

Press Release

State Inception Workshop

Insight into Indian States (I3S)

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Various studies increasingly point to the fact that some Indian States are able to achieve better public policy outcomes manifested through better concomitant quality of economic growth and governance while others continue to languish. The Twelfth Five Year Plan expresses concerns about public expenditure outcomes. Therefore, it recommends an urgent need for reforming the implementation processes, on the one hand, and provides additional provisions for encouraging innovation, good practices and creating inter-state synergies to improve quality of outcomes, on the other. However there is no platform, where the States can engage and learn from each other on issues of common interest. Documenting successful and not so successful practices across States in India has been undertaken sporadically.

Public Affairs Centre, Bangalore in collaboration with CUTS International, Jaipur in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), New Delhi, has initiated a project Insight into Indian Cities in Karnataka. The main feature of the two year project is a coherent, user friendly, sustainable and interactive web portal, which would depict successful and not so successful practices on governance in the selected four States (Assam, Odisha, Rajasthan and Karnataka) of India over two years. The aim of the portal is to present an independent and dispassionate view of policies and practices which can help other States to imbibe and improve their own policies and practices. The portal will be innovative and different from other such portals, mostly operated by government agencies, because of the very nature of the portal which will be operated by a non-governmental organisation on a dynamic basis.

In this regard Public Affairs Centre had organised an inception workshop on 5th December 2013 at Central Training Institute, KMF Campus, Bangalore. The workshop saw the presence of various state agencies like the Karnataka State Rural Livelihood Mission, Abdul Nazir Sab State Institute for Rural Development, NABARD, Non-Governmental Organisations, Individuals working in the field of non-farm livelihoods and representatives from enterprises like Mother Earth that promotes and market rural crafts. The workshop focussed on discussions related to Non-Farm Livelihoods in Karnataka.

"The inception meet saw the presence of Mr. Amit Anand, UNDP Programme Officer, Suresh, Director, PAC, Mr. George Cherian, Director, CUTS International, Jaipur and others from civil society organisations. Mr Amit Anand, in his special address spoke about the knowledge gaps at various levels in the country.

Mr P. Shiva Shankar, Director, SIRD in his key note address spoke of his experience as the CEO of Dakshina Kannada district and how the water supply system of the region was documented as best practice by the World Bank and is now being followed all over the country.

Mr Prakash, Joint Director, KSRLP in his inaugural address described non-farm sector as 4Ms (Men, Machines, Materials and Markets). He opined that there was a need to focus on the following 4 sectors if one were to promote the non-farm sector:

- Assessment and use of locally available raw material
- Consider the local needs and consumption patterns
- Promote locally available skills (indigenous skills and trades)
- Effective market strategies have to be developed.

The inaugural session was followed by a round table discussion on rural non farm sector in Karnataka. Prof. Sriram from IIMB chaired the session and moderated the discussions. Prof Sriram started by quoting a study by Prof Anirudh Krishnan on the reasons why people slip back below the poverty line. The reasons why people move out of poverty are different from the reasons of why people fall into poverty. Diversification of livelihoods is the major cause for moving out of poverty as it reduces the vulnerability of the people which would lead to reduction of poverty in the longer run. He also told the gathering that SHGs and Micro finance when introduced appeared like solutions but in reality they were solutions in search of problems. He posits that we are presently in the cusp where

agriculture cannot be fragmented further and there is a shift to the service or the tertiary sector, hence the time is right to speak of non-farm livelihoods.

Representatives from NABARD, ISEC, SRLM, GRAAM, Mysore and Industree Foundation were the panelists in the discussion."