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Do SHGs Really Empower?

It is necessary to critically examine whether women's self-help groups, besides being a means to credit for poor families, are also adequate platforms for women's empowerment

Santosh Sharma

This is in response to the article by D Narendranath on mature self-help groups (*A Broader Role for SHGs*, NewsReach June 2005). It has provided a good overview of the approach that needs to be adopted in understanding the maturity of SHGs, and the desirable ways forward. My response is based partly on the article per se and partly on my understanding of the microfinance sector and the role of SHGs in it.

Narendranath seems to more or less conform to the general understanding of the SHG-based approach to microfinance, where the women's groups primarily play the role of credit intermediaries. They are also expected to play a broader role in the family as well as in the society. It is here that I think I have a point of view to present.

I completely agree that SHGs have a broader role in the interplay of social, political and economic development but I am not convinced with the approach that the article has outlined. I strongly feel that women are being used and abused in the name of making credit available to them. The article somehow reinforces the feeling. It seems to assume a very wide range of roles for the SHGs, from small savings and credit to staking claim on entitlements, without much thought on many issues.

Doubts on Empowerment

The writer seems to feel that access to credit

helps women attain empowerment. I think that those who claim these impacts either lack the understanding of empowerment or they are trying to glamorise microfinance. The fact that women are less politicised and more disciplined than men, and less exposed to the outside world, makes NGOs, bankers and MFIs target women.

One can argue that the very reason for targeting women is their being less exposed and politicised. And since they are vulnerable, it makes all the more sense to work with them! Fair enough. But then, how can mere access to credit and other governmental development programmes empower women? Can we say that only access to and not the ownership of resources is sufficient for the desired changes to take place? Do we not need to question the societal structures that define and designate a subjugated position to women? I think these are well-debated issues and do not need further discussion.

Not Taking for Granted

What is required is to counter every intention that takes women for granted. No doubt women have the capacity to play an equal role, provided we first question and try to demolish those societal structures that have positioned women as secondary human beings and citizens. One does not need to do either this or that. Even the microfinance programmes can be conceived and designed

with a 'genderised' approach.

But I doubt the capacity of micro-credit programmes and other allied activities, being propagated currently, in bringing real and long-lasting changes in the position of women vis-à-vis men unless they work towards creating these SHGs as progressive platforms. By progressive platforms I mean SHGs conceived and designed not only to burden women with overall responsibility of developing the family, village, etc. but to provide them with critical understanding of societal structures and their position vis-à-vis men. Equipped with this critical understanding, women would have the ability to question and challenge the unequal structures.

I doubt the capacity of microfinance institutions that are driven by financial sustainability considerations to adopt this revolutionary approach to the issue. What worries me more is their limited understanding of the negative potential that credit has to play against borrower women and the household. If a woman has to prove her worth by bringing credit to her family, then are we not negating her right as an equal member of the family? Would she not be in constant pressure to oblige the family by accepting their demands to borrow from the group?

Adequate Vehicle?

In a society where gender relationships are not based on equality and one sex is granted a dominating status over other (this is across classes and castes), would coming together in weekly meetings for tiny financial transactions, accessing credit, and running some tiny enterprise change the very base of their subordination?

If one honestly reviews the minutes of the meetings that SHGs conduct, and the discus-

sions, if at all, that take place in the meetings, it will become clear that there are negligible inputs to the women on issues that are not related to saving and credit. Yet unfortunately, SHGs that are mere savings and credit groups are being propagated as vehicles of women's empowerment.

Although women are being compelled to take an active role in development and maintenance of common infrastructure and resources such as informal schools and health centres, community grazing land and water bodies, they are mere caretakers. The resources that bring power in the real sense are primarily in the possession of men. Even if there are laws that ensure certain entitlements to women, how many of the women have the understanding and capacity to assert the same?

It is no more news that SHG members use credit to pay medical expenses for female infanticide. Can we blame the mother who agrees to such a ghastly act or do we hold the society as a whole responsible that has taught the mother that girls are bad omen and a perpetual burden on the family? If the women are not exposed to critical thinking about patriarchal structures, they can easily fall prey to cultural and religious compulsions.

What I find more serious is the fact that people who are hardcore supporters of SHGs are mostly concerned with the quality of groups. The quality parameters are designed primarily around the group's capacity to repay loans. Most of the discourse is about managerial and technical aspects of SHGs. These are important but no less than issues that affect the day-to-day lives of women.

Can these platforms be used to engage women in the discussion of issues affecting their lives?

Improving Livelihoods through Dairy Farming

The Kuru Grameen Dairy Co-operative Society, comprising poor dairy farmers of Lohardaga in Jharkhand, plans for expansion and sustainability through a focused production and marketing strategy

Samir Bhattacharjee, Maaiké Tjallingii and Joost Moonen

Dairy farming and marketing is a viable livelihood option for tribal women in Lohardaga district of Jharkhand. This is one of the poorest regions in the country, with more than 80% of the population living on less than US \$1 a day. A tribal woman starts her own dairy business by purchasing two high-yielding crossbred cows. They get a 50% grant from the government to purchase the cows and construct a cattle shed. The remaining 50% is financed through a bank loan.

All the women become members of the Kuru Grameen Dairy Co-operative Society (KGDCS), which provides backward and forward linkages to the producers so that they derive maximum benefit out of this business. The dairy farmers could earn an additional annual income of about Rs 10,000 in the first year itself, which will increase in the following years. For the families this means a new and stable source of income that is earned evenly throughout the year.

Most families who could be part of this programme are dependent on seasonal rain-fed paddy cultivation. The dairy business supplements the income from agriculture and improves their financial position. This programme will infuse cash into the households with which they can better access basic services such as healthcare and education. In addition, it will reduce the need for seasonal job migration.

The programme will have spin offs in the form of increased use of organic fertiliser

for agriculture, which will enhance agriculture production and improve quality of land. Increase in the asset base of the families (mainly through she-calves) is another important aspect that will help the families cope with various stresses. The project will also strongly improve the position of the rural women because they would learn new skills, gain self-esteem, contribute to the family income and participate in the decision-making process.

Scaling up Pilot Phase

Pradan has already completed the pilot phase of the programme. It now seeks to scale up the project so that more and more women can take up this activity. Since the nearby state capital Ranchi has a milk deficit, with most of its milk coming from other states, KGDCS is trying to create an alternative marketing channel by launching its own processed and packaged milk in the Ranchi market. This will help to give a better price to the producers and help to bring many more women into this business.

To do so Pradan seeks to set up a processing and packaging plant for the producers' co-operative, preferably in cooperation with the state-owned Lohardaga Dairy. Pradan will also establish a marketing chain in Ranchi, targeting middle class household consumers along with the institutional bulk consumers. Better quality, lower prices and a regional product made by the rural women will be the unique selling points of this new brand. Pradan plans to involve at least 400 women by March

2006 in this business to produce over 4,000 litres of milk per day to be sold in Ranchi.

The women will be involved in managing the co-operative and will be the decision makers. Initially, Pradan will depute a professional to work as a CEO of the co-operative. Eventually, in 5-7 years time, the producers will be able to appoint a suitable technically qualified professional from the market and will become self-sufficient organisation. This will have positive impact on role and status of the women within and outside their homes.

Market Overview

The key market for the Lohardaga dairy project is the nearby city of Ranchi. Ranchi is the capital of Jharkhand and has a population of 900,000. It is located 75 km from Lohardaga and is the administrative and business centre in the region. The present market demand for milk in Ranchi is estimated at 100,000 litres per day (LPD). The demand is growing at around 12% per annum. This growth rate is expected to continue at least for the next 3 years.

The Ranchi market is dominated by Sudha Dairy, which enjoys a virtual monopoly. Sudha has a market share of around 60%, as it is the only organised player in the market. Local milk production is very low and Sudha imports most of its milk from other states. Because milk is imported from outside the state and Sudha has a near monopoly, the price of milk in Ranchi is one of the highest in India. Ranchi is therefore a market with a high milk deficit and ample room for new players.

This project aims for a market share of 10% in the medium to long term. Once the

Lohardaga project is up and running, similar dairy extension programmes can be started in other parts of Jharkhand where Pradan is active, such as Hazaribagh and Khunti. Eventually the produce can also be marketed in Jamshedpur and Bokaro.

Target Market and Region

There are 2 target markets for the product: private households with stable incomes and institutional clients such as schools, hotels and restaurants. Ranchi has a large concentration of salaried government employees. These are consumers that are concerned about quality and branding and are willing to pay more in exchange for efficient services and constant quality.

Ranchi is also the commercial and educational centre of the state, with a large number of hotels and restaurants with a high demand for milk. There are a number of residential educational institutions in the city, which are regular bulk consumers of milk. As the institutional market generates large volumes but relatively thin margins, Pradan intends to focus mainly on the retail market for households, where profit margins are significantly higher.

Competition and Context

As mentioned earlier, the main player in the market is Sudha Dairy. Apart from Sudha there are a couple of new dairy ventures around Ranchi city, such as Kisan Dairy, Shyam Dairy and Nand Dairy. At present they are still very small players but they could turn into real competitors.

We have learned that Kisan is investing to expand its production facilities and intends to move away from institutional clients to households and retailers. Competition thus looks likely to intensify over the next cou-

ple of years, with Sudha likely to suffer the most. For all market players, the key challenge is access to a large, reliable supply of milk from nearby farms. Pradan's project has a major advantage since it is a cooperative based in the villages, with its own, rapidly growing supply.

The Product

Initially KGDCS will start marketing 2 products: packaged, pasteurised milk and farm fresh, unpackaged milk. The packaged milk will be sold in poly-packs of 1 litre and 0.5 litre to household consumers, while the unpackaged milk will be chilled and sold in bulk to hotels, restaurants and other institutional customers.

Our unique selling points are threefold:

- **Quality:** KGDCS will provide much better quality than the small scale, marginal producers in Ranchi and will also develop a brand name to enhance the consumers' perception of a high quality product.
- **Price:** KGDCS will charge a price significantly lower than Sudha.
- **Local produce:** KGDCS' product is made by women in nearby villages, farm fresh and from Jharkhand, as opposed to Sudha, which imports from out of state.

In the medium term KGDCS intends to expand its product range with 2 major milk-based products, cheese and paneer. At present only Sudha Dairy has these products under its brand name Sudha. The rest of the supply comes from small shops and sweet shops, which sell generic, unbranded cheese and paneer.

In long term, KGDCS will also look to set up a plant to convert liquid milk to milk powder. This will help in 2 ways. First, it will help expand its product range. Secondly

and more importantly, it will be the way to sustain the marketing of the production even in the flush season. The flush season is the period during the monsoon (roughly June–October) when there is ample fodder available for cows and thus the supply of milk is high, so much so that it becomes hard to absorb the extra milk. Thus, with the milk powder option KGDCS can convert the extra milk in the flush season and market it in cities like Ranchi, Jamshedpur, Bokaro and Dhanbad. Transport and storage will be much easier with milk powder.

Location and Infrastructure

Milk production takes place at farms in the Lohardaga district. Subsequently, the milk is collected and taken to the Lohardaga dairy processing and chilling plant. This is an existing plant run by the Lohardaga Dairy Company, a small, local dairy owned by the state government of Jharkhand. The supply chain is as follows:

For Packaged Milk

- Production (Processing and packaging) will be done in the plant at Lohardaga.
- Packaged products will be transported to Ranchi by road every day.
- At Ranchi there will be distributors where delivery will be made as per agreed quantity.
- Distributors will either sell the products from the point or do home delivery. For home delivery customer will be paying a premium.
- Each distributor will have a deep freezer for keeping stock.
- There will be a central storage facility in Lohardaga for inventory management.

For Fresh Milk

- Milk will be chilled in the Lohardaga plant.

- Chilled milk will be transported by milk tankers to Ranchi.
- Tanker will deliver the milk to vendors.
- Vendors will supply the milk to the household at doorstep.
- For institutional buyers the delivery will be at doorsteps.
- Limited storage capacity for fresh milk will be available in Lohardaga.

The infrastructure required for this project is a building with a small milk processing and packaging plant with a capacity of 5,000 LPD, expandable to 10,000 LPD. This also includes supplementary equipment such as milk testing and weighing machines, milk cans and milk crates for transporting milk. In addition, electric generators are needed as a backup, since the electricity supply is erratic.

The Lohardaga Dairy has approached KGDCS to set up a joint venture. The main advantage is that they have a 10,000 LPD processing plant which is operating well below capacity (15-25% used). There would thus be no need for any major investments in fixed assets from our side. The disadvantage is that we will not be able to run our own show. As the Lohardaga dairy is government owned, managing the project will be an issue, with bureaucracy and corruption being the main concerns. However, at this stage we think the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. We are therefore negotiating a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Lohardaga Dairy. The construction of our own milk plant is thus no more than a fallback option at this point in time.

Development Stage

Provided we can reach an agreement with Lohardaga Dairy, no further R&D is needed. Lohardaga Dairy has a production facility in

place and they have the required licences and certificates. However, if we cannot reach an agreement, we go back to our fallback option, which is to acquire our own plant. De Laval, an international company with a strong presence in the eastern part of India, will supply this.

Laval's 5,000 LPD plant is a compact and highly automated plant and very simple to operate. It requires only 2 persons to operate and 2 labourers. They are not required to be skilled technicians. We already have a 500 litres capacity bulk cooler from De Laval and it is operated by the women themselves when required. Only 2-3 days of initial training and familiarisation was required.

Also, in case the Lohardaga Dairy alliance does not go through, we would need to get our own certification, which is required under the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act. The health department of the Lohardaga state government issues the certification. Since the certification is issued locally from Ranchi and we have a strong relationship with the state government, it will take no longer than 2 months to get it issued.

The women's co-operative is already legally registered with the government under the name of Kuru Grameen Dairy Co-operative Society (KGDCS) and the brand will also be registered with the concerned government department.

Marketing and Sales Strategy

First, one should note that our cooperative currently has an agreement with the Lohardaga Dairy whereby it can sell any quantity of milk to the dairy at a price of Rs 9.5 per litre. The processing, packaging

and selling is subsequently done by the Lohardaga Dairy. As mentioned before, in the future we want to do our own processing, packaging and marketing so that we can add more value and obtain higher returns for our farmers. But to do so we need our own milk processing, packaging and marketing facilities, and a large and constant supply of milk.

Increasing production is our key challenge for the next year. As of March 2005 we were producing 1,100 litres per day (LPD), but this is rapidly increasing as more women are joining our project and the number of cows and the amount of milk produced is rising quickly. We are on target to reach a production level of 4,700 LPD by March 2006, all of which we will sell to Lohardaga Dairy.

Once we reach the production level of 4,700 LPD by March next year, the emphasis will shift from increasing milk production at the farm level to establishing proper processing and marketing. We aim to start marketing our own brand in Ranchi after the 2006 monsoon (by November 2006). In the meantime, milk production will continue to increase but at a much slower pace than before. By November 2006 we will be producing almost 6,000 LPD.

We will sell 75% of the 6,000 LPD as packaged milk to households and retail consumers, with the remaining 25% aimed at the institutional market. We expect sales to develop as forecasted in table 1 on page 8.

Distribution Channels and Networks

Ranchi has an extensive network of small and medium sized shops. We intend to utilise these shops to retail and promote

our product and brand. Most of the shops already have a refrigerator to store cold drinks and other chilled products, so the infrastructure for selling our packaged dairy product is already there.

Wholesale includes hotels, government entities, schools, and hospitals and sweet shops. We have contacted a number of schools, hospitals and sweet shops. Some of the schools have their own cattle yard and thus produce their own milk, while others buy from the market. The same goes for the hospitals, where one hospital has its own cattle several others are buying from the market by a formal tender process whereby a long-term contract is signed with a preferred supplier. This would be an interesting option for us as well.

As far as the sweet shops are concerned, these consume 250-350 LPD on average, with some of the big ones even consuming up to 600 LPD. These are thus potential customers and several shops have already indicated they are interested in buying milk from us.

Customers will buy this product because of its superior quality and moderate price. We intend to launch a promotion campaign ahead of the product launch in November 2006, which will include billboards, print media coverage and free samples.

Price

The following gives a breakdown of the selling price of packaged milk (for retail consumers) and chilled, unpackaged milk (for wholesale clients). In both case the main cost item is the price the co-operative pays the farmers, i.e. its members, for the milk. We aim to pay the farmers US\$ 0.25/litre (Rupee 11), up 15% from the

Table 1: Production and Sales

	Production (litres per day)	Sales (litres per day)		
Quarter ending		Lohardaga Dairy	Ranchi retail	Ranchi bulk
March 2005	1,100	1,100		
June 2005	2,000	2,000		
September 2005	2,900	2,900		
December 2005	3,800	3,800		
March 2006	4,700	4,700		
June 2006	5,150	5,150		
September 2006	5,600	5,600		
December 2006	6,050		4,538	1,513
March 2007	6,500		4,875	1,625
June 2007	6,950		5,213	1,738
September 2007	7,400		5,550	1,850
December 2007	7,850		5,888	1,963
March 2008	8,300		6,225	2,075
June 2008	8,750		6,563	2,188
September 2008	9,200		6,900	2,300
December 2008	9,650		7,238	2,413

US\$ 0.216 (Rupee 9.5) that the Lohardaga Dairy currently pays the farmers. For a breakdown of costs at the farm level, please look at the excel sheet. The direct payers for the packaged milk will be the distributors and vendors (retailers), while the final payers will be the household consumers. For the chilled, unpackaged milk both the direct and final payers are one

and the same: the bulk consumers.

Investment Plan

For investment at the co-operative level, if we can reach an agreement with Lohardaga Dairy then little investment in fixed assets is needed as they already have a milk processing and packaging plant that is up and running. If an agreement with Lohardaga

Dairy cannot be reached we would need funds for investing in setting up our very own milk plant. In that case we would need up to Rs 4.8 million, which we are hoping to raise 50% from long term bank loans and the remaining 50% as grants from the government and donors as this is a socially relevant enterprise. Rest of the working capital will be raised from banks at 8.5% annual rate of interest.

At the farm level each woman will buy 2 cows, financed 50% with a government grant and 50% through a bank loan at 8.5% interest. Maximum loan size will be Rs 25,000 for buying the cows, building a shed and working capital. The loan will be repaid in monthly instalments of Rs 500 over a 5-year period. Each of the members will purchase a share of the co-operative at Rs 700.

Developmental Impact

This project is targeted at poor, tribal women and their families. This project will give the women of the community the opportunity to buy 2 high-yielding milk cows. This will help the families earn a substantial additional income. By fifth year of the project each family can have a stable income of over Rs 22,000, which is substantial by local standards.

This income is not only more assured than income from growing rice but also is distributed evenly throughout the year, thereby reducing the families' financial problems and eliminate the need for migration. There will also be more productive investment in agriculture and other businesses because they will have an assured income from their dairy business.

At this stage (April 2005) the project's

pilot phase has ended and the project currently employs (or actually self-employs) around 100 women. We are now scaling up quickly and aim to employ 500 women by March 2006. After that the project's expansion will continue, but at a more moderate pace, gradually increasing the number of women dairy farmers to 700 by mid-2007 and 900 by mid-2008.

This project will generate a lot of employment, both in the short and medium terms. In addition there are the jobs generated by the co-operative and the dairy plant, which includes veterinarians, village-level supervisors, plant workers and marketing supervisors. For example, during the current expansionary phase, which runs until March 2006, the project will train 14 local youths as village-level supervisors while another 8 local people will be trained as stock keepers for cow fodder and medicine. In terms of the number of jobs created, this will of course mainly take place at the farm level, where the women are tending their cows.

Social Impact

The project will not only have a very positive economic impact but also a very positive social impact. The social impact will be felt in at least three ways. First, this project will enhance the status of women in their community and give them more economic independence.

This was already visible during the pilot phase, where we witnessed a tremendous increase in the self-confidence and assertiveness of the women. They play an increasing role in the family decision-making process, which is otherwise heavily biased toward the male. As a member of this programme, women particularly will get to engage more and more with the outside

world when building their cowsheds, going to purchase cows in Ranchi, dealing with banks, suppliers and government officials who will regularly visit the project area.

They will also be responsible for taking decisions for managing the co-operative and for the betterment of all the members of their co-op. To do this they will have to think and act on issues other than that of their own families and self. This will enhance their worldview, make the rural women more confident of themselves and help them to link with the mainstream society constructively and create more space for them in it.

Secondly, higher incomes will lead to better healthcare, education and welfare in general. The availability of milk will make a lot of difference to the health of both mother and child, which we see as a major impact of the project. Moreover, the education of small children will improve due the increase in cash income, as more families will be able to afford it. The community will also be able to access better healthcare facilities, as government facilities are poor and most families cannot afford the more expensive private clinics.

Lastly, there is the impact on the Naxalite insurgency. The Naxalites are a violent underground communist movement, which is very active in Lohardaga. Lots of disenfranchised young people join it because of the widespread poverty and unemployment. If this dairy project is successful a large number of families will take up dairying as a livelihood option.

Environmental Impact

The project will have a positive impact on the environment, mainly through the larger

availability of cow dung. First, farmers will use organic manure produced from the project on their own agricultural land. Presently most of them are using chemical fertilisers to enhance productivity, which is damaging soil fertility. Secondly, since cow dung will now be available in large quantities, the price will fall and even other farmers of the area will be able to purchase and use it. This will help to conserve and enhance the fertility of the land and also make agriculture more productive and sustainable.

Management and Organisation

Presently we work with a project team of 9, which includes a 3-person management team deputed by Pradan. One of us is a registered veterinarian and has been working in this project since the beginning. Another professional is a graduate in agriculture sciences and is looking after the expansion of the project and fodder development. We also have 2 trained and experienced paravets to assist the veterinarian as well as to train the farmers in cattle management. Then there are 3 village-level supervisors for regular follow up and input-output management and for assuring real-time information flow. Finally, we have an accountant for maintaining the computerised accounts of the co-operative.

In the future the co-operative's operations will be managed by a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) appointed by the Board of Directors, who are in turn will be elected by the members. Effectively, this means that for the initial years a Pradan professional will be the co-operative's CEO.

The task of the CEO will be to manage the business of the co-operative in such a way that the returns to the producers are max-

imised. While all strategic and policy decisions will be made with the concurrence of the board as the highest decision making authority, the CEO will manage all day-to-day activities like arranging inputs, marketing, maintaining linkages with other players like the government, banks and the dairy industry.

In addition, the CEO prepares and executes plans for the growth of the co-operative with the approval of the board. The co-operative will have many employees like the veterinarians, field supervisors, marketing supervisors, accountant cum office assistant, stock keepers for distribution centres (feed and medicine). These employees will be paid for by the co-operatives. Presently the co-operative pays for the cost of the accountant and the supervisors.

The profile of key employees is as follows:

Production In-charge

A trained veterinarian to provide expert veterinary advice to the field supervisors and handles critical cases. She will be responsible for training and capacity building of field supervisors and farmers in veterinary support and cattle management respectively. She will also deal with external parties such as the medicine companies, research centres and institutions.

Area Veterinary In-charge (AVI)

Skilled veterinary practitioners with 3-5 years experience in the field will provide veterinary support. Each veterinarian will be responsible for 100-150 farmers and will have a motorbike and a mobile phone. They will be mainly responsible for providing veterinary and management support to farmers and will work under the production in-charge.

Village-level Supervisors (VLSP)

VLSPs will be responsible for providing regular follow up of the cattle shed and provide management advice and primary veterinary support to the farmers, guided by the AVI. They will be responsible for ensuring inputs like feed, medicine etc reach the farmers. Each VLSP will be responsible for 35-45 farmers of a village.

Plant Manager

This person will be responsible for the smooth functioning of the dairy plant. She will oversee production and supply chain management, supervise labour and maintain records and accounts.

Accountant

The person will maintain the computerised accounting system for the co-operative.

Marketing Supervisors

The marketing supervisors will liaison with the vendors. They will be responsible for increasing retail network, supply chain management and collecting dues from the market.

The co-operative is a democratic organisation and all the members are eligible to vote to elect the 11 board members from among themselves. There will be no external representatives on the board, only women farmers. The individual farmer participates in the management of the co-operative through his representatives (board members). The members also have the power to recall the board members through a general body meeting.

Pradan will depute some of its professionals to the co-operative and will initially subsidise their cost as well as the cost of support services. But once the expansion is

over, there may be only one Pradan professional to help manage the co-operative and the co-operative will have to bear his cost. Timeline for these have not been planned, as presently the major work is still at the farm level in agricultural extension.

Pradan will be able to fully step back from its involvement in managing the co-operative once the members develop a big enough stake in the sustenance of the co-operative. They will then be able to hire an external executive, who will work for them towards enhancing the returns of the co-operative's members. This will be a slow process, as presently the concept of a co-operative is new for most of the members. We think it will take a minimum of 5-7 years for us to reach this stage. It will require us to work toward developing the members' stake in the co-operative and increasing their capabilities and confidence.

Strategy

We see the following as milestones for our project for the next 2 years:

- To reach a production level of at least 4,000 LPD by March 2006.
- To start our marketing operations in Ranchi by November 2006.
- To be able to increase the milk price we pay our farmers from Rs 9.5 litres to Rs 11 per litre.

Our efforts will be geared towards becoming a major player in Ranchi over a period of 3-5 years. The KGDCS will try to garner at least 10 % of the market, which even at present volume works out to 10,000 litres per day. In a later stage we may try to expand in the nearby cities of Jamshedpur and Bokaro.

Our project basically consists of the following stages:

- To increase total milk production;
- To run a dairy processing and packaging plant, and
- To implement a well-designed marketing strategy and brand building campaign.

For each stage the following are key factors critical for the success of the plan:

- Suitable technology to reduce costs.
- Competent and trained manpower that includes training and capacity building of farmers and village level supervisors for sustained production and efficiency increases.
- Increase productivity of milk production through technical collaboration with research institutions to enhance milk production.
- Back-up funds as a cushion for probable initial setbacks in marketing.
- In case the joint venture with Lohardaga Dairy fails to materialise, we need a significant amount of money (up to Rs 4.8 million) for the initial capital investment in plant and equipment. We will approach the government to fund at least 50% of this amount as a grant.

Stall Fed Goat Rearing in Dausa

An initiative to promote improved goat rearing as a source of livelihood for the poor in Dausa district of Rajasthan has shown encouraging results

Pankaj Sinwar

Each year Pradan's field teams pilot new activities in various areas and expand outreach of mature sectoral programmes to new locations and families. Pradan teams have piloted goat rearing as a source of livelihoods in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Orissa. This article presents a case study of an initiative to promote improved goat rearing as a source of livelihoods for poor people in Dausa district of Rajasthan.

In Dausa most poor families practice goat rearing, as there is abundant common land, wasteland and hills to support grazing. Poor families have very low landholdings, insufficient to support the family. The men of these families migrate to cities in search of wage labour. Due to successive droughts in the area for the past 3 years, the condition of the poor has gone from bad to worse and the number of local wage days has shrunk.

In 2002 Pradan's Dausa team determined that improved goat rearing and management practices have the potential to enhance incomes of poor households. These families operated at a subsistence level, viewing goats as a means to access cash in times of need. They therefore maintained 1-2 goats with irregular reproductive performance and barely invested in feed and medical care. The team set up a pilot to transform this into an attractive business activity that yielded regular income.

Standard Unit Size

Initially the team introduced a unit size of 5 goats and one buck. But this did not translate into an attractive business proposition for a poor woman to take up goat rearing as a major source of income. As a result, this was revised to a unit of 10 goats and 1 buck in 2004.

The revised unit provides full-time employment to one adult member in a family within 2 years, when the herd size increases to 18-20. Pradan has promoted 133 such units till date. All the families have earned a profit by selling the male goat kids. The herd sizes have increased to 16-18 goats in just 7 months.

Housing

Based on field observations and discussions with experts at the Central Goat Research Institute in Magdum, the team designed a shed for the goats that costs about Rs 7,500. The shed is airy and cross-ventilated. The structure also includes a fenced area outside the covered shed for the free movement of goats. A plastic pot containing fresh water is kept at a convenient height inside the shed to ensure easy access to water.

One hundred and twenty-two families have constructed these sheds. They availed of a grant of Rs 5,000 each under the government's District Poverty Initiative Project

(DPIP) to construct the sheds. The concerned families contributed the remaining mount (about Rs 2,500).

Management Practices and Feeding

In Dausa the traditional fodder in the Rabi season are ranjaka and kashni (legumes), which have high protein value. The team plans to promote extensive dhaincha (legume) cultivation in the Kharif season next year. Tree leaves (neem, desi babool) also comprise good fodder.

As a long-term strategy, goat rearing self-help groups will take up plantation work on private and common lands. They plan to graze the animals on plots of developed pastureland as a model of grazing and land management. Feeding is currently based mainly on free grazing, which is available round the year on the common grasslands. Table 1 provides an overview of feeding practices.

Breed

Pradan has introduced the Sirohi breed in

this area. It is a dual-purpose breed, reared for both milk and meat. The animals are bought from Ajmer in Rajasthan. It is envisaged that the bucks will play an important role in improving the breed in the area, as open breeding is common.

Healthcare

The Dausa team has selected and trained a cadre of local paravets. A paravet oversees routine healthcare and keeps records in 2-3 villages (based on a cluster approach) with over 50 goat rearers (250 adult goats). The paravets are expected to visit the goat rearers' daily in the morning or evening to check on the hygiene and health of the animals and record the milk production.

A centralised veterinary support with testing lab facility has been established at Dausa town. A veterinarian makes fortnightly visits to every village with the paravets. The rearers pay a nominal sum of Rs 1 for each such visit. Each common interest group of rearers has a medicine kit (containing 18 types of medicines) for emer-

Table 1: Feeding Practices

		Rate/kg (Rs)	Total amount /day (kg)	Total amount / year (kg)	Total amount / year (Rs)
Concentrate feed	Goat & Buck	5	0.15	54.75	273.75
	Kid	5	0.1	36.50	182.50
Dry fodder	Goat & Buck	1.5	0.15	54.75	82.12
	Kid	1.5	0.1	36.50	54.75
Green fodder from grazing	Goat & Buck	-	-	-	-
	Kid	-	-	-	-
Total	Goat & Buck		0.4	146.00	538.37
	Kid		0.2	73.00	237.25

gencies. These kits are sufficient for first aid treatment.

Insurance

Initially, the team tied up with an insurance company but faced a number of problems in completing formalities. Another company has been identified which has waived the condition of post mortem reports to collect death claims. It only requires confirmation from Pradan. This issue is yet to be addressed on a sustainable basis, when the company can operate even without Pradan's presence and involvement in routine matters.

Marketing

The rearers sold goat milk to local dairy co-operatives based on fat content. There is also a local market for meat in Dausa, controlled by the Kahtik community. Meat is sold at Rs 40 per kg live weight. Pradan is trying to promote a goat rearers co-operative at the block level to absorb price fluctuations and provide the producers with a fixed prize.

Goat Rearers Co-operative

The team plans to promote a goat rearers co-operative for long-term sustainability. All the rearer groups will be members of the co-operative. The co-operative will procure inputs in bulk and supply them to the groups, which in turn will supply it to their members. It will also work on wider issues in the interest of the rearers.

Performance

The performance of goat rearing families has been encouraging so far. Families are earning an average of Rs 140 per day for two months by selling goat milk. They are also earning about Rs 4,000 a year by selling male goats. They are regularly availing

veterinary facilities. An increase in regular income has also led to these households redeeming earlier debts. Investments in quality inputs for agriculture have increased and children are now sent to schools instead of grazing the animals.

Challenges

In order to promote goat rearing among larger numbers of poor households, the team needs to address a few issues that include appropriate unit size of the herds, proper housing, animal insurance, fluctuating market rates, and appearance of the animals.

Experience has showed that there is no fixed unit size and programme design. These need to be worked out keeping the needs of the target families. There is no one standard package to promote goat rearing.

The team has also learnt that proper housing is required to promote goat rearing on a large scale and to check the spread of disease. At present a few families have extended part of their own huts to keep their goats. Funds to construct shed for the animals need to be addressed urgently.

Insuring the animals has proved to be difficult. No insurance company has products designed specifically for kids. Also, the animals cannot be tagged the way cattle are tagged. Their ears cannot be pierced because they cannot be then sold during Muslim festivals. Companies have to agree to a new tagging method. While insuring the goats, insurance companies usually calculate the cost on the basis of live weight, which the producers do not find appropriate.

Fluctuating market rates is another area on

concern. There is no fixed or regulated market price. The goats are sent to Delhi or Mumbai, where there is no institutionalised market.

The price of the animals depends largely on negotiations and on the agreement between the buyer and seller on a one-to-one basis. Rates are quite high before festivals like Holi and Id till the day of the festival but plummet drastically after the festivals are over. Besides, there are huge price fluctuations from year to year. This year both the Mumbai and Delhi markets were a bit down. Transportation hazards also have an effect on the price.

Most importantly, the cost of an animal is evaluated on its appearance rather than live weight and health. Skin colour (primarily white), shine of the horns and their shape, signs of traditional methods of castration, etc. are some of the parameters that a buyer looks at before evaluating cost. Besides, the animal has to be two-teethed and should not have any blemish. Live weight thus does not carry much relevance in pricing. This has implications for the producer, who has to be made conscious of practices to ensure the required appearance to fetch a good price.

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Incorporating Women's Issues into Pradan's Work

Experiences of various organisations would help Pradan to integrate women's issues while promoting livelihoods for the rural poor

Jui Gupta

Pradan promotes and strengthens livelihoods for the rural poor in 26 selected districts across seven of India's poorest states. It involves organizing them, enhancing their capacities, introducing ways to improve their incomes and linking them to banks, markets and other economic actors. Pradan organises the community through the formation of women's self-help groups (SHGs). It follows an area development approach and addresses the family as a unit, though in most of the cases, the women are the primary members of SHGs promoted by it.

For sometime there has been an increasing feeling within the organisation that the objective of broader well being of the poor, which includes improving the condition of women, are yet to satisfy us. I undertook a study that attempted to explore ways to organically integrate these concerns with Pradan's primary mission of promoting livelihoods.

I explored ways in which I, and Pradan, might intensify the focus on issues related to gender that included delivery of services and rights and entitlements along with the attention to enhancing family incomes and food security. I selected and visited some organisations to understand how they have attempted to work on livelihood promotion with women's empowerment as their main

focus. The main idea behind the study was to see how the empowerment approach could be incorporated into Pradan's livelihood work. I also tried to explore practical ways and means for a livelihoods-promoting organisation like Pradan to incorporate women's issues into work.

At the end of the study I expected the following:

- Better understood how other organizations integrate livelihoods enhancement and gender concerns while working with poor families;
- How they work for poor women's rights and entitlements in issues related to land, forests and water;
- How they prepare women to deal with issues related to domestic violence;
- How they prepare and support women to participate in local governance like panchayats and gram sabhas;
- How they groom women's organisations in order to do all of these;
- Explore how this fits into Pradan's livelihood work, and
- Prepare a road map to integrate this in Pradan's work.

Methodology

The method I followed included the following:

- Visits to selected organisations to understand diverse ways of working with gender

issues.

- Documenting overviews of how these organisations deal with women issues.
- Meeting selected individuals who work in this field and discussing the issues related to women's empowerment.
- Writing draft of the roadmap of incorporating women issues in Pradan's livelihood interventions.
- Presenting final draft of roadmap to a Pradan panel and sharing these internally.

I visited 6 organisations in 2 states, which included:

- Vanangana, Chitrakut, Uttar Pradesh
- Mahila Smakhaya, Chitrakut, Uttar Pradesh
- SEWA, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh
- SEWA, Ahmedabad, Gujarat
- KMVS, Kutch, Gujarat and
- ANANDI, Baria, Gujarat

Gender and Livelihood

To understand the contribution of women in rural areas, we need to consider the different livelihood options available to them. Rural women are extensively involved in agricultural activities. The mode of women's participation in agricultural production varies with the landowning status of agricultural dependent households. Their roles range from managers to landless labourers. In overall farm production, women's average contribution is estimated at 55% to 66% of the total labour with percentages much higher in certain regions.

Women provide one half of the labour in rice cultivation in India. Their contributions vary depending on the region and crops, but they provide pivotal labour from planting to harvesting and post-harvest operations. Traditionally, women had usufruct rights to the community land. But

after land reforms, land titles were given to men, denying women's access to land.

In the Indian context, no simple gender division of labour exists with regard to crop production. In certain areas women play a key role as seed selectors and in seedling production. Their knowledge on seeds and seed storage contribute to the viability of agricultural diversity and production. As weeders, women contribute to crop management. Women prepare and apply green and farmyard manure. As integrated pest management practices are introduced, it could be expected that women's work will increase due to more labour-intensive activities.

Livestock

In our country, livestock plays a multifaceted role in providing draught power for the farm, manure for crops, energy for cooking and food for household consumption as well as the market. In animal husbandry women have a multiple role. With regional difference, women take care of animal production. Their activities vary widely, ranging from care of animals, grazing and fodder collection, cleaning of animal sheds to processing milk and livestock products. In livestock management, indoor jobs like milking, feeding, cleaning, etc. are done by women in 90% of families while management of male animals and fodder production is sometime looked after by men.

Women accounted for 93% of total employment in dairy production (World Bank, 1991). Depending upon economic status, women perform the tasks of collecting fodder, collecting and processing dung. Women undertake dung composting and carrying to the fields. Women also prepare cooking fuel by mixing dung with twigs and

crop residues. Although women play a significant role in livestock management and production, women's control over livestock and its products is negligible. Men assume the vast majority of the dairy cooperative membership, leaving only 14% to women.

Forestry

Rural people are highly dependent upon forests. Firewood contributes 84% of the total household energy consumption. There are 66.5 million tribals in India and with a few exceptions, the majority of them are forest dwellers. Unfortunately, forests are deteriorating massively due to encroachment of agricultural production, mining, construction of dams, industrial and railway demand. The country has been losing 1.5 million hectares of forest cover annually (Government of India, 1988).

Gender roles in using forest resources vary widely depending upon the region as well as socio-economic class and tribal affiliation. Rural Indian women's interface with the forests includes gathering, wage employment, production in farm forestry and management of afforested areas in community plantations.

Women are the major gatherers and users of a much more diverse range of forest products than men. Depending upon the socio-cultural variations among different communities, primarily non-timber forest products (NTFP) are collected by women and timber by men. In several parts of India, large proportions of the population depend on NTFP as their main source of livelihood. Apart from fodder and fuel, women collect food, medicinal plants, building materials, material for household items and farm implements. Women primarily collect sal and tendu leaves. As women have traditionally

been collecting forest products, they possess the knowledge of properties and potential uses of these products.

Rural Enterprise and Production

Women in rural area generate income in various ways. Women are highly involved in processing of NTFP, particularly in small-scale enterprises. This includes basket, broom and rope making, tasar silk cocoon rearing, lac cultivation, oil extraction, bamboo handicrafts, etc. Women constitute 51% of the total employed in forest-based small-scale enterprises. However, this does not mean that men do not have any role in these activities. Among the scheduled-caste bamboo weavers in Orissa, West Bengal and Jharkhand, men collect grass for making baskets while women cure it and make the baskets. Among some tribals, men and women are equally involved in collection, processing and marketing of forest products such as grass, bamboo and resin.

Fisheries

Our country is among the top 10 fish producing countries in the world, contributing about 3% to the world marine fish catch. About 5 million people in the coastal areas carry out fishing and allied activities for their livelihood. The nature and extent of women's participation in fishery vary across the states. Fish drying and curing, marketing, and hand braiding and net mending are the main areas of women's involvement in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Orissa. Women are also involved in shrimp processing in these states. In addition, in Andhra Pradesh women are engaged in mollusc and shell collection on a seasonal basis in a few places along the coastline.

However, marine fish capture is a men's domain. Men cast nets while women and

children catch fish with hands.

Scant Recognition

The above examples show the contribution of women in every sphere of livelihood. Despite their great contribution, there is no recognition for their productive work, which is in addition to their reproductive responsibilities. Over the years, the changes in ecology and the process of globalisation have mainly affected poor women. Their suffering has increased over the years. The decline in common property land on one hand and the deterioration of the remaining land have jointly contributed to the hardship for women of poor households.

Deforestation has increased time and distance involved in grazing and collection of fuel and food. Distance to forests or other sources of fuel, type of farming system, etc. have explained increases ranging from 45 minutes to 5 hours in women's work time (World Bank, 1991). Moreover, it has also threatened income-generating opportunities for women by affecting livestock rearing and collection of NTFP. Reduced or non-availability of NTFP has shifted women from self-employment to wage employment. In areas where men also collected firewood, deforestation resulted in decrease in men's participation, as it was no longer possible to collect firewood in bulk.

Women play a key role in both land use and management. They supply inputs from the forests as fertiliser as well as fodder for the cattle, which produces fertilisers. In India, there are women-headed movements for forest protection such as Chipko. Women have also been the source of knowledge relating to conserving and maintaining the quality of water. Depleting water resources

have also impacted women severely in terms of longer walks and more work, as they are principal collectors of water.

Women's key role in the production of major grains and minor millets illustrates their invaluable contribution to the food security. In addition, women play a crucial role in ensuring supply of food as food vendors and post-harvest processors of live-stock and fishery products. As major buyers of family food and meal-makers, women ensure adequate food security. As primary providers of nutrition to the young children, women are the major decision-makers in ensuring nutrition to the next generation.

Despite these contributions, women have a share of only 25.7% in earned income. A recent study in Maharashtra showed that 92% of the women surveyed has gynecological disorders. The proportion of pregnant women (age 15-49) with anaemia is as high as 88% in India. It has also been observed that women head approximately 35% of the households below the poverty line.

Gender Discrimination

There is ample evidence that major gender differences exist in our society. These differences could be seen in the declining sex ratio, and the position of women in our society, especially in the rural context. This can be seen clearly in the distribution of assets and entitlements as well as the gendered division of activities. Some of the key facts are:

- Indian population is 48.1% women and 51.9% men
- Female illiteracy is 62% compared with male illiteracy rate of 34%
- Labour force participation rate of women

is 22.7%, less than half of the men's rate of 51.6%

- In rural India, agriculture and allied industrial sectors employ as much as 89.5% of the total women labour.

If we see the contribution of women in production activities in addition to the reproductive and house management work, we find that:

- Women have extensive work loads with dual responsibility for farm and household production
- Women's work is getting harder and more time-consuming due to ecological degradation and changing agricultural technologies and practices
- Women have an active role and extensive involvement in livestock production, forest resource use and fishery processing
- Women contribute considerably to household income through farm and non-farm activities as well as through work as landless agricultural labourers
- Women's work as family labour is underestimated

The Myth about Tribal Women

Women in tribal communities constitute half of the tribal population. The well being of the tribal community, as that of any other community, depends importantly on the status of their women.

The popular image and perception of the tribal women is that of being better off than their non-tribal counterparts. There is no child marriage and no stigma on widowhood. She enjoys the right to decide about her marriage, etc. Instead of dowry there is bride price indicating high social status of the tribal woman. A tribal woman can divorce and remarry easily. She earns and is, therefore, to a great extent economical-

ly independent.

To some extent these are true but there are many facts that indicate a low status among them. For example, she does not have property rights except in a matrilineal society, which is a small proportion of the tribal population and the Nair community in Kerala. She is paid less as wages than her male counterpart for the same work. Several taboos discriminating against tribal women exist in most of the tribal groups implying impurity and low status. Tribal women cannot hold the office of a priest. There are taboos related to menstruation as in non-tribal communities. In Bhumij, Santhal and many other tribal communities women, cannot touch a plough nor can she participate in roofing of a house. They do not touch menstruating women during harvesting for fear of the destruction of the harvest. In most tribes only the males can participate in ancestor worship. The women cannot attend communal worship. Women are not allowed to enter into the Jahera, the sacred worship place.

Vist to Vanangana

Vanangana is an organisation of economically, socially and politically exploited community, especially women. The organisation is based at Karvy in Chitrakut district of Uttar Pradesh. Madhavi Kuckreja started it in 1993.

Madhavi was working with the Mahila Samkhaya program of Chitrakut. While working with Mahila Samakhaya and forming mahila mandals (women's groups) for overall well-being, she realised the need of organising women, particularly dalit and scheduled caste women, against caste and class violence.

The area Vanangana selected to work is in the border of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. It is a neglected dry zone poor in infrastructure. Being a border area and surrounded by forests, some of the area is infested by dacoits. There is a big population of scheduled caste, largely very poor, asset-less and oppressed by higher castes.

A *parda* (veil) system prevails for women. The dalit community either owns very little land or are completely landless. Some of them are dependent on their traditional work like flaying skins from dead animals etc. They are mostly illiterate and very poor. Poor sanitation conditions, heavy labour and lack of proper food have resulted in a high incidence of tuberculosis in this area.

Vanangana undertook a detailed study in end 2000 to determine a path to move ahead and consolidate their work. It then reorganised its work under 3 broad head. They were:

- Community organisation and livelihood;
- Human rights, and
- Natural resources management.

On the human rights front, the organisation wanted to work on the issues of women and improving their condition. Its aim was to prepare the community so that the women could take their own decisions. They intended to prepare the women so that they can exercise their rights and have access and control over their assets and property legally.

Initially the organisation started with community organisation through the formation of SHGs. It helped form 150 SHGs in 4 blocks of Karvy district (Manikpur, Chitrakut, Pahari and Mau) between 1993

and 1996.

Community Organisation and Livelihood

Vanangana started organizing women around the issues raised by the women. They did not approach the community with a pre-decided programme. This is a basic difference with Pradan's approach.

Initial organisation of women centred on knowing the life of only the women: The problems they faced, their means of livelihood, etc. When the women started taking an interest, Vanangana would present its SHG package. It provided a choice. The women could either form a SHG with weekly savings and credit meetings or, if they did not have sufficient money to save, they had the option to save monthly.

The organisation promotes livelihood in a very innovative way. According to them, livelihood is creating sustainable earning opportunities with a scope of growth. Thus in some villages they helped the dalit community to organise and fight for their rights. This fight finally helped the community to earn a better wage rate in the local area.

Many of the SHGs they promoted are linked with SGSY or with banks. Rearing buffalos is a common practice in this area. Many women have taken loans to purchase buffaloes. Many others have taken small loans to start small businesses or shops. There was no specific design to support these activities.

Human Rights

Vanangana is trying to address the issue of untouchability not only among higher and lower castes, but is also trying to address

intra-caste dynamics through innovative methods. It arranged many rallies and conclaves not only for SHG members but also for the entire dalit community. The issues addressed were not only untouchability but issues that affect the entire dalit community, such as water, wage earning, food, violence, etc. The women took up the entire arrangement and financial responsibility of organising these campaigns.

To carry forward the work on untouchability, which is deep rooted in this area, Vanangana designed a special curriculum on caste and the class system for working women (wage earners). Along with this, many workshops are arranged on caste and the class system to break the chains of untouchability. The organisation also tries to address the issues of sexual exploitation and child sex exploitation.

It has prepared many street plays based on different aspects of human rights. Vanangana also tries to educate people through media like songs, street plays, etc. It also provides legal support to needy people.

The most valuable asset of the organisation is its creativity. I attended quite a few of their innovative methods to sensitise the masses. They have taken the help of Phad, in which 2 persons hold a long piece of cloth with sequential pictures, who sing and converse among themselves to explain the theme depicted in the cloth. This audiovisual method generates a lot of enthusiasm among the rural poor.

Except the founder Madhavi and her colleague Huma, all other staff of this organisation are local people. All of them have some experience and presently holding key

positions in the organisation. The organisation provides a lot of support to women who face problems in their personal lives. Due to this strong bond among the staff, the respect and ownership in this organisation is very high.

The strength of the organisation is its community organisation skills and the rapport it shares with the community. Since the community is asked to list its own problems, prioritise and then decide the process as how to move ahead, their involvement and ownership is very high. I also realized that the quality time the staff spends with the community is also praiseworthy.

Since the organisation is very committed towards the women's issues, they have trained their staff efficiently to deal various situations. It also provides strong training support to the community. The people's organisations and their strength in networking on various women's issues appeared to be pretty strong.

To be concluded

News and Events

- A series of presentations by civil society groups on natural resource management focusing on livelihoods was organised by the Planning Commission on July 19, 2005 at Yojana Bhavan under the Chairmanship of B N Yugandhar, Member, Planning Commission. Deep Joshi made a presentation entitled Integrated Natural Resource Development for Sustainable Growth, Food Security and Poverty Alleviation in Rainfed Areas.

- A workshop on livelihood and small ruminants was organised by CALPI (Capitalisation of Livestock Programme Experiences India) during July 6-7, 2005. Naveen Jha and Pankaj Sinwar from Pradan presented case studies of pilot projects of rearing goats undertaken in Dausa and Alwar districts of Rajasthan. For further information write to icindia.calpi@spectranet.com.

- Pradan's Dholpur team organised a series of Anoestrus Management and Treatment Camps in 3 centres on July 26, July 30 and August 6, respectively. Pradan consultants Dr Ravi Mittal and Dr Brijbhan Yadav, and vets from the Dholpur Animal Husbandry department conducted the trainings.

- Pradan's Governing Board met on July 9, 2005. Deep Joshi, Achintya Ghosh, Nivedita Narain, Soumen Biswas, D Narendranath, Smita Mohanty, Dinabandhu Karmakar and Anirban Ghose attended the board meeting.

- A joint orientation programme, SHG thematic orientation, village study workshop, and gender and poverty workshop was held at Kesla between July 28 and August 10, 2005. Thirteen apprentices of 33rd batch participated in the workshop. Resource per-

sons included Deep Joshi, Anish Kumar, Achintya Ghosh, D Narendranath, Nivedita Narain, Tamali Kundu, Ashok Kumar, and Aabha Bhaiya from Jagori.

- Ten Development Apprentices of the 32nd batch attended the Process Awareness and Sensitivity Module (PAS-III) during August 2-6, 2005. Deepankar Roy and Ramesh Gahloda were resource persons.

- Twenty-one Development Apprentices attended a programme on Village Study and PRA Workshop during August 8-13, 2005. Madhabananda Ray and Ajaya Samal were the facilitated the village study programme and Dhrubaa Mukhopadhyay, Avijit Mallik and Manoj Kumar facilitated the PRA workshop.

- Two recruitment training programmes were held during July 11-14 and July 19-22, 2005, respectively, in Delhi at the India International Centre. There were 14 participants in the first and 20 in the second. Dr N R Jain and Deepankar Roy were facilitators.

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 (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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