

HALF YEARLY REPORT

**Promotion of Sustainable Livelihood in Protected Areas near Kanha  
National Park in Balaghat District of Madhya Pradesh**

Supported by  
Paul Hamlyn Foundation



Implementation  
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## **Acknowledgement**

Community Development Centre is happy to present its first progress report on **'Promotion of Sustainable Livelihood' in Protected Areas near Kanha National Park in Balaghat District of Madhya Pradesh**. This project is being supported by PHF [Paul Hamlyn Foundation]. This is our first experience with PHF to work on this project. We are very much thankful to PHF for their guidance and support to implement this project. We are deeply thankful to Mr. Amod Khanna and Mr. Sachin Sachdeva for continue guidance and support.

We do hope that we will be able to continue our work in this project with the guidance of PHF. Thanks must go to all who have provided invaluable support during the first six months of this project. Appreciations also go to other supporters who have assisted in so many ways in promoting the project. We are working on promoting livelihood options to villagers in targeted villages. In the first year of the project there are some positive results came out of collective efforts of the project staff. Organization is thankful also to all project staffs and also to other project staffs of the organization who have all contributed in getting this project off the ground. We do hope with this project that we will definitely achieve project goal in coming years with the regular support and guidance of entire team, experts and officials.

With best wishes

Ameen Charles  
Executive Director  
Community Development Centre

## 1. Background of the project

Balaghat is a tribal dominated district. Around 50% of geographical area is covered by forest. The district is rich in natural resources like good quality of Bamboo, Teak, Sal is produced here in the forest while, Copper, bauxite, Manganese are also available. With all these natural resources, it is also famous for the Tiger Reserve - Kanha National Park. A big portion of national park comes under the Balaghat district.

The Kanha National park is making famous to this district, but another reality is, due to this park the livelihood of the local people mainly tribals has been affected and a number of families have been displaced. In 1970 there were 18 villages displaced, and people who were displaced have not yet been get settled properly till today. New laws, rules and regulations for forest and conservations are creating problems for survival of local community because of their unawareness and being unable to get proper information of laws. The poor implementation strategy of park administration and less dialogue creates lots of confusion among local community. Now the local community is looking this park as a problem because lots of developmental activities are being affected by this park. Mainly livelihood and livelihood options are becoming less in this area. The local people, who were dependent on forest and forest resources, are now unable to get the benefits from this forest. Agriculture and forest based livelihood of the local people has been effected. There is no effective approach comes forward from park administration, the forest officers and their attitude could not work towards community participation on conservation.

When the joint forest management came there was hope for community participation but park administration could not work effectively with community, there is not good result of JFM. After declaration of buffer zone lots of new rules and regulations came into existence and the possibility of community participation has got finished. The local people are finding new options to keep away from the forest. They care about the conservation of forest and wildlife because nobody is caring for them.

No one tried to finding new ways to make collective efforts for conservation, the park administration tried to manage the things with the unfriendly rules and regulations, and it is true that this process cannot work for long time. Conservation could not possible through the laws, rules and regulation, it needs local participation. By creating conflict conservation could not possible. There is need to understand the requirement of local people. There is confusion in sides, community and park administration. They need to work collectively.

People are interested for all these efforts. Park administration works previously on formation of Echo committee but due to target oriented work it is not sustainable. Nobody can ensure the community participation with dictatorship attitude. Need to work with long term vision, park administration tried to give only few services and facilities, there is lack of discussion and need assessment. People who are living in buffer zone area are afraid. All are thinking that national park is working towards displacement. There is need to work on information dissemination and understanding the work of Kanha National Park.

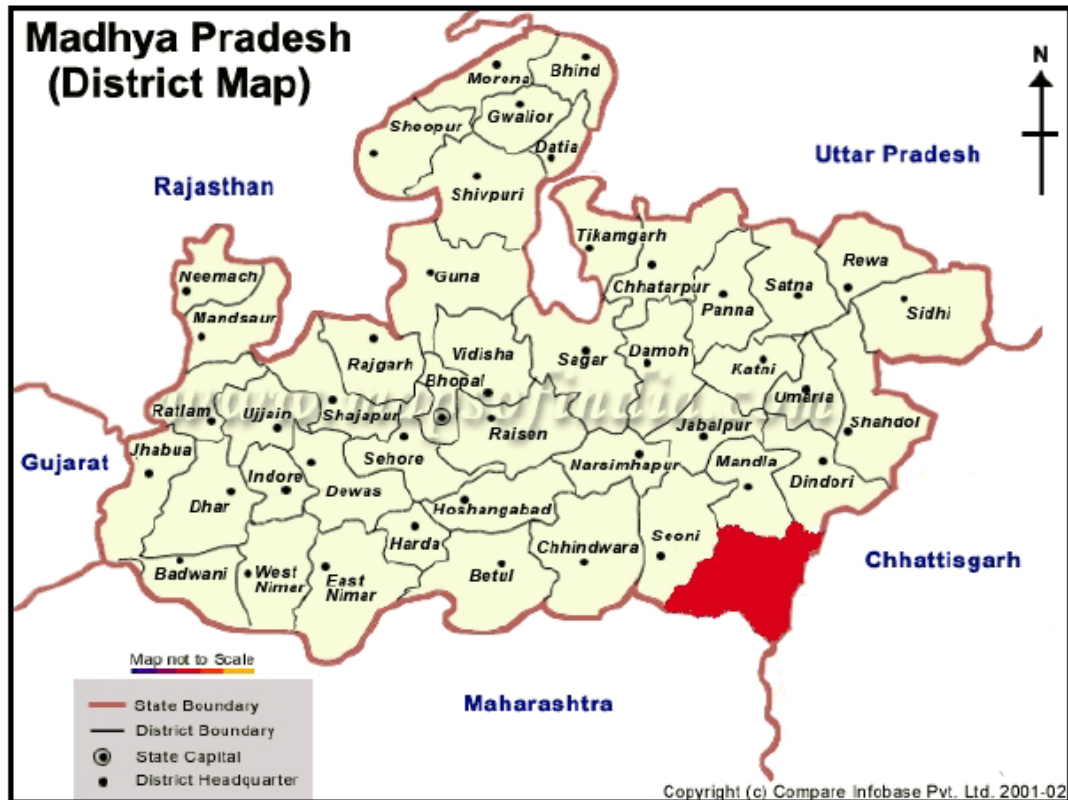
The villages which are situated very near of the core area of national park, there are more problems, because the livelihood of the villagers got effected, there is damages of crop and live stock in high volume some times human damage also. But they are unable to get compensation against damages and process of compensation is quite difficult.

This project has been planned on the problems and situation of these villages. The project villages are inhabited by the Gond tribe. Their livelihood is dependent on rainfed agriculture, wage labour and NTFP collection. The community members collect NTFPs like Amla, Harra, Bahera, Chironji, honey, Mohul leaves from the forest and sell them in local market. In case of agriculture, paddy is the main crop cultivated whereas Arhar (*Cajanus cajan*), a pulse crop is cultivated on the farm bunds. Some community members cultivate beans and a vegetable crop if there is assured irrigation post-three months after the rainy season.

CDC has also been intervening in the villages for the implementation of FRA. Claims have been registered though they are at different stages of processing, especially claims over community forest land.

## 2. Project area

Organization is working in 28 villages which fall under 10 gram panchayats. Villages are situated very close to the core area of Kanha National Park.



S. No.	Panchayat	Villages
1	Sijora	Khursipar, Komo, Baijalpur, Farmtola, Nunkatola, Kaliyatola
2	Jaitpuri	Jaitpuri, Juaditola
3	Kugaon	Dhaniyajor, Arandi, Kugaon
4	Ramhepur	Ramhepur
5	Pondi	Pondi, Agantara
6	Khajra	Chhinditola, Saraitola, Khajri
7	Mana	Narghutola, Lapti, Mana
8	Bhalapuri	Bhalapuri, Balgaon, Parsatola
9	Kadla	Kadla, Hirapur
10	Samariya	Bilaikhar, Samariya, Dungariya,

### 3. Project Goal and Objectives

#### **Ensuring livelihood security of the tribes around KANHA National Park through promotion of Horticulture activities and tuber crops.**

The overall goal of the project is to develop a horticulture based model for livelihood security for villages located in protected areas.

The specific objective of the project is to intervene in selected villages in the periphery of National Park to:

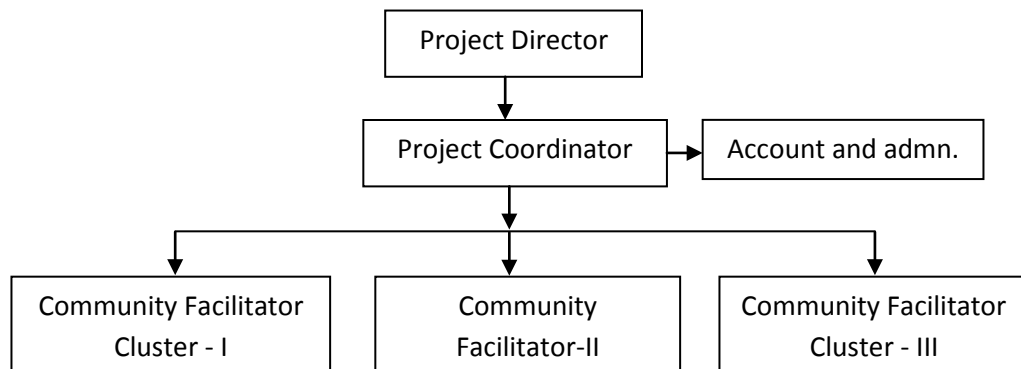
- improve household income of 300 identified families in 20 selected villages of Baihar block;
- develop market linkages for sustainable sources of income; and
- organize the local community to enable them to address land rights under FRA.
- the project will be implemented in 28 villages in 10 Gram Panchayats of Baihar block in Balaghat district. The list of villages and Gram Panchayat is given in Annexure.

The project will focus on promotion of horticulture crops as a sustainable livelihood activity.

#### 4. Project team

As per project approval the project comprises of one Project Coordinator, three Community Facilitators and one accountant . We have appointed the project staff in the first month of implementation of the project.

Figure : project staff



## 5. Implementation of Work Plan [Plan VS Performance]

SN	Activities	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	STATUS/ Remarks
<b>1</b>	<b>PLANNING</b>							STATUS/ Remarks
i	Baseline & MIS for 150 families	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					Completed
ii	Value Chain study on selected Horticulture cops (Study of 3 crops per year)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Process initiated, data collection is on progress, one training / consultation has been done
iii	Identification of 150 families per year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					Completed
iv	Micro Planning of 150 families per year		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Process is ongoing, Individual file with SLF process is going on, field staff is doing the same with ongoing project activities.
<b>2</b>	<b>TRAINING</b>							
v	Training on Vegetable cultivation (50 families each for 3 selected crops)					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Training completed 150 household trained, Horticulture and agriculture experts were present for these trainings.
vi	Training on Composting, Management and Use (50 families for each crop group)			<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>	Training completed with the close coordination of local Govt. departments i.e. horticulture and agriculture, exposure for compost making at Farm house for all identified beneficiaries.
<b>3</b>	<b>HORTICULTURE CULTIVATION</b>							
vii	Seed support (3 crops to 150 families)			<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1 time seed support provided in the month of June and July for ARBI, GINGER and TURMERIC now we are in process to provide Potato.

SN	Activities	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	STATUS/ Remarks
<b>4</b>	<b>DEVELOPING ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE</b>							
vii	Design Estimate for Compost Pit under MGNREGS				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Primary discussion starts with Sarpanch, Panch and organizing meetings with beneficiaries. Linkages developing for making of compost manure pit under MNREGA
viii	Design Estimate for Water Structures under MGNREGS					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Primary discussion starts with Sarpanch, Panch and organizing meetings with beneficiaries. Linkages developing for making of compost manure pit under MNREGA
<b>5</b>	<b>MARKET LINKAGES</b>							
ix	Local Market-Product Mapping				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		The process has been initiated
x	Meeting with Hotel and Resort Owners (2 meetings per year)							Planned in Oct. Nov.
xi	Meeting of Farmers for Collective procurement and selling (2 meetings per year in each of the 3 crop clusters)			<input type="checkbox"/>				One meeting has been done
<b>6</b>	<b>FRA</b>							
xii	Meeting at Panchayat level once a quarter			<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>	Completed
xiii	Project level meeting once in six months							Planned for next month
xiv	Interaction with government on FRA (One meeting per year)							





## 6. Programme and Activities in Details

### Motivation and Orientation of the community

Village level meetings were organized with farmers, panchayat representatives and CBOs during the collection of baseline data in each village. The issues discussed in these meetings are :

- What is the project.
- Why CDC is implementing this project in the area.
- Who will be stakeholders and beneficiaries of the project.
- Role of organization and the community.
- Role of local Panchayat and CBOs.

SN	Village	Date	Participants		
			M	F	Total
1	Khursipar,	12/04/2014	11	09	20
2	Komo,	12/04/2014	23	13	36
3	Baijalpur,	13/04/2014	08	10	18
4	Farmtola	13/04/2014	20	21	41
5	Nunkatola	15/04/2014	19	18	37
6	Kaliyatola	15/04/2014	07	13	20
7	Jaitpuri, Juaditola	17/04/2014	29	17	46
8	Dhaniyajor	18/04/2014	23	24	47
9	Arandi	20/04/2014	18	11	29
10	Kugaon	22/04/2014	05	06	11
11	Ramhepur	25/04/2014	13	08	21
12	Pondi,	25/04/2014	22	13	35
13	Agantara	28/04/2014	18	04	22
14	Chhinditola	02/05/2014	14	11	25
15	Saraitola,	02/05/2014	09	15	24
16	Khajri, Khajra	04/05/2014	23	22	45
17	Narghutola Lapti,	05/05/2014	21	23	44
18	Mana	06/05/2014	18	07	25
19	Bhalapuri Parsatola	07/05/2014	28	11	39
20	Balgaon,	10/05/2014	13	15	28
21	Kadla Hirapur	11/05/2014	33	17	50
22	Samariya	13/05/2014	21	16	37
23	Bilaikhar	14/05/2014	18	08	26
24	Dungariya	14/05/2014	10	04	14

The project staff discussed these issues in detail and clarified project objectives to overcome the doubts the community members had in their minds. Certainly, the community had some doubts over the implementation of the project. Beneficiaries

questioned about our intentions and our relations with the Park administration. There was doubt in their mind that we were the agents of the Park administration and some day or the other the villagers would be forced to leave the village to settle at another place.

The project staff told the beneficiaries that the project need their active and effective role and support for improving and ensuring sustainable livelihood. We have tried to link the livelihood with conservation of forest and wildlife so that the villagers could understand that they could secure their livelihood without doing any damage to the forest and wildlife.

Issues emerged during discussions and observations are:

- Agriculture is the major source of livelihood but most of the illiterate farmers have not been successful in cultivating their land economically. They have been treating agriculture as a family tradition, following age old practices and ready to adopt new changes only after observing the success of their neighbors.
- As the chances of crop failure on these lands is very high, the farmers generally do not invest in external inputs like improved seeds, fertilizers and plant protection measures and end up with poor crop yields, even during normal years.
- In the absence of adequate training and demonstration, they believe that excess water can enhance their crop yields.
- Forest has been providing many direct and indirect benefits to rural communities like firewood, bamboo and wood for construction of house and a number of other things for their survival. This sometimes, result in conflict between the community and forest staff.
- People do not hesitate to express their livelihood issues as due to the rigid restriction of the government against exploitation of forests, their life has become more difficult.
- There is a need to develop alternate livelihood sources to decrease dependency on forest. People need support from government schemes but they have some doubts like the government may ask them to refund the money provided in terms of support for seeds, agriculture equipments, grant etc.
- Tribal, who were dependent on forest products for livelihood has been threatened
- The forest is under the ownership of the Government but this precious resource cannot be protected unless the local communities come forward to conserve it.

After continuous efforts and regular contact the communities have become familiar with project staffs and the project activities are being organized smoothly.

## **1. Planning**

### **1.1 Baseline Survey and MIS for 153 families**

- Printed forms were distributed to the staff members to conduct the Baseline Survey.
- Certain criteria was fixed to select the potential families and accordingly, tentative list of beneficiaries was prepared by the community facilitators with the help of Anganwadi workers, community leaders, Panchayat representatives and Panchayat secretary.
- Meetings were held with beneficiaries to inform them about the project objectives and to take their consent.

- The beneficiaries of the project are individual households who have been identified according to well being ranking i.e. size of land holding; availability/accessibility to livelihood assets (e.g. water, credit etc); migration status, willingness and interest in undertaking horticulture activities. The basic issue addressed at the household level is economic status (household income, employment and assets).
- Initially, it was planned to take 10 families from each village but after having been organized the meetings with farmers and knowing the interest of the farmers and considering the time limit to complete survey, the project management decided to cover more than 10 families from the villages where farmers showed great interest to participate in the project activities. Thus more than 10 families were surveyed in Dhaniyajhor, Khursipar and Nunkatola.
- The Baseline Survey was conducted in 15 villages by a team of 3 community facilitators and 1 project coordinator from 1- 31 May 2014. Total 153 households were surveyed.



**Village Meetings**



## **Key Observations during Survey**

Some of the key observations arrived at from the data analysis are:

- Most farmers do not have water harvesting structures in their land to arrest rain water, essential for improving farm productivity.
- Most of the households have permanent house structures.
- Most of the households rely on firewood and other fuels for their cooking needs, thus impacting the ecology.
- Since there are no toilet facilities either at the household or community level, there is a high risk for the spread of contagious diseases from open defecation.
- Farmers mostly depend on traditional agricultural equipment & practices. Dependency on hybrid seeds compared to indigenous ones is increasing day by day.
- The benefits from the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), which seeks to create income-generating assets at the local level through community involvement has not managed to reach the target groups.
- Most marginalised households were often unaware of the various government-initiated poverty alleviation programmes/ schemes, their entitlements & benefits. Even among those aware, the SC/ST households have benefitted very scantily from such initiatives.
- The declining cattle population can be attributed to lack of pasture land, ban on cattle grazing in the forest and fear of cattle being killed by wild animals in the project area almost every year. Compounding these issues, the average milk production in the project area is declining.
- Absence of proper water harvesting structures contributes to low agricultural output.

### **1.2 Value Chain study on selected Horticulture crops (Study of 3 crops per year)**

More than one consultation has been done with the expert. One day orientation with the project staff was done to understand the process and data collection. Data collection on prescribed formats has been started.

### **1.3 Micro Planning of 150 families per year**

Process is going on, Individual file with SLF process is going on, field staff is doing the same with ongoing project activities.

Considering poor rural family as a basic unit for development has provided an opportunity to identify the target families who require different types of support to strengthen their livelihood. The major objective of micro planning is not on issues pertaining to allocation of resources but on issues pertaining to better use of resources, which are already allocated to community/ village.

- With the identification of families and household survey, a multi-stakeholder process involving community representatives, panchayat raj institutions has been initiated.
- To mobilise the local community to prepare village level plans and mapping of key facilities and services is being done.

- Common discussions with the community along with PRI representatives and Gramsabha have been initiated ensuring that all selected households are taken care of.
- Participatory community mobilization process has been adopted which can serve as a common vehicle for micro planning to leverage funds from various government schemes such as NREGA, BRGF etc.
- Efforts are on to seek possibility of convergence for construction of compost pits, water harvesting structures, obtaining agri equipments, digging of wells etc.

## 2. Training

### 2.1 Training on Vegetable cultivation (50 families each for 3 selected crops)

Training completed 150 household trained, Horticulture and agriculture experts were present for these trainings.

A One day training programme in bathes on 'Vegetable Cultivation' was organized at Garhi. 153 farmers from the project area participated in the training. The training programme was organized to improve the income generation capacity of farmers through vegetable cultivation technology and through linkages with different institutions. The topics of the training programme covered field preparation, nursery management, nutrient and irrigation management, pest and disease management, organic farming and post harvest management of vegetable crops with special emphasis on tuber crops i.e. arbi, ginger, potato etc. A field visit to Govt. Agriculture farm and dairy farm was also organized where the participants were able to witness the cultivation of vegetables through scientific techniques. The training programme with 8 lectures by resource persons from Horticulture Department was successful as evident from the feedback of the participating farmers.



**TRAINING TO FARMERS**

## 2.2 Training on Composting, Management and Use (50 families for each crop group)

Training completed with the close coordination of local Govt. departments i.e. horticulture and agriculture, exposure for compost making at Farm house for all identified beneficiaries.

SN	Place of Training	Date of Training	No. of Participants	Name of Resource Person
1	Farm House Garhi	12/09/2014	69	Mr. Uikey
2	Community Hall Garhi	15/09/2014	40	Mr. Meravi
3	Community Hall Garhi	19/09/2014	40	Mr. Meravi

CDC in collaboration with horticulture and agriculture departments conducted One day three training workshops on compost making at Garhi. 149 farmers were trained on compost making techniques. The first training was attended by 69 farmers followed by 40 and 40 farmers in the next two training workshops.

Speaking at the opening sessions, Mr. Meravi and Tekam of Horticulture department spoke extensively on the importance of the training, saying it will go a long way towards improving production and productivity of farmers. He went on to note that the training would equip farmers with the skills and techniques on how to make compost by using grasses, cow dung, vinegar and other bio wastages. Mr. Kalihare pointed out that chemical fertilizers are expensive and sometimes they are not available. He then informed that the training will provide the information which will be helpful in improving crop production and productivity by increasing productivity per unit area. Mr. Tiwari urged the farmers to train other farmers who did not have the opportunity to attend the training.

Mr. Meravi from Agricultural department, reaffirmed that the aim of the training is to equip farmers with the knowledge on how to produce organic manure by using quick composting. He posited that if farmers are well trained on how to make compost it would contribute immensely to their production and productivity. He implored the participants to make best use of the techniques and knowledge gained during the training session and to also train others. Mr. Kalihare also called on farmers to make best use of the opportunity and to put into practice what they have learnt, challenging them to take ownership of the project for its sustainability. According to him, all this is geared towards food security and poverty reduction. He said agricultural activities are the only way forward in eradicating the poverty and food crisis.

Training sessions lasted for 8 hours with the first 6 hours in lectures were used to explain compost production. In the afternoon the participants had a tour to a demonstration farm where they saw a compost facility farm and a compost testing demonstration. The influence of compost characteristics on crop growth and yield was also discussed. Also, compost application methods were demonstrated. The instructors told the participants that proper composition is a must for making quality manure.



### Training Schedule

S. No.	Content/topic	Resource Person's
1	Introduction and opening remarks	Mr. Kalihare Mr. Uikey Mr. Meravi Mr. Tekam Mr. Mahesh Dahate
2	Importance of organic compost, controlling soil erosion with compost	
3	Method of making compost, (raw material, composition)	
4	Use of compost Effect of Composts on Soil	
5	Compost and soil fertility	

### 3. Horticulture cultivation

#### 3.1 Seed support (3 crops to 150 families)

Seeds of Ginger and arbi were distributed to the households who showed interest. Before distribution of seeds a one day orientation was organized with the beneficiaries to give them knowledge about the timing, preparation of field, sowing techniques etc. to get maximum benefit and high production. Experts from Horticulture department were called to give information to the farmers.

Particulars	ARBI	TURMERIC	GINGER
No. of Farmers Supported	60	37	33
Quantity in quintal	600 Kg	122	103 kg

One time seed support provided in the month of June and July for ARBI, GINGER and TURMERIC now we are in process to provide Potato seeds.





## **4. Developing Associated Infrastructure**

### **4.1 Design Estimate for Compost Pit under MGNREGS**

Primary discussion starts with Sarpanch, Panch and organizing meetings with beneficiaries. Linkages developing for making of compost manure pit under MNREGA

### **4.2 Design Estimate for Water Structures under MGNREGS**

Primary discussion starts with Sarpanch, Panch and organizing meetings with beneficiaries. Linkages developing for making of compost manure pit under MNREGA

Convergence of NREGA activities with those of the watershed development programmes of various departments has great importance as more than 50 per cent the activities under the scheme are related to land development, water resource development, water harvesting and afforestation. The project staff has initiated the process to devise better methods for convergence of MGNREGA activities.

Representatives from panchayat raj institutions, and other stake holders including CBOs working in the field of water conservation and management have also been made part of the discussion process.

The project team has been trying to develop ways and means of harmoniously integrating activities of MGNREGA and the watershed programmes through convergence process, including participation of people and institutional approach.

## **5. Market Linkages**

### **5.1 Local Market-Product Mapping**

Linking beneficiary farmers to the market is a priority for the project that aims at poverty reduction but market linkage is a big challenge because giving support to increase productivity is one thing while developing market linkages for agricultural production in order to generate enough income to sustain the needs of their households is another thing. The challenges to market linkages include:

- *Poor Transportation facilities* make marketing of agriculture produce uneconomical. Most productive areas are remote and not well connected to the main market hubs.
- *Lack of market information*: Most farmers are ignorant of potential markets. It is therefore important that a good information system is developed for small farmers so that they can make informed decisions for their produce.
- *In the project area* agricultural production is mostly dependent on rainfall. Changing rainfall patterns is a challenge to consistent production and productivity. Convergence with various government schemes is need of the hour to develop water harvesting structures.

Initiatives intending to support farmers to increase production for the market is focused on ensuring that the following issues are considered:

- 1) Market – Where is the market? How big is the market? What are the specifications for the product to be sold?

It is important to develop relationships of mutual trust among market players for the development of sustainable, longer-term linkages. Flow of information, transparency and accountability are key elements. Promotion of dialogue through suitable platforms, to facilitate linkages between producers, processors and buyers is important for the growth of agribusiness and development of associated value chains.

- 2) Production – What is the current level of production? What is the capacity of farmers to produce? Is there scope for expansion?

Issues such as inadequate availability of produce due to scattered, small-scale production and low productivity, need to be addressed. Engaging more organised, commercially oriented farmers and adopting better production technology would contribute to improvements in the level and consistency of production.

- 3) *Organisational capacity – Are farmers organised? How best can they be organised?*

Another challenge is to create a business culture amongst farmers so that they are able to relate production to the needs and expectations of the market. The capacity of farmer groups in issues of governance, planning and group marketing is very limited. There is a need to strengthen this capacity.

- 4) *Coordination of development initiatives*

Villages have witnessed a plethora of agribusiness development initiatives over the years. However, coordination has often been weak, resulting in duplication of activities and less than optimal allocation of resources. Improved coordination of agribusiness development initiatives is vital in order to develop cooperation, share lessons and good practices, and improve resource allocation. It is essential that efforts are made to develop both the demand and supply sides of value chains.

## **6. FRA**

### **6.1 Meeting at Panchayat level once a quarter**

The 73-rd amendment to the Constitution of India which bestowed a constitutional status on the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) offered an opportunity for the common villagers to participate in local governance. After more than two decades today the reality is nowhere close to the scenario envisaged in 1993. As per the 73-rd amendment, there are many areas that affect the livelihoods of the people directly.

Forest Rights Act passed by the Central Government in 2006 provides opportunity for the development of tribal communities and it is recognizing right to forest resources and scope for livelihoods promotion. With this Forest Rights Act, the adivasi people can get land and property rights. PRIs do not exercise any role presently in the management of forests which have critical impact on rural farming and livelihood systems and ecology.

These are some of the issues that have direct relevance to livelihoods of people, where Panchayats need to intervene. We are trying to educate and mobilize people towards empowerment by using these laws and ensure their rights and development. We have planned to educate adivasi communities for implementing this FRA act with democracy values. This will support adivasi communities in accessing traditional rights over common property resources, land rights, forest collections and will improve their standard of living. We need to strengthen this process for constant and sustainable action by organizing awareness generation activities.

Panchayat level meeting was one of the steps to move forward towards achievement of these objectives. The meeting was conducted to make the PRI representatives realize the importance of Panchayats and Gram Sabhas under 5<sup>th</sup> Schedule. 27 PRI members and 67 community members attended the meeting. Role of local governance for the utilization and monitoring of Government funds for creating common community resources and infrastructure, conservation of surrounding bio-diversity were emphasized during the discussions. It was also emphasized that the women are key players to improving local governance. Relevant information on Bio-diversity, NREGS, FRA was also provided with a view to educating the villagers.

### **6.3 Interaction with government on FRA (One meeting per year)**

The Forest Rights Act was notified for operation with effect from 31.12.2007 and the scheduled Tribes and other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Rules, 2008 for implementing the provisions of the Act were notified on 1.1.2008. Ministry of Tribal Affairs has been made nodal agency for implementing the FRA. The Government of India has passed an order to all state governments to implement the act in its true spirit. This special order guides the state authorities for implementation of FRA with people's participation. But the implementation of the act is far from reality as the Adivasis are still struggling to get their rights on forests. The traditional forest dwellers are forcefully being evicted from forests by the forest department. This issue has been raised by the project staff during dialogues with the forest functionaries. During the interaction it has been felt that both the community as well as the government officials need to be trained about the Act and the influence of the Forest Department needs to be minimized for effective implementation of the FRA.

## 7. Staff Capacity Building

### 7.1 Training on Baseline Survey

A three days training/orientation was organized for the staff members on 13-14 May 2014 at CDC's Field Office based on Project objectives and goals, implementation strategies and Baseline Survey. 3 Community facilitators, 1 Project Coordinator and 1 accountant attended the training. The training was conducted by the Executive Director of CDC. Base Line Survey format was discussed and finalized during the training. A tentative plan was prepared to conduct baseline survey and identification of beneficiary families.

### Experience and Process of Project Implementation

The project is being implemented from April 2014. The Project Director heads the project and Project Coordinator manages the project. All project staff have received appropriate training. Reporting is done regularly with monthly progress report is prepared by Community Facilitators on a prescribed format and the PC consolidates the report. Progress of the project is supervised by the Project Director. He tracks implementation progress and provides meaningful support and guidance to the project staff on the basis of which the project team members monitor household level impacts and implementation experiences to take corrective actions, if necessary.

### Problems faced and solutions

The project team have faced various challenges and these include:

- **Poor methods of farming:** Farmers remain particularly conservative and very hesitant to advance or modernize their farming methods. It is a difficult task to sensitize them about improved methods of farming. As a result, such practices like growing the poor local breeds/ local crops – which cannot survive under poor weather conditions leading to low productivity. On the same note, modern farming equipments also remain very expensive for a poor farmer to afford.
- **Lack of access to the common market/ market support:** Many rural farmers remain unemployed and they greatly rely selling on part of their agricultural produce to provide the basic needs to their families. This implies that they need a reliable and accessible market to be able to sell their products to earn a decent living.
- **The landholding system:** Some people have no land at all (the tenants), some have very small plots and while others have very big plots of lands (land lords). Some of those families who have small plots of land have big families. Usually, these small plots do not provide enough space for them to practice large scale farming. As the families and

communities expand, the rate of production remains the same and sometimes the yields become smaller due to natural factors. In essence, the produce is much less than the subsistence and market requirements.

- **Low productivity:** As stated earlier, the small plots of land and mentality of subsistence farming coupled with poor methods of farming can only result in low productivity. Farmers use labor based techniques using rudimentary tools like wood-plough which limit their productivity. In addition, many farmers don't have access to crops and/ seeds at the beginning of the season. This is mainly because most of the seeds are either consumed or spoilt by the pests and often nothing is spared to be planted for the following season. This is a problem because the farmers cannot reach their full potential and as a result many rural farmers remain poor as they barely produce enough to feed their families.
- **Male dominance:** The men in most cases dictate what the women grow on the family plots. Men control the cash flow in the families and in many cases they first fulfill their needs – usually alcohol! Women lack access to land, lack of access to credit, and lack of access to education. The abuse and violation of the rights of the women in various ways such as wife beating, discrimination to some extent are also visible.
- **Lack of information:** Here we mention lack of access to agricultural information. This has led to persistent infestation of pests and diseases and lack of planning. Only a small number of the total population of rural farmers is able to read and write. On another note, access to technology remains quite expensive – becomes worse when it comes to rural farmers. This makes information sharing among the rural farmers pretty hard.

#### **Strategies to tackle these problems:**

- Progressive farmers will be encouraged to set up demonstration farms which will be instrumental to train more farmers from the project area to ensure that the skills are dispersed widely such that the project benefits people beyond the targeted community. Knowledge and skills sharing is one of our core values.
- Regular monitoring and evaluation exercise will be put in place.
- We shall encourage farmers to produce as much as they can to promote the entrepreneurship aspect such that they can sell the surplus to earn a living to cater for their basic needs
- Farmers will be encouraged to work in groups to reinvent the spirit of cooperative farming with its unsung advantages. Youth and women participation will be specifically encouraged.
- We shall create linkages with other organizations working in the field of agriculture.
- We shall sensitize the farmers about ecology, economy and social concerns of agriculture in development as a sustainable approach.
- The project will promote solidarity among farmers for increased bargaining power, more advocacy to stop land grabs through secure land rights.
- This project is going to cover the gender gap between rural farmers. Women have proved to be in a better position to ensure seed and food security. Often, the women are

the ones who preserve the seeds for planting the next season. And they are also the ones who sow, weed and harvest in most cases. Our project therefore will encourage women participation.

- The project is going to encourage the farmers to grow food crops to ensure that the farmers ensure food security in their homes before they start producing on a larger scale.
- The project will encourage farmers go to the nearest markets they have in their reach; this will enable them to supply food crops to schools, hospitals in their communities and beyond. Ignoring the nearest markets would even cut on their costs of production through reduced costs of transportation.

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