Poorest of poor strategy

Enhancing the capability of women in Integrating farming system to improve the quality of their lives in the poverty regions of Odisha

(Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Rayagada)

A project und3er Ministry of Rural Development, government of India

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The proposed project plans to assist 6000 rural women whose family's primary occupation is farm-based. About three-fourths of them would be tribal people and all of them below Rs100/day house hold expenditure. The project would be implemented through existing women's SHGs and their associative tiers. The main focus of the project is large scale capacity building of SHG members to facilitate adoption of improved and sustainable technologies and practices to attain rapid growth in farm and farm allied sectors taking an INRM[1] perspective and enabling them to access markets to sustain the economic gains.

Focus on Poverty and women is to be done strongly for this project .Starting from deciding the project area in the poorest regions in the state, within the districts, poorer and backward blocks are chosen. In most cases poverty is so widespread in these regions; the selected habitations consist of 100% target population. In rare cases where mixed population resides in villages, community wealth ranking is used to identify the target families. Almost 70%of the participants will be from Scheduled tribe and Scheduled Caste families and rest from most backward communities (MBCs). Most of these families will be small-marginal farmers, however, in the rain fed context, project will be conscious to include food-insufficient families with land holdings. The target families are part of women SHG mobilization process and thus in some ways self select themselves. In all cases the women in the target family is the local person for this intervention. The project also proposes to follow a saturation strategy to enable creation of viable business organizations at the community level; hence clustering of villages will also follow clear poverty cum economic potential criteria.

The blocks identified by PRADAN under this project belong to backward and very back ward category as per Ghadei[2] report . There is also high concentration of SC & ST and BPL in those blocks.

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[1] Integrated Natural Resource management

[2] Praffula Ch. Ghadei , then finance minster of Orissa has formed a committee to segregate the blocks of the state based on 11 indicators .

At the beginning of the project, PRADAN would identify the clusters of villages in the selected blocks based on the following Criteria.

❖ A minimum total of 60% SC & ST population in the village

❖ More than 70% saturation with SHG in Village

❖ At least 70 % of the women and their families depend on agriculture as their major livelihood.

❖ The villages are in contiguous to each other

Once we identify the villages in a contiguous patch, we would share the concept either at respective cluster or GPLF body depending on the context and stage of the institution. With help of those institutions we would conduct wealth ranking in village with SHG members to identify the poorest of poor like widow, single women, land less and physically challenged to include in the SHG and thereby include under the project. All the members under this project will be recorded in the *Mahila Kissan profile format*. It would be kept both at SHG level and PRADAN level.

Strategy for the Poorest of poor:

Special measures will be taken to include the land less , single woman and widow into various livelihood programme under this project. These landless in many pockets are already into traditional agriculture in the encroached land. Efforts will be taken to link them to different govt. programmes like FRA to get land wherever possible. In some cases these land less will be organized to go for collective farming taking land on lease and will be motivated to save. Community infrastructure will be provided to them through the project to go for this activity. As land less and ultra poor has a dependency on livestock programme, they will be included in livestock programme to reduce the mortality of small ruminants and hence improving their learning from livestock. Also gradually once their herd stabilizes other components of livestock rearing will be introduced by converging with other Govt. Programmes. However during planning process poor farmers plan would be prioritized during allocation of funding. However the prototype for the poorest of poor is yet to be finalized.

The proposed prototype under this project area for the poorest of poor women farmers under this project:

Most of the farmers will have or to have access to one acre of land. We are proposing a prototype based on the entire farming system of the women and family. She would be having around 0.3 acre medium low/low land for paddy , 0.2 acre of Medium up/homestead land having acess to irrigation and 0.5 acre of upland. Under this project we are supporting 1500 such families with a small lifting device to lift water either from a well or canal.

This prototype will give him 6 months food sufficiency and Rs40,000/- cash income. The sample protype is given below.

		Crop	Area	Invest (Rs)	Prod. (Q)	Own consum. (Q)	Balance (Q)	Market value (Rs)	Net income (Rs)
Upland and medium upland including homestead	Kharif	Rainfed Pigeion pea	0.5	1500	3	1	2	7000	5500
		Vegetable	0.2	2000	24	0.25	23.75	23750	21750
	Rabi	Irrigated vegetable	0.15	1500	18	0.25	17.75	14200	12700
Low or medium land	Kharif	SRI	0.3	500	6	6		44950	39950
						Rest she would get from PDS			

The core strategy would be working with the women of the community, so that they can have more objective understanding of food sufficiency and malnutrition prevailing in the family and in the society, its implications and enabling them to find out the most appropriate ones for their own context.

The women are targeted as a conscious choice because they the most suffered one with food insufficiency and malnutrition and there are strong evidences that they are the cornerstones which can reduce the malnutrition among children.

- Training to SHG members to integrate nutritional dimension in annual crop planning. This will lead to diversifying the cropping at farm level to ensure a proper crop mix that can take care of access to complete food and nutrition for the whole family. This may result in inclusion of crops like pulses and oil seeds, millets, maize, vegetables for home consumption, in addition to crop targeting the market.

- Improved income through cultivating and marketing cash crops by women of the family so they can bring more cash to the families for their wellbeing.

Potential Risks:

- The major risks relate to the problem seeks to address, the political context where it operates and the human resources implementing the project. Since the project pertains to rain-fed farming, prolonged drought and highly erratic rainfall may lead to crop failures, causing loss of interest among project beneficiaries.

- The Assestisation at Individual Family level mainly Land and water based interventions is to be done through MGNREGS, delay in payment and sanctioning of Plan by the respective authorities may hamper the pace of the Project.

- Political instability and law and order problems also discourage private players to take initiatives. This may affect our plans to link farming families with the private sector especially in the remote areas. Though PRADAN has fairly modest staff turnover in the past, increases in personnel compensation in government and private sector may lead to both higher turnover and lower recruitment.

- Delay in fund flow related to the project may affect the pace of the project.