

News Reach

APRIL 2005

Volume 5 Number 4



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Letter to the Editor

Responding to Fine Tuning

This is in reference to the letter written by Binod Raj Dahal (*Fine Tuning Livelihoods Training*, NewsReach February 2005) which in turn was in response to Saikat Pal and Debashish De's article (*Experimenting on Livelihood Planning*, NewsReach August 2004). First, I agree that women assessing the status of their families through pictures of sad or happy faces may give us a fair picture. But as 'happy' and 'sad' are relative and personal terms we cannot for sure compare them. Still as Binod has suggested, for our purposes we may outline the good and bad for her as here we are focussing on their livelihood situation. This is what we have attempted in Pradan's ILS (Internal Learning System) workbooks, particularly the 7 rivers exercise, where good is defined as a prosperous life with food security in contrast to a resource poor, hungry situation. Many of us have substantial experience with the 7-rivers exercise; that this helps a woman assess her livelihood situation based on her perceptions of livelihoods. So we do have a tool that may save us from reinventing the wheel. We need to rather adapt it to our respective situations.

Secondly, I think there could have been no better time for him to suggest the need for systematic study to find out how our self-help groups (SHGs) are functioning. I am glad to share that the Research and Resource Centre has already launched a systematic quantitative study (performance study) to understand why some SHGs do spectacularly well while others dissolve? What is the profile of the members who leave a group and those who stay back? Although we are into the second phase of the study, we would welcome efforts to frame more questions that delve a little more in the subject and which we would like to be answered.

Neelam Maheshwari, New Delhi

We urge all readers to freely share thoughts and responses to articles in NewsReach. Email your letters to newsreach@pradan.net or post them to Pradan, 3 CSC, Niti Bagh, New Delhi 110 049

A Step Towards Sustainability

Experience in Padma shows that an appropriate frame of reference for local service providers is essential to increased effectiveness of our interventions

Sabita Parida

Some of us call them service providers, others, *sahyogkartas*. Both terms represent a knowledgeable villager ready to help others, one who has a clear vision of the growth and development of the village and himself. This definition is still evolving as experience adds other criteria by the day.

During our intervention in maize cultivation in Padma block of Hazaribagh district in Jharkhand in 2002, we started grooming a few persons as service providers (SPs). The SPs were supposed to help us increase outreach, and help villagers adopt the package, being always beside them to tackle various problems. In short, SPs were expected to more or less play our role in our absence. We initiated this system to better utilise our time by reducing the burden of mechanical tasks and giving quality time to the community.

I have been working in Padma since 2002. This block comprises 9 panchayats (Census 2001). Pradan is presently working in 7 panchayats. The land is most suitable for agriculture. Most villagers depend on it besides some other small activities.

In 2002 we intervened in Kharif paddy (100 acres), hybrid maize (40 acres) and pigeon pea (16 acres) cultivation in 5 villages with about 400 farmers. We selected 5 SPs based on educational qualification, some knowledge of self-help groups (SHGs), present level of engagement, etc. We also decided on the payment system, tasks to be performed, etc.

Preoccupied with Payments

After discussions we decided that SHG members would select the SPs. I briefed the new incumbents about the system. I found most were more concerned about the payment they would receive or how much they would earn rather than their roles and responsibilities.

However, everything went more or less smoothly till the time of distributing agricultural inputs like seeds and fertilisers. Problems arose during the time of field visits and follow-up. Most SPs paid rare visits to other villagers' plots. Some were not at all informed about field practices and training. The only thing they reminded me about was payment, which was brought up most of the time starting from training to general interaction.

When they were given the task of compiling nursery data (bed size, fertiliser use, etc.) some were so clever that they wrote numbers approximate to the formula in the datasheets. For example, nursery bed size should be one tenth of the main field, so for 5 kg seeds they wrote nursery bed size as 0.4 or 0.6 *katha*. We decided to cut payment to check this irregularity hoping that it would help them to improve.

The result was totally the opposite. Some of them distributed fewer inputs to participating villagers and sold the rest in the market at higher prices. This created chaos during repayment. It became a tough task to repay the amount borrowed for inputs and thou-

sands of rupees remained outstanding. Other managerial problems also occurred. At that time I asked myself whether the system was really sustainable. The only ray of hope was the better performance of some of the SPs.

Reflections on Service

This initial failure in establishing the SP system forced me to think over this once again. I reflected that this is not really a new concept. In our society this system has been working down the ages. There are different people in the villages for different types of work, including barbers, *dais*, *pundits* and others. They provide a service to the community round the year and receive their payment in terms of paddy or potato after these are harvested.

A particular person has a fixed service area. After him, his sons inherit that area. This service, like land and other property, is also divided between sons. Cash payment is very rare. This payment increases with rise on the price of commodities. The service area is divided keeping 3 generations in mind to ensure livelihoods for the 3 generations.

According to the client's physical property and income, payment varies from family to family. People did not hesitate to pay for such services. If these systems can run in our villages, why not our system of providing expertise in agriculture work?

Looking Back on Initiation

Perhaps we had taken this concept in a totally different way, which created problems for us. We were also not confident when we took the concept to the villagers. Even our first concern was how we would pay them. We were not sure whether people would agree to work with such a minimal amount in our non-tribal areas, where

migration is a major source of earning. This was a major concern for us.

Before discussing with SHG members I felt that no one would work for such a meagre amount. I was hesitant about the system. During selection I found myself trying to attract people with the remuneration amount. I was not adequately bothered about the person, and his or her feelings and expectations.

I worked just like a contractor - giving tasks, crosschecking work, paying money and grading performance. I did not try to see their personal side, whether he had sufficient to support his family or not, whether he was in good state of mind or was facing some problem.

Our relationship was mechanical, just basic give and take. I was always hesitant to clearly state my limitations regarding remuneration. I never gave them space to own the work they did. Our vision regarding their roles and responsibilities in the future was also not very clear. We did not know whether they were for the villagers or us. So many preconceived ideas, dilemmas and confusions hindered the setting up of a new system.

New Frame of Reference

This year I am working with the SP system in a totally a new mode. My frame of reference totally changed after visiting the service provider meeting at Gumla. Some 40 odd people attended that meeting on their self-interest, on their own.

Dealing with human resources is not as easy as with other resources. There I saw a human resource building process. The participants were not just service providers. Every other

person was an agriculturist with sound knowledge on agriculture. The content of training was totally different from that of ours: no target setting, no forced responsibilities, only sharing knowledge and sharing dreams for their own village.

After returning I started working with 6 service providers (3 old, 3 new) with this new concept. The training method and content is given in table 1.

The change was not only in the pattern of formal training but also in general behaviour. Earlier we had a contractor worker relationship, which restrained them from opening up with their ideas, queries and concerns before me.

To provide them that space I started by sharing my own limitations, dreams, aspirations, and problems faced in the field. It had an impact. They opened up very quickly and told me their plans.

I found that they were in need of some help in their personal lives. Some were going through family problems, other needed pumps for vegetable cultivation, some wanted Kisan Credit Cards (KCC), etc. Small interventions like arranging for a pump, talking with bank managers regarding KCC, etc. made a huge difference.

They now feel that I am one of their own. This builds our relationship further. The issue of payments, which was always brought up earlier, was now just a general point of discussion. Some have started their own business with a little help. One of them, who had a small fertiliser shop catering to his village, expanded his business to 3 nearby villages with the help of the KCC. Another has opened a small seed

shop to cater to the nearby 4-5 villages.

Building Stakes

They are now part of every process, be it setting targets or generating demand. After their training they were asked to conduct these trainings in their villages on their own. I was only there to help them in times of need. Some also conducted agricultural training at nearby villages. They purchased seeds, collected money, paid dealers, arranged for pesticides, etc on their own. They also helped other villagers get a fair price while selling their output.

With their help, I was able to manage our interventions in paddy, maize, groundnut, pigeon pea and tomato intervention. Villagers also got a knowledgeable resource person at their doorstep.

In Padma there are 7 such persons. There is a difference not only in their work but also in their behaviour. After the success in the Kharif season, they tackled the Rabi season by themselves. I was just there to take care of the training, special interests of producers, field follow-ups, etc. On the marketing front, my work was to check the demand. The SPs took care of the payments, transportation, distribution, etc.

We needed a market survey before intervening in vegetable cultivation. The SPs helped us to quickly survey the local markets as well those in Hazaribagh, Ranchi, and Ramgarh. In my absence, the person with sound agricultural knowledge took charge to follow-up the Rabi cultivation in nearby villages and also in a village 8-9 km away. The Rabi intervention was a success with minimum input from me.

We may judge the SPs efficiency from an

Table 1: Training for Service Providers

Modules	Content	Time
1 st phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introduction ● Working experience in Pradan, achievements and expectations ● Dreams for their village ● Dreams for self ● How both are interrelated 	1 day
2 nd phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Briefing about Pradan, its mission and vision ● Working strategy ● By working with Pradan how can he or she achieve his or her dream 	3-4 hours
3 rd phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Role of agriculture in their village economy ● Status of agriculture in their village ● Agriculture as a profit making business ● Converting agriculture into a business from a routine job ● Changing perspectives of agriculture in their own village? 	5-6 hours
4 th phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Qualities of an advanced farmer ● Factors affecting good farming, from production to marketing ● Role of markets in agricultural production ● Need for market surveys for vegetable production ● Distribution of responsibilities for market surveys 	6 hours

These training modules are in addition to the general training on crop packages of practices, with special focus on crop economics.

incident. In a particular programme in Hazaribagh district our team was expected to promote 50 livelihoods around dairy, 50 around poultry and 10 around small-scale industry. We needed to conduct a survey for this within a week's time. We did not want to lose the opportunity but did not want to do it in haste either. I generated demand in the villages, discussed various aspects, but left tasks like the filling up of survey forms to the SPs. They were sufficiently trained to tackle all the aspects meticulously.

I was astonished while checking the survey forms. I found that they had checked out the interested families on the basis of repayment, economic status, number of working hands, performance as SHG members, etc. I was satisfied because my new efforts have yielded results.

Lessons Learnt

While formal training is important, we also need to pay attention to behavioural patterns. Building local cadre is not easy but not impossible either. First, we need to help SPs solve their own problems. Being with them in their hour of need or while facing problems is essential to build a strong relationship of trust.

Also, giving responsibilities in increments helps to build their stakes in the work. They cannot give their best without owning the programme. Once they do that, they need rigorous training and exposure on the subject matter to make them subject-specific resource persons.

Although I have been successful in building a pool of service providers, in real terms one man has become an agriculture resource person with sound knowledge on agricultural production, marketing, economics, etc. I

plan to groom more people with him to cater to the entire block.

This year our main focus would be on training and exposure to build the technical knowledge of the SPs. They are ready to take charge of 5 villages to promote paddy cultivation, from seed purchase to production. I also visualise converting my area into a vegetable pocket with the help of this pool of people.

Present a New Idea for Peer Review

Pradan has always been in the forefront in innovating on new ideas that could be implemented at the grassroots. *Concept Papers* in NewsReach are a way to share and air new untested ideas to solicit peer feedback. If you have a new idea you would like to test before implementing, send us a 2,000 word *Concept Paper*. If you have experience or views on any *Concept Paper* that would help the author, email us at newsreach@pradan.net.

Pradan's Role in People's Organisations

The role of Pradan and its professionals needs serious deliberation as the need of forming and nurturing formal people's organisations increases in all field locations

Soumen Biswas

Pradan has promoted people's organisations in various places in the form of women's groups, users' associations, etc. since its inception. There has also been attempts to promote secondary and tertiary people's organisations at various times. These attempts were propelled more by individual proclivities of Pradanites rather than as an organisational strategy. In the south Pradan went ahead with building secondary and tertiary organisations of self-help groups (SHGs) as an organisational strategy that generated intense debate regarding their purpose and methodology.

Sakhi Samiti at Alwar in Rajasthan, Damodar at Hazaribag in erstwhile Bihar were built mainly around solidarity issues. Contemporary but short-lived secondary irrigation users' associations at Karra (Ranchi), Lohardaga and West Singhbhum were initiated for mixed purposes like providing a platform for service providers, input provisioning, drawing resources from the then existing Bihar Plateau Development Project, etc.

Organisational Need

Our interventions in poultry and mushroom highlighted that poverty-stricken producers were unable to directly negotiate with the market. Kesla Poultry Samiti and SAMUHA for mushroom, however, remained informal entities for a long time, presumably because we were yet to gain confidence about the activities, the MACs (Mutually Aided Co-operatives) Act was not in place,

and there was no provision for producers' companies.

Since 2002, with the spread of poultry in various locations, we have promoted several self-supporting cooperatives. These are not secondary organisations because individual farmers are members. A federation of poultry cooperatives is registered in Jharkhand and a producers' entity with all poultry cooperatives promoted by Pradan is also going to be registered soon. However, we have ensured that only SHG members become members of the cooperatives. This has also ensured that these are all women's cooperatives.

In tasar too, we are about to promote primary and secondary entities for business operations. Several other cooperatives have been incorporated for dairy, agri-horticulture, and tribal development. These organisations are or will be incorporated under various acts appropriate for business functions -- cooperatives, mutual benefit trusts and companies. The cooperatives now have a fairly large membership base. They handle large funds, hold assets, employ many people and are earning profits.

Energy Flow

Prior to this, if I may say so, the 'centres of energy flows' were either SHGs or the Pradan team. Work with individuals where that happened constituted the third centre. Our work with cluster associations, barring a few exceptions, was not significant. We promoted users' associations too, but looking back I find how

little we knew about organisation building! There were no other centres.

Financial resource flows happened at the level of the SHGs or the Pradan team. Capacity building efforts, networking, etc. were all around these centres. With the emerging producers' organisations (POs) and the high intensity work being undertaken through these, they will now constitute a distinct and major centre of 'energy flow'.

It is thus imperative that Pradan gears up to meet several challenges and the expectations of all concerned. To my understanding, if we promote producers' organisations, they have to be the best. If Pradan's purpose is rural community development, the purpose of the producers' organisations is member benefit. We have to help the producers' organisations attain the same competency in order to succeed in that objective; same as that we have brought in Pradan to address the objective of rural community development.

The question however is, while the POs address the issue of their member benefit, are we to expect that they should be so organised as to reach more and more additional poor people to benefit? In other words, do they play a developmental role? Or do we assume that this is a role to be played by Pradan and that the POs are not the appropriate entities and should not be loaded with such responsibilities.

In the third scenario, we may visualise that the local Pradan team and the POs will act in unison for years to come so that they have a greater synergy in addressing rural community development in the local economy. What are the various design elements in such a case?

Which Hat to Wear?

These questions are intimately related to Pradan and Pradanites' role in the producers' organisations. In all the existing POs, Pradanites are the chief executives. Do they continue to be there as the business grows or as they come back to Pradan and the POs hire their own CEOs from the market?

In the latter case, Pradan will have very little control over the PO. If the Pradanite stays on, how does she maintain her identity as a Pradan team member as well as chief functionary of the PO?

Presently the POs are built on a foundation of trust between SHG members and Pradan. Their functioning is also greatly influenced by the maturity of the SHGs and the capacities of the SHG members that have been developed by virtue of this membership. This has greatly facilitated matters. However, as the cooperatives grow, they will require serious institution building initiatives. There should be some mechanisms for doing this.

So far as the direct control over the POs is concerned, Pradan as an organisation hardly has a place unless some financier has made it conditional on the PO to have such controls. Even there, exercising this control is not easy. The most substantial control by Pradan is likely to be through the community that it has mobilised.

The values of member benefit and poverty alleviation (if that is any consideration) have to be addressed in the cooperatives mostly by Pradanites (deputed as CEOs) and the members themselves and not Pradan. What mechanisms are required so that Pradanites and these organisations continue to be on track?

Size Considerations

There are size considerations for the producers' organisations depending on various factors. Should we look for formalisation of the entity only when it can address certain volume and regulatory requirements and bear costs on a sustainable basis? For example in tasar, should each of the reeling centres be registered as a mutual benefit trust or a number of them be clubbed together to form the registered entity, each maintaining its separate informal identity at the same time?

This has implications because each registered entity has to meet certain operational, institutional and regulatory requirements that may not be possible or may be very cumbersome to fulfil without external support. One design consideration in such cases is that the entity should only be registered when it has a 'professional management' to handle these. Further, the professional management should be able to raise its own costs from the business of the entity.

I think that even if commodities like paddy or vermicompost are produced purely for a family's own consumption, they should be produced cost-effectively in a way they can compete in the market. I once held the view that only in cases where it is difficult for a poor producer to directly negotiate with the market should Pradan facilitate formation of a producers' organisation.

As of today I see value in consolidation and integration in many activities by the poor producing goods or services - whether we promote a PO in the beginning or sometime later. The purpose could either be backward or forward linkage oriented. If we plan to do that, it will mean promoting a large number of producers' organisations.

In fact, each team may have 4 or more POs depending on the area and the sectors involved. If we think that Pradanites are not supposed to manage the POs in the long run, we need to arrange for hiring talent from the market and build their capacities. Needless to say, this human power has to be of superior quality and Pradan has to invest time and resources for their selection, retention and growth.

Revenue Implications

Are there any financial implications for Pradan on this front? If a team promotes 4 cooperatives on an average, they will, in not a very distant future, be able to bear the staff cost including its chief executive and still generate a profit. If a Pradanite continues to be the CEO, would Pradan like to get the cost reimbursed by the cooperative?

I think it is possible for Pradan to raise a significant proportion of its livelihood promotion costs through the POs. This may then mean that Pradan sources its community mobilisation costs through grants. Once the community produces goods and services, it pays for its development support and other operational costs. would Pradan consider this as a revenue opportunity?

Educating for Enterprise

Developing a programme to serve the needs of rural youth working on livelihood promotion in Andhra Pradesh to provide an entrepreneurial edge to grassroots initiatives

Lalitha Iyer

Management educators are in search of tried and trusted ways to build entrepreneurial or 'intrapreneurial' skills among students. There have been many approaches. The skills required of managers seem to vary according to the scale of operations (volume of output, capital required and infrastructure support) and the market reach (global, national, local, rural, etc.).

This complexity is sharper in a developing economy like India with stark contrasts and market imperfections. Three broad approaches seem to coexist. They are:

- Entrepreneurship is an individual competency that can be developed or improved upon - creativity, risk taking, leadership achievement motivation and related topics could be the appropriate curriculum.
- Entrepreneurship is a result of the access to networks that an individual builds - public relations, networking, personal selling, and lateral thinking could be relevant topics.
- Entrepreneurship is about spotting opportunities in a given context and using them for economic advantage - analytical skills, strategic thinking, project planning and management skills would be the required inputs.

For teachers and learners alike, the challenge is to get an effective blend of all these ingredients together. I would like to share a recent experience (2002-2003) of balancing these aspects in developing a programme to serve the needs of rural youth working on

livelihood promotion in Andhra Pradesh. This could contribute to the discussions on methodologies and training processes for enterprise and livelihood development.

YLP Programme

Andhra Pradesh Rural Livelihoods Project (APRLP) launched the YLP (Young Livelihood Professionals) development programme in order to enlarge the base of professionally oriented staff for projects coming up in rural and semi-urban areas.

A batch of 55 young people with graduate or postgraduate degrees was selected on the basis of general awareness, interest in rural development and willingness to stay and work in rural areas. A 10-month training programme was designed with four classroom modules and intervening fieldwork modules. On completion of training they would work with groups and individuals in a block of villages, promoting livelihood generation projects, micro enterprises and related activities.

In short, the programme was aimed at developing local resource persons to contribute an entrepreneurial edge to grassroots initiatives.

In designing the programme, some special requirements had to be kept in mind. They were:

- The candidates were educated mainly in rural and semi-urban areas.
- They would need a broad understanding of many issues and an ability to modify and apply these concepts for very small-scale activities.

- They would have to work with a wide variety of projects.
- They would have to motivate women's groups to look beyond the immediate needs and develop sustainable enterprises.
- Micro enterprise development would require an awareness of linkages and economic systems in operation at local and regional levels.
- They would often be working closely with the state agencies and multilateral projects.

Therefore the conceptual inputs had to be presented in very simple terms, through applications supplemented by reading materials in the local language (Telugu).

Programme Inputs

The programme inputs were based on discussions and consultations with other organisations engaged in capacity building for livelihood development. The broad coverage was as follows:

For individual entrepreneurship qualities: Communication, listening, teamwork, facilitation, creativity, public speaking, and motivation.

For networking capacities: Public relations, awareness of services provided by the different government departments, exposure to activities of different NGOs and interactions with innovators in the field of rural development.

For opportunity analysis skill: Issues in development, impact of social systems on development, economic factors in development, governance issues, project formulation, marketing, accountancy and financial management, awareness of sector-specific issues, etc.

The first week in the classroom was an intro-

duction to the entire programme. The coverage included:

- Conceptual frameworks on poverty, livelihoods, local economies, economic opportunities and social structures;
- Introduction to project management and micro enterprises, and
- Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and sector wise analysis of issues were the topics covered.

Semi structured interactions with NGO leaders and successful practitioners in development were arranged every evening. The groups found these meetings inspirational. A review of the previous day's sessions was taken up every morning in addition to presentations on reading material distributed. Candidates had opportunities to improve their communication, public speaking and presentation skills. Activities and surveys were designed relating to each of the classroom sessions.

Field study of a village economy was the theme for a 2-week deputation to locations in the Anantapur district in Andhra Pradesh. This was a firsthand experience of data collection to link the concepts taught to realities in the field.

The second round of classroom inputs covered

- Data collection, graphical representation and analysis;
- Topics on interpersonal relations, communications, teamwork and facilitation;
- PRA and other tools in detail;
- Governmental structures to implement different programmes and policies, and
- Basics of computer usage.

Concepts were developed through analysing and presenting the data collected in the dif-

ferent locations. Behavioural sessions were activity-based and experiential, giving the candidates many ideas on how to improve their own interpersonal effectiveness. The computer laboratory was made available to the candidates in the evenings and mornings and they could gain direct experience of word processing, e-mailing and Internet usage.

Field Placements

Field placements with mentoring support (for 4 or 5 weeks) gave candidates an opportunity to learn by observing and supporting a mentor who was already doing livelihood promotion work. The placements were with various NGOs and resource organisations specially selected by APRLP. The organisations were requested to specially select the mentors known for the quality of their work. The candidates were briefed to

- Observe how the mentor works with community groups and learn about the functional aspects of running self-help groups (SHGs).
- Do a resource mapping activity in the field and try out some of the PSA tools.
- Compile poverty-occupation matrix and study local production and local consumption patterns.

The mentors too were provided with guidelines for supporting the candidates.

The Third round of classroom training focused on

- Operational guidelines on important aspects of APRLP watershed programmes;
- Guidelines on project planning and implementation;
- Detailed information on planning and implementing watershed development programmes;
- Formation of SHGs, maintaining their books of accounts, and federating them, and

- Rural marketing.

The case studies, exercises, games and a fieldtrip proved interesting and the group was ready to go back to their mentors to apply what they had learnt.

Field placements with mentoring support were continued for a further 8 weeks. The detailed inputs provided in the classroom helped the candidates to assist the work of their mentors more directly. The details were reinforced with the work done in the field. Some of the specific tasks taken up by candidates were

- Shandy studies (assessment of potential for local rural markets).
- Household surveys in identified villages.

The fourth round of classroom inputs covered

- Issues regarding livelihood promotion in some major sectors namely agriculture, animal husbandry (dairy, poultry) pisciculture, food processing, rural infrastructure and so on.
- Guidelines and identified specific livelihood promotion activity that they could undertake in their area.

They drew up a specific action plan and the format for detailed weekly reporting to the coordinators

Livelihood Promotion Projects

The candidates went about implementing their projects (for 2 months) that had been identified and finalised earlier. Many of them went back to the earlier locations while some sought a change for various reasons. The candidates were enthusiastic about the project and submitted detailed reports on the following aspects:

- Natural resources

- Production related activities
- Financial and market infrastructure
- Physical infrastructure
- Social infrastructure
- Peoples attitudes and living conditions
- New livelihood opportunities
- Efforts to promote such new activities

This experience of assessing potential and implementing a scheme helped to integrate all the different aspects they had learnt as part of their training.

Assessment

An assessment process was taken up to evaluate the learning in terms of knowledge, behavioural skills and competencies and identify specific aptitudes of the individual trainee.

The following data on individual candidates was available to start with:

- Academic profile
- Scores of the entrance tests
- Report of the trainees on their projects

A written test for the coverage of content was conducted. A case study on watershed development was administered to evaluate their ability to apply what they have learnt. An assessment procedure to judge interpersonal, entrepreneurial and leadership skills was designed and conducted.

On the basis of this evaluation and the individual's preference, the trainees were assigned to one of the following streams:

- Productivity enhancement in agriculture and allied activities.
- Micro-enterprise development and market linkages.
- Social and community mobilisation.

They were placed with agencies and organi-

sations specially working on these aspects to give them additional exposure to the aspect they were interested in.

The Learning Process

In the course of the nine months candidates received a holistic understanding of the issues in livelihood development. They have learnt from

- Direct experience of the project implementation cycle on a small scale;
- Exposure and understanding of larger projects (such as a watershed programme), and
- An overview of large development interventions at a district or state level.

Much of this learning was derived either by field work or through direct observation of others in the same field. This helped the candidates overcome their initial diffidence. As they developed their skills to work with communities and generate new ideas and approaches, their self-confidence improved. They have gained a realistic understanding of the problems and the prospects. While they do hope for jobs, they are ready to become social entrepreneurs setting up small NGOs to make a change in their localities.

Linking Elements

Our review with the candidates indicates the linking elements in the programme were crucial in helping them integrate their learning.

The coordinator played crucial role, reviewing the work done each day and monitoring the fieldwork on a weekly basis. The programme inputs could be tailored specifically to suit requirements. Candidates could freely approach him for guidance and problem solving.

The mentors were the next major link in the

learning process. They were given broad guidelines about their role. Candidates developed strong relationships with their mentors and gained immensely from the arrangement. The coordinator sorted difficulties that arose in a few cases at the initial stage.

Our original intention to provide course material in the distance-learning mode could not be kept up. This could have been another important element in helping better integration of knowledge.

It would appear that future iterations of such a programme could be mounted on an e-learning platform retaining the elements of coordination and mentoring. Opportunities for networking could be created through some contact seminars. Such an approach can be customized to suit specific projects or organizations as well.

Reflections on Methodology

Are there some lessons in all this for course design and methodology? I would identify 2 major ones.

Mentor Support

One element that seems to stand out is the importance of mentoring. Management courses make 'summer projects' mandatory. Paying attention to some parallel mentoring arrangements could enrich these experiences. What we learnt about mentoring as we went along included

- The mentor should be some one playing a role that the candidate expects to play very soon. For example, a newly confirmed management trainee would be more appropriate than a general manager or a senior vice president.
- The mentor should be interested in playing

the role. It should not be an ex-officio task added on to a protesting overburdened middle manager.

- The mentor should be briefed about the role. Perhaps a one-day seminar would help. A checklist of dos and don'ts could also be circulated.
- The mentor should also be prepared to let go of the trainee on completion of the project and not continue to exercise control.
- The mentor would educate the trainee about the real-time issues of working in industry- the 'what they don't teach you in business school' stuff, of grasping the nuances of organizational cultures and working through them for enhanced effectiveness.

Thus a B-school may develop a cohort of mentors from among their alumni and send candidates to them for project work. Alternatively, it may seek out seasoned middle managers who could demonstrate the art of working smoothly and effectively with others. A highflier or a guru-in-the-making would not serve the purpose at this stage in a student's life.

This could be a way to address the criticism that B-school graduates are naïve about the realities of organizational life. The mentors would be educating their students in the 'art' as well as the 'science' of management.

Democratizing Management Education

The programme amply demonstrated that management education for the non-elite can be meaningfully attempted provided we move away from the classroom into the field. Sophisticated concepts can be taught

through applications and the theory gradually developed. This has been demonstrated in many earlier experiments also.

Expertise in the management of resources and enterprises is the most critical challenge we are facing across the developing world. Courses in rural management have been successful in creating a global corps of development experts. They deal with issues from a macro-perspective on a global scale. The need today is for barefoot practitioners giving caring attention to very local issues. Can management educators see their way to building cost effective courses for the rural youth of today? They are needed for the micro-markets of our local economies urgently.

Recent Review

The programme was recently reviewed (18 months after completion). Out of the batch of 54, 44 were still available to the government system. They had contributed significantly to the programme and were in demand through the system. The other striking element was that they wished to stay at the block or district head quarters and had no wish to migrate out of the location. The YLPs have now been given contracts in keeping with the framework of the project.

The YLPs felt they could have done more livelihood promotion work if there was a better appreciation of their training and skill profile within the system. All of them did manage to incorporate some livelihood promotion work in their activities. Those who had left had gone on to 'better' assignments within the development sector and their skills are valued there as well.

Acknowledgements

I would like to specially acknowledge the

support and encouragement we received from Shri S P Tucker, IAS (APRLP) and Dr K Tirupathiah, IFS (CDS-APARD) in initiating this programme and supporting it right through. Many individuals from different organisations contributed their ideas and offered timely guidance. The organisations that supported the fieldwork played a significant role as well. Shri K V Krishna Reddy coordinated the programme with energy and enthusiasm proving a friend in need to the candidates.

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Local Self-Governance in Jharkhand

A Pradan commissioned study on laws relating to tribal self-governance in Jharkhand finds various laws at cross-purposes with each other. The study was supported by the Ministry of Rural Development and the UNDP under the CBPPI (Community based Pro Poor Initiatives) project

Nandini Sundar

The Union Ministry of Rural Development and the UNDP had asked Pradan to organise a study on pro-poor laws and policies in Jharkhand. Pradan in turn contracted a team of researchers to undertake different aspects of this multidimensional study. The study was co-ordinated by Nandini Sundar from the Centre for the Study of Law and Governance at JNU and Nivedita Narain of Pradan. The researchers included Carol Upadhyaya (land), Sudha Vasan (forests), Videh Upadhyaya (water), Ramesh Sharan (land alienation), Nitya Rao (Santhal land rights), Ajitha Susan George (mining), and Nandini Sundar (PESA and overview), with Madhu Sarin as the overall advisor.

The researchers decided to focus on natural resource management and the functioning of PESA (Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas Act, 1996). The research involved:

- A study of all the different rules, laws, policies, regulations that govern particular sectors;
- An attempt to understand the manner in which they make it difficult for the poor to gain access to resources or control their own lives, and
- Suggestions on the ways in which people can assert their rights within the current framework or the point at which they need to mobilise against existing laws.

The report entitled Tradition and Democracy in Jharkhand: A Study of Laws relating to Local Self-Governance examines the Jharkhand Panchayati Raj Act 2001 (PRA 2001), with a special focus on its provisions for scheduled areas. It is difficult to assess the functioning of the law as it has yet to be implemented.

However, this report attempts to analyse the implications of the law, especially the way it contradicts various constitutional provisions and existing laws specific to Jharkhand, such as the Chotangapur Tenancy Act (CNTA), the Santhal Parganas Tenancy Act (SPTA), the Wilkinson Rules, and the Santhal Police Rules of 1856, also known as the Yule Rules.

Constitutional Provisions for Tribal Autonomy

(Part X) Article 244: This deals with the administration of Scheduled Areas and Tribal Areas, which covers the operation of the 5th Schedule. In practice, experience with the 5th Schedule has been very disappointing. The Tribes Advisory Councils have hardly any teeth, laws applicable to the rest of the state are routinely extended to scheduled areas, the Governor rarely exercises the powers vested in him/her, and the overall result is there for people to see in the miserable human development indicators for *adivasis* (tribals).

Part IX (Panchayats): Article 243 B makes it mandatory for every state to constitute panchayats at the village, intermediate and district levels. However, an exception is made for scheduled areas in Article 243 M, which notes that parliament can modify or pass new laws on panchayats for scheduled areas. Parliament passed the Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA) on December 24, 1996.

Salient Features of PESA 1996

Two critical clauses in PESA of a general nature are clauses 4 (a) and 4 (d). PESA (clause 4) states that "Notwithstanding any-

thing contained under Part IX of the Constitution, the Legislature of a State shall not make any law under that Part which is inconsistent with any of the following features, a) a State legislation on the Panchayats that may be made shall be in consonance with the customary law, social and religious practices and traditional management practices of community resources... d) every *Gram Sabha* (village council) shall be competent to safeguard and preserve the traditions and customs of the people, their cultural identity, community resources and the customary mode of dispute resolution.

Problems of PESA

There are many problems with PESA. They are:

- There is no effective mechanism for implementing these 2 clauses.
- The general laws that violate tribal customary law are not laws relating to panchayats per se, but include IPC and CrPC.
- PESA does not specify that the *gram sabha's* competence to manage its customary resources override the authority of line departments like the forest or irrigation departments. Inevitably, the interpretation of the more powerful departments has continued to prevail. Forest officers routinely assert that PESA does not apply to reserved forests even if they fall within the village's customary boundary. Police officers refuse to acknowledge the community's right of customary dispute resolution when they intervene in village disputes.
- PESA is silent on what happens if the customary law or traditional mode of dispute resolution (for example, witch killings) violates a person's citizenship rights under the constitution. In fact, by not building on some of the existing laws within Jharkhand and elsewhere which specify the category of offences which can be tried by customary

law or by providing an option for people to turn to courts, PESA runs the risk of actually imposing and making rigid a feudal system, which did not exist before.

- The Act is internally contradictory, by providing both for elections to the village panchayats (Clauses 4c & 4g) and upholding custom, which involves non elected headmen at the village and *pargana* level. In fact, the legal challenges to PESA within Jharkhand (Champia versus State of Jharkhand, Adivasi Aatu Boisi versus State of Jharkhand), which try to invoke the central PESA against the state act, and argue that there should be no elections, ignore the weakness of the central act itself on this point. As far as elections are concerned, the Jharkhand PRA 2001 merely reproduces this feature of PESA.
- In an area that is truly critical - land acquisition for development projects, and which has been repeatedly shown to be a major cause of impoverishment for tribals, PESA simply gives them consultation rights. Consultation amounts to very little and communities have no easily accessible remedies if their objections are overruled.
- Although PESA gives the *gram sabha* the right to prevent land alienation in scheduled areas and restore alienated land to scheduled tribes, this is restricted to the alienation of private land to private parties. The appropriation of common or private land by the state (whether through land acquisition or settlement procedures or other means) does not figure anywhere, although this is an equally common problem.
- Since the second part of the Bhuria Committee proposals were not implemented, PESA is not applicable to municipal limits within scheduled areas. Although the govern-

ment has to get a village's agreement (it is not clear whether villagers can say no) to include it within a municipality, given the growing urbanization in scheduled areas, and the swallowing of whole villages, this takes away rights from a large chunk of people who might be thought to need them most.

On the positive front, PESA gives the *gram sabhas* (or panchayat at the appropriate level) a number of specific powers: to approve schemes for social development, to identify beneficiaries, to certify the utilisation of funds by the panchayat, to recommend prospecting licenses or leases for minor minerals, the power to manage minor water bodies, village markets, enforce prohibition. Three significant powers are the ownership of minor forest produce, the power to prevent land alienation and restore land to scheduled tribes, and the power to control money lending.

Problems with the Jharkhand Panchayati Raj Act 2001

The problems with the Jharkhand Panchayati Raj Act, as related to *gram sabhas* and *gram panchayats* are as follows:

- There is a lack of clarity on the relation between the *gram sabha* and the *gram panchayat* in terms of funds. If funds come to the *gram panchayat*, how will they be distributed between the various *gram sabhas*? There is no reason why funds should not come directly to the *gram sabha*.
- A similar lack of clarity relates to the powers of the *gram sabhas* and their traditional heads (Sec 8.3) compared to the *mukhia* (head) of the *gram panchayat*. Once there are direct elections to the *mukhia* post, and it is she who controls development funds, will the *munda* or *pradan* (traditional heads) still command any respect?
- What will be the relation between the ward member and the *munda* or *pradan*?

- While the PRA apparently gives the *gram panchayat* more development powers than the *mundas* and *pradans* had, most of these are wishful thinking and not backed up by finances, or by any justifiable clause. The powers given to *mundas* and *pradans* etc. are at least enshrined in the CNTA and SPTA whereas the panchayat has to obey orders issued by the government from time to time.

- One needs a careful comparison of the powers enjoyed by the *munda* or *pradan* with those of the *mukhia*, the *gram sabha* and the *gram panchayat*.

- The Jharkhand Panchayati Raj Act has been the subject of both political and legal challenges. The problem appears to be not so much that it contradicts central PESA but is silent on critical issues, like the *gram sabha's* right to be consulted before land acquisition, or the ownership of MFP by the *gram sabha*.

- Elections have not been held under this act to date, even in non-scheduled areas.

Jharkhand Specific Laws - Powers to Headmen under Tenure Acts

The following laws specific to Jharkhand already provide wide-ranging powers for self-governance.

- Bengal Regulation XIII of 1833: First set up Jharkhand as an area outside the operation of general laws. This state of exceptionalism was continued in the Scheduled Districts Act (Act XIV) of 1874.

- Wilkinson Rules (Administration of Civil Justice) - Kolhan: Under this civil disputes are referred to panchayats and the *mundas* and *mankis* are given certain rights that include settling wastes, collecting revenue, arranging for and maintaining natural irrigation sources and fallows, acting as police head for his village and maintaining law and order, and engaging in social forestry.

While the rights and duties given in the *hukumnama* are wide ranging, in practice many of these powers have been taken over by the government. For instance, the revenue powers of the munda or *mankis* - the right to settle wastes and collect rents - have been largely taken over by the circle officers and *karmacharis*. Secondly, the Kolhan was meant to be a non-police area. The *munda* was equivalent to a head constable for his village, a *manki* equivalent to a sub-inspector of police, and the *dakua* to an ordinary constable. However, the number of police stations has now been expanded, and not only are the police exercising all their regular powers but also greatly expanded powers through the use of POTA.

In the pre-colonial period, the *mundas* and *mankis* were central to the local political structure. It was this system that enabled resistance to the British. Through the *hukum-namas*, they were co-opted into the colonial administrative structure and were reduced to administrative officials appointed by the government. In the post-colonial period, their political and administrative role has been further marginalized till they have been reduced to largely ceremonial figureheads.

Activists in Jharkhand fear that with the holding of panchayat elections, even the lingering powers of the *mundas* and *mankis* that have survived will completely disappear. They cite the experience of the panchayat elections held in the late 1970s, following which the elected *mukhia* gained at the expense of the *munda*. It is true that under PRA 2001 the *gram sabha* has more powers now and the meetings are presided over by the traditional head and not the *mukhia*, yet the likelihood of one system destroying the other remains. Panchayat elections held under the current party system, in which

money has a decisive sway, is unlikely to really throw up candidates who will reflect popular aspirations.

Powers given under CNTA

The rights and obligations of village headmen, variously known as *pradans*, *manjhis*, *mandals*, etc., are part of the record of rights that the state government is obliged to prepare under Chapter XV, Sec 127 of the CNTA. In addition to their revenue responsibilities the village headmen are also responsible for mediating between the village and the government in a number of other respects. For instance, the village headman has to maintain law and order in the village, report offences and bad characters to the police, look after officials on tour, and maintain tanks, forests and other resources. The office of the *khuntkatti* headman is hereditary, while that of the non-*khuntkatti* headman is so only if this is specifically mentioned in the headman's *patta* (deed).

However, unlike the *pattas* given to Ho *mankis* under the Wilkinson rules and the powers given to *parganaits* under the Santhal Parganas Police rules, there seems to be no official recognition given to the supra-village organisation (*parha* panchayat) among the Mundas and Oraons.

Powers under SPTA

In the Santhal Parganas, the *majhis* and the *parganaits* are recognised by the government and have certain rights and duties: to help the government, maintain community property like forests. Under the 1856 Yule Rules they also had police powers, which the government now treats as defunct.

The new Jharkhand Panchayati Raj Act, rather than building upon and expanding these existing provisions relating to the appoint-

ment of village officials, bypasses them altogether in favour of an elected *mukhia* and vague powers of dispute resolution. A case filed before the Ranchi High Court by Saathie, an NGO working in Godda seeks to restore these powers that have become defunct but have not been repealed.

Need to synchronise Jharkhand specific Laws and PRA

Certain rights given to the village communities in Khatian Part II of the settlement to manage their forests or to settle wastes are far more extensive than those provided under PESA. In other respects, for example, by providing for customary modes of dispute resolution, PESA/Jharkhand PRA 2001 potentially give the villages more freedom than the limited police powers given under the Wilkinson or Yule rules. But this power will remain meaningless unless accepted by the police or the powers of the police in PESA areas are clearly repealed.

On the other hand, the Wilkinson Rules give the *manki* and *munda* the responsibility of maintaining law and order which is a broader concept than mere dispute resolution. PRA 2001 has the advantage of providing the *gram sabha* with several powers related to the monitoring and implementation of government schemes. All these laws need to be synchronised to ensure the maximum effective power to villagers.

Experiences with PESA and the traditional structure

Even prior to the enactment of PESA in 1996, several groups in the country had begun demanding some form of self-rule. The enactment of PESA in 1996 gave a fillip to such activities, especially clause 4d that makes the *gram sabha* 'competent' to manage its resources.

What appears to be paramount today is the

struggle over interpretation of laws, particularly PESA. While the Jharkhand government has tried to stick to a minimalist interpretation by not including several PESA clauses in PRA 2001 and not amending parallel legislation for ensuring compatibility, NGOs, peoples movements and others have tried to use and reinterpret PESA to assert their legitimate rights to self governance.

In many cases, NGOs and others have also used PESA to formalise traditional village structures. In most cases, traditional headmen appear to be 'elected' to the post of *gram sabha adhyaksh* but since the panchayats have not yet been set up, it is unclear as to what their relationship will be with the elected *mukhia*. The procedures of the *gram sabhas* now appear to be undergoing some bureaucratisation - with local decisions now being formally written down in registers.

While these *gram sabhas* continue to deal with traditional village decisions such as the dates of sowing and festivals, fines for caste offences etc., many of them have also begun to intervene in the implementation of government schemes dealing with poverty alleviation. But in many villages where there are no people's movements or NGOs, awareness of PESA is non-existent.

According to the accounts of various groups, while traditional political structures at the village level (*munda*, *pradan*, etc.) may be undergoing some revitalisation, the supra-village level (*parha*, *pir*, *pargana*), which is not recognised by either PESA or Jharkhand PRA, is gradually becoming defunct. These institutions are still capable of becoming effective units of self governance at a supra-village level, and are more rooted in local custom than block level panchayat *samitis* (councils) but require political will for being supported. On the flip

side, even in these reform and revival attempts there are very few women leaders.

What is equally striking is the administration's refusal to recognise any of these *gram sabhas* - at least till state conducted elections are over and instead to continue with their practice of the panchayat *sachiv* (secretary) calling *aam sabhas* to get schemes passed. Proponents of elections argue that at least this would mean that the *gram sabhas* they have already formed could begin functioning officially.

What is of great concern, however, is the government's propensity to set up *gram sabhas* that suit them by buying off a few influential villages and getting them to sign *gram sabha* declarations supporting projects that cause displacement. The very concept of community assent is being subverted for achieving the government's ends.

Comparing PESA 1996, Jharkhand PRA 2001 and existing laws on major aspects

While PESA/PRA is an advantage over the existing situation in terms of giving villagers control over development schemes it fails quite seriously on other fronts. If one were to pick just 3 arenas that have been the bane of tribal communities over the last 200 years, one would have to look at the activities of the police, the forest department and land acquisition.

The traditional tenure acts and the new panchayat acts does not give local communities sufficient powers to offset state interventions in these areas. Genuine self-governance would mean transforming the structures of the state - especially the police and forest departments more broadly. The problem, moreover, is that the state routinely violates its own laws.

PESA, PRA and Women

Perhaps the greatest challenge for local autonomy is the involvement of women in the panchayat system. Women are not represented in the traditional village councils, and attend only if they are involved in a particular case. There are few women *mundas* or *majhis* though the concept is not unknown. The *gram sabhas* set up by most NGOs have also not achieved anything by way of gender parity, since in most cases the traditional *mundas* and *pradans* get elected.

In this respect, the Jharkhand PRA 2001 is an improvement: it mandates that the quorum in any *gram sabha* meeting must include at least one-third women and one third seats are reserved for women in the *gram* panchayat. However, what powers they get in practice still remains to be seen, as the experience of women in panchayats in other states has been a mixed one.

While lack of political representation is an issue, women are being dis-empowered in other ways, for instance in the highlighting of tribal women's marriages with non tribals as a major cause of land alienation, and the consequent backlash against giving women land titles.

Conclusion

The situation in Jharkhand raises several questions about the nature of democracy and autonomy, as expressed through local self-governance structures. There can be some debate over the role of traditional structures involving hereditary, non-elected headmen or chiefs in a democratic set up. To the extent that only certain families (usually the founding lineage) have the right to become the *munda* or *Pradan*, etc, the system may appear anachronistic and feudal, especially for women, who have traditionally been excluded from political power.

On the other hand, the failure of the electoral system to achieve true democracy - owing to the crucial role played by money among other things, means that many people have begun to see their traditional institutions as the only guarantors of any kind of democracy.

It is also true that the power of the traditional headman was limited by the absence of sharp economic differentiation and he was subject to the customary law of the community. In that sense, powers given to the munda to maintain law and order or to settle wastes were really powers vested in the community.

In the current situation of growing differentiation and the fact that many Santhal pradans have themselves become moneylenders and are giving mining leases or settling outsiders on village wastes, this may no longer be wholly true. Yet, the traditional system has the advantage of familiarity and long usage - most people know their village headmen, as against the elected *mukhiya* of a *gram* panchayat, which is much larger.

Perhaps the best bet is the ongoing efforts to reform the traditional system from within, including involving women in the everyday affairs of the panchayats. According to activists, the demand to continue with the traditional munda must be seen in conjunction with the other rights given by PESA/PRA. By giving the *gram sabha* control over different economic spheres - for example, the management of natural resources, and identification of beneficiaries for development schemes - it is possible to avert the danger of the *munda* turning autocratic as well as reverse the trend of the traditional structure being seen as concerned only with social offences. The traditional structures need to be restored as units of social, political and economic self-governance.

At any rate, the very size of the *gram* panchayat (5,000 people) suggests its incompatibility with decentralised self-governance. There is no reason why funds cannot come directly from the block office to the *gram sabha* as is happening under the current system in the absence of panchayat elections.

Care must also be taken when setting up a system of participatory democracy to look after the needs of voiceless elements, particularly women and migrants. The seasonal migration from Santhal Parganas and elsewhere could result in usurpation of control over *gram sabha* or *gram* panchayat decisions by those who can afford to stay in the village.

Besides improving or crafting new panchayat institutions, it is equally essential to transform the major departments that affect people's everyday lives: the police, the forest department, the revenue department, etc. In many places, only the coercive aspect of the state is visible and not its developmental aspects. This needs to be reversed.

Finally, the state government needs to shift its focus from promising domicile in class 3 and 4 jobs (increasingly irrelevant in a situation of growing privatisation) to granting genuine domicile or rights to local people in natural resource management. People should be consulted on their vision of development, their land should not be acquired without their prior and informed consent (instead of mere consultation), they should have shares in any project that comes up on their land with their land ownership remaining intact, and they must be asked to move only if rehabilitation has been satisfactorily completed.

Recommendations

General

- Redraw the boundaries of Jharkhand state to include greater Jharkhand and exclude non-tribal areas.
- Reorganise the police, forest and revenue departments - changing both fundamental laws and the structure, include more adivasi and dalit personnel at all levels

PESA 1996

- Remove the contradictions within PESA and Jharkhand's PRA with respect to the role that should be given to custom (which includes the *manki-munda* system) and whether elections should be held, after widespread discussion.
- Sort out the other problems in PESA 1996 mentioned in the report. We especially need to clarify the superiority of PESA and State PESA Acts over existing Acts with contrary provisions, and minimise the bureaucracy's discretion for interpretation.
- Provide widespread publicity in local languages to both the Central Act and the relevant state Act, through the print and electronic media, through cultural mechanisms like street plays, puppetry, etc. Traditional *adivasi* leaders should be asked to disseminate information through traditional councils. Booklets should be printed in adivasi languages providing the import of the law in simple understandable terms and copies distributed to every high school and college in scheduled areas, in addition to the panchayats. Provisions of the Act should be included in the educational curriculum at different levels.

Jharkhand PRA 2001

- Hold a widespread process of consultation as to what shape the PRA should take - whether it should replicate the traditional *munda-manki* structure or rely on elections and the 3-tier system.

- Even within the existing system, clarify the relationship between *gram sabhas* and their traditional heads (Sec 8.3) and the *mukhia* of the *gram* panchayat.
- Do away with the *gram* panchayat for funding purposes and transfer funds directly to the *gram sabha*.
- Amend Jharkhand's PRA in conformity with PESA and provide missing clauses (for instance, on ownership of minor forest produce).
- Hold elections to panchayats in non-scheduled areas.
- Either amend or make inapplicable to Schedule V areas, a host of overlapping laws with contradictory provisions such as the Land Acquisition Act, Excise Act, Indian Forest Act, etc.
- Develop more detailed procedures to operationalise the various powers of the *gram sabha* under PESA.

PRA and Existing Tenure Laws

- Where existing tenure laws like the Wilkinson Rules or the Yule Rules give headmen or *gram sabhas* greater powers than those given to them under PRA, these powers must be incorporated into the PRA.

PESA, PRA and Women

- With respect to the charge that giving women land rights would lead to alienation of community land if women marry outside the community, we need a good study of how many such intermarriages are taking place and their effect on community land ownership and land alienation.
- While women's land rights might be best guaranteed under a system of collective ownership, in the face of growing privatisation, there appears to be no alternative to joint pattas at least as a starting point.
- Encourage the participation of women in panchayats, whether traditional or formal.

News and Events

- UNDP organised a workshop in New Delhi on April 20, 2005 to disseminate the UNDP-CBPPI-PRADAN initiated study on pro-poor laws and policies affecting the poor in Jharkhand. NewsReach has been publishing the summaries of recommendations on various aspects that included land acquisition; mining; land rights; inheritance rights for women; management of forests; water policy, and PESA. For full texts, write to newsreach@pradan.net.

- Dibyendu Choudhary presented Pradan's Computer Munshi Programme at Micro-finance India during April 12-14. Neelam Maheshwari also attended the event. Care India organised the event in collaboration with Sa-Dhan, Ford Foundation, Planet Finance and few others. The event brought microfinance institutions together on a forum to deliberate on various issues.

- Water Support Services and Activities Network (WASSAN) held a workshop during April 18-20, 2005 in Bhopal to share findings of studies conducted on various watersheds across India. WASSAN has initiated a study to understand the processes of watershed development in 7 states. Pradan is anchoring the study in Jharkhand. Participants included representatives from ARAVALI, Arthik Anusandhan Kendra, NCHSE, AFPRO and Pradan. Yogannad Mishra attended the meeting on behalf of Pradan.

- The Forum for Policy Dialogue on Water Conflicts in India held a meeting on water conflicts of India in Hyderabad at the ICRISAT campus on March 22, 2005. The forum is working on a compendium on water conflicts in

India. A study has been initiated to document around 70 cases of water conflicts across India. The purpose of the meeting was to share some of the findings. Deep Joshi attended the meeting.

- Pradan's Annual Retreat was held during April 6-9, 2005 at Sukhtawa. 170 Pradanites deliberated on development tasks in 2015 and its implications for Pradan.

- Pradan's Consultative Forum met during April 9-12, 2005 at Kesla.

- 10 Development Apprentices of the 32nd batch attended the Process Awareness and Sensitivity Module (PAS-I) during April 11-16, 2005. Deepankar Roy and Ramesh Galhoda were resource persons.

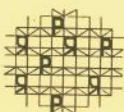
- 16 participants attended the Entrepreneurship Motivation Training held during April 1-5, 2005 at Sukhtawa in Madhya Pradesh. Rita Sengupta of NIESBUD (National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development) with Sahana Mishra were the resource persons.

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PRADAN (Professional Assistance for Development Action) is a voluntary organisation registered under the Societies' Registration Act in Delhi. We work in selected villages in 7 states through small teams based in the field. The focus of our work is to promote and strengthen livelihoods for the rural poor. It involves organising them, enhancing their capabilities, introducing ways to improve their incomes and linking them to banks, markets and other economic services. PRADAN comprises professionally trained people motivated to use their knowledge and skills to remove poverty by working directly with the poor. Engrossed in action, we often feel the need to reach out to each other in PRADAN as well as those in the wider development fraternity. NewsReach is one of the ways we seek to address this need. It is our forum for sharing thoughts and a platform to build solidarity and unity of purpose.



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