experience of promoting sustainable livelihoods for Lambanis in Karnataka

Brajesh Pandey and Poorvaja Kumar

Introduction

Lambanis, a nomadic tribe, comprises a significant portion of the extremely poor in Bijapur and Bellary valley of Karnataka. Being nomadic, they are landless and dependent upon other rural households. With the gradual decline in agriculture, the living conditions of Lambanis were deteriorating further due to loss of traditional livelihood options. Lambanis, especially women, are also known for their hand-crafted dress materials and jewelry (popularly known as Banjara art) which is a part of their traditional attire. In these changed times, Lambanis of Bijapur are losing their traditional artisanal skills and their attires are also changing. This was leading to loss of a rich traditional craft form.

Sabala, a voluntary organisation set up in 1986, works with Lambanis in Bijapur and has succeeded in developing a sustainable livelihood model for around 350 ultra-poor households by utilizing their traditional skills while developing products for modern markets. Sabala worked with a value chain approach wherein it looked at each component of the supply chain and developed standardized production processes to ensure timeliness and high quality. Sabala set up a 'linked enterprise' - Crafts Development Center (CDC) - to facilitate interaction of communities with market, both domestic and export, and is now selling its products under the brand name of 'Nomads'. This has had a significant impact at the community level wherein each woman earns upto Rs. 2000 per month. The initiative has led to revival of a traditional craft, reduction of migration and the settlement of the nomadic tribe in a respectable and dignified manner. Currently, the craft based Livelihood Initiative is a full-fledged business enterprise which has managed to sustain in the market for more than twenty years without any conventional funding support. Lambani tribe, who belong to the scheduled caste, are today recognized as an artisan group. The programme has thus shifted the community's social identity while preserving its cultural identity.

This case study presents Sabala's journey in promoting sustainable livelihoods for a typically ultra poor community and the knowledge created in this process. It also presents the important features of the intervention model and analyses the key factors along with challenges faced. The case also comments on the issue of size, sustainability and replication of promoting sustainable livelihoods for the ultra poor.

Lambanis - the nomadic community

India is a land of cultural diversity where a lot has been contributed to the national heritage by schedule castes and tribes through their culture and unique styles. One such underprivileged community is the 'Lambani community'. The community is historically nomadic and hence called 'Banjara's' which is derived from the Sanskrit word "Vana Chara", meaning wanderers of the jungle. They are known differently in different parts of the country, as Vanjari, Lambada, Lambani and Labban.

Much of their history is still a mystery, but the Banjara or Lambani tribe is believed to have descended from the Roma gypsies of Europe who travelled across the rugged mountains of Afghanistan into the deserts of Rajasthan in north India thousands of years ago before migrating down into the country's southern states. They are primarily Hindu-Animists with their own gods and goddesses, festivals and worship practices. Music, dance and storytelling remain central to their culture, as do their fine textiles made from natural materials and dyes. Theirs is a distinctive style of dressing characterised by vibrant colours, ornate embroidery and a range of embellishments.

Today, however the Lambanis are experiencing many changes and their traditional culture and institutions are undergoing considerable transformation. They have lost their traditional calling of keeping cattle, trading salt and transporting goods for livelihood and have eventually settled down to agriculture, although it not being their traditional occupation. Most of them are agricultural labourers settled in their isolated settlements called Tandas in states like Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan where they have been listed as scheduled castes and are exposed to various welfare programmes. The state of Karnataka, which lists the Lambanis as a scheduled caste since July 1977, has rectified the anomaly. However, their outreach and benefits provided have been extremely limited. This has compelled the Lambanis to look for new opportunities for their socio-economic betterment.



Picture 1: A Lambani woman

Though the community is a treasure trove of rich culture, tradition, Indian ethos, it continues to face problems that are age-old . They live mostly in inaccessible or remotely situated hilly terrain and have been left far behind in terms of economic development. Lagging behind in terms of socio - economic and educational status, the community even today lacks access to basic infrastructure . This is the situation in Karnataka, especially in the districts like Gulburga, Shimoga, Bijapur, Chitradurga and Bellary where the Lambani population is very high.

Sabala recognized and studied the issues of the Lambanis of Bijapur district and initiated a sustainable crafts-based livelihood programme around 28 years ago. Today Sabala is working with 400 families in 8 habitations spread over 8 villages in Bijapur district in Karnataka and is responsible for providing livelihood opportunities to 221 Lambani women. Against this backdrop, we critically analyze the work of Sabala as a development paradigm in providing sustainable livelihood options to the Lambani community, also one of the ultra poor communities of the country.

Sabala - the facilitating organisation

Sabala, meaning 'mighty', aims to combat the Lambani community's poverty issues through proper policy advocacy and enhancing its livelihood options. Sabala is headed by Mallamma S.Yalwar and is supported by core staff comprising professionals and village level workers. The organisation works mainly with women from Lambani community, Dalit, shepherds and other backward communities in 60 villages of 3 talukas of Bijapur district. Sabala, since its inception has focused on issues like gender discrimination, devadasi system, illiteracy, housing, unemployment, social evils like dowry and child marriage which directly impact women. It has organised women into SHGs and executed programmes on gender sensitization, health issues, housing for homeless, watershed management and sustainable agriculture. With some external support and funding, the organisation also conducted trainings and established a women's cooperative bank which directly caters to around 1000 families.

Crafts based livelihoods programme: the genesis

In late 1990s, with the migration of Lambani families to other states in search of employment, there was a drop in the number of women accessing the services of Sabala and an increase in school dropout rate. Sabala studied this pattern and found that lack of livelihood opportunities at the local level was prime reason for this exodus. This paved way for identifying a conducive and economically sustainable initiative by Sabala.

The traditional Lambani embroideries are designed for a nomadic life style, featuring geometric, floral and animal motifs. The combinations of stitches and mirror work are extraordinary with vibrant colours, making the design strikingly different. Sabala, initiated a social enterprise using this traditional skill of Lambanis in which the traditional Lambani art was used to create modern products by the women from their homes and sold to the mainstream market in an organized manner. This programme created a platform for the Lambani women to engage in productive activities that generated income on 'piece rate' basis. Sabala trained more than 400 women and organized them into SHGs and formed a network of SHGs called 'Banjara'. The organization focused on livelihood promotion, skill development and skill up-gradation, establishment of training and production centre and design and marketing support. Other underprivileged women are also a part of the programme and have been trained in Kasuthi art and jute making but Banjara art remains exclusive to the Lambani women. The organization creates variety of products for the national and international market like bags, cushion covers, clothing, decorative and gift items using these art forms.

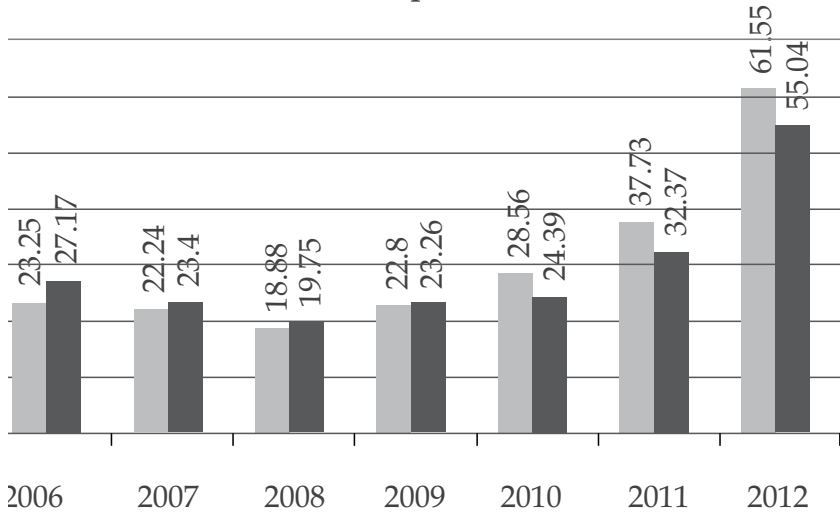
Reportedly, the women are spending their incomes on their children, in repaying small loans and increasing their savings. Since initiation, a rise in monthly income from Rs 600/- to Rs 3000/- per month is reported. The piece rate cost has also doubled in these years (for example, for making cushion covers the women were paid Rs 25/- per hour in the year 2000 and are now paid Rs 55/-).

Participating in process, right from production, marketing to sales has provided immense recognition to the Lambani women. The earnings that the women contribute to the household has empowered them and given them acceptance as an earning member in their family. The women have participated in various national and international exhibitions and workshops which has increased their self esteem and confidence.

Crafts based livelihood programme: the key outputs

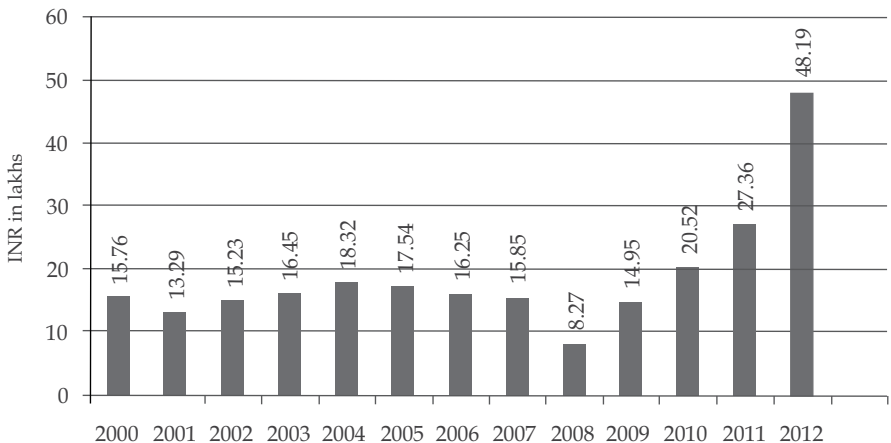
1. Financial turnover: Increase in profit (ranging between 4 to 5 lacs) in the past three years. Since the organisation's primary market is international, the recession and resultant depressed market affected the overall sales causing a loss between 2006 and 2009. The organisation started maintaining separate accounts for the crafts centre only after 2006.

Year wise profit - loss



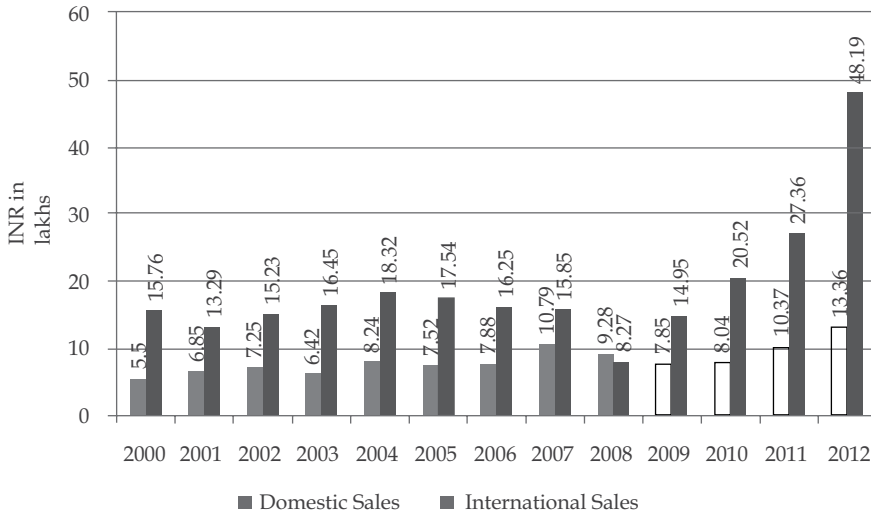
- Market sales: a rise in exports over the period is observed. An increase in both domestic (from INR 5.50 Lacs in 2000 to INR 13.36 lacs in 2012) and international (from INR 15.76 in 2000 to INR 48.79 lacs in 2012) market sales. The rate at which international sales is increasing is higher than that of domestic sales. The sales dipped down between 2006 and 2009 due to recession in the market.

Export Data Figures

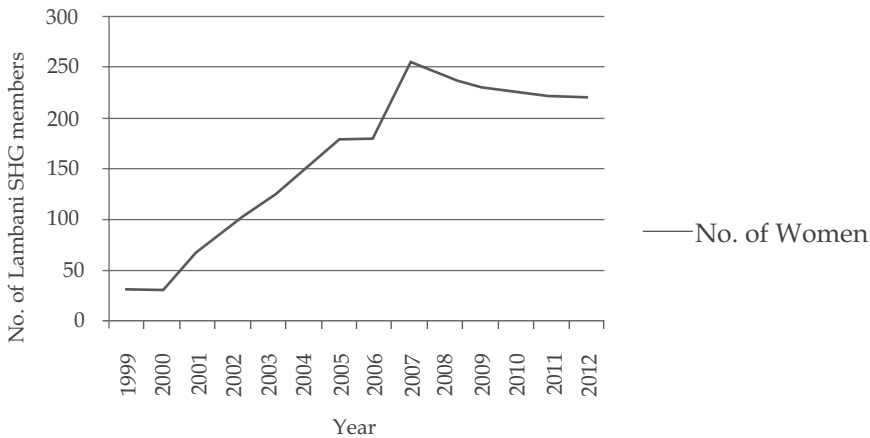


3. Employment creation: the number of Lambani women in the SHG has increased over the years from 30 women in 1999 to 221 in 2012. Due to reduction in sales between 2006-2009, Sabala did not provide employment to all and there was dropout of women. As sales improve the number of women working is also increasing.

Client/Buyer over the year



Total artisan in the crafts programme

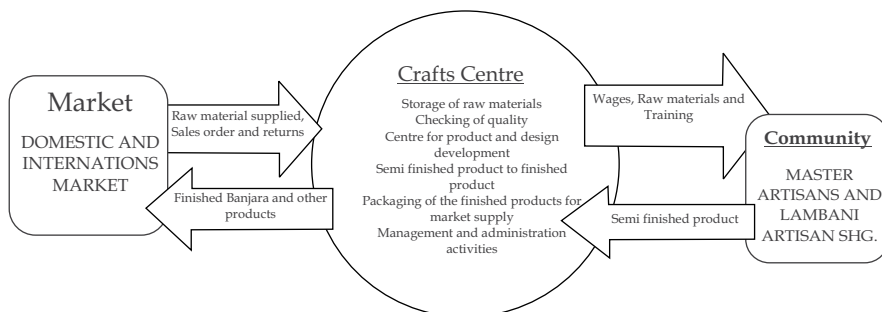


The value chain approach: emergence of linked enterprise Crafts Development Center (CDC)

The organisation established CDC in 1996 and registered it under Limited Liability Partnership Act in 2012. This CDC acts as a commercially viable

intermediary institution that is capable of negotiating between artisans and mainstream market in a manner that improves the terms of trade and income of the Lambani artisan community.

This model connects the social value creation in the various areas of the economy identified by linking the voluntary economy of giving, to social enterprise, public services, socially responsible and mainstream business and the rise of ethical markets. The crafts centre emerges as a 'linked enterprise' in this process of 'value chain'.



Key features of the intervention model

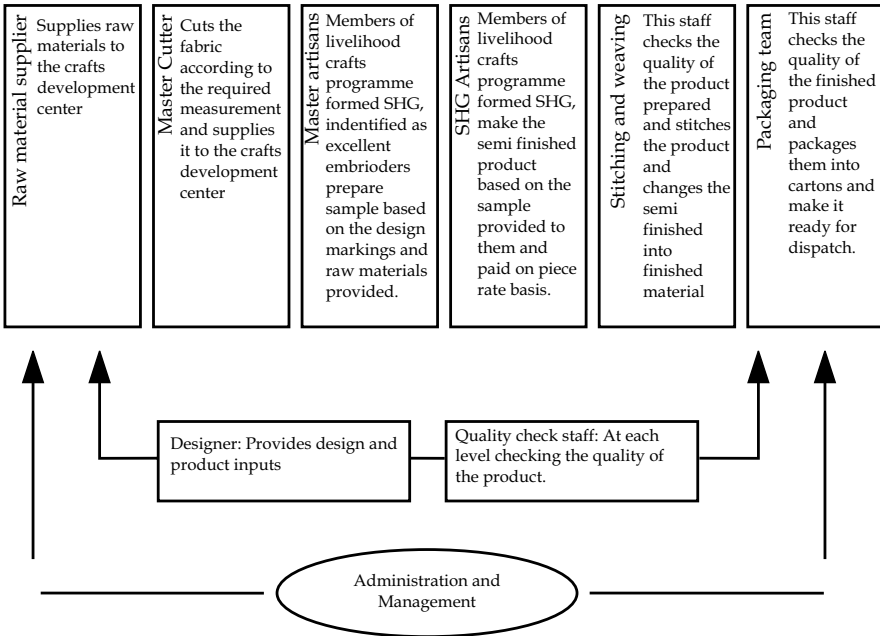


Picture 2: The stitching team

'I sew the buttons in the bag and also check if there are any defects in them' - Ningraj Bisnal- Crafts Centre Staff

1. **Assembly line production:** Sabala engages in a sequential manner of creating a finished product. The CDC assigns specific tasks to the staff and trains them on the same. Each member involved in the process excels in one particular task and performs it to her/his best capacity. The uniqueness of the model lies in the fact a traditional craft based process has been broken down into standardised processes to ensure

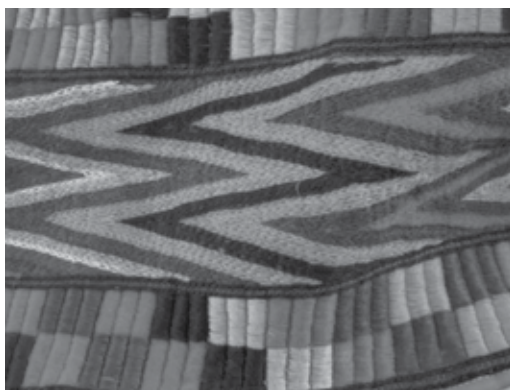
high quality and timeliness. In the production-sales process, the staff involved includes:



Picture 3: Staff checking the measurements of the product

‘ If there is some defect in our embroidery Mallamma madam wants us to make it all over again” -Lalitha Rathod, a member of SHG Minchanal Tanda.

2. Quality check: Sabala's products are not only appealing to the eye but are also made from pure cotton or silk. The fabrics are bought directly by the weavers without involvement of any middleman which ensures the quality of the cloth. There are 3 people at the crafts centre allocated for quality check and 5 people in the supervisory team. The quality is checked at different levels:
 - a. **Level 1-** The cloth gets tested at the TUV-Bangalore for colour and usage of ASO free chemicals.
 - b. **Level 2-** After the master cutter sends the material; the quality of the material is checked by the staff and then presented to the design team.
 - c. **Level 3-** Once the master artisan prepares the sample, each sample is checked by the quality check team and supervisors following which the sample is sent to the Lambani artisans in the SHG for further production.
 - d. **Level 4-** The supervisors visit the Tandas regularly to supervise the work. After the ready pieces are sent to the crafts centre, the quality of each piece is checked. All minor errors are rectified at the crafts centre by the staff (stitching team, weaving team and quality check team). In case of any major defect, the piece/s is sent back to the Tanda to the women to be remade and reworked.
 - e. **Level 5-** The team of eight women involved in stitching recheck the items before sewing.
 - f. **Level 6-** The product quality is checked before the final stage of preparation, like sewing buttons, beads and any other small items. The minor defects in stitching are again rectified by the team.
 - g. **Level 7-** Before packaging all the items are checked by the supervisors and the team looking after quality control. The packages are also checked for damages.



Picture 4: Traditional Lambani embroidery

"The Banjara art is done by only the Lambani community..because no one else can do it better than them" - Mallamma, CEO - Sabala

3. **Banjara art:** Sabala has selected an art form which is unique to the Lambani community. It has been reported that this art is in high demand in European market and has a growing demand in the domestic market as well. The competition in the international market is low compared to the domestic market as the Banjara art is also provided by different organisations in Gujarat and Rajasthan. There are four major buyers . In India, Sabala makes regular supplies to Federation of South India Producers Association (SIPA) and to retail outlets like Suruthi in Mumbai, Dastakar in Bangalore (for the past 5 years) and Fab India, SASHA, Calcutta and ANTS, Bangalore (for the past 3 years). These retail outlets have not been beneficial to Sabala as they do not provide adequate compensation and do not use the 'Sabala' tag .



Picture 5: Geeta is a physically challenged 'quality check' staff member

"Sabala has given us a lot of support in educating our children, today both my children go to school...I am proud of them" -Malashree Parashuram Rathod- SHG member, Ainapur Tanda

4. **Social support:** Since inception Sabala has been providing social support through women's counselling, support committees and awareness campaigns. The organisation has helped the women obtain access to social security schemes like ration card, artisan card, widow pension, handicapped pension, subsidy for housing. Sabala is also attached to various social organisations that provided assistance like Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID), Federation of Voluntary Organisation for Rural Development - Karnataka (FEVORD-K), Bangalore, IDOBRO, Mumbai. The crafts centre has also employed two physically challenged staff members.



Picture 6: Bank for the women

“I took loan from the bank for making a borewell in my field..soon I took loan to educate my children”-my one son is studying engineering and the other is in college- Somibai Chawan, Master artisan.

- 5. Access to easy finance:** In 1995, Sabala established a Cooperative bank called ‘Chaitanya Mahila Co-operative Bank’ (under Reserve Bank of India umbrella) to provide financial assistance to women. The bank provides for low interest rates (From 11 % -17% in 1995 to 4% - 11.25% today) and waives security till upto Rs 25000/- for women. The association with the bank helped the women to repay the money lenders, take loan for seeds and other agriculture related activities, for children’s education and marriage and also enabled them to buy sewing machines for their personal use. Though this bank is open to all, but most of the Lambani SHG members have accounts in this bank and have taken loan from this bank. This is reportedly because of the provisions of the bank for women and its association with Sabala. The women in the livelihood crafts programme have shown an upward trend in the loan taken from the ‘Chaitanya Mahila Co-operative Bank’.



Picture 7: Women are taught to make traditional jewellery without nickel for export.

“ We use bright colors that the foreigners don’t like..we were trained on using colours by madam..these colours people like” –Kasturba Bai, SHG member, Minchanal Tanda.

- 6. Capacity building:** The Lambani community through the livelihood endeavour of Sabala has received various trainings (Annexure 3). Though the art form is already known to the community women, the usage of design, colours and other capacity building activities has improved the community knowledge and developed their skills. The training has been supported by organisations like NABARD, Development Commissioner and District Industries Centre.



Picture 8: Sabala banner with 'Fair Trade' mentioned on it

*"Because of Fair Trade we are getting more recognition in the mainstream market"-
Pranesh Jahagirdar, Manager, Sabala*

7. Networks and standards:

CDC through Sabala as a business organisation, is very well connected. The raw materials are sourced from different parts of the country. Association of Sabala with organisations like South India Producer Association (SIPA), Chennai, Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH), New Delhi ensures maintenance of certain prescribed standards.

Sabala adhere's to 10 Fair Trade Standards :

1. Creating opportunities for
2. Transparency and Accountability
3. Capacity Building
4. Promoting Fair Trade
5. Gender Equity
6. Ideal Working Conditions
7. Payment of Fair Wages
8. Protection of Environment
9. Protection of Children's Rights
10. Trade Relations

Most important is its association with Fair Trade Forum – India (FTF-I) and World Fair Trade Organisation (WFTO), Asia. Sabala under the banner of Fair Trade forum follows and maintains certain prescribed standards. As a part of this association and also in order to meet the national/international market standards, products are usually eco-friendly in nature. The fabrics either use vegetable dyes or are tested for ASO free chemicals and colour fastness at the TUV India Pvt Ltd before production. The products are also packaged using biodegradable stretch film and biaxially oriented polypropylene (BOPP plastic).



Picture 9: Design markings and sample design

“We are the only organisation who club today’s fashion with the traditional work..we create usable and trendy products” - Mallamma, CEO Sabala

- 8. Product development and design:** The key feature of the products supplied by Sabala is its variety and design. Sabala has devoted a great deal of focus on product development and hired design consultants on an ongoing basis. The consultants use Banjara craft effectively to design a product that best suits the modern consumer’s needs. The organisation is a member of PENTON and TRENDS, the international organisations providing universal colour coding and trend forecasting.



Picture 10: Products are packaged in a bag with the brand name Sabala

“I have gone to many exhibitions..many a times people ask me to make and show the embroidery live” -Somibai, Master Artisan

- 9. Marketing and brand promotion:** The products made by the Banjara women are branded as ‘Nomads’- as it is globally understandable

and acceptable. This tag on the products says 'Nomads' along with which there is a picture of a Lambani women and a quote by her. This methodology of branding provides information about the producer to the buyer and also attracts the sales. To promote the brand 'Nomads', every customer is given a free t-shirt on a purchase of Rs. 2000/-.

The marketing strategies adopted include web-based sales, brochures and exhibitions. The organisation sends a master artisan or any other artisan who excels in embroidery work to these exhibitions with their sample products. The consumers get an opportunity to meet the artisan themselves and check the authenticity of the product. The retail shop in Bijapur focuses on presentation of products and has an attendant with knowledge on Sabala, its activities and also the Lambani community.



Picture 11: Bijapur retail store-NOMADS

Under the umbrella of Fair Trade Organisation and as member of WFTO India, Sabala crafts centre has been able to reach out to the mainstream market. Apart from these creative marketing strategies, Sabala also has plans of setting up cultural centres promoting Lambani art and linking them to retail outlets thus promoting the Sabala products and tourism in Bijapur.

- 10. Pricing:** sabala produces a range of products. The products are priced based on labour charges, raw materials and other factors of costing. The profit margin is about 15 % and there is a variation in price of about 5 % between the retail, wholesale, exhibition and international export rates. Below are the product listings with their price range.

Products	Price range(In Rupees)
Cushion Covers	200 to 700
Gifts Items like Mobile and Spectacle Case, Kit Purses, Purses, Folders, Key Chains, etc	40 to 250
Tops, Kurtas and Jackets	400 to 2,500
Wall Hangings	500 to 3,000
Clutches	250 to 800
Sandles	400 to 800
Bags	250 to 1500
Ethnic jewellery	50 to 1000



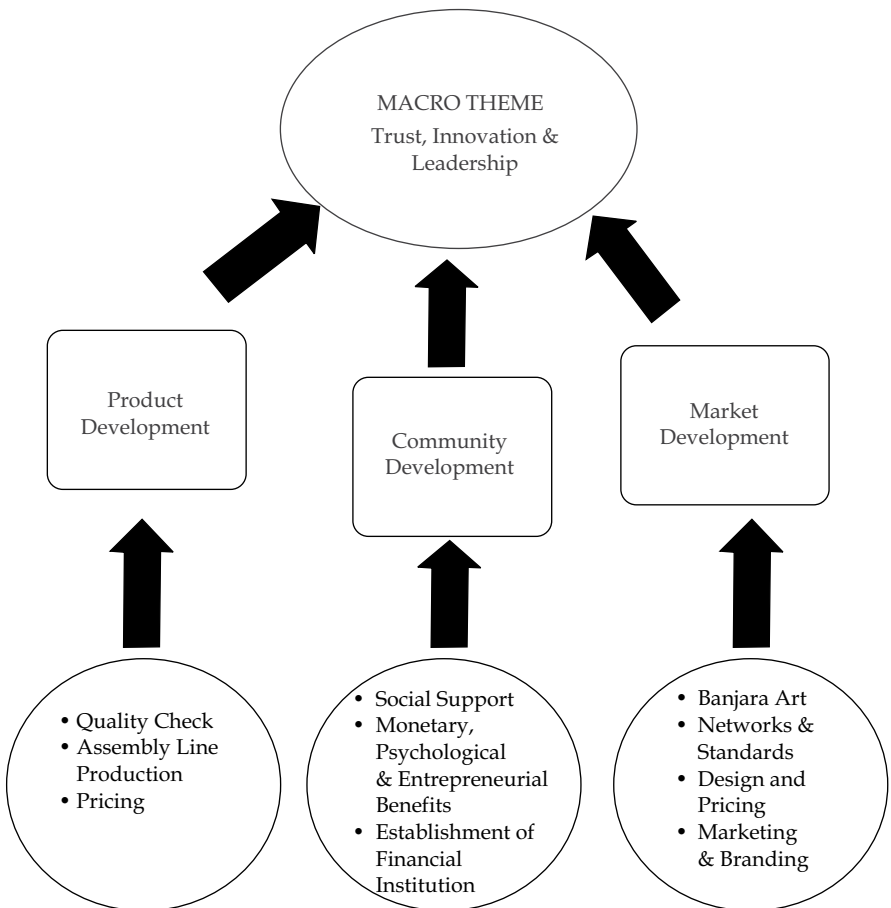
Picture 12: Some SHG members at the Aianapur Tanda

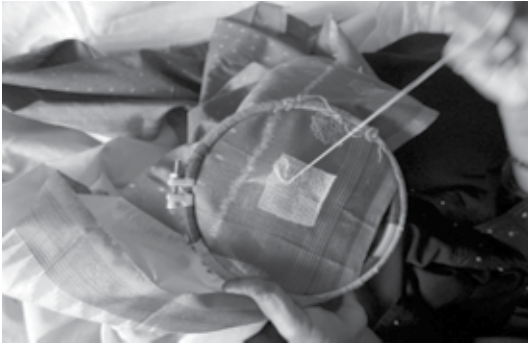
“We all feel like good that we don’t have to depend on our husbands for money. We keep the money for our children and for buying small things for us” - All SHG members, Ainapur Tanda

- 11. Wage negotiations:** In the process of deciding the piece wage rate, the organisation promotes decision making by the SHG women. The women have regular SHG meetings wherein the changes in domestic/ household costs and labour charges are discussed and a consensus on wage rate is arrived at. The SHG leaders from all the hamlets have regular meetings with the organisation head to negotiate their wages. The organisation vests the decision making power to the artisan women on an adequate piece rate.

Emerging model of social entrepreneurship with trust innovation and leadership as key themes

Though Sabala does not follow a pre-assigned entrepreneurship model to plan its functions but the analysis of the features of the value chain approach exposes themes and interpretations. The paper conducted thematic network analysis (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Clarke and Braun, 2006) which led to creation of theme piles namely- a) product development b) community development and c) market development. When these themes were related and associated through a thematic map, a macro theme emerged which is the final tenet. This 'macro theme' that emerges out of this analysis, depicts the social entrepreneurship collective that Sabala has evolved into. The macro theme or the overarching factors that have impacted Sabala's operations are - Trust, Innovation and Leadership.





Picture 13: From Banjara to Kasuthi, Sabala's growing community

The role of trust

Lewis and Weigert (1985) characterized trust as 'the undertaking of a risky course of action on the confident expectation that all persons involved in the action will act competently and dutifully.' The growing interest in building trust between organizations stems from the belief that trust enhances business performance. Trust has been identified as an important component which makes partnerships, strategic alliances and networks of small firms successful (Kramer, 1999). Trust has emerged as a promising variable in the thematic analysis of Sabala's value chain components.

Under product development, the organisation has adopted stringent quality control measures at every stage of production along with the efficient production method of assembly line, which ensures the superior quality and timely delivery of the product to the consumer. According to the perspective of rational choice theory, individuals are presumed to be make choices which maximize expected gains or minimize expected losses from their transactions (Kramer, 1999). Sabala, by creating a niche in the market for superior quality Banjara art establishes a trust relationship with the market.

Trust has played an integral role in community development initiatives of Sabala Crafts programme. The efforts of the organisation since its inception has been to establish contact and maintain it with the Lambani community. This has helped build the trustworthiness and willingness of the population to engage in Sabala's activities and also accept new initiatives without any conflict. Through the cumulative interaction that has taken place over the years towards providing social support, a strong rapport between the organisation and the Lambani women has been built, creating a relationship of trust and confidence; Kramer (2006) calls this interdependency History-Based Trust.

The crafts initiative tapped the most pressing issue of women and their economic empowerment. The monetary, psychological and entrepreneurial benefits provided though the CDC not only gave sense of ownership to the Lambani women towards the programme but also created a platform for 'renegotiating their social identity'. Today they look at themselves as suppliers 'artisans' of Sabala or SHG leaders/ members rather than just Lambani women. The existing SHG members mobilize women in their community to join the group through social interaction. This 'Category based trust' wherein trust is built merely on the basis of membership in a social category, in this case - Lambani women has influenced more women to join the initiative which in turn has impacted the organization (Kramer, 1999).

Schelling (1960) noted that choice is motivated by a "conscious calculation of advantages, a calculation that in turn is based on an explicit and internally consistent value system". Such is the case in developing market relations. Sabala made a very calculated choice of selecting Banjara art, an art that the Lambani women were well versed with and could be trusted to produce with best quality. The community also trusts Mallamma, the leader, with her role of overall supervision and work delegation. This mutual trust between community and the organisation sustains the activity of production and work delegation; a 'Role based trust' where individuals adopt a presumptive trust based upon knowledge of role relations, even in the absence of personalized knowledge or history of prior interaction (Kramer,1999).

The various marketing strategies, product designs and attempts to strengthen networks are indicative of the determined effort to build and maintain the 'trust' in the market. The representation of Lambani women during the exhibitions or product labels with information about the Lambani artisans signifies the level of transparency that Sabala maintains with its customers. By keeping pace with the trends and tastes of the buyers, Sabala attempts to improve the sales. Also, third-party organizations are important conduits of trust because of their ability to diffuse trust-relevant information (Brut andKnez, 1995). The association with well established organisations and networks has also been favourable for Sabala's crafts sales. For instance, the affiliation with Fair Trade is reported to have given Sabala a place in the mainstream market.

Innovation: process and product

Schumpeter (1934) said that entrepreneurship activity involves the carrying out of new combinations, the 'creative destruction' of an existing equilibrium with a particular industry.



Sabala as an entrepreneur is making constant efforts to re-conceptualise the services and continually reassess the organisational routine in order to keep pace with the dynamic business environment. In this process, the organisation brings new products, services and practices to the organisation, community and the market. This act of introducing something new, as a novelty is called 'innovation'.

By bringing in innovative techniques of quality check in product making and assembly line production on a small scale, Sabala is catering to the market demands of timely delivery and high quality product. These innovative techniques which are rather found in large scale industries or corporate profit making bodies when introduced by a small scale producer like Sabala has certainly increased the manpower costs but in return has created employment to the community thereby, causing an increase in its sales.

Innovation is a process whereby invention is put into practice, transforming a disembodied idea into workable and economically viable operation (Baumol, 1993). The identification of 'Banjara art' as a means of livelihood promotion is an example of 'Innovation'. This innovation kept the costs low and the returns high at all levels. At the community level, a known form of art coupled with convenient work setting provided for both monetary and psychological benefits. At organisational level, intervention with a familiar community coupled with minimum training cost led to increase in sales and income, and at market level, demand for high quality Banjaras art product was met.

Sabala's crafts programme seems to have created a niche for itself in the market with its emphasis on the 'design' of the product. With the creative input from the in-house and external designers, the organisation produces variety of products which retains the enterprise in the competitive market. As Sabala increases its networks and affiliations with social and governmental organisations, it is ensuring innovative and creative means to meet the needs of the stakeholders. Using a globally recognized name 'Nomads' coupled with a detailed and informative tag on the products, attracts the buyers to the product. The strategy of brand promotion of free Nomad t-shirts is also an example of innovative brand promotion technique. By using of waste materials creatively in jewelry and by creating eco friendly products, Sabala meets the standards set by Fair trade innovatively.

Leadership: Mallamma – the social entrepreneur

Among the four factors of production, 'entrepreneurship' plays a vital role in Sabala's settings. Mallamma, the founder CEO, has acted as a catalyst in making all components work together. She is a savvy business leader who

is in tune with the needs and issues of the community and the market, and keeps an update on the new developments.



Picture 14: Mallamma sitting with the staff and deciding the design

It is said that 'a leader with charisma is revolutionary and transvalues everything; it makes a sovereign break with all traditional and rational norms' (EISENSTADT, 1968). With a revolutionary and counter-normative attitude, Mallamma emerges as a charismatic leader. By overcoming the initial challenges such as communicating with a community which doesn't speak a known language, visiting inaccessible villages and managing with very limited finances, Mallamma won the trust and the confidence of the community. The positive community response is a consequence to her efforts of social support and upliftment that created mutual trust. Effective leader are ones that earn the trust of their followers (Bennis and

Nanus, 1985).

By introducing innovative yet practical ideas of setting up institutions for community support, Mallamma has focused on holistic development of the community. The women look up to Mallamma, they feel she is indispensable which makes her a very effective leader today. Willner (1984) says it is not what the leader is but what people see the leader as that counts in generating the charismatic relationship.

Mallamma's charisma has not only influenced the community but also the market. By bringing innovative techniques like quality check and assembly line of production, she ensures she meets the demands of the buyers. She thereby has managed to build strong networks and relationships with external agencies and buyers wherein she is responsible for negotiations in pricing, production needs, improving sales and returns, keeping in line with the overall objective of 'social development'. She basically acts as a successful liaison between the community and the market.

Mallamma has kept both management and governance as two separate entities. The categorization of roles of the community and roles of the management are demarcated very clearly, while she provides support to both. She has learnt the art forms and is present with the artisans in the crafts centre assisting them, at the same time she gives timely assistance to the management team.

Mallamma encourages intellectual stimulation among her subordinates. In terms of meeting marketing needs, she has the ability to push the

employees to do their best and produce high quality items. This challenges the followers to re-examine their assumptions about how they work and rethink on how it can be performed. It promotes cooperation among employees and getting them to work together towards a common goal.

Mallamma's determination and trust has today made Lambani women into successful artisans. Boa and Bryson (1988) recognize this as the real essence of transformational leadership wherein they say that an effective leader is one who "lifts the ordinary people to extraordinary heights".



Picture 15: Somibai, Master Artisan making the sample

*"I went to South Africa for a conference and represented my community, before that I was scared to go anywhere alone.
I am proud of myself.....the Banjara art won't die-we won't let it die"- Somibai Chawan,
Master Artisan*

Challenges and way ahead: sustainability, replication and upscaling

The organization faces challenges at 3 levels, i.e. sustainability, replication and upscaling

Sustainability

Providing continuous work to Lambani and other underprivileged women on a regular basis has been a constant challenge for Sabala as generating business orders also depends upon the overall economic scenario. Since, the global economy has witnessed a slow-down, Sabala is also facing its effect. The pricing of the products have not increased significantly while the pressure from women to increase wages has been tremendous in light of the constant inflationary pressures. Additionally, the business has not

grown as expected which means comparatively lesser work for women. This also demoralizes women who again have started looking for alternate options. Sabala's continuous efforts to generate business from multiple sources have somehow ensured regular work to core group of women, however, sustainability still remains one of the biggest challenges.

Replication

Sabala's model runs on the premise of trust, innovation and leadership. All the three factors are highly time consuming. Any project or programme that has time limitations may not be in a position to replicate the model that Sabala adopts. Sabala's efforts to replicate the model in other districts of the Karnataka have had limited success due to these reasons. The leadership, which completely engaged in management of the ongoing initiative, has not been able to devote similar attention to other areas and emergence of new leadership for other areas with similar dynamism and passion has been absent. The absence of strong second rung leadership in the organization can also be attributed to this limitation.

Upscaling

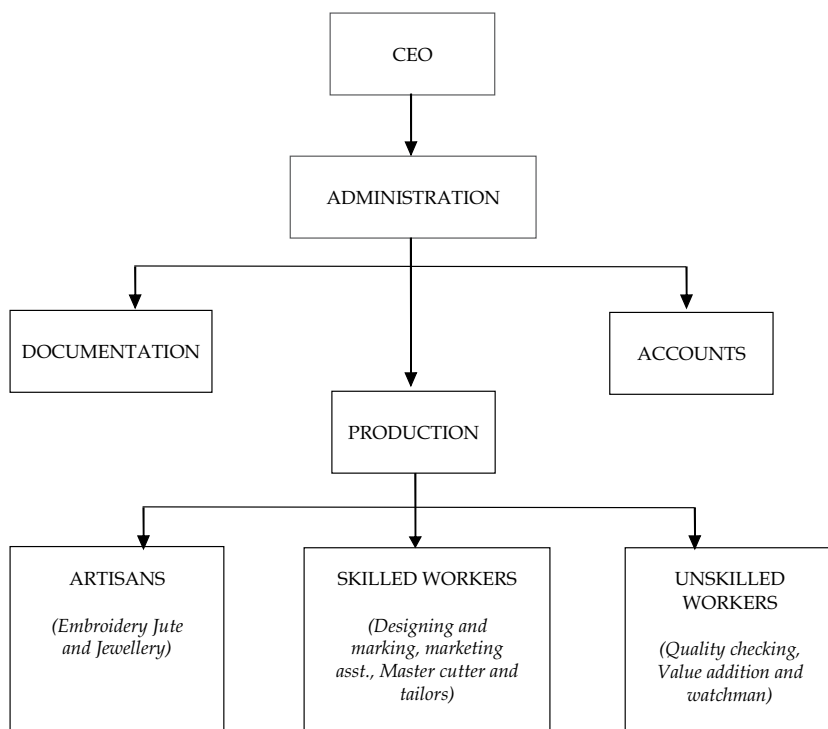
Sabala is under constant pressure to increase the number of women working as artisans. With the number of women getting educated, there is a shortage in the population with expertise and interest in the traditional art form. The educated women seek other more lucrative employment. Though the Banjara products are in high demand in international and domestic market, the limited number of trained artisans acts as a hindrance. The handmade art takes time unlike the other machine made products whose production can be increased as per the demand. Another important factor in upward scaling is the career pattern in any industry, which is rather limited in this case. The income can be increased only if the value of the products is increased. Due to the limited human capacity of the workers it is difficult to give extra pieces for production to the workers. This might affect the quality also.

In light of the above factors, sustainable livelihoods for ultra poor remains a challenging area as demands years of rigour, trust and innovation. The current development paradigm, which looks to generate results in a shortest time frame, will need to rethink about its strategies. This is more so, as seen in the Sabala case provides as an example, that the sustainable livelihoods for ultra poor demands much longer time frame and creation of new forms of linked enterprises or institutions which can help them in interacting and negotiating with the market.

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Annexure 2: Sabala Craft Development Center, Bijapur Structure of the Centre



Annexure 3:

The List of Major Buyers and Supply since inception			
Sl. No.	Name of the Buyer	Country	Sales(in Lakhs)
1	Tribal Area	Spain	10.00
2	Zabriskie Studio	Spain	20.00
3	D. H. Empreases	Chile and Peru	35.00
4	CATSTUDIO	USA	110.00
5	SIPA	INDIA	25.00

Annexure 4:

The List of Trainings conducted to Artisans and Staff			
Sl. No.	Name of the Training	Annually	Since inception
		No. of Prog.	No. of Prog.
Artisans			
1)	General Awareness Programme and capacity building	4	60
2)	Skill Trainings	2	55
3)	Design Development Workshop	2	10
5)	Exposure Visits		10
6)	Fair Trade Awareness Training		2
Staff			
1)	Capacity Building Training		10
2)	Skill Trainings - Production and Execution		3
3)	Exposure Visits		4
4)	Fair Trade Awareness Training		2

Annexure 5:

The List of Major Raw material Suppliers			
Sl. No.	Name of the Raw Material Supplier	Type	Place
1	Bharani Trading	Cotton Fabric	Tamilnadu
2	Sri Sabari Fabrics	Cotton Fabric	Tamilnadu
3	Dastkar Andhra Marketing	Cotton Fabric	Tamilnadu
4	Manish Textiles	Cotton Fabric	Karnataka
5	Madhu Silks	Silk Fabric	Karnataka
6	Hemalatha Kalamkari Fabrics	Kalamkari	Andhra Pradesh
7	Kaveri Mahila Sangha	Jut Cotton	Chimmalagi
8	Bhandari Cloth Centre	Cotton Fabric	Karnataka
9	Muskan Enterprises	Zip and Runners and Accessories	Karnataka
10	Carvan Plastics	Zip and Runners and Accessories	Karnataka

11	Ramchand N Sons	Zip and Runners and Accessories	Tamilnadu
12	Pooja Glass Beads	Glass and Wodden Beads	Delhi
13	Jain Thread House	Jain Thread	Delhi
14	Modinsab Aga and S R Ajagaonkar	Cotton Thread	Karnataka
15	Local Market (Bijapur)	Lambani Materials (Like Mirror and Thread, etc	Karnataka

Annexure 6:

Participated in Exhibitions	
Sl. No.	Exhibitions
1	Cauvery Showroom, Bangalore
2	Dastkar, New Delhi
3	Dastkar Haat Samitee, New Delhi
4	CAPART, New Delhi
5	SASHA, Kolkatta
6	EPCH, New Delhi
7	SIPA, Chennai
8	Sunday Sole Sante, Bangalore
9	VITC, Bangalore
10	Consortium of Indian Exporters, New Delhi
11	Mother Earth, Bangalore
12	Development Commissioner (Handicrafts)
13	DIC, Bijapur

Annexure 7: Sample Costing sheet

COST SHEET				
Product type		Fabric code		
Product type		Grand Total		
Fabric	Fabric Description	Price/m	Fabric consumption	Total cost
Main Fabric				
Lining				
Total Fabric Cost				
Trims	Quantity	Price/Unit	Total Cost	
Sewing thread				
Embroidery thread				
Mirror				
Label				
Total Trim Cost				
Labour	Production/day	Wages/day	Total	
Cutting				
Sewing				
Embroidery				
Hand work				
Quality checking				
Finishing				
Product Development				
Total Labour Cost				
Packaging	Quantity	Price	Total cost	
Polybag				
Carton				
Customer bag				
Total Packaging Cost				
Total cost of the product				
Fabric cost				
Labour cost				
Packaging cost				
Total				
Overheads (10%)				
Total				
Wholesale Profit (15%)				
Grand Total				

Fighting Poverty through Fashion A Case Study

Ananya Kulkarni and Anita Ahuja

The name Bahadurgarh, would in all probability, not ring a bell with most people. It's just one of those places that happen to exist: unseen, unrecognized. The same would've been said of its people until recently. So the question arises, what's special about Bahadurgarh? And about its people, its residents? The answer lies in the shunned, socially "unfavourable" employment of rag pickers, which is what most residents of Bahadurgarh, in an attempt to earn their bread and butter, are engaged in.

Everybody understands that cleanliness is important, and that the city's waste must be going somewhere. However, what most people don't stop to think, is where the city's waste disappears and who facilitates the process of ensuring city's cleanliness (or to whatever extent cleanliness exists).

It's the rag pickers who play an extremely pivotal role in the city's system of maintaining cleanliness. It's through the waste collection efforts of the rag pickers that the big industries also thrive on.

According to available statistics, in 2011, India generated a whopping 1,85,132 tonnes of waste. This number is expected to see a 50% increase and reach an even more mind-boggling 25,18,515 tonnes in 2021. Each person in Delhi generated 0.650 tonnes of waste in 2011, out of which less than 30% was treated and under 60% reached landfill sites.

The capacity of the waste management systems of Delhi is insufficient, with the city generating more than double the amount of waste the system can actually dispose appropriately. The result is an ever-rising amount of non-biodegradable waste, especially plastic materials that not only adds to the filthiness of the city but also plays a major role in the rising pollution levels, the degradation of the soil quality, impairment in the movement of water, etc.¹The plastic material not only harm the environment in general, but even the marine life forms supported by it that one wouldn't imagine could get affected.² The degree of damage caused is enormous and, the organisation Conserve strives to alleviate some of it with its effects.

¹ Anonymous, *Soil Pollution*, [Http://NsdL.Niscair.Res.In/Bitstream/123456789/990/1/Soil_pollution.Pdf](http://NsdL.Niscair.Res.In/Bitstream/123456789/990/1/Soil_pollution.Pdf), Last Visited To 10Th September 2012.

² Anonymous, *Marine Litter*, [Http://Www.Unep.Org/Regionalseas/Marinelitter/Publications/Docs/Anl_oview.Pdf](http://Www.Unep.Org/Regionalseas/Marinelitter/Publications/Docs/Anl_oview.Pdf), Last Visited On 10Th September 2012.

Industries depend on rag pickers to a large extent, for as they play a major role in collecting waste that is useful for industrial purposes. The waste provides a major share of the raw materials to the factories. So one doesn't have to think too much to figure out that the city's industries would come to a standstill if there were no rag pickers.

Given the role played by the rag pickers is, one would assume that their work is recognized and they get due credit for their efforts. Unfortunately, that assumption by is incorrect. In spite of all the work put in by the rag pickers, the long distances travelled by them under scorching summer sun or cold winter, they have no rights that one would assume, everybody living in a country with a Constitution as comprehensive and progressive as ours, would possess. Naturally, this lack of recognition leads to numerous problems for the rag picker communities. A lot of them are migrants, not only from other states, but also countries like Afghanistan. Since most of these workers are considered to be illegal immigrants, they aren't recognised by the government, let alone be provided any support. They possess no proof of identification, which disenables them from gaining access to simple necessities like ration cards, bank accounts. According to the NGO Chintan, rag pickers "are unrecognized and have almost no right to work, despite the fact that they save almost 14% of the municipal budget annually. In Delhi, an army of estimated 80,000 waste pickers save the city at least Rs. 6 lakh daily through their work."

In spite of the support that these workers lend to the government and municipality and the huge amounts of funds that they help in saving, the conditions that they have to survive are abysmal.

- 1) **Issues faced by rag pickers (level 2):** The average income that a rag picker receives is a mere Rs. 50 a day, not at all sufficient to make his/her ends meet. In this scenario, the rag pickers have to send their children to work, or even sell them to exploitative workers for some extra income.³
- 2) **Health care issues:** Lack of resources naturally leads to lack of access to health care facilities. But it's not just basic health care that eludes these workers. Their working condition is most appalling. The workers spend most of their time in filthy environment, searching through the garbage without any gloves or shoes. They often have to handle medical waste like used syringes, condoms which further impacts their health adversely. Health problems like worms, anaemia, respiratory ailments are common with rag pickers.
- 3) **Lack of education for the children:** Since the children are forced to help their parents and siblings, they're unable to go to school.

³ Anonymous, "Causes Of Child Labour", [Http://Www.Childlabour.In/Causes-Of-Child-Labour.Htm](http://Www.Childlabour.In/Causes-Of-Child-Labour.Htm), Last Visited On 19Th February 2012

- **79% children are out of school because** neither their parents nor the contractor [for whom they are working] see the benefits of sending them to school. Moreover, since the children earn additional income by working, they fail to recognize the importance of getting an education, as it would be at the cost of that income.
 - **5% children drop out of school because** they don't find the school engaging enough. There could be many reasons for this like uninteresting teaching methods, and inability to afford the cost of better quality private institutions.
 - **4% of the children attended school but** did not find a favourable atmosphere. Both they and their parents experienced discouraging discrimination at the hands of the teachers and other students.
 - **10% children found** that they could neither understand nor recall what they had been taught. These symptoms will have to be studied for identifying possible learning disorders. Language is also a big barrier, as migrant children often don't speak the language of the city they work in.
- 4) **Threat of abuse:** To make matters worse, the community is vulnerable to abuse, including sexual abuse. They often end up suffering from drug and alcohol addictions. With lack of support from law enforcement authorities, they have very few sources to depend on for assistance.
- 5) **Prevalence of child labour:** India has the highest number of child labourers under the age of 14 years in the world, with children working in many industries like footwear, garments and other hazardous industries like glass blowing, match works etc⁴. This is in spite of The Child Labour (Prohibition) Act, 1986, which was enacted to eradicate child labour.⁵ Due to inadequate implementation of the act, the problem still exists and it leads to a vicious cycle of illiteracy and consequent unemployment.

This part discusses, at length, the initiatives taken by Conserve India to help this rag pickers and the impact of their efforts on the workers' lives.

Conserve India's many initiatives are based on a single innovative idea - converting non-biodegradable waste into consumer products. The sale proceedings are then used to fund the rehabilitation of the workers. This unique method is more energy efficient as compared to recycling and results in fewer carbon emissions.

⁴ Priyanka Khanna, "Combating Child Labour", [Http://Www.Unicef.Org/India/Child_protection_1726.Htm](http://www.unicef.org/india/child_protection_1726.htm) Last Visited On 19Th February 2012

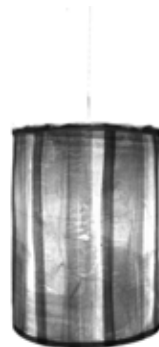
⁵ Anonymous, "The Child Labour (Prohibition) Act, 1986", [Http://Www.Tnchildlabour.Tn.Gov.In/Prohibition.Htm](http://www.tnchildlabour.tn.gov.in/prohibition.htm), Last Visited On 10Th February 2012

This idea thus addresses waste management issues in New Delhi, especially disposal of plastic waste, while simultaneously providing better job opportunities to the millions who work as rag pickers in the city. By converting waste plastic materials into useful consumer products, it also tackles the environmental threat posed by the non-treatment of the non-biodegradable wastes.

Conserve India has adapted an innovative technique converts waste plastic into raw materials, which then is used to design high fashion products. This method of converting waste material into useful raw materials is also known as up-cycling. Up-cycling of plastic bags into consumer products is a relatively new activity which has excellent potential given the increasing environmental awareness in the contemporary urban society.

Technology/production detail: The process involves the use of heating and pressing waste plastic materials to transform it into raw materials that can be turned into high fashion products. The technology can also be used to create low cost building tiles, wall papers amongst other products.

What is novel about this innovation is that it uses lesser amount of energy than regular recycling methods. Also, it retains the colour of the plastic



bags, thereby eliminating the need to add colour dyes to the products. The desired colour of the raw material depends on the colour combination of plastic, allowing flexibility in variation of colours and patterns.

Meeting consumer needs: The common practice of treating waste plastic materials involves recycling and smelting processes to create plastic chairs, etc. This consumes a large amount of energy and the result entails a loss of the original physical properties. This process, on the other hand retains all the original properties, especially the colours which can be used to develop creative aesthetic designs.

Conservation of the environment: The innovation helps in conservation of the environment since it uses existing non-biodegradable materials instead of using the dwindling natural resources.

Nature of engagement, support and strategies offered by Conserve:

- 1) Providing extensive knowledge and training to workers- Conserve works with several external fabricator groups. Majority of these groups began as Conserve employees and were then trained to set up their own small businesses. Conserve conducted multiple skill-training workshops and provided small amounts of capital for equipment purchases. This support for the small entrepreneurs is fundamental to Conserve's vision for employment creation as each fabricator employs 10 workers. These groups are able to work both for Conserve and other firms they can tie-up with. The system of external fabricators provides Conserve with the benefit of flexibility: it helps to maintain the number of full-time employees at a manageable level but ensures availability of extra resources when orders exceed in-house capacity. Conserve supports the fabricators with all necessary training and closely monitors their compliance with fair-trade principles.
- 2) Hamara School- Hamara School (slated to start in July) is a major element of the strategy to tackle the problems faced by working children, especially those who work on the dumping grounds. It is a non-controversial entry point programme designed to facilitate their reintegration into mainstream education system. These children, as explained before, are forced to work in the occupation themselves due to the inability of their parents to send them to schools. They're unfortunately at the very bottom rung of the social hierarchy, with no access to education or healthcare whatsoever. The main objective of Hamara School is to provide the children with a better alternative to keep them away from work on the dumping grounds. The school hopes to bridge the gap that exists between the children and the path of success and their dreams. It will be the child's first contact with

Conserve, wherein the child will be provided with an opportunity to do what he/she feels like doing yet be gradually introduced to the educational processes. Once the children attain their age-appropriate competencies, they will be encouraged and convinced to join a mainstream school. The services offered by the school will include not only educational, but also recreational, pre vocational, counseling and medical services that will cater to the child's every need. It shall be a low cost and replicable model which caters to the immediate needs of those children, and be their first step toward a better future.

- 3) Medical services- Conserve strives at not only improving the economic conditions of the rag pickers, but also to eliminate the various health dangers that they're exposed to on a daily basis. It has implemented many healthcare projects like funding a health care check-up van to visit the slums, children's de-worming clinics, educational sessions on family planning, sexual health and hygiene, clinics with gynaecologists, eye specialists and general physicians.

This community has seen a significant change thanks to its own and Conserve's efforts and initiatives, where otherwise they would have continued to suffer due to the ignorance and negligence of the city.

The third part of the case aims to highlight the various ways in which Conserve's initiatives and support strategies have directly created the possibility for sustainable livelihoods for the rag picker communities. Building on the successes of its initial projects, the new vision of "Sustainable provision of skills, services and advisory to groups of urban and rural poor" enables Conserve NGO to channel the key skills of Conserve into impactful projects across the base of the pyramid.

Major impact by Conserve's efforts:

- 1) Providing expert knowledge and advisory: Conserve passes on the knowledge it possesses in the area of export markets and its business relationships to small artisan groups set up all across India. The NGO has associated itself with self-help groups, which it trains to facilitate the selling of the products they create. In 2010-2011, Conserve NGO conducted 199 group training sessions. Technical training is critical to ensure them mainstream employment opportunities. They undergo a one-year training program to become a factory worker and a five-year training program to become a small-scale entrepreneur. Conserve not only trains them, but also provides internship programmes to introduce them to the factory union. The union teaches them to demand their rights, negotiate their salary and other benefits that they're entitled to.

- 2) Environmental Performance- Delhi generates 8000 tons of garbage every day. The local municipality has the capacity to collect only 4000 tons. Over the years, this has led to the build-up of huge “plastic mountains”. Lack of technology to dispose them appropriately has led to widespread pollution. The government has run campaigns in recent times to discontinue use of plastics. While the initiative will take some time to be fruitful, Conserve, by purchasing these waste materials and supporting rag picker communities, decreases the volume of material destined for landfill or incineration.
- 3) Employment Creation- Having initially worked with only rag-pickers, Conserve now creates employment for people from the bottom of the pyramid in 3 ways, namely, full time employment in Conserve’s factory, support for external fabricators and an increase in the average daily earning of rag pickers from Rs. 50 to Rs. 200 – 300 which cumulates to form a minimum monthly wage of Rs. 6,000. In the year 2010-2011, Conserve had 55 people under direct employment and 86 people under indirect employment. Since its inception, Conserve NGO has excelled in providing skills’ training that enables un-skilled rag pickers in establishing themselves in paid employment, with rights.
- 4) Improving access to healthcare- Conserve has always put concerted effort to combat the health problems that the workers face. It has initiated many projects, as mentioned earlier. The result of these projects has led to over 1,200 successful medical screenings in just the year 2010-2011, which means that over 1,200 people are leading healthier lives, due to the sensitive approach of Conserve.
- 5) Improving access to education- Bahadurgarh is one of the many slums on the outskirts of Delhi. The dwellers relocated here after the demolition of many of the slums in Delhi for the Commonwealth Games in 2010. But what was demolished was not just the slums, but also the schools that catered to the educational needs of the children living there. The schools were the children’s one shot at gaining the education they deserve, and it disappeared along with their homes. Families, in order to gain additional income, either send their children to work or worse sell them to exploitative workers. 98% of children can’t go to school as it is unaffordable while 79% are out because their parents don’t see the benefits of education. 5 % drop out because of lack of proper teaching methods and inability to go to private institutions. Language also poses to be a big barrier. The children have to engage in rag picking instead of attending school, sometimes completing 2-3 shifts a day. The working conditions are hazardous to say the least and the children have to sometimes eat the filthy remnants they find at the garbage dumps. Conserve has started Hamara School to help these children to gain an education which

would help them get out of the vicious circle of poverty and resultant no education. The school will take around 200 children during the course of the entire project. The first part of the project will be aimed at convincing them to leave the dumping grounds, come to the school regularly and get acclimatised to the surroundings. They'll be allowed to play, rest, etc and once they're comfortable, they'll gradually be drawn into the education process, based on their needs and capability. Conserve will be a vital facilitator in shaping a better future for 200 kids who'll be able to lead independent, satisfying lives, far removed from the dumping grounds.

Every process that is initiated with the aim of achieving a goal or an objective faces at least some challenges. The larger and more comprehensive the goals, the larger are the challenges met. Conserve is no different. The organization, whose work spans 3 different areas that affect society deeply, faces challenges with respect to each of these areas.

- 1) Social challenges- Conserve strives to gain recognition for the rag pickers but is faced with obstacles right from the beginning. The idea of "waste being impure" is not a new notion for the Indian society. Indians are taught from a very young age not to handle any sort of waste due to many reasons, a lot of which is based on superstition. These superstitions and narrow beliefs, such as the caste system which started out as a system to divide society in the order of the occupation performed, unfortunately spread in such a fashion that has resulted in generations of exploitation and ill-treatment at the hands of the so-called "upper castes" for those who had to handle waste as they belonged to the "lower castes". This belief still a long way from disappearing with continues, and has led people viewing rag pickers with suspicion. This in turn kept them firmly rooted at the bottom of the social ladder. Conserve strives hard to change this mindset, but it is accompanied by its share of challenges.
- 2) Economic challenges faced by the rag pickers- Economic problems faced by the rag pickers results in their children being forced to work as rag pickers instead of attending school and attaining education. Though Conserve has started a school for the children of rag pickers, it has been difficult to draw the children and their families out of the habit of working rather than schooling. Most parents and children alike don't see the benefits of schooling or attaining proper education, and it takes a lot of time to convince them of the same. The children who do end up attending schools also drop out due to their families' needs, and problems faced by them in coping with the curriculum.

- 3) Challenges faced due to competitors- Conserve's most comparable competitors are ethical brands that focus on recycled products, with or without a social mission. There are small companies across the globe, some examples are:

Europe

- Freitag – Swiss recycled bag brand, using truck tarpaulin, bicycle tube and seatbelts
- Kultbag – German recycled bags, using truck tarpaulin and airbeds

South America

- Ecoist - Peru/Mexico - Bags made from recycled candy wrappers, food packages, newspapers. Fair-trade, Socially responsible and eco-focussed: plants a tree for every bag sold

America and Canada

- Trashedbags – Canadian recycled bag brand that invests profits in micro-enterprise in Liberia
- Sarah*Bella Upcycled bags – Bags made of plastic waste in the US

India

- Handmade expressions – US-based company that works with artisan groups in India to make responsible, sustainable, and Fair Trade products

- 4) Challenges faced due to problems with the material used- Although Handmade Recycled Product (HRP) has so far done well in the market, its uses are constrained by several weaknesses:

- The material cannot be folded
- The material is prone to tears
- The material is susceptible to cracks
- The material has a rough texture
- Low adhesiveness means expensive adhesive is required
- Material can only be produced in 1m sheets

- 5) Other constraints- Conserve's business has grown steadily (average turnover growth 23%) but has been constrained by:

- Limited factory space
- Small management team
- Longlearning curve for new entrants to manufacturing and export market.

These factors have meant that growth has largely been driven by external factors, with Conserve responding reactively to market and customer pulls.

Conserve is managed by a small but dedicated team. Founders Anita and Shalabh continue to have oversight of both the company and the NGO. The COO, Gaurav Dhingra, who has been involved for many years. The management can be characterised as entrepreneurial and creative - continually pushing Conserve to try new materials, processes and products. The team is also recognised within the industry for their strong relationships, building long-lasting working relationships with key buyers. Conserve's team has proven (over 4 years) its up-cycling expertise and its business acumen in making Conserve's dream a reality. They all share a common passion for social enterprise and contribute towards it. The CEO's technical and entrepreneurial skills are complemented by the Creative Director, Anita Ahuja's design and creative skills while the COO, Gaurav has worked with people and materials all his life and brings this valuable experience with him. The second tier of management has over 30 people with years of experience in production, training, quality control and export. Apart from this, Conserve also employs various interns throughout the year who help the Creative Director with designing the products, research work, etc. Conserve has a contingent of semi-skilled and skilled crafts persons who produce up cycled products.

Conserve has been growing at an average rate of 35% every year and has built the export markets of the US, Europe and Australia. Apart from the team's consistent and continuous efforts, factors like increased social consciousness and the ever-increasing environmental awareness have all combined to ensure that Conserve's efforts are recognized and appreciated across all arenas, whether governmental support, markets, or people at large.

Henry Ford's famous quote, "Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress. Working together is success" very effectively sums up the entire idea that Conserve emulates. It is hoped that with reflected in Conserve's motto, "People, Planet" will continue to fulfil its mission through the organization's efforts and set an example for others to follow.

When a Single Path Diverges: Learning from Trickle Up's Livelihood Program

Jo Sanson and Jui Gupta

"We've started using the river's water for agriculture. The river has been there forever but we didn't use it for our fields. Our Field Worker didn't give us the river, but he did give us the knowledge to use it for cultivation."

Saro Mandi

For women like Saro Mandi, who lives in Cholagora, Purulia, West Bengal, change came in small but meaningful increments. Her tiny plot of land once provided paddy for the family for 3 months; now with better irrigation she also grows a vegetable crop to sell for cash. A cash crop means she can invest in livestock to grow her asset base and save weekly. Weekly savings meetings bring her together with others from her self-help group (SHG) – Cholagora Licher Sarna – ultrapoor women like Saro who are now making big changes in their community.

Incremental and meaningful change is the key to success in Trickle Up's Ultrapoor Program, which works with 3,250 ultrapoor women to build a sustainable livelihood base, knowledge and skills, and connection to community allies and services. Of the eight hundred participants who started with the program in 2009, most exhibited significant improvements in their lives upon completion. However, not all participants performed well, and understanding the reasons for variation in performance is critical for improving the design and implementation of programs that are aimed at the ultrapoor.

Program background

In 2009, with local partner Jamgoria Sevabrata (JS), Trickle Up supported 300 participants from communities in Purulia, West Bengal. Designed to reach the very poorest of the poor, the program built on lessons learned from Trickle Up's involvement in the CGAP-Ford Foundation Ultrapoor Graduation Project. Recognizing that the ultrapoor are too vulnerable to benefit from microcredit, the Graduation Project seeks to build on BRAC's ultrapoor programs in Bangladesh and create a common methodology for "graduating" the ultrapoor out of extreme poverty. JS was one of the nine Trickle Up partner organizations working in West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand and Odisha.

Ultrapoor families in India, as elsewhere, confront the largest obstacles in the climb out of poverty. Their ability to participate in the economy of their remote farming communities is compromised by limited land

availability, often abysmal soil quality, severe droughts and floods, and saturated local markets. Government investment in these areas is minimal and the poorest lack the capital to make investments in moving their families ahead. Comprising the largest percentage of the country's poor, India's "invisible women" struggle at all levels of poverty, but particularly so at the deepest levels. Most do not know how to sign their name, are unaware of basic rights, and, with men in the household controlling the meagre assets, struggle for decision-making power.

Safety nets such as food aid and cash transfers help stave off crisis, but on their own, do not build the social and financial base necessary to break out of extreme poverty – nor do they provide women with greater agency. Livelihood development programs aim to reach beyond a safety net by significantly increasing a household's income-generating capacity, but are more challenging to implement with ultrapoor families than the less poor. Living day-to-day with virtually no productive assets or savings, facing numerous sources of vulnerability and frequent emergencies, ultrapoor families require a more complex Intervention in order to triumph over the many factors that can undermine progress.

Program model

Women were selected for Trickle Up's program using participatory community mapping and wealth ranking exercises to identify ultrapoor families. This was followed by household-level verification, through which individual women were identified. Despite their obvious need for support, JS staff had to return many times to convince them to join the program. Years of deprivation had made them wary and highly risk averse.

Because of the isolation of the ultrapoor women selected, the three-year Intervention started by connecting the women to support systems, including two coaches (field and health worker) who would mentor them throughout the project and a self-help group (SHG), consisting of 10-15 participants. The groups met weekly and were encouraged to begin savings, taking small loans (initially for consumption and eventually for productive activities), and creating mutual support mechanisms.

The participants and their coaches began a planning process, in consultation with the families and other SHG members to identify viable livelihood activities. This was the first step to develop a broader livelihood strategy to reduce their reliance on sporadic wage labour (the primary income source of 79% of participants at project inception). The first few activities were made possible by seed-capital grants to purchase productive assets and training was tailored to the livelihood activities they had chosen. Most chose animal husbandry and agriculture, but some chose vending/small business. All received a stipend during the "hungry

season” in the first year of the program to reduce distress migration before their activities were established (78% were migrating every year prior to the program). Participants also received training on accessing government health and social support schemes (only 44% had Below Poverty Line cards), and were visited monthly by health workers who provided training in nutrition, hygiene, maternal and child health and other preventative measures.

The programme was deemed to generally have been successful. Participants increased their net assets 22-fold during the program, to an average of Rs. 18,690 (adjusted for inflation) from a baseline value of Rs. 826. Eighty per cent diversified their livelihood activities beyond those supported directly by the program; and all participants were regularly attending SHG meetings. All participants at end of project had at least two cooked meals a day, compared to baseline where 54% ate only one cooked meal a day.

However, variation in performance did occur, both at the individual level and between SHGs, and two groups in particular performed poorly. Understanding the reasons for variations in performance is critical to improving program design and implementation, and these are explored below through the experiences of two different groups of women – one that was average and one that performed poorly.

The case draws on data from baseline and end-of-project surveys, monthly monitoring reports, periodic qualitative case studies of participants and groups, and an end-of-project qualitative evaluation that took place in six villages, and included 24 in-depth semi-structured interviews, nine focus group discussions with participants, and five focus group discussions with other community members.

Village 1: Cholagora

The performance of Cholagora Licher Sarna SHG was fairly representative of the 26 groups supported by JS. The hamlet of Cholagora consists of 31 households, all of which are from the Santhal Scheduled Tribe. Ten of the poorest of these households were chosen to participate in the program. Eight performed well and met most SHG and individual targets, including achieving a diversified livelihood base, and significant assets and savings.

Following the completion of the program, SHG members generally believed their lives were much improved. Prior to participation, they had been heavily dependent on irregular agricultural day labour and seasonal migration, since the land that they owned was mostly un-irrigated undulating upland that is poorly suited to cultivation and could provide an average of only four months of consumption for the household.

Eight of the ten households had invested in agriculture, which provided cash and increased the quantity of staples available for consumption. Land that had been fallow during winter was made productive through agriculture extension training and capital inputs. Summer paddy crops were also improved through training on the system for rice intensification (SRI). Vegetable crops were generally lucrative, and some participants used profits to lease new land. Two invested their grants solely in livestock, but most used goats and bullocks as secondary assets for diversifying their livelihood base, once they had made profits in agriculture. Some, like Saro Mandi, purchased land from vegetable cultivation. Participants were optimistic: “We don’t have scarcity;” “We have money;” “We are feeling good,” they said in summing up their three years in the program.

All but two participants had ceased to depend on seasonal migration in the lean season, but both cases were due to shocks that had decapitalized their households early in the project. One lost her husband when a thorn in his leg turned septic, and the other her mother-in-law. Despite continuing to be forced to migrate during the lean season, their hardship was mitigated by support from other group members.

Severe drought in the year after they commenced was a setback for all participants, since it occurred before the new livelihoods had been fully established, forcing everyone to migrate. However, program participants were less severely affected than others in the community as SHG members were able to replace the failed paddy crops with food purchased from sale of their winter vegetable harvest and livestock. At the end of the project they believed they would not need to migrate again, as they had SHG assets, pump sets for future droughts, and group solidarity in time of need.

Program participants claimed that their dietary patterns had changed: “Earlier we didn’t have [enough] food so we used to cook maize in a lot of water and fill our stomach with that. But now we have vegetables, potato and rice for most of the time.” They had seen improvements in both the quantity and quality of food: “We can have fish and meat now in our menu.” They had also amassed stocks of wheat and rice to get them through the year. Saro Mandi stated:

I’ve created a buffer food stock in my house to cope with the lean season. The rice lasts for eight months and for the rest of the year I purchase rice from the money I get from selling vegetables. Before, from upland paddy, I only got about a month’s worth of paddy.

Such statements reflected overall program results: 93% of households reported that adults had missed meals due to food shortage prior to the program, compared with 8% at the end.

Apart from one year of severe drought, conditions in the community had generally improved for everyone over the previous years, particularly with the introduction of the Jangalmahal subsidy scheme started in the area in late 2011, which provides highly subsidized cereals. However, the conditions of program participants appeared to have improved more than those of others. End of project consultations with men whose households had been more food secure than the program participants' due to their greater ownership of land – the reason why they had not qualified for the program – suggested that the participants' ability to invest and manage winter vegetable crops and other assets had improved their wellbeing above their own. These other households were still limited to growing paddy and maize monsoon crops. And two ultrapoor households that had refused to join the program were continuing to depend on seasonal migration, thus also reducing the benefits that they would have received from the government schemes.

Participants who were using mosquito nets and boiling drinking water felt that they were falling ill less frequently; two years without migration meant more school attendance for children and participants had more to invest in education: Saro Mandi had been able to keep her son in school two years past class eight and cover Rs. 100 per month for tuition. Participants were able to repair their houses, buy utensils, and jewelry and clothing that did not bring them shame. "These are things "you can see," stated one participant proudly.

Group members viewed the SHG as protection from moneylenders and security during future hard times – "we have money in the SHG box which we can use in emergencies" – and a financial source to continue to grow and diversify their livelihoods. The SHG would also allow them to access bank loans.

But the SHG was far more than an informal bank. It was also a vehicle to make their voices heard in their community and beyond. Group members discussed the need for an Integrated Child Development Services centre in the village and collectively prepared and submitted an application, with help from the field worker. The application was accepted and a centre was soon established. Saro and other SHG members also visited the Panchayat together with demands for food, rations, and work through MGNREGS. "We didn't know that we would get work if we put pressure in Gram Sansad meetings", said one member, Parvati Murmu. But "now after putting pressure in Sansad we are getting work for around 50 days while earlier it was only seven days".

Of course, not everything worked out. Many of them still did not have a BPL card, which they ascribed to not having the right political affiliation or good relations with the block office. But "we have understood that it's

better to go [to the Panchayat] together than alone” – an argument they also used to allay their husbands’ concerns. The group also submitted an application to MGNREGA for a water-harvesting structure and individual ponds, which they hope would be approved.

Just as importantly, the women’s status had improved within their households. Field staff were instructed to ensure that women were at the center of the livelihood planning process, (while also involving husbands), and the investment of grants had to be for productive activities in which women could play a major role. This was intended to give women significant influence over consumption and future investment of profits. Participants reported that their involvement in household management and decision-making had increased. Some also reported less domestic violence.

Village 2: Paisagora

In contrast to the Chologora Licher Sarna SHG, many of the ten members of Rengernachar SHG, in Paisagora village (also in Manbazar II block), struggled. Rengernachar was one of two groups out of the 26 whose limited progress against key performance benchmarks led program staff to believe that the group was unlikely to continue independently after the program. Also a largely Santhal tribal community, Paisagora is located 15 km from the nearest market town. This village of approximately 175 households had also seen general improvements including receiving Jangalmahal benefits.

Three participants saw significant improvement during the program due to vegetable cultivation and increased paddy harvests following SRI training, but their land was near the river, making success easier. Before the program their diet was largely rice water, but they were soon eating normal rice with vegetables grown in their own kitchen gardens (an outcome supported through training) and they used some of the profits from the first crop to jointly invest in a pump, enabling them to cultivate throughout the year, rather than only in the rainy season. One woman earned enough to repair her house and buy a bicycle, along with further livelihood investment.

The other participants invested their grant money on goats. However, profits were lower than expected. Participants complained that they could not sell their goats before the rainy season because the traders coming to the village were offering low prices: Rs. 500-700 each. When the rains came many goats died from an outbreak of goat pox. When the goats started dying, one participant mentioned “We did not think of any other diversification option and staff did not facilitate this either.” and many of the participants ended up reinvesting in goats with their second grant.

To support their families, most of the 10 participants continued to engage in wage labour with their husbands. These participants continued to face severe food scarcity during August and September due to lack of employment and only receiving two to three days of work from MGNREGS. Along with having earned limited income, they tended not to have land for kitchen gardens. The consumption of green vegetables that was encouraged by field workers depended on their ability to purchase from the market, which they could generally ill afford. At the end of the project, they were still consuming rice water and had almost no vegetables except potatoes. They ate pulses only once a week.

The condition of the SHG itself was also of concern. All participants had amassed savings, though seven out of ten were below the average of Rs. 4400, and most of the loans from the SHG were used for health purposes, rather than productive investment. However, those who had engaged in agriculture were, again, faring better on this account too. Basanti Mandi took a loan from the SHG to buy a goat, potato seeds and books for her children. She was expecting to sell her goat for Rs. 2500.

When asked about the future of the SHG, a number of participants stated that they would continue to save from earnings, even from wage labour, as a cushion for emergencies. Speaking for this group, one woman said, “at home we cannot keep money and have to spend it on daily needs.” Another responded that she was only continuing because the field worker expected it. However, some non-participant community members believed the Rengernachar SHG had freed members from the village moneylenders and formed their own group to accomplish the same.

The participants exhibited other positive changes that can reasonably be traced to program inputs, including improved hygiene practices and increased usage of mosquito nets. And, interestingly, non-participant community members generally appeared to be more positive about the group than members, claiming that relatively speaking their food security had improved. However, many participants appeared unsure about the future, lacked a clear vision of a livelihood strategy to escape extreme poverty and felt a need for more guidance, as suggested by Jabarani Tudu, who said, “My goats are too old to be sold at a good price. Please suggest what I can do with these. I don’t have any knowledge.”

Why did most groups perform well, but some did not? Reasons for variation

Livelihood planning processes

Livelihood planning discussions between SHG members and field staff started early in the program cycle and were expected to be continuously revisited and fine-tuned throughout the program. Careful facilitation of

livelihood planning is critical to giving participants and their households a sense of ownership over decisions about investments and livelihood activities, so they can envision how their activities will help them to reach defined economic and social goals.

The sequencing of activities is usually vital. Participants are expected to gradually build up from activities that support food security to higher yielding but higher risk and longer-cycle activities that can create a strong and diversified livelihood base. In facilitating planning processes, field workers must also consider technical questions – does the household have the resources to manage a large herd of goats, for example, and how will they survive in the time it takes for it to bring in income? Will interim coping strategies such as daily wage labour or migration negatively impact the profitability of certain activities that require continuous attention? Furthermore, field workers are expected to veto Trickle Up funded activities in which women themselves cannot be active participants. Balancing these competing demands of the livelihood planning process requires skill, patience and adaptability.

In Chologora, this process appears to have worked well. Participants' experiences over the three-year period exhibited a sequenced progression of livelihood activities that were logical and cumulative. Investment in agriculture, for example, created profits that allowed further investment in infrastructure such as pumps, which enabled the purchase of livestock, which minimized risk in times of drought, with some diversification into vending activities such as fish selling. Furthermore, participants appeared to internalize such planning processes: they had concrete plans for what they would do next, and appeared motivated and optimistic about the future. As one participant stated, "When you have money, ideas come to you." They knew that there eventually would be droughts and sickness, but most felt that their social, financial and physical assets would enable them to overcome such shocks. In other words, their efforts were not likely to be for nothing.

In Paisagora, however, the planning process appears to have been problematic. Many participants claimed to have felt pressured into investing in goats, though this may be partly hindsight (it is easier to feel that a decision was not one's own if it did not work out well). The overall lack of arable land available to participants greatly narrowed investment decisions. However, the field worker was unable to envision any alternative except goat rearing, and this itself he approached with ambivalence. Goat rearing was seen as poor substitute for the agricultural improvement that was this particular partner organization's strength. This ambivalence appears to have negatively impacted the livelihood planning process and weakened participants' sense of ownership of decision-making and ability to visualize success.

Another dynamic may also have influenced the planning process: goats are visible, tangible assets. Tangible assets are valued by participants, and particularly women, who have generally had very few assets to call their own – they connote both security and status. There was also some indication that staff felt that their performance would be judged on changes in such tangible outcomes (i.e. more goats), rather than a long-term strategy of diversified livelihoods. In the case of Paisagora, this bias toward tangible assets mitigated against some other activities, including vending, for which accumulation of visible assets was less central. A desire for security and status should not be dismissed – they are both important intended program outcomes. But these factors, when given too much priority on their own, appear to have crowded out a deeper analysis and understanding of how such assets would contribute to forging a pathway out of poverty.

In understanding this situation it is important to note that not all participants who invested in goats did poorly. In fact across all 300 participants supported by JS, those who raised goats performed comparably in terms of savings and assets to those who invested in agriculture and a mix of activities, although the income they earned during the program period was generally lower. Monitoring data suggests that those participants who followed all the training guidelines (including providing vaccinations, a goat shed, appropriate food) did reasonably well. Furthermore, about one in five of all JS participants chose to invest in goats from their own profits and SHG loans, as they saw goats as a worthwhile investment. And in Paisagora itself, consultations with other, slightly better off and more educated, community members suggested that goat and other livestock rearing were appropriate activities as grazing ground was abundant. While they acknowledged the challenges (goats are prone to diseases and there is no government veterinary support in the village) when these villagers were explicitly asked what they would do if they had no land, they said they would invest in goats.

So the question is why did quite a few participants from this SHG not follow the training? It is here that buy-in during the planning process, or lack thereof, appears to have been critical. Motivation comes with a belief that efforts result in a worthwhile payoff. A significant challenge of working with ultrapoor people is that they have been trapped in cycles of poverty in which frequent shocks and low levels of resilience can make it exceedingly difficult for people to envisage a path out of poverty. Without a careful, on-going, planning process that helps to project such a future and a field staff that are united in and enthusiastic about a strategy, the opportunity provided by an injection of productive assets can easily be lost to participants whose primary preoccupation has long been meeting the basic consumption needs of their families. In Chologora, the process worked well, but in Paisagora, decisions about livelihood selection served to truncate the broader livelihood planning process.

Group dynamics

In Chologora, SHG members engaged in a mix of livelihood activities from the start. Landless women pursued longer-cycle activities like livestock-rearing while other group members grew and sold vegetables that fairly quickly brought in cash. All participants were provided with consumption stipends of Rs. 126 per week during the first lean season to enable them to survive without migration, and hence grow their assets. This was particularly important for those who invested in longer-cycle activities such as goat-rearing, for whom many months would pass without seeing a return on their investment. But although their activities had not yet yielded profits, the women were motivated by seeing others doing well—it helped them believe that their effort would pay off. These goat-rearers also benefitted from the capital circulating in the SHG fuelled by early profits of others, as they could take loans before their activities provided income. So just as livelihood diversification at the household level is important, this mix of activities within the group created dynamism, with the success of some members providing support and a positive example to others.

Members of the Paisagora group also engaged in a mixture of activities. However, the predominance of goat-rearing within the group, combined with a livelihood planning process in which messages were communicated that raising goats was an activity of last resort, meant that participants did not project the progress of those engaged in agriculture as a likely predictor of their own movement out of poverty. (See Annex 1 for a breakdown of the relative investment versus income by activity for both groups.)

Participant-staff dynamics

Staff performance, as in any context, varied. However, there was considerable variation in performance between different SHGs supported by the same staff members, and some of this variation did appear to be associated with staff performance vis a vis those particular groups. Many of the participants in Paisagora were critical of the field worker, believing that his guidance had resulted in investment plans that did not reflect their interests. Participants from other groups overseen by this field worker, however, were generally more positive about the support and guidance that he had provided.

So why would staff performance vary between groups? When this question was posed to staff members themselves, one simply answered “we are human” and explained that when a group or individual is doing well, field workers themselves are motivated by their interactions. This fosters a virtuous cycle in which engagement with participants is rewarded with both gratitude and more positive outcomes. However, the opposite also occurs, and a lack of initial success can build resentment and de-incentivize the close engagement required to guide participants on an

economic strengthening pathway. In the case of Paisagora, it appeared that a vicious cycle was created in which already poor care of assets resulting from participants' lack of ownership over the choice of asset contributed to and was compounded by a lack of close supervision by the field worker. In such cases staff continued to visit participants as per their contracts. However, some participants reported that the advice they provided was not detailed, and the visits often did not involve inspection of assets to monitor and demonstrate best practices. Working with people who are demotivated is itself demotivating.

Conclusion

A combination of factors are required to foster the virtuous cycles required for people in ultra-poverty to confront the multiple barriers they face in building sustainable livelihoods. These barriers include limited financial and productive assets along with weak social capital and limited technical skills. They also include the social and psychological legacy of livelihood strategies that are largely oriented to meeting survival needs, resulting in a low capacity to absorb risk and envisage paths out of poverty.

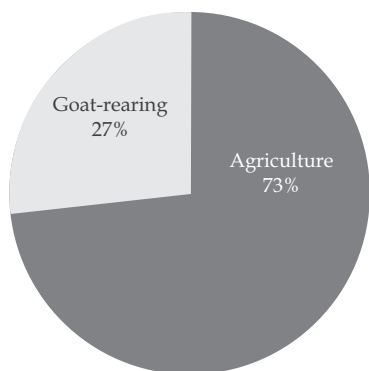
We should return to Saro Mandi's statement, that the field worker did not give them the river but gave them the knowledge to use it for cultivation. After all, what was stopping these participants from using it before? It is unlikely that they had no exposure to people who had irrigated their land, and while the capital outlays would have been difficult to come by for these families, access to small lump sums of cash from migration was not impossible, despite most such funds being used to pay off debts. However, the barriers were not only a lack of technical skills and capital, as substantial as those were. Ultrapoor households such as Saro Mandi's also needed the breathing space to invest in such opportunities and the support to take risks and change their mindset about what is possible.

Even with a holistic program, with numerous inputs and close support and monitoring, one significant obstacle, such as a death or an alcoholic or unsupportive husband, can seriously undermine progress. However, situations in which groups of participants perform poorly tend to be the product of a combination of factors. Bad luck, such as poor seasons, and context, including availability of good land and access to markets, no doubt play a role. But factors related to program design and implementation are also key, and affect the impact of adverse conditions. This includes the ability to strategically trigger early successes by considering livelihood selection in the context of both the household and SHG, and the key role that livelihood planning processes play. Both these factors, together, help provide the motivation and hope that come with being able to envisage a viable trajectory out of poverty.

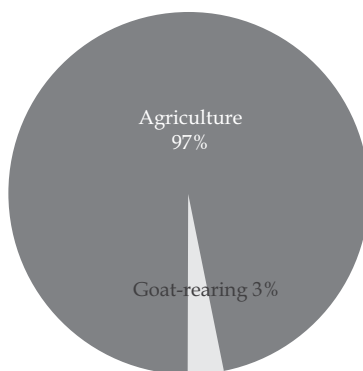
This means that it is important to monitor and address trends beyond those that directly reflect livelihood performance, such as income and accumulation of assets. This includes monitoring the dynamics within both households and groups, and interactions between field workers and participants, both of which may affect future livelihood performance. Issues need to be identified early on and steps taken to remedy problems, including the mere lack of triggers to break the cycles that keep people trapped in poverty. Based on Trickle Up and Jamgoria Sevabrata’s experience, such virtuous cycles can be triggered with carefully sequenced program inputs, appropriate monitoring and fostering positive group dynamics – this did occur in 24 of the 26 SHGs supported. However, by understanding the experiences of those that did not perform well, Trickle Up has sought to improve the performance of all.

Annexure 1: Value of Grants vs. Value of Income by SHG
Cholagora SHG

Grant Utilization

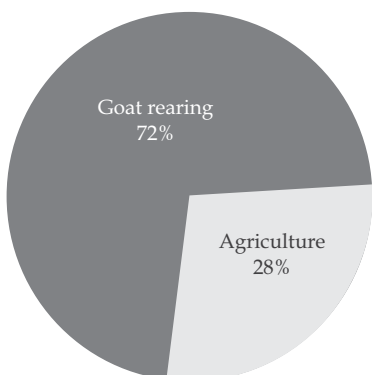


Income Sources at End of Project

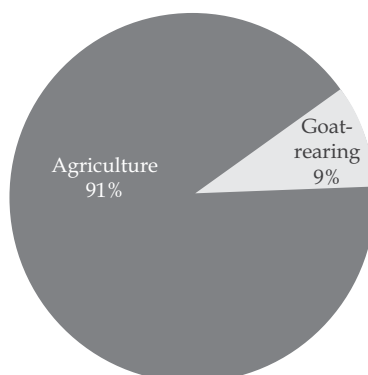


Paisagora SHG

Grant ntilization



Income Sorces at End of project



Prevention of Migration among Tribal Group through Special Project

Karan Girdhar and Richa Singh

“It is obvious that tribal areas have to progress. Nobody wants to keep them as museum specimens. It is equally obvious that they have to progress their own way.”

Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, 1952

Earning livelihood without migration: a success story

Mandli Jayamma, a Chenchu tribal woman from Kollapur mandal of Mahabubnagar district in AP, was given two acres of land under the Recognition of Forest Rights Act 2006 (RoFR). The acres were fallow and did not yield enough for her family to meet even its basic survival needs. Though she tried to augment her income through collection and sale of non-timber forest products (NTFPs), earnings were meagre and largely seasonal. Where baseline survival was at stake, ensuring proper education and healthcare for her three young children while putting aside some savings for the rainy day was a luxury she could not even dream of.

Her experience with government schemes led her to comment, *‘We do get work intermittently under some government scheme or the other but the earnings are not enough and sometimes we have to wait for years for the money to be released to us.’*

Struggling with days of starvation, malnutrition, poor health and deprivation, Jayamma with her husband and children were forced to migrate to the city in search of livelihood.

The story has been similar for nearly all families of the Chenchu tribe which had to withstand the adverse impact of the Nagarjuna Sagar Srisailem Tiger Reserve Notification of 1978 and Declaration in 1983 – two bits of legislation that pushed the tribe into a hell hole of extreme poverty and deprivation.

It was in the year 2009 that the NREGS Chenchu Special project was introduced in the area. The challenge facing the project team was to gain confidence of people in government schemes.



Picture 1: A Chenchu Household

Jayamma had little choice but to try her luck with the project given her dire situation and reluctance to migrate.

The project was much like other earlier projects which aimed to provide livelihood options to the tribe, but the significant difference was that it was structured to avoid the pitfalls of earlier projects. Says Jayamma,

'We are working under the NREGS Chenchu Special project since 2009 and are assured 15 days of wage employment in a month throughout the year for Rs. 2055 per month per member. There have been no delays in payments so far'

There has been a sea change in Jayamma and her family's life. The family now earns an amount of Rs. 6165 per month and is able to afford sufficient food, clothing and healthcare. The household has seen no migration since the project implementation. Steady and timely cash releases to the beneficiaries have also helped them revive their fallow land through cultivation, thus providing sustenance during off-season. Children are going to school and the family has been successful in setting aside some savings every month for their future needs.

"All we have to say is that NREGS Chenchu Special project has made us realise how bread tastes with butter which we never did earlier neither through migration nor any other interventions" – Ramudu, Jayamma's husband.

Introduction

The Constitution of India makes special provisions for the welfare, development and protection of tribal communities. Schedules V and VI under Constitution of India consist of many constitutional safeguards for tribal groups. There are currently 654 Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities in India, out of which 75 are termed as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) earlier known as Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs). Government of India (GoI) has enacted important policies, programmes and laws for the welfare and protection of the tribal communities. But PVTGs have benefited less than other communities due to isolated settlements, poor community participation, and inaccessible habitations.

Chenchu tribe

Chenchu is a primitive tribe of Andhra Pradesh (AP) recognized as PTG/ PVTG in 1975. The tribe is referred to as primitive as their livelihood is based on forest produce; they use pre-agricultural techniques for food gathering and production and their way of life has not modernised. They inhabit the Nallamalai hills of AP and are spread over the six major districts namely Kurnool, Mahabubnagar, Prakasam, Ranga Reddy, Nalgonda and Guntur. Living across 338 villages or hamlets in the state, their total population adds up to around 42, 000.

Table 1: District wise population of Chenchu community spread across the districts of AP¹

District	Mandals	Habitations	Households	Population
Kurnool	14	42	2133	8160
Guntur	6	48	1643	6376
Nalgonda	3	15	291	1069
Ranga Reddy	7	31	799	2700
Mahabubnagar	10	123	2766	10406
Prakasam	7	81	3136	13321
Total	47	340	10768	42032



Picture 2: Map of AP showing Chenchu districts

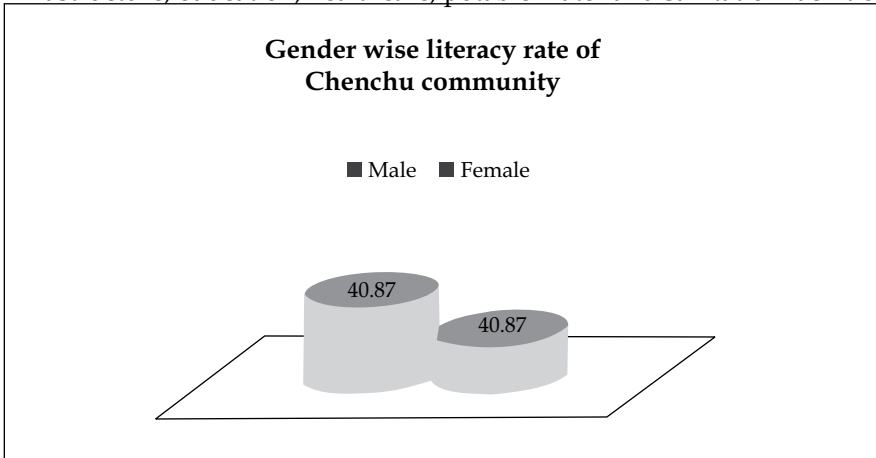
Members of the Chenchu tribe are undaunted by the challenges of their natural surroundings and gather food or hunt animals from the forests. They hunt with bow and arrows as well as small knives. They generally gather NTFPs and trade them for pulses and food grains at Girijan Cooperative Corporation (GCC) set up by the Government of Andhra Pradesh (GoAP). Other NTFP collected include gum, tamarind, myrobalans, nuxvomica, honey wax, mohwa flowers, chironji, etc. They rear goats, sheep, buffaloes and cows. Activities that the Chenchu community is generally involved in are:

¹Source: Integrated Tribal Development Agency, Srisailam

- Tiger tracking for forest department of the state
- Acting as guides for tourists
- Labour work under NREGS
- Agriculture (recently started)

The larger indigenous tribe is divided into distinct clans with a common culture. It follows a patriarchal and patrilineal social structure where monogamy is usually followed (though cases of polygamy are also seen). Marriages between cousins are common. The overall literacy rate is 32.3% where male literacy higher than literacy among the women folk.²

Since the Chenchu tribe has lived in isolated hilly settlements and remote and inaccessible forests for centuries, it has suffered a degree of exclusion from government development programmes. Initiatives in reaching infrastructure, education, healthcare, potable water and sanitation facilities



to the community have neither been sufficient nor very successful. Thus the Chenchu community has, for many years, remained outside the realm of the Government’s constitutional safeguards.

Integrated Tribal Development Agency, Srisailam

Keeping in mind the challenges involved in both implementation and administration of constitutional policies, programmes and laws, GoAP set up the Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA), Srisailam. The agency was established with the objective of improving the socio-economic condition, infrastructure, accessibility and awareness about the various government schemes and entitlements leading to elimination of poverty, unemployment, migration, displacement, indebtedness and lack of livelihood opportunities.

²Source: Census 2001

The ITDA Srisailam was established in 1975-76 with its headquarters at Hyderabad. The headquarters was later shifted from Hyderabad to Srisailam during 1988 as Srisailam is more centrally located for the Chenchu communities in Nallamalai hills. The ITDA acts as a nodal agency for the development of the Chenchu community. So far, ITDA Srisailam has taken up many development schemes covering:

- Provision of basic amenities like drinking water, housing, electrification etc.
- Education
- Agriculture
- Recognition of Forest Rights (RoFR)
- Livelihood

The ITDA is chaired by a Project Officer and has a team of sector experts with strong network of implementing agents at district, mandal, village and habitation levels.

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme

Article 21 of The Constitution of India - "Protection of Life and Personal Liberty" - assures a citizen the right to live with human dignity, and to be free from exploitation. And to live with dignity, a citizen must have access to a means of livelihood that provides the basic necessities of food, clothing, shelter, healthcare and education. Government of India has been implementing various programs to provide opportunities for growth to rural communities. Initiatives such as National Rural Employment Programme, Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Scheme, Jawahar Rojgar Yojna, Employment Assurance Scheme, Sampoorna Grameen Rojgar Yojna were launched at various points in time for the purpose of improving the quality of life of the rural citizenry but met with limited success.

The **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act** (MGNREGA) was enacted in 2005. The scheme provides a legal guarantee for one hundred days of employment in every financial year to adult members of any rural household willing to do public work-related unskilled manual work at the statutory minimum wage of 120 per day at 2009 prices. It provides assured employment and guaranteed wage benefits to the rural community and marks a paradigm shift from earlier employment generation schemes with its provision of rights-based framework for wage employment and demand-driven objectives. The MGNREGS is the largest employment programme in Indian history.

The three basic objectives of MGNREGS are:

- Provision of employment
- Development of natural resources
- Capacity building enhancement through inclusive growth

Not only does the scheme provide employment opportunities to landless labourers, it also helps in creation of resources in situ through construction of roads, ponds, wells, irrigation canals and other water conservation activities along with afforestation. The scheme is being implemented through the gram panchayats to avoid middlemen.

The scheme has been implemented in a phased manner covering 200 most backward districts in first phase, 130 additional districts in second phase and remaining 285 rural districts of India in the third phase, thereby covering 615 districts in all. Proper planning and a focussed approach has helped this programme in successfully reaching the grassroots.

The intervention

The Chenchu tribe has been suffering from many societal ills including low life expectancy, low literacy rate, extreme poverty and increased rate of migration for livelihoods.

The objective of any successful Intervention is to incorporate a working culture. It must enhance livelihood and income-generating activities among the tribe and thereby reduce migration. The earlier Interventions had seen limited success and so migration was widely prevalent in the tribal community the tribal community. Though there are many reasons, the primary one identified was the lack of livelihood options being provided.

Regular programs by ITDA

So far, 5013 houses have been sanctioned to the Chenchu community excluding 1158 houses sanctioned under the Conservation Cum Development Project (CCDP) program. Initiatives to provide drinking water have been taken up on a large scale and also electrification of 293 Chenchu habitations out of a total of 340 habitations.

Currently, there are 122 Government Primary School (GPS) schools in the agency area wherein 1493 students have been enrolled. ITDA has provided a total of 122 Chenchu teachers, one each for a school. Apart from GPS, 34 Tribal Welfare Ashram School (TWAS) with strength of 4848 students, 6 mini-gurukulam schools with strength of 893 students and 5 residential schools with strength of 2379 students exist in the area. In total, more than

10,000 students have been enrolled in different educational institutions set up by the ITDA.

ITDA has established 41 Public Health Centres (PHC), 7 Community Health and Nutrition Clusters (CHNC) and 2 area hospitals. Also, as of now, 300 ASHA (Chenchu women) have been trained and posted in all 340 habitations, and 29,500 bed nets have been supplied.

For the promotion of agriculture in the area, Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) has distributed 1678 acres of land to 1006 households. Under RoFR, 7380 acres and 1008 acres have been distributed to 2360 individuals and 212 individuals in first and second phase respectively.

Apart from this, a special agency G.C.C. was set up by GoAP in 1956 with the aim of improving the socio economic conditions of this tribe to improve their livelihood options. It was established with following objectives:

- To ensure procurement of NTFP collected by Chenchu tribe and giving a fair price for same.
- To ensure the supply of essential commodities under the PDS and other daily requirements (DR) at reasonable prices to tribal consumers through a network of DR sales depots.
- To provide short-term credit to the tribal farmers for their seasonal agricultural operations.

NREGS Chenchu Special project

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme - Chenchu Special project was launched in ITDA Srisailam during May 2009. The project was introduced to address the alarming rates of migration of Chenchu members to cities in search of livelihoods. The projects that were successful in other parts of the country were not as successful in Chenchu areas because the issues facing them were unique.

NREGS Chenchu Special Project was designed in such a way as to focus on the root cause of the issue i.e. ensuring livelihood opportunities in the local area to improve their income and prevent migration.

The usual procedures of NREGS were especially customized such that the Chenchu tribe benefitted the most. The major modifications that were done include:

- Fixed wage employment throughout the year whereas NREGS ensured only 100 days of wage employment.
- No advance wage payments are usually made to beneficiaries in NREGS while here 50% of the wage component is released to Chenchu beneficiaries as an advance to meet their expenses and keep them engaged within the project.
- NREGS provides for only monetary payments for work carried out. In this project, food baskets were given in exchange of wage amount to tackle starvation.
- With NREGS, most wage payments are generally transferred to bank accounts of the beneficiaries and the payments are often delayed. In this project, wages was paid in cash on time through local Village Organizations (VOs).
- Land allotted to Chenchu farmers was hardly being put into use due to inhospitable terrain and unavailability of water. Through this project, land development programmes have been taken up which have made the land suitable for agriculture. The agriculture operations are now an added source of revenue for the beneficiaries.
- All work allotted under NREGS has been carried out in the local area, thereby preventing migration.

Customized NREGS project

NREGS Chenchu Special Project did not follow the NREGS guidelines that have been implemented across the country. The procedures and guidelines were customized to address the issues faced here. The features, which made the project a remedy for the pains of the Chenchu tribe, have been summarised below:

- An assured amount of Rs. 2200 per month given to each Chenchu wage seeker working for 15 days in a month, throughout the year.
- Employment given to the wage seeker throughout the year
- The wage payments released with no delay and the work usually started immediately after issue of orders.
- 50% advance payment of wages to encourage participation.
- A dedicated project management team with a strong network of field team that reached the remotest of the villages and habitations, including deep interior areas of forests and hills.

Monitoring system

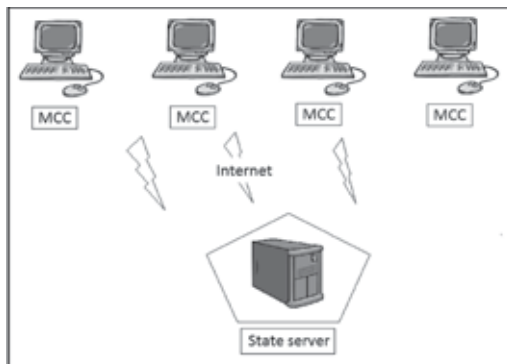
Information and Communication Technology Level 4

The process delivery of NREGS is completely technology driven. Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) has been appointed for managing the web portal (nrega.ap.gov.in) where progress reports are reflected on a daily basis. The NREGS process - job card delivery, estimate generation, issue of work orders, release of funds for the project - is processed through the

fully integrated software application called Rastra Grameena Abhivridhi Samacharam (RAGAS).

Mandal Computer Centres (MCC) have been established in mandals which have computer systems with internet facility. Each centres act as a facilitation centre and hub for the process at mandal-level. The progress is recorded and reviewed through the state-level-server, which captures the progress in web reports.

The layout of the Information Communication Technology (ICT) system of NREGS may be as follows:



Picture 3: Layout of ICT system of NREGS

The server gathers the information uploaded at each MCC and the data thus collected is used for analysis. The analysis produces useable information in the form of web reports which are updated on a daily basis.

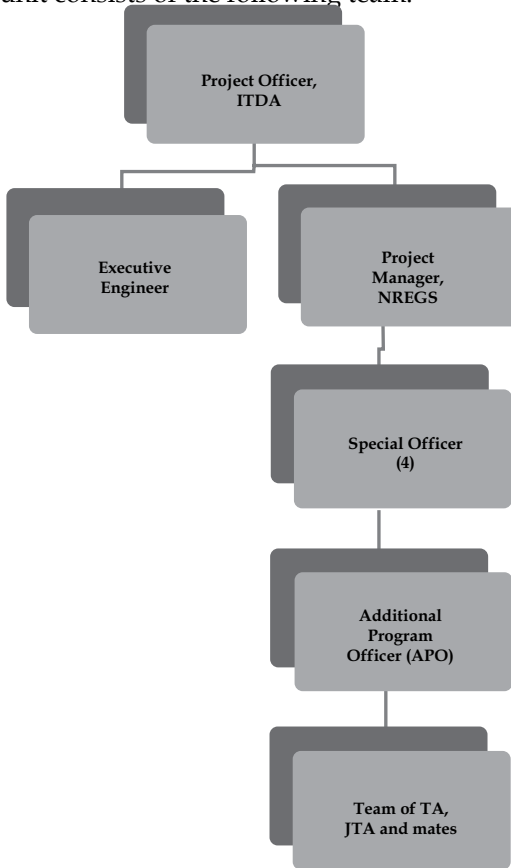


Picture 4: A snapshot of the web portal showing NREGS Chenchu Special Project progress reports

The web reports describe the progress of the project on a day-to-day basis in the form of wage seekers enrolled, wage payment status (estimated cost, payment made), man days created, coverage of habitations, job card registered, work status (number sanctioned, number in progress, number completed) etc. The information available is at state level, which can be drilled down upto habitation-level for micro-analysis and close monitoring.

Project monitoring unit

A Project Monitoring Unit (PMU) has been established at ITDA for the close monitoring of the project's implementation and to review its progress. The unit consists of the following team:



Picture 5: PMU, NREGS at ITDA Srisailam

Challenges faced

There were several challenges to the successful implementation of the project. Some of the major ones were:

- Most of the habitations were located deep within forest areas making it difficult for the group to mobilize them
- Alcoholism was very high among Chenchu which hampered work
- Low availability of the local educated youth for the implementation. involvement of local youth was important to mobilize the community
- Most of the Chenchu habitations are located in forest area where permission from the local forest department is required for any Intervention.
- General rates as per the NREGS Act did not work out in this project area as hilly terrains offer low opportunities for work. Furthermore, the long distances involved increases the transportation costs. This resulted in private suppliers/service providers not showing much interest at current allowable rates.
- The project needed close co-ordination between ITDA, Srisailam and local forest department. But the level of dedication shown towards the project was not equal on all the sides and thus, the project was delayed or suffered in certain cases.
- Low interest among Chenchu community for work other than land development due to lack of working culture.
- Cell phone network is not available in interior habitations, which prevented implementation of IT based monitoring systems such as e-muster.

Strength of the project

Despite various challenges that were faced by the implementing and monitoring teams, the project succeeded to a large extent. This was mainly due to certain strengths:

- The major strength of the project was in creating livelihood options locally.
- Advance payments attracted higher number of beneficiaries.
- As only land development tasks were initiated, nature of work was not very complicated and involved low manual labour, which ultimately suited the tribal culture.
- The Self-Help Groups (SHGs) were homogeneous i.e. all members belonged to the same community and thus proved to be an added benefit for the project.
- Extension programmes were conducted for creating awareness about the NREGS projects.
- Conversion of existing SHGs into fixed labour groups through provision of wage and employment throughout the year helped functioning
- Live demonstrations were given by the subject experts for the

development of the land as an additional source of income to enhance their livelihood.

- Regular and robust monitoring system, which included IT based Interventions and MIS reports updated on a daily basis.
- Project strategy developed ensured the ownership and control of Chenchu community over the project.
- Supplementing schemes like supply of food baskets to communities, where the food items were generally not available in the vicinity, provided physical well-being to carry out labour-oriented activities under the project.

Impact

- The project resulted in significant upliftment of the living standards of Chenchu tribe.
- The physical strength and health of the community members has improved to a large extent as a result of regular labour and increased food intake facilitated by higher income and better nutritional intake through the food basket scheme.
- With the community's adults largely involved in NREGS work, their alcohol consumption has reduced to a large extent.
- Prior to NREGS Chenchu Special Project, adults of the community would take their children for NTFP collection or other income generating activities. NREGS staff now regularly visit the Chenchu habitations and motivate them to send their children to school. Education level is thus rising among the youth as a result of increased school attendance.
- Assured paid employment has reduced migration to a great extent.
- Increase in purchasing power.
- Increased exposure to technology such as Television, mobile phones and resultant awareness of the outer world through such media.
- Better access to health facilities and use of NREGS team vehicles in case of emergency.
- Community members have started visiting cities and other areas for leisure and shopping;
- Chenchu tribe have been traditionally inhibited in their interactions with the government officials. Frequent visit by NREGS team and addressing the issues raised in a timely manner has developed a comfortable rapport for community members to approach and discuss their issues freely.

Food basket scheme

It was observed during the initial periods of the project that the wage amount received by the Chenchu beneficiaries was mostly spent on liquor and other social vices. Many male Chenchu members were affected with diseases like TB. Considering the gravity of the situation, a Food Basket Scheme has been introduced. This basket contains nutritious food items

like red gram, wheat flour, turmeric powder, chilli powder, ground nut oil or coconut oil. The scheme has been so far successful in tackling liquor consumption and diseases like tuberculosis.'

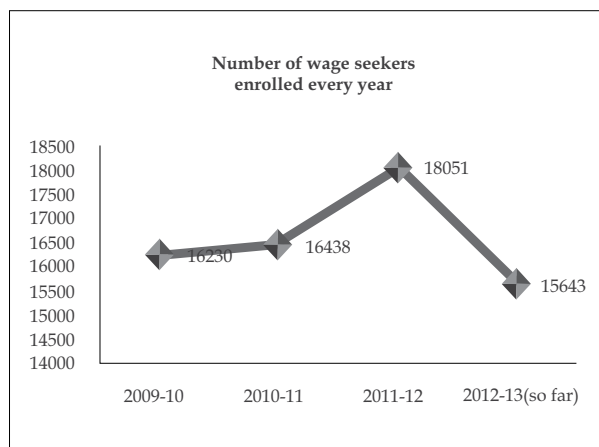
Picture 6: Distribution of food baskets to chenchu community members



Progress so far

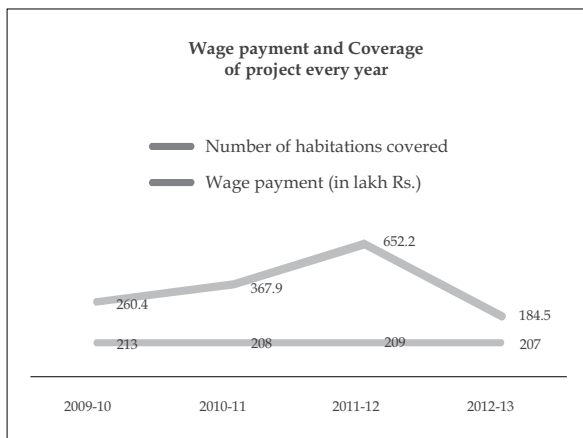
Till now, through the NREGS Chenchu Special Project, approximately 6000 households have been provided with at least 100 days of wage employment through the program.

Picture 7: Number of wage seekers enrolled every year



Payment progress for the wage disbursement and the habitations covered by the project so far are as follows:

Picture 8: Payment progress and coverage of project every year



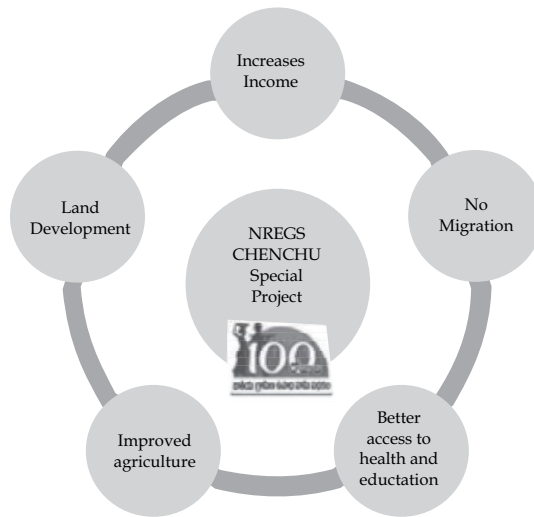
Following table gives the district wise details of the yearly habitation coverage by the project.

Table 2: District wise yearly coverage of habitations

S. No.	Year	Habitations covered				
		Mahabubnagar	Kurnool	Guntur	Prakasham	Total
1	2009-10	88	28	37	60	213
2	2010-11	88	28	37	55	208
3	2011-12	90	31	36	52	209
4	2012-13 (so far)	90	31	36	50	207

Sustainability

The project gives assurance of wage employment throughout the year to willing wage seekers. Land development activities followed by farming on the land create livelihood assets for the community. This ensures sustainable income generation for the community. It also gives enough time to Chenchu to practice their traditional way of life. The project has become well-known not only within the Chenchu tribe but also other government departments for its effective implementation.



Picture 9: NREGS Chenchu Special Project: Sustainability component

Conclusion

Despite the Chenchu community members not being open towards government Interventions and officials, NREGS Chenchu Special Project has attained remarkable success in upliftment of their living standards. The success of the project cannot be attributed to a single factor or a single stakeholder. The deviation of the project guidelines from the normal NREGS guidelines, dedication of the implementation team, IT Intervention, strong monitoring system, cooperation of Chenchu community members and many other factors have contributed to project success. Though the project targeted improving the livelihood of the beneficiaries, it has also made significant contribution to the improvement of social status, health standards and education level of the community. Children go to school, nutrition level of the people has improved, alcohol consumption has been reduced to a large extent and they now have mobile phones, TV other assets that are increasing their awareness of outside world.

As it is said, the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. The project has been a single step by the GoAP towards the upliftment of one of the most vulnerable groups of the country i.e. the tribal community. However, it's still a long journey to achieve the successful upliftment of various other groups that are on the verge of extinction. Tribals are the most vulnerable of our communities and the preservation of their culture while providing opportunities for livelihood through the Interventions is what the tribal community needs. There are hundreds of development schemes and programmes initiated in every region of the country, but

to what extent their strategies are customized to suit the needs of the vulnerable groups, still remains a question.

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Identifying Innovative Options for Sustainable Livelihoods of Poorest of the Poor

Lokendra Singh Kot

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;

Where knowledge is free;

Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls;

Where words come out from the depth of truth;

Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;

Where the clear streams of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;

Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever widening thought and action;

Into that heaven of freedom, may father, let my country awake.

Rabindranath Tagore in "Gitanjali"

Background of the region

Jhabua is a predominantly tribal district located in the western part of Madhya Pradesh. It is surrounded by Panchmahal and Baroda districts of Gujrat, Banswara district of Rajsthan and Alirajpur, Dhar and Ratlam districts of Madhya Pradesh. This hilly district has abundant natural resources and has an agriculture-based economy. The main crops of the area are Maize, Jowar, Bajra, Cotton, Wheat, Urad, Arhar, Groundnut. The climate is generally moderate with well-defined seasons. The average rainfall in the district is about 800mm. Most of the rainfall occurs in monsoon season though there is some rainfall in winter as well. The minerals found here are gram, limestone, dolomite, calside etc. Meghnagar is a developing industrial area of the district.

This district is sparsely populated with a total population of 7.84 lakhs as per the 2011 census. Spread over 3782 sq kms, Jhabua has about 656 inhabited villages. About 85% of its population belong to the tribal community of Bhil while 3% population belong to Schedule Castes. 47 per cent of the people live below the poverty line. The literacy rate according to 2011 census is 36.8% with female literacy of only 4%. Thus, Jhabua is an overwhelmingly tribal and poor district.

Area of the District	3782 sq km.
Forest Area	645 sq km.
Tehsil	5
Development Blocks	6
Revenue Villages	813
Inhabited Villages	656
Male Population	396141
Female Population	388145
Total Population	784286
Rural	91%
Tribal (Bhil)	85.60%
SC	3%

The Bhil Tribe

The name Bhil is derived from Dravidian word 'bhilawar', which means archer.



Society of Bhil Tribe

Physically, an average Bhil is medium-sized with dark skin and thick hair. The Bhils are strong and brave people with simple habits and a simple lifestyle. Although excellent warriors, they earn their livelihood working as peasant farmers, field labourers, and village watchmen. Bhili is their dialect which is an Indo-Aryan language. Their dialect includes Rajasthani, Gujarati, Hindi, Marathi words, and also some unique words without any Sanskrit elements in it. They are large consumers of varieties of flesh and liquor. The tribe is highly religious by nature and they worship several Hindu deities, chief among them being the deity, Raja Pantha. The Bhil community also worships crops, fields, water, the forest and the mountains. They are superstitious and believe in wearing charms and amulets to ward off evil spirits. They usually bury the dead. Bhils are generally wary of accepting outsiders within their community.

Culture of Bhil Tribe

The Bhil tribe has a rich cultural heritage. Its Ghoomar dance is one of its most well-known art form. The Bhil tribes are considered to be a fun-loving community. Sawang is a popular form of entertainment among the Bhil tribes, which consists of storytelling combined with drinking, dancing and music. They celebrate festivals in honour of their departed ancestors. One of the most important festival of the Bhils is the Gavri where a roving group of performers enact Hindu stories in village squares throughout their district. Joining them is considered to be a duty and also an honour.

The costumes of the Bhil tribes are distinctive. The Bhil woman wears an upper garment called the kapada, a ghaghra and an odhna. The kapada is a short-sleeved cotton blouse, with laces at the back, around the neck and the waist. The ghaghra is ankle-length skirt which can be ingeniously turned into a pair of trousers while working in the fields. The women



cover their torso and head with an `odhna` or `lugda`, made of hand-spun fabric that may be block-printed, resist-dyed or screen-printed. The typical Bhil bride wears a yellow `ghaghra` called a `piliya`, the colour of turmeric, which is a symbol of purity. The ghaghra worn by married Bhil women in general, has printed designs.

Ornaments are an integral part of their dressing. The women wear the bor and jhela on their forehead. Their ear-ornaments include the dhimmna



and oganiya. The hansli, haar and tagli are various neck-ornaments. The muthia are a set of bangles worn on the forearms and comprise the kasla and the kamkada. Kaslas are bangles made of coconut shells embellished with silver bands and the latter are plain bands of brass or lacquer worn around the wrist. Finger rings called beenti, and bidi are made of brass or copper. Married women wear

brass anklets called `pejania`. Toe rings are called `bichiya` and are made of silver, brass or white metal. Tattoos are very popular and have acquired a certain social and religious significance. The members of Bhil community generally tattoo birds, flowers and scorpions on various parts of bodies like the forearms, wrists, forehead, chin, calves and feet. The women of the community wear intricate and complicated hairstyles. For example, one style is a centre parting with small plaits on either side of the forehead. These are intertwined with thick red-and-black cords called `lasa` and are joined to the main braid at the back of the head.

Conditions under which collective action was initiated

The contribution of women in farming is no way minor. Historians believe that it was the women who first started growing crops and domesticating animals. The women in Jhabua, like in many other places, are invisible workers labouring hard from dawn to dusk for the betterment of their farms and homes. However, women have suffered utter neglect over centuries. Studies reflect that 78% of economically active women are engaged in agriculture and allied sectors. This holds good for Jhabua as well. The women are



usually engaged in arduous field operations like sowing, being the plough, transplanting, weeding, interculture, harvesting and threshing and agro-processing. The activities in agro-processing involve cleaning/ grading, drying, parboiling, milling, grinding, decorticating and storage.

Working collectively has always been seen as a constructive form of contributing to society, as the proverb 'Saha-astitvam sufalam' i.e. mutual coexistence brings success, illustrates.' Traditionally, agriculture has been woven into the life of Bhils and not seen as a money-making enterprise. Members of the tribe, especially women would work as a group on each of their farms in the process of growing the necessary produce. But with increasing modernisation, and resultant mechanisation and higher consumerism, catering to market factors became far more important leading to practices that was at odds with their culture, and this ultimately drove them into the vicious cycle of indebtedness.

The role of SAMPARK and the factors contributing to the success of the initiative

A successful way to develop a community is to make them aware of their ancient traditions and revitalise their customs. An organization called SAMPARK used this to develop and foster the traditional practice of collective working among the women of the Bhil tribe.

Traditional systems of working within communities were often self-sustaining. In Jhabua, women worked collectively, developing an autonomous approach to labour. Recent societal and economic changes had however led to the abandonment of this form of working.

Under the system of "Arji-Parji", members of the group work on each other's farm. Through this form of exchange, the women mainly covered activities like sowing, transplanting, weeding, interculture, harvesting, agro-processing.

Yet another system is the HALMA, under which a group of people work one farm and the owner of the farm provides food in the evening to all the workers. This in such systems of collective work, there is no exchange of money.

These ancient traditional systems were revived by SAMPARK in 1996-97. The basic objectives behind this programme was:

- To preserve Bhil's traditional collective work culture, especially among women.
- To empower the women in local development activities.

- To encourage Gram Swaraj and women participation in Panchayati Raj.
- To nurture traditional systems and institutions like “Arji-Parji,” “Hamla,” “Justice from Choupal,” and “collaborative Nukta.”

SAMPARK conducted activities like village level workshops, training sessions, awareness camps, educational tours, Gramotsav (village fairs) street plays and video shows to generate awareness. This process was carried out with help of self-help groups and with discussions in the gram chopal sessions.

It was estimated that on an average, around 10-15 people would be required for completing a farm’s work. Based on this, they calculated the extent of labour required, and formed groups to implement it. Members from 75 villages of Jhabua district joined this program.

It was the first step of the process, but people weren’t sufficiently interested in this system. Initially they faced many administrative, social, political and cultural problems but gradually, its acceptance increased. SAMPARK regularly interacted with the villagers and ultimately after 12 to 14 months, more people adopted the system. Once the system was adopted by few villages, around 92 villages of the district Jhabua joined in. Since there was no exchange of money but only exchange of labour, the biggest benefit that resulted was the reduction of cost involved in agriculture. And most importantly it resulted in the members escaping the need to take loans from Sahukars (money-lenders) at high interest rates.

With increasing awareness, many women became active. The customs that had died out over time like “Arji-Parji,” “Hamla,” “Justice from Choupal,” and “collaborative Nukta.” were re-established. And soon positive results

could be seen. Women were encouraged to participate in Panchayati Raj (local governance institutions). Empowered by SAMPARK, after some initial hesitation, they have made greater progress than expected.

Each year, cultural programme are organized as a part of Gramotsav. Around 3-4 districts of



Jhabua participate in these Gramotsav. A group discussion with women

is also conducted as a part of this, and generally around 500 to 700 people participate.



Parameters of success and results

This movement is an excellent example of a successful cooperative society which has also developed women leaders. It has helped them become empowered enough to participate in Panchayati Raj system, taking advantage of the 33% reservation. This entire program is being run by Suraj bai and her group in Bhil Kotda village of Jhabua district, and is a landmark achievement for Panchayati Raj. Suraj Bai has become so popular in her area that she was elected as a Panch (village leader).



Another such success story is Hukli bai from Jamli village of Patlavad Tehsil of Jhabua district. She initiated Arji-Parji and also started “Bayera Ne Kuldi” which is a fund created by the women for themselves, a self-help group in other words. At the end one year, the 32 women of her group have a fund of around Rs. 1.25 lakhs collected with a small but regular saving of. Rs. 2-10 from their earnings.

These are but two examples of the region but others like Shanti bai, Shagun Bai, Fundi bai from other villages are also similar success stories.

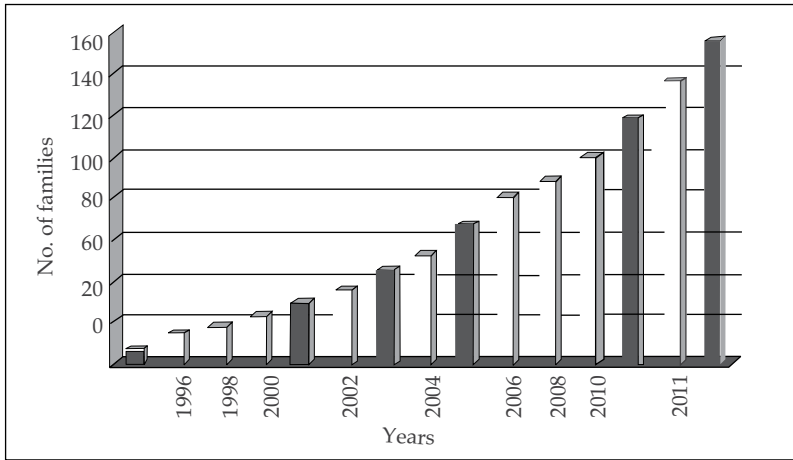
The members say that the practice of not exchanging money is very advantageous because the money saved can be used for other purposes. This form of working has also stemmed the migration that was prevalent earlier. Another advantage is that members come closer to each other socially and politically.

The following table presents data for past 15-16 years on the monetary benefit accruing to the groups through Arji-Parji form of working:

No.	Year		No. of Villages	Arji-Parji (No. of days)	Arji-Parji (No. of person worked)	Arji Parji (Total Saving in Rs.)
1	1996	sowing,	7	45	10	9000=00
2	1997	transplanting,	12	56	14	15680=00
3	1998	weeding,	15	136	22	59840=00
4	1999	interculture,	16	197	27	106380=00
5	2000	harvesting,	16	182	32	116480=00
6	2001	agro - processing.	16	165	39	108420=00
7	2002	The activities in agro - processing	16	154	48	147840=00
8	2003	involve cleaning / grading,	28	174	56	147840=00
9	2004	drying,	31	182	69	194880=00
10	2005	parboiling,	38	216	89	251160=00
11	2006	milling,	52	226	102	480600=00
12	2007	grinding,	71	236	126	576300=00
13	2007	decorticating and storage	83	270	139	743400=00
14	2008		83	320	157	1125900=00
15	2009		92	684	184	1507200=00
16	2010		92	1183	212	3775680=00
		Total		5256	1524	24570220=00

The data reveals that, over years, out of 1119 families, a total of 5256 persons have benefited by Arji-Parji. On an average cost basis, the money saved is around Rs. 245 lakhs. This is only the amount of net savings, it will be more if the interest that would have been paid to local money lenders is added. The figure below shows the number of families that have benefited over years.

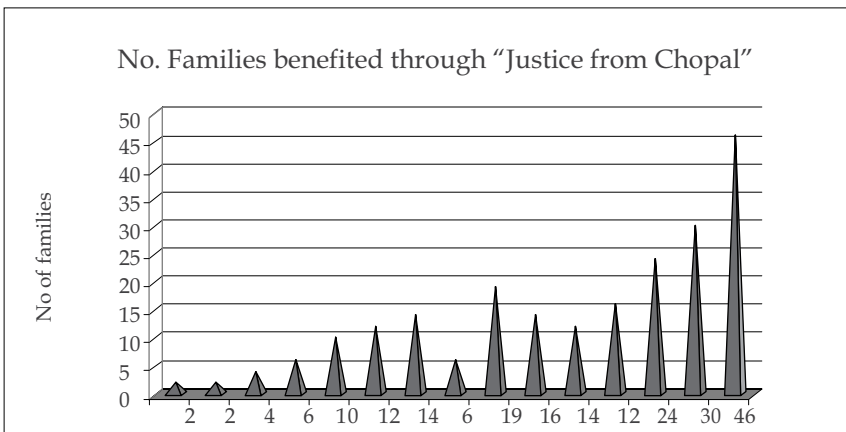
No. of Families benefited through "Arji-Parji"



All this is the direct impact of the redeveloped system of Arji-Parji. but other key indicators like increased social integration, better personal relationships, higher leadership among women, improved living standards signify the extent of impact on the community.

What innovations are associated in collective action

An amazing spin-off has been the increased social cohesiveness. As a result of the smoother personal relationships, many conflicts and disputes are being resolved under a single umbrella i.e. "Chopal ka Nayay" which means Justice from Chopal. This traditional system of justice comprises senior and respected members of the community who give their decision on the disputes after listening to both sides. The harmony developed through "Arji-Parji" plays a key role in the of success of this system, and in last 15-16 years many families have been benefited as shown in the following figure.



An example is the resolution of the land dispute between Laxman and Kashiram of the village Mahudipada who had been fruitlessly fighting an expensive court battle for 9-10 years with no results. Arji-Parji bought them closer to each other and they decided to consult and follow the Chopal's ruling. With only a small payment to the Chopal, they were able to settle their dispute.



Among the Bhil community, a custom called Nutka is followed wherein food is provided to the whole community after the death of any family member. Costing around Rs. 18, 000 -20, 000, the Nutka is a status symbol among the community and mandatory for every one. Loans are often taken at very high interest to conduct this function. With the

help of SAMPARK it was decided that each and every family of the village would contribute some money and some food grain to the bereaved family. Over time around 250 quintals of grains have been arranged for this purpose and a total of 212 Nukta functions carried out

This has benefitted 239 families in 92 villages who saved around Rs. 7-8 lakhs .

Critical challenges for continued success of the collective action

The biggest challenge of the area is to matching overall progress and development. The new generation is attracted by the urban lifestyle, and Bhil's culture needs to be able to withstand and survive this. Second



challenge is the increasing mechanization in agriculture. Although helpful in general, it threatens the livelihood of a labourer. Third is learning to be successful in carrying out agriculture as a business as it only within bounds of system like Arji-Parji can emotional ties exist and function meaningfully.

Approach to Establishing Efficient Tribal/ Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group owned Marketing Institutions

Nirmallya Mandal and Jitendra Mallick

Background

Over 70% of the population of Tumudibandh block in Odisha's Kandhamal district belong to the Scheduled Tribe (ST) community of *Kondh* and *Kutia Kondhs* (an aboriginal tribal race classified as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group). Notwithstanding its rich vegetation and good rainfall, this region is home to one of the highest concentration of rural poverty in the world. For millennia, tribal communities here have lived in forests, and survived on hunting and gathering.

Physiographically, the entire district lies in a high-altitude area with inaccessible hilly terrain and narrow valley tracts. This inhospitable environment has influenced the socio-economic conditions of its inhabitants and the development of the district. With a Human Development Index score of 0.389, the district ranks a dismal 29th out of the state's 30 districts, making it one of the most backward districts in the state of Odisha.

Their backwardness is largely attributed to the all-pervasive illiteracy and resultant ignorance. Tumudibandh tribals carry out many activities like collection of various forest products, seasonal farming, non-farm activities, and animal husbandry. All these activities usually contribute to the gross income of a tribal household. In the past, due to poor accessibility, the producers travelled with their minimal produce to the nearest haats (traditional markets) which were often the only market for their produce. Ignorance and lack of opportunities forced them to sell their products at meagre prices. Clearly, there was need to address these issues collectively in order to break the vicious cycle that was dragging these farmers into abject poverty.

Adivasi Bazaar Committee (ABC), A Community organization was thus formed by members of *Kondh* and *Kutia Kondh* tribes under Odisha Tribal Empowerment and Livelihood Programme (OTELP) in 2005. ABC was registered under Societies Act as a non profit community institution to empower and enable primary producers and collectors to access the more remunerative organized markets. Many initiatives were undertaken to market surplus Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFP)/ agricultural products but inadequate participation of the community, poor quality,

low surplus produce, underutilized infrastructure and low institutional cohesiveness threatened viability of the institution.

Supported by Rabobank Foundation in 2010, MART, a leading rural consultancy agency, started a comprehensive program to strengthen ABC. Earlier, MART had supported Odisha Tribal Empowerment and Livelihoods Programme (OTELP) as a technical agency in 2007 to pilot and establish collective marketing of NTFP/Agri produce across the operational area of OTELP. Although the first steps in collective marketing had proved to be highly remunerative, there was much more to be done. The challenge was getting the prerequisites in place for *making the markets work for the poor tribals* in a sustainable manner. Achieving economies of scale at the local level was imperative for success in gaining access to mainstream markets. Among other requirements, it was felt that building infrastructure, both physical and social was extremely critical. The role of social infrastructure is particularly essential for ensuring successful sustainable collectivization.

ABC thus needed a change in its approach towards developing a pro-poor system of marketing. Following is a brief account of the transformation of ABC from a tribal community institution into a profit making community business enterprise.

Issues and Challenges

ABC started its functioning in 48 villages. With representatives residing in each village, it was quite cumbersome for ABC to organize collectivization and take business decisions. Absence of Panchayat system, weak social structures and small individual surplus in addition to inaccessible and remote villages made coordination all the more difficult .

Some of the major issues were:

- There were no specific products that ABC focused upon, and poor expertise in marketing led to many issues. The change in cropping pattern of the community in the past six-seven years also made it necessary to review the product line so as to identify the products that would remain viable over a long period of time and could be produced in a large scale.
- Low amount of surpluses within the operational 48 villages highlighted the need to increase the number of villages covered to achieve economies of scale.
- Poor market information prevented formulation of market-appropriate marketing strategies.
- The products sold lacked consistency in quality and were not as per market requirements. Since a major bottleneck was inaccessibility of villages, the need for localized village level aggregation and quality

checking was felt strongly. Localized physical infrastructure to do this was thus required to be put in place.

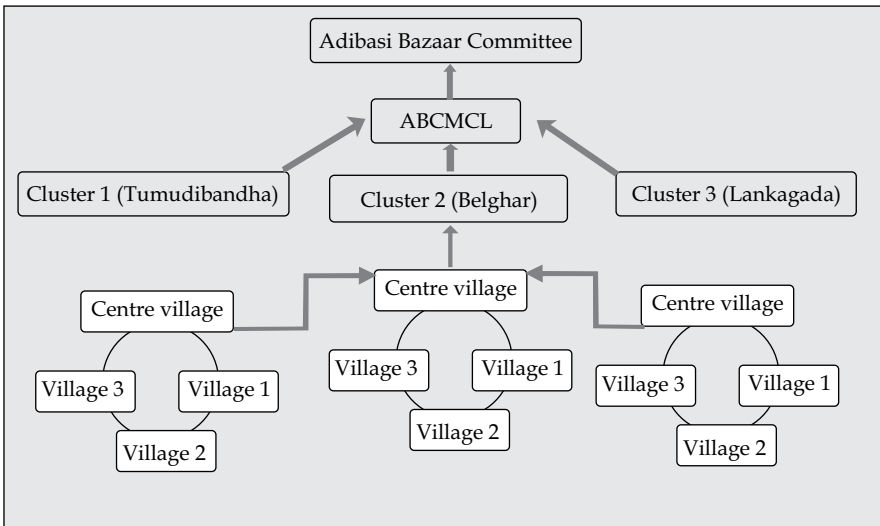
- ABC was unable to negotiate with higher order markets and so was losing considerably to smarter market players.
- To undertake large scale business activities, ABC needed flexibility in its legal framework. Since ABC was institutionalized as a non-profit agency under Cooperative Act, 1860, the institution was not legally permitted to retain profits and conduct regular business activities.

Steps to promote a sustainable marketing institution

In order to address the above challenges, MART in association with Rabobank Foundation came up with specific strategies:

1. First, an intensive study was carried out to gather information about the available produce in the operational villages. During the exercise, information on the village profiles, available products and information on active Self Help Groups (SHG) was collected through small group discussions at the community level both from the original base of 48 villages and the new operational villages across Tumudibandha and Kotagada Blocks. Special formats were designed to record quantitative information and required data was collected by MART. Qualitative information on critical factors affecting the product, community based organisations (CBOs) and markets was collected as well. Based on this, a provisional product profile of all the operational villages was prepared. This profile contained, among other things, detailed information about the seasonality, tentative quantity available and issues relating to the marketing of the products. The database thus provided an overview on the availability of products and institutions in the entire operational area. Validation of the database was done during concept sharing meetings held in each of the operational villages. The study also led to developing value chain analyses of nine potential products. Institutional loan assessment exercises facilitated the process of production planning of various products at village and SHG level, with detailed business plans being developed for them. Community mobilization plans for idea sharing and increasing participation of primary stakeholders were developed. The existing catchment area of ABC has surplus of few products viz. niger, castor, cow pea seed etc. Products based clusters were also identified based on product profiles developed.
2. Operational structure: The villages are mostly situated within a radius of 40 km from Tumudibandha Block office. For operational convenience and geographical proximity, all operational villages have been divided into three operational clusters i.e. Tumudibandha cluster, Belghar Cluster and Lankagada Cluster, and each cluster was

divided into centers for micro operations. A center consisted of 2 to 6 villages (based on the size of population in the villages) situated in close proximity, and out of them, one village was identified as the center village. The center villages were identified based on road connectivity, availability/possibility of creating new storage structure, presence of vibrant SHGs etc. In most cases, the center village was chosen so that produce could be easily transported with approach roads connecting to the main road of the area. The center villages were provided with all necessary market infrastructure i.e. weighing scale, storage structure, drying yard etc. and also other equipment to support the business activities of the clubbed villages. Operational diagram of ABC is given below:



Representation of ABCMCL

3. ABC was re-legislated to be a formal business entity. Suitable by-laws were finalized and agreed upon in consultation with leaders and stakeholders of ABC. A subsidiary organization called Adivasi Bazaar Committee Multi Purpose Society Limited (ABCMCL) was registered under Odisha Self Help Co-operative Act, 2001. With this, ABCMCL could now create reserve profits and conduct business activities. This enabled the organization to reach out to larger markets.
4. Creating leadership to manage various business functions at all levels of ABC was considered necessary to sustain its activities in the long run. In addition to the existing leaders who have been associated with ABC since its inception, new leaders from the community in

the expanded operational areas of Adibasi Bazaar Committee were identified. Leaders were carefully selected in consultation with the partner NGO and CBOs as the process of democratic election was not serving the purpose. The leaders were chosen to represent the various villages/centers, and they worked closely with the CBOs. Currently the leaders are involved in social mobilization activity and over time, it is expected that the leaders will facilitate business functions in their respective villages/centers. Sensitizing the community towards the need for efficient and good leaders as understood by MART and developing them is a complex and context-specific process. Hence a deliberate plan to facilitate the process of creating the leaders and supporting them was developed. MART desired to empower various stakeholders by training them so as to create ownership and ensure sustainability of the initiatives. After assessing the training needs, MART designed and administered training at different stakeholders level. It also developed a pictorial flip book to sensitize ABC members about different management aspects.

5. Management of clusters: One volunteer is selected to manage mobilization, coordination and other business functions of each cluster. Three such members have been deployed in three different clusters. These selected volunteers have been associated with the Adibasi Bazaar Committee since its inception and have high levels of acceptance within the community. They are primarily responsible for social mobilization at the cluster level and are paid a monthly remuneration of Rs. 3000 per month by MART. The cluster-level volunteers work in close coordination with the partner NGO. Other than the cluster level volunteers, some center level leaders were also identified and groomed to support the CBOs for the overall coordination and other business functions.
6. Training for skills: A detailed training plan was developed for ABC members, leaders and governing committee with specific community based modules designed for skill enhancement in business/ institutional management and enterprise management. Frequent discussion with ABC members had led to the identification of training in areas of Micro Enterprise Development, Collective Marketing, Preparation of Business Plan, Documentation etc. Discussions were also held with other stakeholders to understand how best to equip the ABC members with the necessary knowledge and skill to be effective in playing their roles for the overall development of ABC. Training modules were prepared on the relevant topics for the ABC members and leaders of the community.

7. Exposure visits to successful units: The leaders of ABCMCL were taken for many exposure visits to markets and successful cooperatives. Direct interaction with traders and market players increased their confidence and market knowledge .
8. Sensitization meetings were organized at ABC premises with the participation of WDT members, Community Mobilizers, Marketing cadres of OTELP (Tumudibandha). As the 48 OTELP operational villages of Tumudibandha Block were coming under the operation of ABC the role of existing facilitators of OTELP was vital to ensure the active participation of the CBOs for the overall development of the ABC, These meetings discussed ongoing developmental initiatives for strengthening ABC
9. Adding value to selected produce: Siali leaf and Hill grass emerged as common products across the three clusters. It was decided by all stakeholders that value adding process for siali leaf had the potential to provide substantial additional income to the community. The communities collected loose Siali leaves from the nearby forest and after sun drying for a day or two, sold it to the local trader at a price of Rs. 4 per kg. By pinning the leaf, they could get Rs. 40-50 per 100 pieces of pinned leaf plate (khali) which required approximately 1.5 kgs of loose leaves. This seemed to be a viable business opportunity. The children and the elderly of the community now undertake this activity as one of their main sources of livelihood. Others could take this up during their leisure hours and on off days. It was also observed that though many had the traditional skill of pinning leaves, the quality and economic aspects of leaf plate (khali) making were not known to them. It was thus decided to impart training to women in all operational villages through high skilled trainers of the nearby blocks, and also provide marketing support to the community through ABC. Accordingly, training was conducted in the villages. Likewise, binding hill brooms from hill grass has excellent market potential in the urban markets of Odisha and nearby states. It was therefore decided that ABC would procure loose hill grass from its member SHGs and undertake hill brooms binding activity. This was institutionalized through the MART support.
10. Procurement and collection systems at the ABC level was strengthened. Marketing infrastructure at ABC/center level was developed. For operational convenience, it was decided to provide all necessary infrastructure support i.e. weighing scale, drying yard, storage structure etc at the Centre level only. Out of 35, 14 centers were equipped with this infrastructure.

List of Market infrastructures created under ABC

- a. 6 storage cum drying yards
 - b. 18 manual weighing scales (1 qtl capacity each)
 - c. 1 rice huller
 - d. 1 Flour Mill
 - e. 1 oil expeller
 - f. 1 electric motor (10 hp)
 - g. 2 packing machines
 - h. 2 electronic weighing scales
 - i. Boundary wall of ABC campus
 - j. 3 Siali leaf plate making (heat pressed) machines
 - k. 4 Market information boards at procurement centers
11. Marketing tie-ups with various organized buyers: Key market players like large traders and trading agencies (both government and private) at several district level and terminal markets i.e. Phulbani, Rayagada, Berhampur, Bargarh and Kantabanji etc. were identified and visited. Discussions are also held with some institutional buyers i.e. TDCC and ORMAS for marketing available products. Traders of neighbouring states of Andhra Pradesh and Chhatisgarh were also contacted over telephone to explore possibilities of tie-ups to distribute available products in large volumes. Community - Trader interactions were regularly undertaken to boost community confidence and build general marketing knowledge.
12. During the value chain analyses of the products, several markets were visited by MART professionals, and important terminal and wholesale markets were mapped . Information collected on traders was consolidated market wise and an overall trader database was prepared. This database continues to support ABC functionaries in providing market information.
13. Introducing better market access : Trader malpractices like improper weighing, advance procurement at low prices, unjust deductions etc. were addressed by ABC. Intensive capacity building on marketing and management of agri/NTFP including trainings, sensitization meetings, exposure visits, trader interface etc. was conducted. ABC did not have capacity to store produce for long periods which would help in generating maximum returns. Prior experience showed that SHGs were not able to take the risk of storing their produce for long periods, but ABC could handle moderate risks on behalf of the SHGs and store for a certain period to have profitable linkage in the off season. Also lack of working capital at the ABC level meant that the produce procured by the CBOs had to be necessarily sold to generate cash flow. Further financial support was arranged in

the form of institutional credit from banks. MART also approached District Supply and Marketing Society (DSMS), Kandhamal District and OTELP for short-term loans as Working Capital for procurement of available produce (agricultural products, NTFP, horticultural produce) at the SHG level and for related activities by ABC. After discussion with various stakeholders, an amount of Rs. 7,00,000 was estimated to be required for a period of one and half year. The working capital limit could be operated like a cash credit (need-based and flexible). ABC needs to repay the principal amount released within one and half year from the date of disbursement after the moratorium period. Simple interest rates as applicable on the principal amount are to be paid annually. In the meanwhile DSMS of Kandhamal District has agreed to provide the said amount to ABC as a Soft loan with an annual interest of 8%. Further discussion is on with other agencies to obtain the loan at lower interest rates.

14. Convergence with other stakeholders: Keeping the vulnerability of the community in mind, it was decided to introduce micro insurance (life) in the operational villages of ABC. Given the unique needs of the community, a special insurance package was needed - low premium rates with high value of coverage. In this connection several round of discussions were held with various private and government insurance companies, and TATA-AIG was finally chosen. The introduction of micro insurance in the area not only provides life insurance coverage to the community but also creates a business opportunity for ABC as insurance channel partner of TATA-AIG. It was agreed by all stakeholders that micro insurance as a service product needed to be offered through ABC to its member villages and all commission earned out of the insurance business would be retained as revenue. Accordingly, an application from ABC was put forward to the concerned authority of TATA-AIG to become its Rural Insurance partner. The marketing cadres (promoted by OTELP in its operational villages of Tumudibandha Block) were trained to act as insurance agents to promote micro insurance among the community. Discussion were also held with TATA-AIG for conducting the insurance agents' certificate course recommended by IRDA (Government of India) to all Marketing Cadres free of cost.
15. Since technical Intervention often results in new income generation opportunities for the community, several rounds of discussions were held with various rural technology providers i.e. SEED, Hyderabad, Panigrahi Enterprise, Balasore (Odisha), Villgro, Chennai. Also low cost manual technology for processes like oil expellers, Silai leaf cutting, solar drying is essential to improve productivity. Exploration of all available alternative technologies and initiatives to introduce suitable community-friendly technology is ongoing.

16. Odisha Rural Development and Marketing Society (ORMAS) is an autonomous agency formed by Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Govt. of Odisha. The marketing of produce at district level is taken care of by DSMS in Kandhamal District. Discussions exploring possible avenues of association with them was initiated by MART. Several rounds of discussions were also held with the Branch Manager, Tribal Development Cooperative Corporation of Odisha Ltd (TDCC) at Baliguda (Kandhamal District) with respect to possible tie-up in the area of institutional linkage of products and cluster development. Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Limited (TRIFED), New Delhi sponsored “Honey Hunting Programme” in Kandhamal District which was implemented by TDCC, Baliguda Branch. Now TDCC is interested in conducting Honey Hunting training programme in operational villages of ABC. Through this programme, the primary wild honey collectors will learn the scientific method of honey collection and receive for free the tools used for honey collection. TDCC is also offering buy-back arrangement of honey in the area. The list of participants for the first batch of the training programme has been given to TDCC.
17. License for trading for ABC: As Adibasi Bazaar Committee deals with the trading of NTFPs, as per as the NTFP Policy 2000 of Odisha state, it needs a valid NTFP trading license that is issued by the local gram panchayat. According to this policy, Gram Panchayats have been authorized to regulate the purchase, procurement and trade of NTFPs including 68 items of MFPs so that the primary gatherers get a fair price. ABC has obtained a trading license for six such products.
18. Extension of membership and support to other parts of the district: Sincere efforts have been undertaken by different stakeholders to improve the functioning and impact of ABC in Tumudibandha and Kotagada Block. The institution has gradually extended its operational base to other blocks of Kandhamal District. MART professionals are regularly in touch with leading NGOs of the District like JAGRUTI, CPSW, PRDAN and discussions are on for extending the reach of ABC to their operational areas. OTELP is looking at ABC as a model organization and is planning to replicate it in other OTELP operational blocks of Kandhamal District. In the month of November 2012, MART in collaboration with OTELP, is going to organize a multi-stakeholder workshop on “Strengthening Adibasi Bazaar Committee”. It is expected that discussions will be held regarding the extension of ABC operational area in the workshop, and on finalizing the roles that will be played by different stakeholders in driving ABC on the road to sustainability.

19. Backward market linkages and input sourcing: As consumables reach villagers through various market players, it becomes more expensive for village-based consumers. It is an accepted practice here for people to trade their surplus produce for a consumable item i.e. salt, dry fish, onion, potato etc. The exchange rate is generally trader determined and unfavorable to the consumer. ABC intervened in this issue. ABC's procurement centres collectively procured the entire requirement of salt for households in its operational villages from the wholesale market i.e. Berhampur and started selling salt in the villages. The products bartered earlier for salt were collected for selling. The villagers purchased salt from the SHGs at cheaper prices than the local market. The process of backward market linkage not only eradicated the exploitative barter system in the locality, but also provided a profit-making business for ABC. Furthermore, the system succeeded in providing a regular supply of iodized salt to the community. Similar systems have been set up for the procurement of common agriculture inputs.

Impact

ABCMCL today offers specialized marketing services on six different products (Niger, Castor, Siali, Arhar, Hill broom, Mahua) spanning 220 SHGs in 135 villages and covering 3500 tribal and PVTG households. ABC has expanded its operational domain by adding around 87 new villages across seven Gram Panchayats of Tumudibandha Block and three Gram Panchayats of Kotagada Block. Increase in catchment area and effective management through centres has led to higher productivity and more surplus. It has also led to dissemination of information through increased membership.

ABCMCL has trained women members across roles, from SHG leader, and centre-in-charge to board member of ABCMCL. Training programmes, exposure visits and trader interaction, has increased the confidence of members and sharpened their business acumen. Regular interaction with different stakeholders has developed their leadership qualities. Timely information on the prices of various commodities along with capacity building and handholding support by MART has enhanced their negotiation skills.

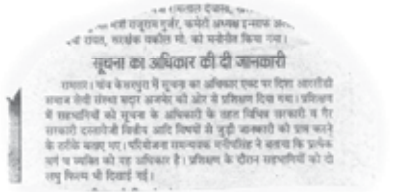
7 Bulk buyers have been identified and empanelled in different markets at Rayagada, Kalahandi, Bolangir, Phulbani and Berhampore. Market linkages have been initiated with these bulk buyers worth Rs 121,98,695/- within years. ABC has generated a profit of Rs. 14,610,30/- within years where Rs. 14,21,640 has been the share of SHGs. ABC has retained Rs. 39,390 as service charges and other income through retailing, processing and value addition to various produce.

The following table highlights the role of ABC as a comprehensive service provider across the agriculture value chain:

Stage	Services provided by ABC	Convergence/ collaboration	Benefit to Members
Pre-production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail counter provided agri-inputs like seeds, fertilizers and pesticides directly to the members at a comparatively lower 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distributors of seeds and fertilizers at Phulbani 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5% to 10% discount on seed and fertilizers • Rate of interest reduced from 5% to 2% per month

Stage	Services provided by ABC	Convergence/ collaboration	Benefit to Members
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitating credit from formal sources for members Training and sensitization meetings of farmers to introduce modern agricultural practices e.g. line sowing, pest management, water management etc. Authentic and timely information on weather, cultivation practices etc. through IFFCO-Airtel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SBI, Utkal Gramya Bank and revolving funds from Govt. project (OTELP, OFSDP). ATMA and KVK Collaboration with IFFCO-Airtel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 5% increment in productivity and another 10% reduction in seed costs after changing from broadcasting method to line sowing. Reduction in risks and improvement in ability to take informed decisions enabled by IFFCO -Airtel mobile agriculture information system.
Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interaction with ATMA and Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) scientists to provide on-field support regularly during production 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support from ATMA and KVK scientists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective water and pest management enhanced productivity by 10%. Enhanced quality of produce
Post production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build awareness on simple value adding processes like i.e. weighing, grading, sorting, storage and drying. Access to market information and facilitation in negotiations. Trader interface and exposure visits organized for rapport building. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration with terminal and district level traders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5% to 10% increase in sale price of products after simple value addition. 2% to 5% increment of sale price after market negotiations. Collective Marketing ensured 10% to 15% increment in sale price.

Although more resources need to be mobilized for expanding the reach of the institution, this journey has shown the way for establishing a successful, inclusive marketing model for poverty-stricken members of tribal/ PVTG communities.



सूचना के अधिकार पर दिया प्रशिक्षण

रामसर। दिशा संस्था की ओर से ग्राम केसरपुर में सूचना के अधिकार पर प्रशिक्षण का आयोजन किया गया। प्रशिक्षण में सहभागियों को सूचना के अधिकार के तहत विभिन्न सरकारी गैर सरकारी पदस्थलों की विनीय आदि विषयों के बारे में बताया गया। परिषद समन्वयक मनीषसिंह ने बताया कि प्रत्येक वर्ग एवं वर्गीकृत को एक अधिकार प्राप्त है। प्राची एक सादे कागज पर सूचनाओं को मांग रिजस्टर्ड डाक से लोकपाल सूचना आयोग को प्रार्थना-पत्र प्रेषित कर अपेक्षित जानकारी प्राप्त कर सकता है। प्रशिक्षण के दौरान सहभागियों को दो सप्ताह की अवधि भी दिखाई गई। कार्यक्रम में कार्यकर्ता सुनिता, हेमंत, ग्यारसलाल एवं कल्याणपुरा, लक्ष्मीपुरा व केसरपुरा के लोग उपस्थित थे।

न्यूज़ इनवॉयस

महिला स्वयं सहायता समूह ने लिया जायजा

रामसर। ग्राम मावशिवा ग्राम पंचायत के गांवों में चल रहे महिला स्वयं सहायता समूह की महिलाओं ने रामसर के प्राथमिक चिकित्सालय, पोस्ट ऑफिस, पुलिस चौकी, पटवारघर, बैंक ऑफ बड़ौदा रामसर तथा पंचायत समिति श्रीनगर वहा भ्रमण कर इनकी कार्यप्रणाली योजनाओं तथा सुविधाओं की जानकारी ली।

मावशिवा में बैठक आयोजित

रामसर। समीपवर्ती मावशिवा गांव में दिशा संस्था की ओर से नेटवर्किंग बैठक का आयोजन हुआ। बैठक का उद्देश्य संस्था द्वारा मावशिवा ग्राम पंचायत के गांवों में चल रहे लक्ष्य तय गैर कार्यक्रम के अन्तर्गत पिछले तीन महीने में को गई गतिविधियों से स्वयं सहायता समूह, किल्लत क्लब व ग्रामीणों को परिचित करना था। संस्था के मनीष सिंह व कृष्ण अरोड़ा ने बताया कि इस मंच के अंतर्गत ग्राम गांवों में रोजगार तथा विसर्ग कार्यक्रम, टीवी, डिटर, इंटरनेट तथा फोन पर लोग लगाने जाएंगे। इसके साथ स्वयं सहायता समूह की महिलाओं के लिए प्रोजेक्टर यूनिट लगाने व डीटी रोजगार से जोड़ा जाएगा। बैठक में सह निर्देशक रविंद्र, मनीष, कृष्ण, हेमंत, तारा, कमलेश, सुनीता व ग्यारसलाल आदि मौजूद थे।

सूचना केन्द्र का उद्घाटन

कुरुक्षेत्रगढ़, संजुली जीवन विकास समिति सांख्यिकी के तत्वावधान में राष्ट्रीय परियोजना के तहत आस्थावादा में रोजगार दामा -सूचना केन्द्र की स्थापना की गई। शिक्षण, कल्याण, सुदती डिप्लोमा के सरपंच, सचिव सहित भण्डारिया के संस्था प्रधान स्वीकृत रावत के आतिथ्य में दामे का उद्घाटन किया गया। इस अवसर पर राष्ट्रीय परियोजना के समन्वयक अविश्वानु कुरुक्षेत्र उपस्थित थे।

महिलाओं ने किया विभागों का भ्रमण



रामसर। दिशा संस्था द्वारा महिलाओं को विभागों की जानकारी देते हुए। फोटो-इन्द्रानुदीन

रामसर, 25 जनवरी। मावशिवा ग्राम पंचायत के गांवों में चल रहे महिला स्वयं सहायता समूह की महिलाओं ने रामसर के प्राथमिक चिकित्सालय, पोस्ट ऑफिस, पुलिस चौकी, पटवार घर, बैंक ऑफ बड़ौदा एवं पंचायत समिति श्रीनगर का भ्रमण कर इनकी कार्यप्रणाली योजनाओं तथा सुविधाओं की जानकारी ली। दिशा संस्था मदर की ओर से चलाने जा रहे लक्ष्य आर्थिका विकास कार्यक्रम के अंतर्गत महिला स्वयं सहायता समूहों का गठन किया गया था। इस शैक्षणिक भ्रमण का उद्देश्य था कि महिलाएं भी आगे आकर विभागों के बारे में जाने तथा सशक्त बनें। इसी क्रम में प्राथमिक चिकित्सालय रामसर से जेडिएम जेकब ने, पुलिस चौकी से सीट अधिकारी महावीर तारु, पोस्ट ऑफिस से असोक जुनैर, बैंक ऑफ बड़ौदा से दशरथ चौहान तथा पंचायत समिति श्रीनगर से पूरणचंद मीना ने महिलाओं को अपने विभाग की विजिट कराते हुए योजनाओं की जानकारी दी। कार्यक्रम में संस्था की ओर से हेमंत, ग्यारसलाल, सुनीता तथा रामनाथ ने भाग लिया।



Executive summary

“Change is important and in society, it must lead towards empowering communities - to demand their rights, access sustainable sources of livelihoods, acquire knowledge, and provide opportunities to live happily”

Since the establishment of LIFE project’s Rozgar Dhabas two years ago, the lives of many marginalized and deprived people has changed in central and southern Rajasthan. In the first year, the Rozgar Dhaba centers were established. In its second year the project was able to achieve 58% of the target it had set for itself and bring about transformational change in the project villages. Some of these changes are listed below:

Situation before/till 1st year of the project	Situation after 2 years of the project - a change factor!
In Banswara, male members from every household migrated to Gujarat for work	No migration has been recorded in the last year. People have started getting work and other livelihood options in their own villages.
Food consumption: dal, roti (bread) and vegetables where crops were raised on chemical fertilizers. Two meals in a day	Food consumption: dal, roti, and vegetables where crops are raised on organic fertilizers. Two meals in a day
Discussion at tea shops: on politics, crime, and culture	Discussion at tea shops: on sustainable agriculture, MGNREGA and government schemes and entitlements.
Usual Attire: Dirty clothes for children and women	Usual Attire: Neat clothes for children and women
Decision-making role of women in the family: was negligible	20% to 30% decisions in the family are being taken by the women
Participation of women in gram sabha: was minimal	15% to 20% female attendance was seen in recent gram sabha meetings as also the gathering on Republic Day, 26 January 2012.
Veil (Parda Pratha): Women covered their heads and faces entirely	Veil (Parda pratha): Now women only cover their heads and their faces are generally exposed.
Community against corruption: no action	Community against corruption: the community has raised its voice against corruption and filed RTIs in this context.

Govt officials: Do the work as per their wish	Govt. Officials: are conscious that the community will raise the voice if needed. Government machinery is changing.
Average wage rate in NREGA Rs. 70/- per day (as compared to Rs. 119 per day in the region)	Average wage rate in NREGA is Rs. 105 per day (in compare to Rs. 119 per day in the region)
Farmers practicing chemical fertilizer based cultivation with use of Hybrid seeds (of Monsanto and other brands)	Approach towards agriculture has changed. Farmers have moved to towards sustainable agriculture practices with the use of organic inputs, certified seeds, availing government schemes, working together for farming through Farmers Club and are reaping increased production.
Limited financial and social inclusion of women	Now SHGs women have moved beyond their veil system. They are going to bank by themselves, dealing with all financial aspects and are linked with institutions like NABARD and Central banks to avail loan at interest of 4-12 percent and, their children are going to school. The aanganwadi worker attends the meetings of SHGs. These SHGs have moved from being mere SHG to being entrepreneurs!
PRI, NABARD and KVK not accessible to the community	Now PRI, KVK and NABARD are the part of LIFE project implementation in the region.

The theory of social development by Garry Jacobs and Harlan Cleveland¹ states that "The formulation of valid theory possesses enormous power to elevate and accelerate the expansion and development of human capabilities in any field, leading to fresh discoveries, improvement of existing activities and capacity for greater results". This is apt as seen in case of the LIFE project and its impact. Its Rozgar Dhaba concept has been able to change the LIFE of poor for the better, creating a successful programme model through training resources

LIFE project in brief

LIFE (Livelihood Initiation For Empowerment) project has been initiated with an aim of securing sustainable livelihood options for the targeted deprived communities of the Banswara and Ajmer districts of Rajasthan. The project is being implemented by SJVS Banswara and Disha-RCDSSS (Roman Catholic Diocesan Social Service Society) Ajmer in 20 project

¹ Conceptualize the social development theory. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_development_theory

villages of the concerned districts (10 villages in each district). Brief details of the project are as under:

Project was initiated on February 1, 2010

LIFE Project Villages - Banswara and Jaipur	
Village/panchayat	Total Target households(HHs)
Amblipada/Jhikali	159
Mundari/Mundari	65
Khedlee/Kanigjira	150
Kanjapada/Jhikali	23
Kajalpada/Mundari	30
Jamrai/Potliya	23
Gadlee/Charkney	47
Bhimgarh/badwasbadi	36
Ambapada/Jhikali	22
Nathpura/Mundari	52
Total	614
LIFE project villages in Ajmer	
Village/panchayat	Total Target HHs
Mavashiya/Mavashiya	106
Kalyanipura/Mavashiya	42
Luxamipura/Mavashiya	32
Godiywas/Godiywas	137
Nepoli/Godiywas	21
Nolakha/Godiywas	165
Surajpura/Mavashiya	48
Kesarpura/Mavashiya	122
Devliya/Mavashiya	63
Gudda/Mavashiya	202
Total	938

Source of data: Application of monitoring tools in April 2011

Brief about the partner organisations

Disha-RCDSSS-Ajmer

Roman Catholic Diocesan Social Service Society(RCDSSS), Ajmer was registered on 24 April 1993 under Rajasthan Society Registration Act 1958.

It has since been active in 5 Districts of Rajasthan in areas of charity, social, medical, agricultural and educational development, for those in need especially in rural areas, irrespective of race, caste, community or creed in the spirit of brotherly love. RCDSSS aims to reduce discrimination against women. It is attempting to raise the status of women in the society through various activities under different projects .

SJVS-Banswara

The Sampurna Jeevan Vikas Samiti(SJVS) was registered in December 1986 instituted by the Bishop of Udaipur for social and development projects in the Diocese. A registered organization, it has a governing and general body. It has a project selection committee with the bishop as the President. The SJVS has been involving itself in a number of social and development projects in the tribal areas and the most backward regions of southern Rajasthan.

What is Rozgar Dhaba?

Concept of Rozgar Dhaba for poor people (developed by Caritas India team)

In today's world "ready information on livelihood, on time" is critical for everyone, be it someone in an urban city or someone in a small interior village. At present, there are several organisations that provide employment information in the urban context. There are well-known websites are as: www.monster.com, www.timesjob.com and www.naukri.com.

But there is hardly any agency or center that provides information on development programmes, rural livelihood options and other skill development related programmes for the rural community. For the rural mass, the Panchayat is the only source , but in most of the places, the Panchayats are inactive in performing this activity. As a response to the prevailing issues. Rozgar Dhaba has emerged as the Information Center that provides relevant information on various rural sustainable livelihood options. It caters to rural unemployed/unskilled youth (both men and women) from deprived or marginalized sections of the community.

The information provided are mostly focused on opportunities in the nearby areas and covers skill up gradation, access to government schemes, notification of low profile jobs opportunities(which hardly any agency provides) such as peon, waiter in a hotel/restaurant, security guard, gardener, helper, field workers, salesman, farmers-organic cultivation, teachers, tuitions, bell boy, construction worker, mechanic, washer man, painter, tailor, typist, cook, mechanic. Apart from this, it would also act as a support center for farmers to improve agricultural productivity by inculcating best practices (in the form of organic and hybrid seeds).

Objective of Rozgar Dhaba

- *Supporting the livelihoods of rural poor and marginalised youth*
Disseminating information information dissemination on employment availability and other livelihood sources.
- *Increased livelihood opportunities for the underprivileged with focus on entrepreneurship.*

Rozgar Dhaba - “all delicious Rozgar are available here”

Rozgar Dhaba is a Livelihoods Promotion Center that targets the vulnerable sections who are sometimes branded as redundant - farmers, school dropouts and illiterate youth - in the concerned villages and enables them to secure their livelihoods by providing relevant information and building skills. The center conducts vocational training, generates awareness on government schemes and programmes through IEC material and personal interaction, establishes and strengthens linkages with Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI) and other local institutions for the growth and development of the community. Rozgar Dhaba empowers the community by developing skills in various trades to help them build livelihoods on their own.

Services available at the Rozgar Dhaba:

- For the unemployed people, it will provide information on available jobs and also inform them about the different institutes which can provide the necessary training for the jobs
- Information on different employment opportunities.
- Information on different government schemes available related to employment - MGNREGA, SGSRY, PDS, Bamboo Mission, lok karmi etc.
- Assistance in filing Right to Information (RTI) applications
- Assisting the elderly with information on old age pension, travel concession, low bank interest rate etc.
- Assistance for people desiring to start their own small business (information about different banks which can give them financial support, institutes which can provide them training and basic information about the business they want to start.)
- Encourage women empowerment by supporting the concept of Self Help Group (SHG) and other skill development initiatives like tailoring and other suitable courses.
- Assistance for the physically handicapped with information on government schemes for physically handicapped and helping them to avail benefits and also provides them with support for self-employment. And also provides them with support for self-employment.
- Counselling to the community on different livelihoods options.

Facilities at Rozgar Dhaba

At present following facilities are available at the Rozgar Dhaba:

- Information (audio-visual and printed) on self-employment, employment, agriculture, livestock rearing and income generation activities) for all targeted groups.
- IEC material forms are available at the centre. Support is also provided to those who apply for and try to gain access to benefits under various government schemes.
- Weekly film-shows based on livelihood generation and other issues are screened.
- IT services are available through internet for villagers for updated information and services.

Operated by community and PRI: At present Rozgar Dhaba is being supported by the community and the PRI. They have provided rooms for its operation and are also bearing expenses related to power, water and maintenance. The village's 'Farmer's Club' manages the Rozgar Dhaba. In order to encourage a sense of ownership towards the Rozgar Dhaba within the community, the LIFE project team at Ajmer has developed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Farmer's (Kisan) Club of the four concerned villages for management of the Rozgar Dhabas .

MIS for people registered at Rozgar Dhaba: Each and every Rozgar Dhaba has its own MIS which contains the details of all community members who have registered at the center. Rozgar Dhaba also maintains MIS for service providers and job providers

Rozgar Dhaba as library: Rozgar Dhaba also serves as a library for the village youth; there are books available on various subjects as also the daily newspaper. The village youth generally approach the Rozgar Dhaba for books on competitive exams (generally for government jobs).

Rozgar Dhaba as the part of Panchayat

With the initiation of Rozgar Dhaba, the LIFE project at Ajmer has crossed another landmark in establishing linkages with PRI. In Ajmer, there are four villages with Rozgar Dhabas for information dissemination on government schemes. These Dhabas work as a bridge between the local employers and unemployed villagers. They also promote sustainable agriculture through capacity building and tie-ups with KVK-Ajmer.

The Rozgar Dhabas at Naulakha village has become a part of Godiyawas Panchayat of Godiyawas village. This Panchayat has officially approved and given space (in an old Panchayat School) for the Rozgar Dhaba to operate in. The Panchayat expects to create synergies where the Dhaba can help the Panchayat in its work, especially in terms of generating awareness

on government schemes. Now at Naulakha Rozgar Dhaba, on an average 50-60 people walk in for information on various schemes and newspapers and the television. Our field animators along with village volunteers are providing support, guidance and counsel at Naulakha Rozgar Dhaba.

It is also important to know that because of the LIFE project's intervention, Godiwas Panchayat has become one of the best Panchayats in the Rajasthan under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGA). The Panchayat has enabled 95% of the eligible households with job cards to receive 100 days of work at full wages of Rs. 119 per day.

Impact of Rozar Dhaba on MGNREGA in mitigating migration

Rozgar Dhaba- A better solution to migration

In India, migration for livelihood is one of the major social concerns. Population from villages or small towns routinely migrate to far-flung cities in search of work. The primary reason for this is lack of information about availability of jobs in their own locations. The Rozgar Dhaba initiative aims to facilitate employment for rural youth in their own village or district or nearby cities. It hopes to do this by creating a database of rural youth (job seekers) and employers (for low profile jobs). Once a person is registered he or she will receive intervention about the preferred livelihood option on a fortnightly basis.

Jean Dreze² in one of his articles in, *The Hindu*, wrote "The delays in NREGA wage payments are not just operational hurdles — they reflect a deliberate attack on the scheme". This is one of the possible problem scenarios, where all goes well but issue at the end is related to the non-receipt of wages. But the scenario in the LIFE project was different.

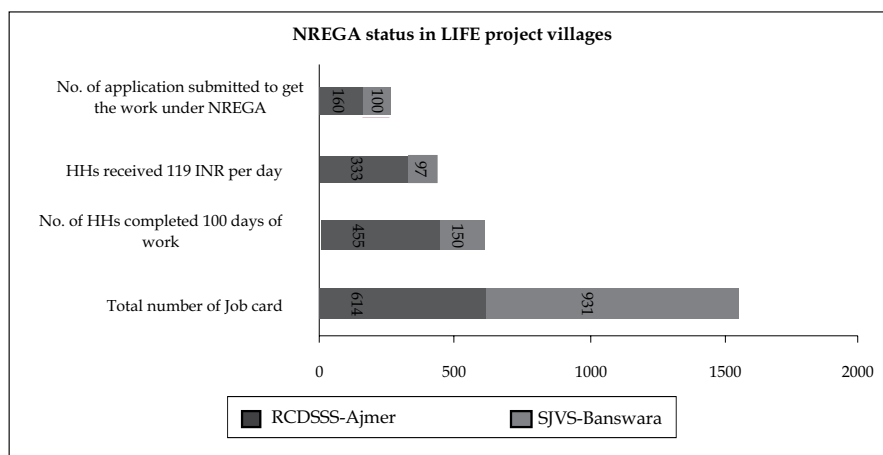
We have 614 target families in the in LIFE project villages of Banswara and till the last year, at least one male member had to migrate to Gujarat³ for labour work, (as the Guajrat border is nearby). Since last one year no migration has been noticed in 614 target families...and one of the key reason behind this is that now they have started getting work in their own villages in lean periods (apart from agricultural work). Average wage has increased to Rs. 100 per day from Rs. 65 per day of last year. Surprisingly 150 households have completed 100 days of work before the completion of the financial year (April 2011-March 2012). Target families now spend time improving on their agriculture practices with the introduction of organic inputs. The bigger impact that we within the LIFE team are visualizing is - reducing migration and decreasing the population pressure on the cities.

²http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean_Dr%C3%A8ze

³ Gujarat is a state in western India

Results in terms of strengthening NREGA:

MGNREGA concerns	RCDSSS-Ajmer	SJVS-Banswara
Total number of job cards	614/614	931/958
No. of households that completed 100 days of work	455	150
Households that received Rs. 119 per day	333	97
No. of applications submitted to get the work under NREGA	160	100



From the graph above, we can see that community now has started submitting written application forms for getting work under NREGA. It is important to understand the importance of a written application for work under NREGA: if a community member submits an application demanding allotment of work under NREGA and takes the receipt, the concerned Panchayat is bound to give the individual suitable work within 15 days; else, it has to pay him/her an unemployment allowance. In our project villages, 260 target community members have submitted written applications and all have received work within the due period. The interesting thing to note here is that before this, there were no such applications Panchayat would announce the work plan and the community would just to go for work without any application process.

In addition to above, Godiywas has emerged as one of the best performing Panchayats in of NREGA implementation, by providing 100 days of work and Rs. 119 for a full days work (depending on the quantum of work done) to all eligible households. Community members now participate

in the social audit of the Godiywas Panchayat and the sarpanch⁴ also attends the meeting of Community Based Organisations (CBOs) formed under LIFE project. The interesting thing to note is that this is the same Panchayat from whom we hardly received any support initially. Regular visits to the villages of the concerned Panchayat and attending various meetings, organizing training programmes has changed the scenario!.

Rozgar Dhaba - Strengthening community to avail government schemes

Government welfare schemes are vital to sustainable livelihood creation, but unfortunately villagers are unable to fully benefit due to low awareness and high levels of corruption. Here are a few examples to illustrate the importance of government schemes in changing lives:

...Sita at Kajalpada (Banswara) has shelter to secure her family in rain

Sita (from Kajalpada villages, LIFE project village, Banswara) , with the effort and guidance from our field animator (Ms. Priya) received funds for constructing a house under the Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) and has constructed it. She is now planning to add a toilet and bathroom to it. When we asked her what would her situation would have been without this house, she replied that she and her family would have been worried about shelter in the rains! She is happy - this is easily observed when anyone interacts with her as she has a smile on her face.

In case of Sita our LIFE team at Banswara worked through the Rozgar Dhaba as described below:

“In March-April 2011 we identified the target community using monitoring tools and listed out those who were eligible but were deprived of the benefits of govt. welfare schemes. In case of Sita our LIFE project field coordinator (Ms. Priya) has worked extensively to guide her family regarding the scheme and make her apply for IAY. Initially there were hurdles including the sanction from the Panchayat. Written complaints regarding the delay were submitted by Sita and other like her who were eligible for IAY in Mundadi and Kajalpad LIFE project villages. They repeatedly approached the Panchayat to resolve the issue. In addition, village-level training programmes for the target community on IAY were organized. This finally resulted in 6 IAY houses in Mundadi, Nathpura and Kajalpada, and Sita’s is one of them!” It was a landmark occasion as these were the first IAY dwellings to have been built in Kajalpad and Mundadi in last 10 years as the process is quite complicated and takes time. In the case of Sita, it took 6 months.

⁴ A sarpanch is an elected head of a village level statutory institution of local self-government called the gram panchayat (village government) in India

...Pratapi of Luxamipur (Ajmer) has shelter....and food security!

Pratapi, wife of late Ghasi, has no idea about her age, but villagers claim she has crossed 80 years. Now she is unable to see properly, but is happy!...Pratapi is from Luxamipura village (Mavashiya Panchayat, Shrinagar block, Ajmer, Rajasthan) and lives in a small mud house along with her disabled son Ranga. This family is one of the targeted family of the LIFE project in Luxamipura as they are marginalized farmers with a mere 3 bigha of land which is rain-fed. To strengthen the livelihood options of the Pratapi family, LIFE team intervened to make her aware about the different government social security schemes like old-age pension, disability pension, Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) and helped the family to apply to these schemes. Pratapi and her son have applied through the LIFE project Intervention and now they have received some amount to construct a house under IAY. Also Pratapi's son has started receiving a monthly disability pension of Rs. 500. Pratapi's old age pension is also in the pipeline. Now Pratapi is happy... she shared with the LIFE team that "When there was heavy rain last night, we were not able to protect ourselves in this mud house. Now, within few months, our own will would be there to protect us from rain and other calamities." Now thanks to the additional support of Ranga's pension, their food security has increased.....Pratapi is thankful to LIFE project and its staff...

Had the LIFE intervention not been there, Sita would probably have been struggling to keep her family safe during the rains, while trying to earn enough to save for a house. This would have invariably led to budget cuts on food and clothing as also debt and high stress within the family. Pratapi and her son would certainly have been doomed to an entirely hopeless existence.

In this way government schemes play an important role in ensuring survival and a life with dignity.

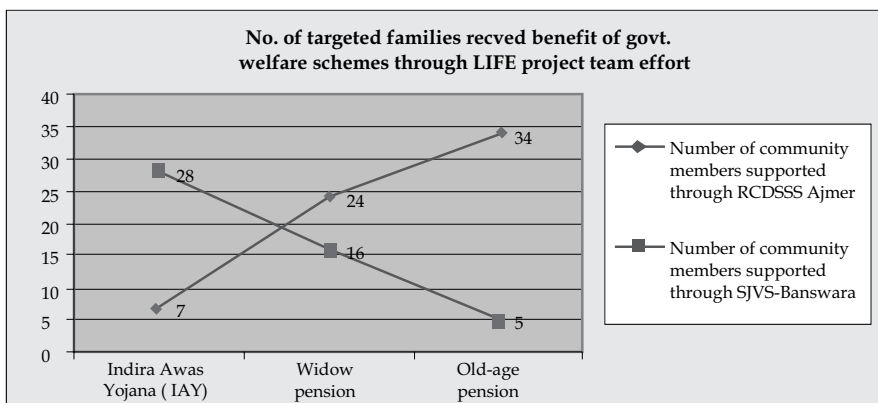
In total, 598 target families have benefitted from the government welfare schemes with the efforts of the LIFE project team. The project team is engaged in following activities :

- Generating awareness amongst the target community of various government schemes through training, rallies and personal interaction. This has helped the community to know about the schemes.
- Sharing the information on government schemes in CBO meetings, and through Rozgar Dhaba centers.
- Organizing small workshops with the community on social security schemes.

- Facilitating interface with PRI and other departments
- Strengthening linkages with the PRI and other government departments
- Providing assistance to the target community in filling the application form and mandatory documents to justify eligibility.

Major welfare schemes for which LIFE project team has supported community are listed below:

Major social security schemes	Number of community members supported through RCDSSS Ajmer	Number of community members supported through SJVS-Banswara
Indira Awas Yojana (IAY)	7	28
Widow pension	24	16
Old-age pension	34	5



- As per the above chart, 35 target families have received IAY services. Each IAY grant provides Rs. 5,0,000, therefore a total of Rs. 1,75,000 (50,000X35=17,50,000) has been given to the community. All the money the community would otherwise have had to spend on building dwellings is now saved.
- Time saved can now be spent on in either leisure time activities with the family or in building awareness through television. It could also be utilized in other income generating activities or in learning agricultural improvement techniques.

But the greatest changes have been seen in behaviour:

<p>Scenario before the project!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Target community was hardly aware of the different welfare schemes• Those who were aware did not know how to avail of the benefits.• There was no one in the community to ask PRIs about schemes• No clarity on eligibility• PRI never shared information with the community	<p>Scenario after 2 years of the project!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community is well aware of the major welfare schemes mainly through the PRI.• They know the process and the amount to be received from the schemes.• Some of them are directly approaching PRIs without any fear and demanding their entitlements.• PRI along with project team are organizing mass campaigns for awareness generation on schemes.
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Rozgar Dhaba: Sustaining agriculture

Rozgar Dhaba disseminates information on:

For skill development:

- Training modules on various skill development components
- IEC material (in the form of posters, documentary films etc.)
- Newspaper articles on various schemes of the government
- Details of different training centers being run by the government (on vocational educational training, namely, ITI's and RMOL approved training centres).

For Agriculture:

- Samples of local seeds and organic methods for the conservation of the same.
- Samples of organic manure
- Training module on preparation of organic manure
- Information on kisan credit card and other government schemes related to agriculture
- Information on various organic inputs
- IEC material on Right for Food Programme and PDS system

Diversity of food crops, and practice of organic cultivation holds the key to sustainable and genuine food security. Also important to understand is that diversity-based farming can help mitigate climate change even as it helps farmers to adapt to the climate variations. In the second year of operation, we have specifically focused on the promotion of sustainable agriculture mainly in the form of organic cultivation. Before understanding the need for sustainable agriculture we must understand the impact of fertilizer-based cultivation (which mainly took place as a result of the India's biggest revolution in agriculture, the Green Revolution).

See the below analysis from the field of LIFE project:

Why did chemical fertilizers come to be used in India?

The green revolution (1967/68) emphasized on two grains -wheat and rice, as they were most amenable to technology-tweaking with higher input provisions like water and chemical fertilizers; policy makers equated food security for everyone with these grains. Rice and wheat thus received a lot of support in the quest to increase food production and productivity. The food production system became centralized and skewed towards particular pockets. The green revolution pockets became monocultures of these two crops and needless to say, this also meant they became big markets for the associated industries - farm machinery, chemical fertilizer and synthetic pesticides industries. Today, these green revolution belts are experiencing ecological, social and cultural impacts of such mono cultures.

Impact of fertilizers in terms of production and price factor on farmers in LIFE project villages									
Crops	2009					2010			
	Use of synthetic fertilizers ⁵ (per bigha) -Includes DAP and UREA (in kgs)	Cost of fertilizers (tentative) @ Rs. 5 per kg for UREA and Rs. 10 for DAP	Production per bigha (in kgs)	Cost of production (tentative)	Use of synthetic fertilizers (per bigha)-includes DAP and UREA (in kgs)	Cost of fertilizers (tentative) is Rs. 6 for UREA and Rs. 11 for DAP	Production per bigha (in kgs)	Cost of production (tentative)	
Maize	70	1050	500	3500	100	1700	450	3150	
Soyabean	100	1500	500	11500	110	1870	500	11000	
Wheat	90	1350	700	5600	120	2040	500	4000	

The above was the scenario before or till the first year of project implementation. This shows that both the amount used and the cost of fertilizers is increasing while the amount and the cost of production is decreasing. This leads the farmer into debt thus making him/her to migrate to cities in search of work.

From the second year onwards, we have focused on promotion of sustainable agriculture and with the training and campaigns on practice of organic cultivation, we have reduced the use of UREA and DAP by 80% and increase the use of organic inputs by 80%. Though this leads to increase in input cost the production remains equal to the production by synthetic fertilizers. Here we could see the analysis:

⁵The bigha is a unit of measurement of area of a land, commonly used in a few states of India including Uttaranchal, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Assam, Gujarat, Rajasthan etc. The precise size of a bigha appears to vary considerably. Sources have given measurements that range from 1,500 to 6,771 square meters, but in several smaller pockets, it is as high as 12,400 square meters.³ Gujarat is a state in western India

Impact of fertilizers in terms of production and price factor on crops on farmer in LIFE project villages												
Crops	2009					2010					2011 (CHANGE scenario)	
	Use of synthetic fertilizers (per bigha)- Includes DAP and UREA (in kgs)	Cost of fertilizers (tentative) is Rs. 5 per kg for UREA and Rs. 10 for DAP	Production per bigha (in kgs)	Cost of production (tentative)	Use of synthetic fertilizers (per bigha)- Includes DAP and UREA (in kgs)	Cost of fertilizers (tentative) is Rs. 6 for UREA and Rs. 11 for DAP	Production per bigha (in kgs)	Cost of production (tentative)	Use of organic inputs (0% of organic inputs +20% of synthetic fertilizers)	Cost of Mix is Rs. 3	Production per bigha (in kgs)	Cost of production (tentative)
Maize	70	1050	500	3500	100	1700	450	3150	100	300	450	3150
Soyabean	100	1500	500	11500	110	1870	500	11000	120	360	500	12000
Wheat	90	1350	700	5600	120	2040	500	4000	120	360	500	4500
Total	260	3900	1700	20600	330	5610	1450	18150	340	1020	1450	19650

From the above table we could see that with the use of organic inputs, there is a decrease of 81% in input cost (for 3 major crops of Kharif and rabi as compared to year 2010) of fertilizers whereas the productions remains the same. Thus this income through the 81% saving from input cost is an addition to the income of farmer. Apart from this with practice of organic cultivation every year production would suppose to increase (as practical reason that soil health is improving) and the input cost would either remain same or would increase by 3-5%.

Also if farmers start 100% of organic cultivation and apply for the organic certification process they would be able to get better prices for the produce. After one year of trial and error, and understanding the needs of the farmers (target families), the LIFE project villages have decided to opt for 100% organic cultivation in coming Kharif season.

To understand the change in better way we could examine the below figures (based on analysis of application of monitoring tools in Dec-Jan 2012):

Practice	No. of farmers in LIFE project villages at Banswara	No. of farmers in LIFE project villages at Ajmer	Total
Model farmers practicing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organic cultivation • Soil testing • Guidance to other farmers • Technical support from KVK • Water testing • Use of certified/traditional seeds • Proper seed treatment 	165 (including 50n those farmers who also guide to other farmers)	261 (including 48 those farmers who guide to others)	426
Farmers having Kissan Credit Cards (KCC) after project Intervention	38	226	26
Farmers availed loan from KCC for agriculture purpose	35	226	14
Framers using sprinkler system for irrigation	00	10	10

So out of the total target community of 1572 (958 of Ajmer and 614 of Banswara), 165 at Banswara and 261 at Ajmer i.e. in total 426 target farming families are practicing 100% of organic cultivation. These 426 families represent 27% of total target families, and this percent is increasing with every crop season.

In terms of production in agriculture following are the key results in the field:

Crop season	Set target in the project (in %)	Production increase in the field of LIFE project villages of Banswara (in %)	Production increase in the field of LIFE project villages of Ajmer (in %)	Total average production increase (in %)
Kharif 2011	25% for ajmer and 40% for Banswara	15-25% (for maize it was 50% +) loss for soyabean , because of heavy rain	65 (with organic cultivation) in Bajra others 19%	40 (with organic cultivation)
Rabi 2011-12 (is based on the number of cereals in the crop) till now harvesting has not done)		30 (with organic cultivation)	20 (with organic cultivation)	25 (with Organic cultivation)

Source: Monthly cluster reports till Jan 2012

Change observed in agriculture practices

<p>Scenario before the project in agriculture practices!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of Hybrid seeds and the amount used was 50 kgs (general consideration) per bigha • Hardly any mixed cropping • No linkages with KVK for technical support • No organic pits • No soil testing • No water testing • No group /community discussion on farming
<p>Scenario after 2 years of the project in agriculture practices!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of traditional or certified seeds, reduced to 30 kgs per bigha • Adopt the method of mix and crop rotation. • 65% of target families have organic pits. In Banswara each and every target family has organic pits. • Around 40% of target families do soil testing • Around 15 % of target families do water testing before cultivation. • Discussion on farming in farmers club • Participation of female members in discussion on farming issues

Food-sufficiency⁶ (a case from Banswara)

Significant improvement has been observed in food-sufficiency, over the last five years the villagers are relying more on agriculture to fulfill their food requirement than on earnings through daily labour. Around 3% increase in dependency on livestock for food-sufficiency has also been observed. Milk, eggs, and meat are a part of the regular diet of LIFE project participants. The average annual maize availability per person has increased from 0.71 quintals to 0.93 qtls (2010-2011). Along with maize, wheat has also become a part of their diet. Since wheat is more expensive than maize, it may be concluded that purchasing power of the people has increased. This increased income is being spent on improving their life style.

Calorific value of food intake⁷ (a case from Banswara)

It is evident from informal group discussion and household interviews, that there is a considerable change in food intake, which in turn has increased the daily calorie consumption. An increase in availability of water (from heavy rainfall) and use of organic inputs like compost, have increase farm output, especially green leafy vegetables like methi, desi carrot, chana,sarson, louki, etc This is helping fulfil nutrition requirements of children, women and men.

Food Item	Average intake, 2010 (in gms)	Average intake, 2011 (in gms)	Calorie content per 100gms ⁸	Total calorie intake, 2010 (in gms)	Total calorie intake, 2011 (in gms)
Bati (Maize flour) ⁹	225	250	342	770	855
Tuar dal	34	62	335	114	208
Rice	40	52	346	139	216
Vegetables	50	97	40	20	39

The table indicates increase in calorie intake in almost every food item listed in their daily diet. Since the data is for one time meal, calorie intake for one day can be estimated to be:

2003: $770*2+114*2+139+20= 1927$ cal

2008: $855*2+208*2+216+39= 2420$ cal¹⁰

⁶Source Primary data (through interview schedule/interaction)

⁷Source Primary data (through interview schedule/interaction)

⁸Source: LIFE project Panchayat PHC and Anganwadi (a tentative figure)

⁹In this 30% of bati weight is reduced as it contains 30% of water

¹⁰It is more than the per day calorie (2400 cal) requirement of a person living in rural India. It also does not include the other occasional items (viz. egg, chicken, meat, etc.) in a normal diet.

thus, we can see how improvement in food-sufficiency has fulfilled the calorific needs of LIFE project villages in Banswara.

The status of LIFE project partners and the community in terms of adopting strategy for the promotion of sustainable agriculture is summarized, below.

Strategy	1st year	2nd year	3rd year
1. Use of hybrid/ certified seeds along with synthetic fertilizer (90%) and organic compost (10%) with no technical inputs	Strategy 1 was used in the 1st year, as there was low awareness of organic cultivation		
2. Use of certified/ traditional seeds along with synthetic fertilizer (50%) and organic compost (50%) with proper technical inputs from linkages with KVK and NABARD, (by the end of 2nd year it was 80% organic and 20% synthetic fertiliser)		In the first annual review meeting of the LIFE project in Feb 2011 in Banswara both the team got clarity on organic cultivation and two staff (one from each project location) attended the field based organic cultivation training at CESSS-Amravati (Maharashtra). Both teams adopted strategy 2 in the 2nd year.	

3. Use of traditional/certified seeds along with 100% organic compost with no technical inputs from linkages with KVK and NABARD			With the success of initial organic inputs both the teams would be adopting 100% organic cultivation from the 3rd year onwards with certification for farmers practicing organic farming in LIFE project villages.
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The focus has now shifted to sustaining the interest of the community in adopting and practicing organic cultivation.

Rozgar Dhaba: Putting RTI to use

The Right To Information (RTI) Act is a critical tool to ensure better implementation of government schemes/programmes. LIFE, in its project design, included awareness generation about the RTI Act amongst the target community and the concerned PRI representatives. The key results of capacity building with respect to the RTI Act through Rozgar Dhaba centres:

Practice on RTI	SJVS-Banswara	RCDSSS-Ajmer	Total
No. of RTI applications filled by the target community to avail various government schemes related to livelihood	02	10	12
No. of RTI applications answered	01	02	02
No. of RTI applications converted to action process	01	03	03
No. of RTI applications that have not received any answer even after 30 days of application	01	05	01
No. of target HHs aware of the RTI Act (basics)	50	150	200
No. of HHs that know how to file RTI applications	30	100	130
No. of training sessions/workshops being organized by LIFE team on RTI Act and its RTI application filing process	10	10	20

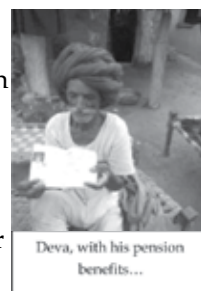
Source: Application of monitoring tools and monthly cluster reports

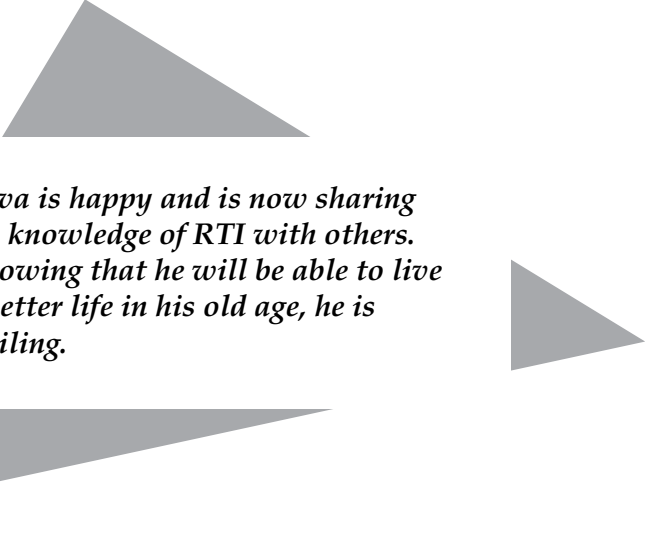
Anecdote: RTI has given pension for survival

Deva / Baldev, aged 67 years from Kesarpura village (Mavashiya panchayat, Shrinagar block, Ajmer, Rajasthan) had applied for the old-age pension one year ago with support from LIFE project staff. Even after a year, Deva did not received any pension from the government. He shared his concern with LIFE project staff, Hemant (the field animator for the Kesarpura village), who guided him on filing an RTI application to the (Social Justice and Rights department, Ajmer seeking information on the reason for this delay in his old age pension.

Deva filed the RTI application on 16th June 2011 and within a week his pension was released. He has received a total sum of Rs. 7645/- in his post office old-age pension account, including pension arrears for the last 10 months.

Deva is happy and is now sharing his knowledge of RTI with others . He shared with the LIFE team that he has returned the money he had borrowed from his neighbour for medical treatment. This has indeed changed Deva's life.





Deva is happy and is now sharing his knowledge of RTI with others. Knowing that he will be able to live a better life in his old age, he is smiling.

Today, 12 RTI applications have been filed by the community in Kesarpur village. Through RTI, the community has empowered itself to fight corruption and delays in delivering government schemes.

More significantly, the community now has the power to gain information via RTI in case of delays or hindrances.

Rozgar Dhaba: Strengthening linkages and leveraging funds

Rozgar Dhaba centre established relationships with a number of agencies to facilitate the availability of services to the community: These included, local nationalized banks (for Kisan Credit Cards), panchayats (for government schemes such as MGNREGA), Krishi Vigyan Kendras (for training on agriculture and allied activities), Rajasthan Mission Of Livelihood and Jan Sikshan Sansthan or JSS (for skills development and training), LIC (for low budget LIC policies such as Jeevan Madhur targeted at people working in the unorganised sector), 1 Local NGOs (for skills development and support activities), and district officials of NABARD (for training and market support for skills development programme, especially related to agricultural produce, and its processing and marketing through *gram krishi mela* and other similar programmes.)

Given the critical importance of right partnerships to sustain the project, LIFE has proactively established relationships with different stakeholders like NABARD, PRIs, and KVKs, and Agriculture department and Animal Husbandry department at MDS University. Details of key partnerships over the last two years is listed below.

Fund leverage till Jan 2012 (in Rs.)			
Agencies from where fund was leveraged	SJVS-Banswara	RCDSS-Ajmer	Total
NABARD (to support farmers, club and SHGs)			
- Loan to 67 SHGs		9,55,000	9,55,000
- For credit to farmers of farmers, club		5,45,000	5,45,000
- Approval of farmers, club and financial support	10,000	15,000	25,000
			0
Panchayat			0
- For welfare schemes	5000	7025	12025
- For IAY	14,00,000	34,50,00	17,45,000
			0
KVK			0
- MOU for the promotion of organic cultivation		3,00,000	3,00,000
- Trainings		1,53,820	1,53,820
- Resource materials and equipments	2,33,200	7620	2,40,820
			0
Agriculture department			0
For KDDPPY scheme for purchase of high breed livestock		9160	9160
For spray machines		2,52,860	2,52,860
			0
Banks			0
Loan written off	2,75,000		2,75,000
			0
Total	19,23,200	25,90,485	45,13,685

By Jan 2012, a total of Rs. 45, 13,685 (Rupees forty five lakhs thirteen thousand six hundred and eight five only) was leveraged through different government and semi-government organizations benefiting nearly 1000 target community members. The total fund leveraged in the last two years is almost equal to the amount released by Caritas India for its projects.

The concrete outcomes of LIFE (project) are:

- NABARD, PRI and KVK at both the districts (Ajmer and Banswara) are now an integral part of the project.
- NABARD has approved 75% of the farmers, club under the project.
- All the SHGs are linked with local bank for financial support.
- Agriculture department of Banswara has started a farmers, school at Amblipada (LIFE project village) in collaboration with the project.

LIFE has played a critical role in ensuring that the benefits of these institutions reach the community, in an unprecedented manner.

For example, NABARD and KVK were present for many years in Banswara, but with limited reach into the marginalized communities. With greater awareness, these institutions can now reach a much higher percentage of the SJVS-Banswara community.

LIFE project has thus played the role of bringing a common platform that brings government schemes, government institutions, and communities together.

For SJVS-Banswara it is the first time since the inception of the organization that any of the farmers, club formed by the organization received approval by NABARD.

Rozgar Dhaba: Securing Youth Employability

As a part of emphasizing on addressing the unemployment situation amongst the youth, LIFE project in last two years has focused on organizing skill development training programmes (specific to the trade demand in the LIFE project villages), linkages with the universities and technical institutions (like MDS University and KVK/NABARD) for the certification of skill development trainings and establishment of center for employment assistance in the form of Rozgar Dhaba¹¹.

Impact of Rozgar Dhaba on community

At present 6 Rozgar Dhaba centers are in operation (4 at Ajmer and 2 at Banswara). Although at Banswara directly we are not working on youth employment, at Ajmer it is a major component.



Bhuwan Lal...now enjoying his life!

¹¹ Rozgar is a Hindi word means Employment and Dhaba is a Punjabi word means restaurant so, it is basically an employment restaurant.

After registering with Rozgar Dhaba, 4 youths received Para-vet training at KVK-Ajmer and successfully completed the same.

I am self-dependent now

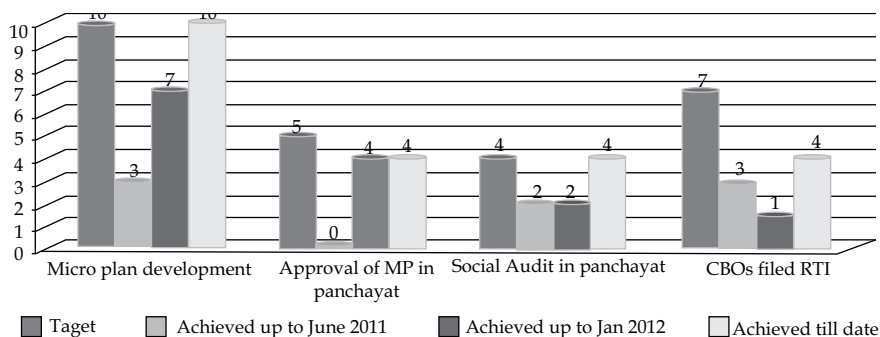
Bheru Lal Bheel s/o Rabdev Bheel

Age - 27 yrs.

Village - Surajpura village (Mavashiya Panchayat)

Bheru Lal s/o Ramdev Bheel is a member of the youth club and is registered at Rozgar Dhaba in Surajpura village. Before the establishment of Rozgar Dhaba, in the village, he did not have any source of income. He usually migrated for daily labour jobs to Ajmer which would fetch him Rs. 150-180, but Rs. 20-30 was needed for travel and Rs. 50 on food, thus the net income would be barely around Rs. 100. From the Rozgar Dhaba and Mr. Gyarsilal, an animator, he has received guidance on getting self-employment. He was motivated to become an entrepreneur and finally in this December 11 he started a grocery shop (through the financial support from youth club and guidance from Rozgar Dhaba). His wife is also a member in SHG and supported him. Inspired with the success of shop he has now brought a welding machine with a SHG loan. Now he is earning Rs. 150 to 200 per day in his own village.

Location of Rozgar Dhaba	Month	No. of beneficiaries for different services of Rozgar Dhaba						Remarks
		TV	News	forms & Magazines	Applied for Schemes	Approval		
Nepoli	Nov.11	170	100	16	7	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 youth for Unemployment Card 1 for KCC 	
	Dec. 11	509	150	32	7	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 Youth applied for CRPF recruitment 2 Youth applied for Agri. Supervisor 2 farmers applied for Pipe set subsidy 1 farmer applied for Farm Pond 	
	Jan. 12	815	175	105	1	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 farm pond is approved 1 applied for Disabled pension 	
Surajpura	Nov.11	0	0	0	0	0		
	Dec. 11	123	82	5	15	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 youth applied and got unemployment 3 farmers KDPPY 2 Youth applied for CRPF Recruitment 1 Farmer for pipe set subsidy 2 farmers applied for KCC 	
	Jan. 12	195	120	15	12	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 Youth for Unemployment Card 4 farmers applied for farm pond and 3 got approved 3 farmers got KDPPY support 2 applied for Disabled and widow pension 	
Kalyanipura	Nov.11	0	0	0	0	0		
	Dec. 11	90	100	12	7	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 youth applied for Agr. Supervisor 5 youth applied and got unemployment card 1 applied for widow pension 	
	Jan. 12	70	80	15	5	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 Youth applied for CRPF recruitment 2 youth applied for unemployment card and got. 1 widow pension approved 	
Nolkha	Nov.11	0	0	0	0	0		
	Dec. 11	36	64	27	3	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 Farmers applied for Azola and got. 1 youth placed at Airtel Digital and getting 5000/- per month 	
	Jan. 12				17	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17 youth applied for unemployment card and 16 got. 	



Standard of living

Standard of living has improved with increased knowledge about better living as:

Situation before the project	Situation after Rozgar Dhaba concept came a-change factor!
Knowledge of internet and computer: No	Knowledge of internet and computer: Now they have, some come to Rozgar Dhaba center to apply online for government jobs.
Training on skill development: Hardly any	Training on skill development: Now able to receive trainings on mobile repairing, para vet, electrician and able to earn good.
Knowledge about outer world, happening in state, India and outside india: Hardly any	Knowledge about outer world, happening in state, India and outside India: Has improved through community TV part of the Rozgar Dhaba.

Income of the rural people

Income of community members has increased through the skill development trainings, information on government schemes and support for self employment.

Situation before the project	Situation after Rozgar Dhaba concept came A CHANGE FACTOR!
Average wage rate in NREGA INR 70/- per day (compared to 119 INR per day in the region)	Average wage rate in NREGA is 105 INR per day (compared to 119 INR per day in the region)
In Banswara male members from every house hold used to migrate to Gujarat for work	Now with our 614 target families there is no migration recorded in last one year. People started getting work and other livelihood options in their own villages.
PRI, NABARD and KVK at distance from the community	Now PRI, KVK and NABARD are the part of LIFE project implementation in the region.

Sustainability of Rozgar Dhaba

Rozgar Dhabhas would be linked with the Panchayat and would work as the PRCs-Panchayat Resource Centers. Further it would also work as a revenue center. This Rozgar Dhaba service will be available for 8 hours in a day for all the community members and any one can contact on the prescribed number or in person to the Dhaba. There will be a registration fee (exempted for BPL families) for registering at Rozgar Dhaba.

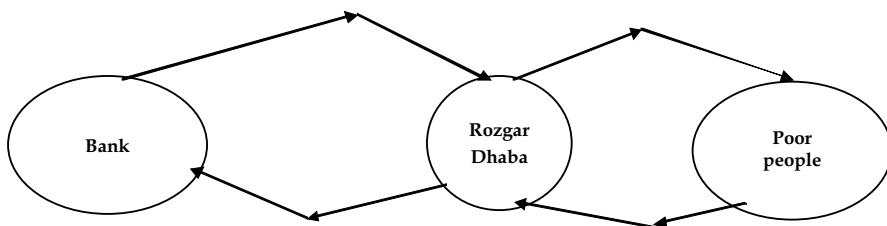
Apart from this there would be minimum charges for print outs and Photo copies taken from the Rozgar Dhaba. This amount would be decided by the farmers club (comparing the expenditure at the Rozgar Dhaba).

Community contribution is planned for the better operation of Rozgar Dhaba (At present Community and PRI contribute to its upkeep) as community and other stake holders own Rozgar Dhaba.

Multiple roles of Rozgar Dhaba

Rozgar Dhaba -as a guarantor

Rozgar Dhaba will work as a guarantor to the poor for purposes of loan and other financial facilities from the bank. Generally when any the economically poor seek approach banks, they are almost never considered favourably for any loan or for any type of financial transaction. For these types of activities



Rozgar Dhaba will establish relationship with the different banks and cooperatives for providing loan to the poor people.

Rozgar Dhaba Card

A Rozgar Dhaba card will be introduced for the members of Rozgar Dhaba. All the members of the Rozgar Dhaba will be known as Rozgarman i.e. he is the person who is seeking for the job and in the process of getting better job. On the other hand the person who will get the job from the Rozgar Dhaba will be known as-Rozgar -which means that he has a job and is satisfied. The shape and the size of the Rozgar Dhaba card will be in the form of mobile recharge coupon available currently.

Rozgar Dhaba- in relation with microfinance

As we know the concept of microfinance is booming not only in Indian context but throughout the world. Microfinance basically provides credit, savings and insurance facilities to the poor members of the microfinance group by establishing the relationship with banks and other financial bodies. In the same way Rozgar Dhaba will provide micro credit (Livelihood finance) for employment to the Rozgar Dhaba card holders. Rozgar Dhaba will form the ESG (Employment seekers group) of same area, community, and of same type of employment. This group will be of 15 to 20 members. One important point of Rozgar Dhaba group is that each and every group of Rozgar Dhaba will be its own identity and different from the other groups. If there are more than 20 groups in a particular area then it will constitute Rozgar Sathi and if the number of group will be more than 100 in a particular area it will constitute Rozgar Sagar. So in this way up Sagar level Rozgar Dhaba will work in the form of micro-finance for providing better employment opportunities.

Annexure:

1. Letter of support from panchayat for ROZGAR DHABA:

कार्यालय पंचायत समिति श्रीनगर (अजमेर)

क्रमांक:-पसश्री/पंचा/11/ दिनांक:-
सरपंच
ग्राम पंचायत गोडियावास

विषय:- आर.सी.डी.(दिशा) को रा.उ.प्रा.वि नौलखा विद्यालय भवन का एक कमरा देने बाबत।

प्रसंग:- आपका पत्र क्रमांक-निल दिनांक 23.09.11 के संदर्भ में।

उपरोक्त विषयान्तर्गत एवं प्रसांगिक पत्र के संदर्भ में लेख है कि ग्राम नौलखा में उच्च तकनीकी सूचना एवं रोजगार केन्द्र खोलने हेतु आपकी विद्यालय में पुराने भवन जिसमें विद्यालय संचालित नहीं होती है उसको आरसीडी को दिये जाये हेतु ग्राम पंचायत की बैठक में प्रस्ताव पारित कर अपने स्तर से दिये जाने की कार्यवाही करे। एवं निर्देशित किया जाता है कि भवन का स्वामित्व विद्यालय का होगा। आवश्यकता होने पर भवन को खाली करवाया जा सकता है। एवं विद्यालय संचालन में किसी भी प्रकार की परेशानी उत्पन्न नहीं हो सुनिश्चित कर लें।

51-
विकास अधिकारी
पंचायत समिति श्रीनगर (अजमेर)
दिनांक:- 30/9/11

क्रमांक:-पसश्री/पंचा/11/ 20/25-25
प्रतिलिपि:- सूचनार्थ

✓ 1. श्री फा. एन्टोनी फर्नांडिस निदेशक दिशा मदार अजमेर।
2. प्रधानाध्यापक राउप्रावि.गोडियावास।

विकास अधिकारी
पंचायत समिति श्रीनगर (अजमेर)

2. MoU of Rozgar Dhaba with Farmers club

9. रोजगार समाचार पत्र	साप्ताहिक	1
10. अखबार	दैनिक	1
11. कृषि एवं पशुपालन संबंधी अन्य पत्रिकाएं	साप्ताहिक/मासिक/वार्षिक	
12. स्टेशनरी - कागज, पेंसिल, फॉर्म, प्रचार सामग्री, पोस्टर व अन्य सामग्री		

इसके अतिरिक्त कम्प्यूटर मय इंटरनेट डाटाकार्ड, फ्लैट डिस्क, इयर फोन आदि भी केन्द्र के लिए उपलब्ध कराये जायेंगे जो कि स्थानीय परियोजना कार्यकर्ता के संरक्षण में रहेंगे और उसकी जिम्मेदारी स्वयं उसी की होगी।

केन्द्र को नियमित संचालन, सुरक्षा एवं समुदाय को अधिकतम लाभ पहुंचाने के उद्देश्य से समुदाय की भागीदारी एवं सहयोग अत्यन्त आवश्यक है जो इस प्रकार होगा।

सामुदायिक सहयोग एवं जवाबदेही -

- क्लब सदस्य केन्द्र पर सामुदायिक सहयोग, रुचि एवं भागीदारी सुनिश्चित करेंगे।
- केन्द्र संचालन हेतु भवन उपलब्ध करायेंगे। अगर यह भवन सामुदायिक है तो पंचायत से अनापति प्रमाण पत्र बनवाकर उपलब्ध करायेंगे और अगर निजी है तो भवन स्वामी लिखित में सहमति लेंगे।
- केन्द्र पर उपलब्ध समस्त सामग्री की सुरक्षा की जिम्मेदारी क्लब सदस्यों एवं ग्राम समुदाय की होगी। अगर कोई सामग्री चोरी होती अथवा गूम होती है तो किसान क्लब की जिम्मेदारी होगी वह जनसहयोग से उसकी पुनःआपूर्ति करे साथ ही अपनी ओर से पुलिस थाने में रिपोर्ट दर्ज करायें और कार्यवाही में सहयोग करे।
- अगर केन्द्र निजी भवन में संचालित है और भवन स्वामी इसका मासिक किराया मांगता है तो किसान क्लब की जिम्मेदारी होगी कि वे इसकी व्यवस्था जनसहयोग से करे।
- किसान क्लब द्वारा केन्द्र में विद्युत बन्नेशन की व्यवस्था कराई जायेगी और उसपर आने वाले खर्च का वहन भी किसान क्लब खुद करेगा।
- किसान क्लब के सदस्य गांव से किसी एक व्यक्ति की नियुक्ति केन्द्र पर करेंगे जो कि निःशुल्क अथवा सशुल्क रोजाना 2 से 3 घंटे केन्द्र संचालन में परियोजना कार्यकर्ता की मदद करेगा। इस व्यक्ति को जो मासिक शुल्क देय होगा उसकी व्यवस्था किसान क्लब द्वारा की जायेगी।
- **त्रैमासिक मूल्यांकन एवं उपयोगिता सिद्ध करना -**
 - किसान क्लब एवं अन्य सामुदायिक संगठनों की यह जिम्मेदारी होगी कि त्रैमासिक स्तर पर केन्द्र एवं इसमें उपलब्ध कराई गई सामग्रियों का सामुदायिक स्तर पर उपयोग, लाभ एवं उत्पादेयता लिखित में सिद्ध करें। केन्द्र स्तर पर इसके लिए कुछ रजिस्ट्रारों का दस्तावेजीकरण नियमित रूप से करने की जिम्मेदारी समुदाय एवं स्वयंसेवक की होगी। इसके लिए केन्द्र स्तर पर एक औपचारिक बैठक रखी जायेगी। अगर ऐसा करने में समुदाय असक्षम रहता है तो यह माना जायेगा कि केन्द्र का लाभ समुदाय द्वारा नहीं लिया जा रहा अतः केन्द्र को स्थानान्तरित कर लिया जायेगा।

अन्य मुख्य शर्तें -

- केन्द्र पर उपलब्ध कराई गई समस्त सामग्री पर पूर्ण-स्वामित्व दिशा-संस्था का ही रहेगा अर्थात् संस्था जब चाहे आवश्यकता अनुसार इस सामग्री को पुनः स्थानान्तरित अथवा हस्तान्तरित कर सकती है। इसके लिए किसान क्लब अथवा समुदाय कोई व्यवधान उत्पन्न नहीं करेंगे।
- लाईफ परियोजना के 10 गांवों में से 4 गांवों में उक्त केन्द्र की व्यवस्था की गई है। इन चारों गांवों का चयन समुदाय की सहमति रूचि एवं सहभागिता है। अतः भविष्य में अगर इसमें कमी आती है या अन्य गांवों में इसकी आवश्यकता होती है तो उक्त केन्द्र अन्य गांव में स्थानान्तरित किया जा सकता है।
- यह केन्द्र सामुदायिक होगा, इसकी किसी भी सामग्री पर किसी एक समुदाय अथवा व्यक्ति का अधिकार नहीं होगा। अर्थात् हर लिंग, जाति एवं वर्ग के लोगों को इस केन्द्र का लाभ उठाने की स्वतंत्रता होगी। अगर कोई व्यक्ति इसमें बाधा उत्पन्न करे तो किसान क्लब एवं स्थानीय लोगों द्वारा उसे रोका जायेगा अन्यथा केन्द्र को स्थानान्तरित का अन्य गांव में स्थापित किया जायेगा।
- केन्द्र पर उपलब्ध सामग्री केवल सदुपयोग के लिए होगी, टेलिविजन, लेपटॉप आदि पर परियोजना द्वारा निर्धारित कार्यक्रमों एवं गतिविधियों के अतिरिक्त अन्य कोई भी मनोरंजन करना अवैध होगा। अगर ऐसा पाया गया तो संबंधित व्यक्ति के खिलाफ किसान क्लब कार्यवाही करेगा। अन्यथा केन्द्र का स्थानान्तरण किया जायेगा।
- शराब, धूमपान आदि किसी भी प्रकार का नशा केन्द्र पर प्रतिबन्धित रहेगा न ही किसी नशे किये हुए व्यक्ति को केन्द्र पर आने की अनुमति होगी। अगर कोई व्यक्ति ऐसा करके केन्द्र पर आता है तो स्थानीय लोगों एवं किसान क्लब के सदस्यों द्वारा उसे रोकना होगा।
- इस्तेमाल करने के दौरान केन्द्र पर उपलब्ध सामग्री को लापरवाही या जानबूझकर स्थायी क्षति पहुंचाने पर संबंधित व्यक्ति से क्षतिपूर्ति दिलवाने की जिम्मेदारी किसान क्लब एवं समुदाय की होगी।

उक्त सभी शर्तों एवं परिस्थितियों को समझकर अपनी-अपनी भूमिकाओं को समझते हुए दोनों पक्ष इसे स्वीकार करते हैं और केन्द्र द्वारा समुदाय को अधिकतम लाभ दिलाने के लिए संकल्प लेते हैं।

किसान क्लब	<p>यू.एन.ए.के.पी.ए.पी.टी. १०१, १०२, १०३, १०४ उपसंचालक किसान क्लब अजमेर ११/११</p>	दिशा संस्था, अजमेर
गवाह	<p>उदय शर्मा राजेश शर्मा</p>	गवाह
उद्गमादि	रावत जी भागीरथजी	दिलीप कुमार उपाध्याय
पूर्व संचालक	नीलेश	मंडल, रावत जी वि. नौलखा

अन्य ग्रामवासी जो अनुबंध को स्वीकार करते हैं और केन्द्र को सुसंचालन हेतु प्रतिबद्धता देते हैं -

खंडर सिंह	खंडर सिंह	खंडर सिंह
रुकमा	वीरान सिंह	बहाउल्ला
बदामी	जाल सिंह	शंभुपति
रामधारी	हुकम सिंह	बचानान
सातपाल सिंह		कविता देवी
जगाराम	मीरा	सधित्र
शांरदा		सम्पति
काममा		प्राची
सीमा		लली
लीला		मीनू
गीता	शोभा	कमल
बुद्धी		बहाउल्ला
रेखा	प्रेम	नाती
सारदा		नम्याती
फैफा		अम्मा
सागत		अष्टवती
लाना		अदनी
अम्मा		दीदी
गौजा		जमकू
अम्मा		जीरा
गुलाबी		

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Enhancing Livelihoods of the Poorest of the Poor

This book is a compendium of the eleven best entries to the Sitaram Rao Livelihoods India Case Study Competition 2012. The Competition, an initiative of ACCESS Development Services, strives to bring together the collective intellect in the sector and assimilate innovative solutions, breakthroughs, good experiences and best practices that can help change the poverty status in India.

The theme for the 2012 Competition was 'Experiences in Enhancing Livelihoods of the Poorest of the Poor'. After a rigorous evaluation process the eleven best cases were selected, which are published in this compendium. The authors of these published cases are a diverse set of people, ranging from students, professors, organisation heads to practitioners. The compendium gives an insight into some innovative practices across the country, which aim to provide sustainable livelihood solutions to the poorest of the poor.



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