

Insight Into Indian States (I3S)

State Partners' Meet

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CUTS Conference Hall, D-218, Bhaskar Marg, Banipark, Jaipur



CUTS Centre for Consumer Action, Research & Training (CUTS CART)

277, Sindhi Colony, Bhaskar Marg, Bani Park Jaipur 302 016, India

Ph: 91.141.2282 062, 2282 823/2282 482

Fx: 91.141.4015 395, Email: I3S@cuts.org

Introduction:

Insight into Indian States (I3S) project initiated on October 01, 2013 in four states (Assam, Odisha, Karnataka and Rajasthan). This is a two-year project on Rural Non-Farm Livelihood supported by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), India. The objective of the project is to generate an interactive, coherent and user-friendly online portal at the national level. The main aim is to research, document and highlight the successful as well as not so successful practices, the successful and not so successful practices will be followed in the selected States and areas to enable policymakers to identify and acquire new skills and developmental activities as well as implementing current policies and programmes in an effective manner and to enable States to take inspiration and learn lessons from each other by way of intelligent discussions enhance the growth rate of the state.

The project will cover Centrally and State-sponsored schemes related to Rural Non-Farm Livelihood Sector programmes and schemes implemented by Rural Development Department, such as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, State Rural Livelihood & Skill Development/Promotion Council/Corporation/Mission, National Institute of Rural Development (Rajasthan & Assam), State Institutes of Rural Development, Department of Industry (Cluster approach), National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Non-Farm Sector), Small Industries Development Bank of India, local or regional premier research institutes and specific initiatives taken by non-governmental organisations/community-based organisations will also be explored.

The partners' meet was one of the key activities under the project to bring all project partners on a common platform to discuss and decide the future course of action, and some research and programmatic knowledge and skills can be enhanced through having technical session on selected topic.

Participation

In the meeting four designated state project officers from Assam, Odisha, Karnataka and Rajasthan



and eight other participants including Project Management Team, CUTS CART and Resource Persons participated in the meeting. Monjit Borthakur, Omeo Kumar Das Institute for Social Change and Development (OKDISCD), Guwahati; Seema Gupta, Centre for Youth and Social Development, Bhubneshwar; Sreedharan, Public Affairs Centre, Bangalore; and Arti Pandey Tiwari, CUTS Centre for Consumer

Action, Research & Training (CUTS CART), Jaipur represented the partner organisations of the project.

George Cheriyan, Madhu Sudan Sharma, Om Prakash Arya, Amardeep Singh and Jai Shree Soni from the Project Management Team (PMT) also took part. In the meeting there were three resource

persons who facilitated sessions on various topics. Narendra S Sisodiya, Chairman, Centre for Micro Finance and Rajesh Jain, Vice President, Access Development Services spoke on 'Livelihood and Rural Non-Sector Issues' and Neetu Purohit, Associated Professor, Indian Institute of Health Management Research spoke on 'Qualitative Research Tools and Techniques'.

Proceedings

Inaugural Session

Opening Remarks by George Cheriyan

George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS International and Head CUTS CART in his opening remarks said



that agricultural sector is declining by the time and Rural Non-Farm Sector (RNFS) is growing. Rural poverty has reduced significantly from 40 to 26 percent. This is mainly attributed to the significant shift to non-farm labour in rural areas.

Referring to the recently released India Rural Development Report 2012-13, he said income from farm livelihoods is no longer sufficient for a household, especially for smaller and marginal farmers. Hence, 43 percent of rural families rely on non-farm employment as their major source of income. Non-farm employment offers better wages and social mobility, especially for lower castes to move out of agricultural labour. There is also some evidence that higher non-farm wages have helped increase agricultural wages. The important barriers to non-farm livelihoods are lack of skills, access to credit and marketing.

With one-third contribution to employment, which amounts to employing about 110 million people, and over 60 percent in gross domestic product (GDP), the non-farm sector is now an important segment of the rural economy of India.

He also shed light on a new flagship scheme called National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) implemented in all states with a total budget of Rs. 1,42,617 crores for 2012-13t the Central Government level.

He spoke about the key challenges in the project, such as knowledge management and getting government officials on board, which is the primary target of this project. He also underlined the importance of the bringing government officials on board and building good relations with them so that sought information can be received in full and on time. He also said the targets are ambitious, but achievable.

Project Overview by Madhu Sudan Sharma

Madhu Sudan Sharma, Project Coordinator, CUTS CART provided a detailed overview of the project for better understanding. He spoke about the problem of having less avenues and opportunities for interstate cross learning at national level and related national context. He shed light on the 12th Five Year Plan approach paper which underlines the importance of having a web portal for interstate cross learning from each other's experiences which can result into scalability of innovations and replicability



as well as leading to the growth of States which are lagging behind. He said that it is in this context, the I3S project has been designed.

He also mentioned the importance of the Rural Non-Farm Sector in general and beneficiaries of the project in particular. He described the objectives of the project in detail. He stated that there are three major activities which are related to action research, web portal and networking of the practitioners across four states.

He also covered few key terms frequently used in the project and are necessary to be understood. Lastly, he also suggested useful links of few web portals similar to I3S initiative to be placed on the said web portal – Solution Exchange, India Urban Portal, Knowledge Governance Centre, and Dec-Watch etc.

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Technical Sessions

Livelihoods and Rural Non-Farm Programmes: An Operational Overview and Approaches

This session was facilitated by Narendra S. Sisodia, Chairman, Centre for Micro Finance and IAS (Ret.). He was the first Director of the Rural Non-Farm Development Agency (RUDA) and worked in various related capacities.

Sisodiya narrated the success story of *Antyodaya Yojana* which was purely a non-farm sector



programme launched in 1974 for the upliftment of 1,60,516 households of Rajasthan by providing them sustainable livelihood options. He spoke about almost all aspects, such as political context of that time and political commitment for the scheme, bureaucratic commitment, economic context and need-based planning. He also elaborated on the lessons learnt and learning from failures as well as to

improve the effective implementation of the project. He mentioned the rationale of the scheme, its

negation of the trickle down approach and adopting the individualist approach in beneficiary selection.

Livelihoods and Rural Non-Farm Sector: Concepts and Methodologies

This session was facilitated by Rajesh Jain, Vice President, ACCESS Development Services, Jaipur. He spoke about the RUDA which was formed in 1997 under State Industry Department for promoting Rural Non-Farm Sector livelihoods in Rajasthan. It was very successful in carrying out its programmes since it was having professional staff and governing board that time but today the number is less and its approach is cluster rather than individual. He further elaborated that RUDA firstly listed down 10 top ten sectors which are crucial in the context of Rajasthan and finally selected top three important areas to work in. These are mineral, leather and wool-based sub sectors. Rajasthan is one of the top most in the production of these three sub sectors.



RUDA is known for its path breaking innovations – using value chain method for the first time, thinking about seeking not only cooperation of the private sector but also establishing collaboration as it was a big question that how a government body can work with private sector with a brand new concept of Self Help Group (SHG)? RUDA was innovative in the sense of learning from the existing experiences especially from

Khadi and village industries which were adopting production lead approach rather than market lead demand-based approach.

RUDA also worked on policy issues, trained related government officials and provided support for skills enhancement of partner organisations. He mentioned that though lots of initiatives and innovative steps were taken but the documentation is very poor; therefore no documents or records are available as of now.

Usages of Tools and Techniques of Qualitative Research



Neetu Purohit, Associate Professor, IIHMR, Jaipur facilitated this session. It was an interactive session. She defined the Qualitative tools of the research and said that these tools help filling gaps in the quantitative data. She covered four methods of qualitative tools – Observation, Focus Group Discussions, Case Studies and Interview. She spoke in detail with examples

of all these four methods of qualitative tools which are extremely important in data collection especially in the rural context where direct input from primary stakeholders is needed.

State Specific Presentations by the State Project officials about progress made so far

Representatives of all states delivered a power point presentation covering following points: Introduction of the organisation, brief about the state, scoping visits done under the project and information collected from relevant departments and their schemes in the given formats etc. All four state project officers raised their queries related to the project and its operational aspects, budget and funds flow.

Karnataka

Sreedharan provided a brief overview of his visit to NABARD, Institute for Social and Economic Change, and Karnataka State Rural Livelihood Promotion Society and its budgeted outlay of 165 crores in ratio of 75:25. SRLM (*Sanjeevini*) conducts training and skill building, creates market avenues and promotes need-based activities etc. He also mentioned that the SRLM has a programme under which it has identified five districts with 20 *talukas* as intensive blocks where the work is yet to be started.



He mentioned in brief about NABARD (budgeted outlay of Rs 90 lakh with 100 percent utilisation) and the work it is doing, such as providing need-based training and skill development through Rural Development and Self Employment Training Institute (RUDSET), *Rural Haats* and *Marts* (initiated in September 2012)

He also shared his experiences related to Mysore Resettlement and Development Agency (MYRADA), a non-governmental organisation working for livelihood promotion in Karnataka and said that its working areas are Micro Finance, Habitat and Health, Education and Sanitation. The organisation works in most parts of Karnataka and forms SHGs. He also spoke about the organisation called Outreach which works in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala for income generation activities in rural areas.

Odisha



Seema Gupta gave the presentation and after providing a brief introduction of the Centre for Youth and Social Development and Odisha, she spoke about State Employment Policy, 2005, Odisha MSME Development Policy, 2008, 106840 MSMEs contributing for over 89 percent of employment in industries, Traditional employment-oriented sectors, such as Handicrafts, Handloom and Sericulture and Potential

for Tourism Development and Agro-based Industries in the state.

She shared that the following departments are key in the State of Odisha for I3S project – Forest and Environment, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, *Panchayati Raj* Department, SC and ST Development, Minorities and Backward Classes Welfare, Handloom, Textiles and Handicrafts, State Employment Mission, NABARD and Small Industries Development Bank of India.

Assam

Monjit Borthakur gave the presentation and after providing introduction about OKDISCD and Assam State he narrated his experiences of visiting relevant key departments of Assam government and also shared the information collected from these departments and organisations.



He further stated that Rural Non-Farm Sector mainly comprises of Small Scale industries, Manufacturing of Food and Beverages, Manufacturing of Furniture, Manufacturing of Handloom/Textile and Manufacturing of Wearing Apparel. He said that following departments and agencies are implementing Rural Non-Farm Sector programmes and schemes in Assam; government departments; Panchayat & Rural Development, Department of Industries and Commerce, Department of Sericulture and State Institute of Rural Development, NABARD and North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Ltd are prominent.

Rajasthan

Arti Pandey Tiwari, Project Officer, CUTS delivered the presentation for Rajasthan. After providing a brief introduction of CUTS and Rajasthan, she shared her experiences of visiting the key concerned departments in Jaipur and mentioned the schemes run by these in brief.



She stated that Rajasthan is the first State in the country to have announced the Non-Farm Development Policy in 1995 and established Rural Non-Farm Development Agency in 1997 under the Department of Industries for promoting the non-farm sector as an alternate strategy for generating alternate avenues of employment in rural areas. The Rural Non-Farm Sector covers mining, processing, village and cottage industries and handicrafts, households and non-household manufacturing, repairs, construction, trade, transport and all kind of services. The state government selected the three core sub sectors which were part of the concentrated high level policy: Leather, Wool and Mineral-based industries.

She said that Rajasthan was the first State in India to establish the Rajasthan Mission on Livelihoods (RMoL), in September 2004 in order to address the challenges of unemployment and ensuring gainful and sustainable employment. Later RMoL was renamed as Rajasthan Mission on Skill and Livelihoods, by adding the word skill in 2009-10, to provide further impetus to the Skill Trainings. She spoke about *Rajasthan Grameen Aajivika Vikas Parisad* (RGAVP) registered as society under Rajasthan Societies Act 1958. Hon'ble Chief Minister is the Chairman of the Society. State Mission Director (LPs and SHGs) is the Member Secretary of Society. All rural livelihood programmes in the State will be henceforth implemented under the aegis of the RGAVP and NABARD implemented programmes and schemes in Rajasthan.

Discussions on the Strategy to Conduct Inception Workshops

Discussions were held on the tentative strategies of conducting inception meetings in all the four states. It was finalised that all the state partners will calculate the budget and make necessary arrangements in advance and send the tentative list of invitees in the meet to CUTS to further add names into that.

Concluding Remarks and the Way Forward

All the participants provided their feedback and said the partners meet contributed in enhancing their understanding about the project. In the concluding remarks, Cheriyan hoped that this project will be successful with the active support and good work of all the project partners and national team at CUTS.

Highlights

- Active participation of participants
- Meeting as per schedule
- Quality of all the three resource persons was satisfactory
- Meeting was successful

Low Lights

- The schedule of the meeting was quite tight and long