

Research Highlights:

Village Adoption Study: Asapur, Jiwati Block, Chandrapur District (Maharashtra)

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1. Introduction:

The study region consists of village Asapur in Jiwati Block (Chanderpur, Maharashtra)- a fully tribal belt surrounded by forest is rainfed agrarian in nature. Nearly 91 per cent of the total population being small and marginal farmers as well as agricultural workers reside. Due to poor resource base, the occupational diversification is very limited. The area is dominated by homogeneous Gond tribal community faces seasonal migration, acute shortages of drinking water, lack of awareness/mobilisation and skills. The livelihood pattern is seasonal mostly dependent on forest based and rainfed crops like cotton, tur, jowar and moog are growing with low productivity. The region is appearing totally neglected due to lack of connectivity, illiteracy and predominant tribal population with less human habitats. The poverty alleviation and other programmes such as Watershed, MGNREGS, Indira Awas Yojana, SGSY etc., have not reached to these remote areas. It is imperative to select this region where overall developmental initiatives need to be established so that the poor tribal people will come out from drudgery and maintain livelihood without further languishing in poverty. Keeping in view, the main objective of the selection of village is to establish institutional arrangements for development and maintenance of livelihoods in sustainable manner. The initiative of the village adoption study is in an action research mode.

2. Study Area:

The selection of the village is Asapur revenue village, Jiwati Block, Chandrapur district of Maharashtra State. The total Geographical area is 836.26 ha. The total households of the village are 62 and total population constituted 305 out of which males 157 and 148 females. Gond (adivasis) is the tribe habitats in the village.

3. Methodology Adopted:

To begin, participatory tools such as transect walk as well as participatory situation analysis have been carried out in the village. The major issues identified were, lack of accessibility to

safe and quantity of drinking water and health facilities, low productivity nature of agricultural practices, and poor connectivity to block and district places. Later baseline as well as socio-economic surveys have been carried out in each and every household to elicit the information related to resources availability, income sources, expenditure pattern, dependency, educational status, accessibility to basic amenities etc., were collected. Taking into consideration of information gathered, the following activities initially were designed. The activities identified were divided into two phases; in the first phase, activities like revival of SHGs, Repair/Renovation of School, Angawadi sanitation and drinking water facilities Mobilisation of Youth through skill enhancement and self-employment were identified and in the second phase Internal road connectivity, Compartmental Bunding through MGNREGS: and Catchment area development (Watershed Activities) were identified.

4. Interventions Made:

- a. Awareness programme was conducted at Jiwati Block headquarters for SHGs during 22-23 April, 2013. A total of 48 SHG members have participated in the orientation programme. Besides, 11 Officials were engaged as resource persons in the orientation programme. They included: DRDA Officials, NGO representatives, BDO Officials and NIRD Faculty). The inputs delivered were the following;
 - Principles of SHGs (membership, meetings, book keeping and governance)
 - SHG needs and wants (Smart savings, Wise spending, Matured borrowings, investment and asset creation)
 - Activities (Problem identification, Prioritization, Skill requirement, Training, Exposure Visits)
 - Linkages (Govt. depts., Banks, credit institutions, Markets)
 - Value addition, processing etc.
 - Films

The major outcome derived through this orientation was SHG members are aware of the functioning of SHG and encouraged to change their attitude towards repayment of loan.

- b. A separate awareness cum skill development programmes for Youth was also conducted in Jiwati Block headquarters for village youth (both boys and girls)

during 25 May, 2013. A total of 18 youth members (12 Boys and 6 Girls) have participated in the orientation programme. Besides, 8 Officials were also engaged as resource persons in the orientation programme. They included: DRDA Officials, NGO representatives, BDO Officials and NIRD Faculty. The inputs delivered were the following.

- Personality Development; Behavioral and Attitudinal Change
- Development of Entrepreneurial Skills
- Understanding the existing livelihoods assets/capitals
- Empowerment tools
- Micro level poverty reduction plans
- Book Keeping: (Cash Book, Ledger register, Preparing Budget, Maintenance of Accounts)
- Writing of Minutes
- Exposure Visits
- Knowledge of Market, Pricing, Value Addition etc.,
- Activities (Problem identification, Prioritization, Skill requirement, Training, Exposure Visits)
- Linkages (Govt. depts., Banks, credit institutions, Markets)
- Films

The outcome was that of the Youth members made aware about the personality, attitudinal changes, skill enhancement and Entrepreneurship development.

c. A special Gram sabha was conducted in Asapur village during August, 2013. The following was the main agenda of the Gramsabha.

- Creation of awareness about the MGNREGA Scheme
- Drinking water and sanitation problems in the village
- Land levelling, compartmental bunding and vegetation across the bunds in the agricultural fields

A total of 38 Villagers (includes 20 men and 18 women) have attended in the Gramsabha. Besides sarpanch of the village, village secretary, anganwadi teacher, NGO representatives and NIRD faculty have also participated in the Gramsabha.

Gramsabha has passed resolution for construction of compartmental bunding, repair of drinking water storage overhead tank, installation borewell and repair of drinking water pipeline etc. The follow up activity of linkage with bank and establishment of institution activity-wise is going on.

5. Innovative Approaches/Experiences:

Recently, as an entry point activity, Director General, NIRD sanctioned 10 solar lamps at different location points in Asapur village. Since the village is facing frequent power cuts, installation of solar street lamps helped them in various ways. The event of solar street lighting system was overwhelmingly received by the villagers. Solar street lights ensured security during night for organising community events etc. The maintenance of solar street lights has been taken over by the community by sharing the cost, if any. The major observation made here is the confidence and capacity building measures established among the SHGs, Youth and villagers. Willingness to contribute either in cash or shramdan for developmental activities in the village was ensured. Through these innovative approaches, cultural capital-shared beliefs and preferences of respective groups in the village have been strengthened. Another important experience reflected is that of non-financial social assets like education, knowledge, cohesiveness among villagers etc.

6. Conclusion:

The villagers expressed their happiness with acquired confidence and capacities and ready to start the various activities in their respective places collectively. They have undergone training in various livelihood activities at Rural Technology Park, NIRD, Hyderabad. However, the follow-up activity of linkage with bank and establishment of activity is going on. It was learnt that how cultural capital as well as non-financial social capital work among tribal community through induced innovative approach of village adoption in an action mode and also internalise externalities if any found in course of action.