

News Reach

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Letters to the Editor

Inevitable Rigidity

You had asked me to give some comments on NewsReach, which I am getting regularly. It is difficult to read all such material and give comments but I read with interest reflections of a field professional from Madhya Pradesh on the role and purpose of common interest groups formed under the MP District Poverty Initiatives (*Out of Madhya Pradesh*, NewsReach January 2003). Although I think from my interactions with Gauri Singh, the project in-charge in Bhopal, the programme is well formulated and managed, there is inevitable rigidity in a government programme. I agree with your professional Ashok Kumar that there should be scope for family-based enterprise, the group serving the families through essential common services like input supply, marketing, etc. If this issue is taken up with the project authorities in Bhopal, they may show a way out. What is the mechanism for culling out policy issues from such write-ups and taking them up with the authorities?

Anil C Shah, Development Support Centre, Ahmedabad

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

Ways to Promote Livelihoods

Choosing effective and pragmatic strategies to promote livelihood activities present a critical challenge to Pradan professionals

Madhabananda Ray

Promoting livelihoods in the areas we work poses major challenges that include selecting activities, sectors and target populations, selecting and applying appropriate technologies, transferring skills and technologies, facilitating sustainable credit environments for the people and establishing links between input and output markets. It also entails creating visible economic impacts, empowering local communities so that they can manage their own affairs and finally, disengaging ourselves from areas where we have accomplished our objectives.

These tasks may be attempted in more ways than one and it is for us to decide on the specific process. I will try in this article to delineate the main issues and capture the options available to us.

We have to keep in mind that any activity has to fulfill some basic requirements in order for it to succeed. Not all the families in a given area can participate in a particular activity.

I present 2 alternatives. One, we could select 2-3 key sectors or activities that have potential to cover a large number of families in a fairly large geographical area. Alternatively, we could focus

in smaller areas and intervene in the existing diverse sectors on a smaller scale.

Large-scale Interventions

There are a number of advantages in large-scale sectoral interventions in large areas. The most inspiring factor could be that producers would be better able to protect their interests and negotiate with other big players in the sector to ensure higher returns and spell an end to exploitation.

In large-scale interventions, the first question is how large? The size of the market (domestic and global) and the competitive edge of the product (quality, price, packaging and promotion) would play an important role in determining the scale.

The competitors would then be big business houses. Could we compete with profit-making business houses? At the same time, it is undeniable that a bona fide organisation is required to link small producers with big markets. Could a collaborative effort of producers' organisations, Pradan and the government play such a role?

While selecting an activity we might use the single sectoral approach or intervene in multiple sectors with self-help groups (SHGs). In the single sectoral approach, we would choose a particular activity based on our experience in a specific area that can promote livelihoods of large numbers of people.

No Single Prescription

We have to keep in mind that any activity has to fulfill some basic requirements in order for it to succeed. Land-based interventions are not possible with landless families, off-farm activities seldom succeed with farmer communities, irrigated crops are not possible where there is no potential and scope for irrigation and so on. In other words, not all the families in a given area can participate in a particular activity.

So far whatever we have done towards livelihood promotion has been by sectoral profes-

sionals working with sectoral targets. They strive to bring a number of families into the selected sector. The families could be a member of a *gram vikash samity* or *tasar vikash samity* or Watershed Development Committee or *sichai sanchalan samity* or Common Interest Group or SHG or primary co-operative.

In these cases a strong base community organisation does not matter much in the selected sectors as long as we are present in the area and are operating with soft money (money from grants). Whatever the stated objectives, the reality is that we have used these organisations to channel programme money only. The specific activity is monitored based on its quantity and quality of product or construction or profit earned per family or contribution to the sector. As a result, very little or no input goes towards development of such organisations and it matters little to the performance of a professional.

Targets are easily achieved in this process and the selected sectors can grow fast. But in this cases, the stake of the individual target persons bears investigation. Often we are carried away by sectoral requirements and our organisational mission is relegated to the background.

Mission Options

If we think that empowerment, sustainability, stake and capability are subjective, difficult to monitor and unnecessarily increase the cost of fast sectoral development for economic development of the poor, could we then modify the mission of our organisation?

The other option could be for some of us to move out of Pradan and form organisations (confederations or companies) that are financially viable, where the organisation

will generate sufficient wage earning (target families being simple wage earners) to a large number of people in a particular area.

The second option of selecting an activity is to intervene using the SHG mode of community organisation. This is however an entirely hypothetical scenario since no single activity would suit all members. Only a few would fit into a particular activity. If we implement it, the rest would be left out. If we put in our effort to establish the activity and ignore some members, they would become marginalized and gradually leave the group. Ultimately there is every possibility that the group would dissolve.

The second option of selecting an activity is to intervene using the SHG mode of community organisation. This is however an entirely hypothetical scenario since no single activity would suit all members.

A second option in the SHG approach would be to intervene in 2-3 activities specific to the selected area.

We could then cover a majority of the members. The problem however is elsewhere. It is difficult for a professional to acquire the required skills and technical know-how for 2-3 different activities. It would also be difficult for her to provide sufficient time to establish linkages to each activity. The groups would also not be able to accommodate all the agenda for all the activities.

The problem could be addressed by disengaging a professional from the responsibilities of SHGs so that she can spend all her time on a particular activity. It would then require 3 professionals for a SHG engaging in 2 activities (other than savings and credit), one to work with the SHG and one each for the 2 activities.

Accountability Issues

Sharing of responsibility and accountability becomes difficult in such a case. If the performance is good for a particular activity, the credit would obviously go to the sector professional. What then of the achievement of professionals who have nurtured the SHGs, planned specific activities, linked the groups with banks and monitored loan repayments? Will that professional's contributions be accounted for while calculating say promoting livelihoods for 150 families per professional per year?

Also, what happens when a particular activity fails to take off? Who would share the responsibility? Such scenarios are sure

recipes for tension between the professionals engaged in different tasks when they need to work in tandem.

The alternative to large-scale interventions is to study a particular area thoroughly to find out the gaps and missing links in the existing activities.

A third option is to facilitate a process where group members select activities that suit them most. The number of activities in such a process is going to increase because we would then not restrict the groups in selecting the activities. The problems of implementation are obvious.

The fourth option would be to allow SHG members whatever they would like to do. In that case, we may have to handle 5-8 different types of activities in a single SHG. Some may be specific to that village or community or group. It will be difficult to implement, manage and monitor all the activities. There would be every possibility that none of the activities would attain minimum scales of economy in a particular area. The chances of failure are evident in such a scenario.

Lastly, we accept that livelihood promotion is

a continuous process that goes hand in hand with group development. We could then initiate a process in the groups where individual members would grow in such a manner that risk-taking abilities and better options for livelihoods would increase automatically. It would be a longer process where we have to keep pace with the community, which would depend on the economy of the area and not our external or internal commitments.

Small-scale Interventions

The alternative to large-scale interventions is to study a particular area thoroughly to find out the gaps and missing links in the existing livelihood activities. We could then zero in on the intervention points where the size of each sector will depend on minimum scale of economy and the size of the local market. We can then prioritise the sectors and start our interventions.

In this approach we might not be significant contributors to the particular sectoral activity and thus, will not be so recognised. The advantage is that there will be less strategic load on us. The target populations would be less dependent on us, making our withdrawal easier.

The real challenge before us is to choose the right method to follow. Shall we leave the choice to again evolve over a period of time and then step backwards after a few years to streamline the entire process? That is exactly what we are experiencing while preparing the SHG roadmap, so much so that we have decided not to increase the number of groups for the time being. Such evolution would be a costly and time-consuming option where we are never sure of the outcome. The issue also affects personal growth of our professionals. How shall we monitor our own performances with varied expected standards and outputs?

Livelihoods from Lac

Lac farming could provide a sustainable livelihood to forest dwelling people in Jharkhand

Binju Abraham

I arrived at Churgi village in Torpa block in Ranchi district on a bright Sunday morning to explore the possibility of initiating a self-help group (SHG). An old friend, Seteng *didi*, went out to mobilise the women while I waited in her house.

While I was mentally preparing myself to meet the women, I happened to see a heap of lac sticks lying in a corner. I thought, "These sticks must have come from 2 or more trees. It would probably fetch around Rs 50."

In the meanwhile Seteng *didi* arrived with 6 women. We started talking and the conversation veered towards lac. I was astounded to learn that they expect to earn between Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 from lac harvested from just one host tree (Ber in this case).

Riches of the Forest

On closer inquiry Seteng *didi* said that she owned 20 Ber trees. I was beginning to get excited. This meant she could earn around Rs 20,000 from lac in just one season. There were such rich resources in the forests around these villages just asking to be properly utilised!

I also learnt that the villagers (mostly tribal) did nothing much on lac farming apart from placing the insects on host trees and harvesting, often before they matured. They revealed that it was not a reliable crop in the past few years. I went my way that day with thoughts of starting lac farming racing through my mind.

In the same evening I went to Khunti to talk with our team leader Anirban. Our team had earlier planned to explore the lac sector. My colleague Dhiraj had actually started work on it but the initiative came to nothing because he went on long leave.

Anirban listened to my thoughts on lac and

Box 1: Lac Basics

Lac is a natural substance secreted by the female lac insect. The male insects die soon after mating. These parasitic insects can survive only on fresh twigs of some selected host plants such as like Palas, Ber, Peepal, Galbang, Kusum and a few others. In order to protect themselves, these insects secrete a kind of fluid that solidifies to form a crust around them so that they can grow safely inside.

Lac insects are of 2 types: Rangeeni and Kusumi. There is a difference in quality of secretion, choice of host plants, cultivation period, market value, etc. Both strains have 2 life cycles in a year.

We promote Rangeeni as the host plants available with the people we work with are predominantly conducive to this variety. The cycles of the Rangeeni variety begin in July and October. Lac cultivation refers to the process of culturing these insects on trees to obtain lac.

The lac insect supplies resins, dyes and waxes used commercially for manufacturing a wide range of products that include adhesives, paints, varnishes, pills and capsule coats, coatings for confectioneries, coatings for fruits and vegetables, insulators, edible colours, dye agents, cosmetics, controlled release medicines and fertilisers, etc.

gave me a file on it, which contained 5 pages of photocopied matter from a book, a few data collection forms and a preliminary report on lac from Gumla. That night I poured over the Xeroxed pages and learnt the first few facts about lac (see box 1 on page 5).

A Fruitful Chase

My enthusiasm for lac receded since I was drawn into the work of setting up and nurturing SHGs till the day I saw a bus belonging to the Indian Lac Research Institute (ILRI) while I was travelling through Torpa block. I gave chase on my motorbike and followed the bus to place where the institute was conducting a training programme on the initiative of a local NGO.

I sat there for about an hour and approached one of the scientists. After a preliminary chat, I took him to a village where we were working to look at a strange host plant on which he was doing research.

We could clearly see a difference in the encrustation formed around the insects in the hamlets where we had intervened. It also did not escape the notice of the people we were working with.

We kept in touch after that. My association with him helped me to recognise the possible areas of intervention and how to go about it.

Our team at this point decided to undertake a pilot project on the intervention points of lac culture before deciding upon a course of action. We selected Jari and Lohajimi villages, in two entirely different pockets in Torpa, to affirm and crosscheck our results.

The cropping cycle under study was from October to April. The pilot project included:

- Visits of ILRI (see box 2) scientists to villages to observe present practices, problems in production and training needs.

Box 2: Indian Lac Research Institute

The Indian Lac Research Institute was founded in 1925 to review lac production and trading. It presently operates under the aegis of Indian Council for Agricultural Research and is dedicated to devising better production technology and product development from shellac. It is the only one of its kind in Asia working on lac and associated activities.

- Select areas of interventions and design trainings, data collection, follow-up, etc.
- Assessing the adaptability and efficacy of each intervention.

Our interaction with ILRI scientists helped us to pinpoint the areas of intervention. These included:

- Improved pruning techniques to ensure greater canopy and healthy twigs.
- The nylon net bags technique to prevent brood borne predators.
- Brood inoculation superior practices.
- Practice of *phunki* removal.
- Spraying insecticide and fungicide in a regulated manner.
- Follow-up on male insect emergence, predator attacks, proper growth, etc.
- Time to harvest and related techniques.

Walking the Walk

We had a fairly good idea of what to do midway through the pilot project. Last year December the weather was foggy for weeks on end. This had a devastating effect on lac cultivation on the whole. But we could clearly see a difference in the encrustation formed around the insects in the hamlets where we had intervened. It also did not escape the notice of the people we were working with.

We therefore started preparing for a larger

Table 1: Lac Cultivation

Period	Cultivation Operation
April-May	Pruning of trees
October	Inoculation of brood lac
	Bundling and filling in nylon netted bags
	<i>Phunki</i> scraping
November	First spray of pesticide
December	Second spray of pesticide
January-February	Third spray, if required
April-May	Harvesting
June	Scraping of harvested lac

involvement. Although we now knew about the production part, there were other challenges to be met before we could dive headlong into it.

Around this time we visited ILRI and called a meeting with other teams interested in lac farming at our Ranchi office. Although nothing much came out of the meeting, we realised that lac was not a very established sector and its production and prices fluctuate wildly.

Assuming that we did not have much control on the market and prices (primarily because it is predominantly a export product and the data available to us were not very dependable), we thought of focussing on production. We thought once the production stabilised, buyers and prices would also become constant. We however wanted to bypass the local exploitative lac traders.

We also realised that the implements hired in the piloting were costly (around Rs 6,000), which our farmers will not be able to afford. To scale up this programme with existing manpower was like trying to move

mountains. We knew we would require trained supervisors.

We also had to disseminate the scientific practices, both knowledge and skills, to people who knew nothing about lac but nurtured misconceptions about the host plants and the insect lifecycle. During our pilot project, we bought the brood from ILRI's captive farm. One of the major bottlenecks ahead was availability crisis the moment we promote lac cultivation (see table 1) on a large scale.

Enter JASCOLAMPF

While we were deliberating on the challenges, Anirban got in touch with a senior official in JASCOLAMPF (Jharkhand State Cooperative Lac Marketing and Procurement Federation Ltd) and submitted a detailed project proposal. JASCOLAMPF (see box 3) was willing to buy the produce at support prices. All we had to do was to reach it to their nearest centres. There was provision in the project for payments to marketing agents who would procure and deliver to these centres. We could then bypass the local traders.

We also got a grant to procure basic imple-

Box 3: JASCOLAMPF

JASCOLAMPF (Jharkhand State Cooperative Lac Marketing and Procurement Federation Ltd) is a state level co-operative marketing federation of Jharkhand. It works with other cooperative societies like LAMPS (Large Area Multi-Purpose Society) for procurement and marketing of its raw material and products. It was founded in 1962 at a time when prices of stick lac crashed to revive the sector by providing a fair price to the lac growers.

ments required to do lac farming. These were for a set of 5 cultivators and contained 5 secateurs, 5 pruning knives, 5 scraping knives, 2 tree pruners, 1 rocking sprayer, pesticides and nylon net bags. The project also had a provision for trained supervisors who would monitor the implementation, follow-up and assist in training.

Acquiring knowledge and skills from ILRI is a major component of the project. We planned 2 types of training: a one-day hamlet level training event for all producer families conducted by ILRI experts and a weeklong intensive training for supervisors at ILRI. We see these supervisors as agents to strengthen the lessons of trainings to producers and also act as somewhat as lac doctors.

Lac is commercially viable, which means that profits from the yield are sufficient to warrant the input costs. The income would significantly impact the targeted families' livelihoods.

According to the project proposal, we needed quality brood lac in large quantities. We decided to procure brood from far off intense brood lac cultivation areas with support from ILRI for quality inspection and supplier contacts. This is an interim arrangement. We have a long-term plan of developing brood lac entrepreneurs.

Territory and Credit

Our next task was to scan for the appropriate territory and plan for credit. We were not sure where our target people with lac host plants existed. We took a random survey in 33 out of 95 villages in Torpa jointly with the block administration. We divided our blocks into lac zones of various host plant densities. Accordingly, we identified our operational clusters and are presently operating in 4 such zones through this project.

After we had identified the zones, we

realised that we did not have much mandate in the dense zones. We had to therefore promote SHGs in these areas on a war footing in order to build rapport and provide credit support to buy brood. We now have around 40 SHGs in these areas. Since the groups are not in a position to muster large funds, we are backing the effort up with some short-term external loans.

Viable Intervention

Lac cultivation has the potential to become a robust livelihood sector. There are many reasons for this. First, it is commercially viable (See Tables 2 and 3), which means that profits from the yield are sufficient to warrant the input costs. The income would significantly impact the targeted families' livelihoods. There is no threat of degradation to the chief assets (host trees, soil and environment) because of cropping.

Secondly, it is ecologically sound. The cultivation does not harm biotic and abiotic life around it. For instance, an increase in the lac insect population is not going to create a disturbance in the food chain or pollute the environment because of large-scale resin secretion. Further, the felling of trees might reduce if they are found to be useful to fetch regular returns.

Thirdly, the geo-climatic pattern of this area suits the lac sector. To carry out large-scale agriculture in an improved manner is an uphill task for the people we work with because of the existing plateau terrain. On the other hand, this area is gifted with a number of host trees and mild summers, providing ideal conditions for lac culture.

Fourthly, it is culturally in tune. Compared with other livelihood sources that we promote, lac seems to have a great affinity to

TABLE 2: Input Costs For a 10-tree unit

Month	Cultivation Operation	Input	Life of the input	Quantity	Cost (Rs)
April-May	Pruning of Host Plants	Pruning knife	Permanent	1	250
October	Inoculation of brood lac	Brood lac	One season	15 kg	600
October	Bundling and filling of bags	Nylon bags	2-3 season	150	225
		Plastic threads	One season	250 gm	25
		Pruning Secateur	Permanent	1	175
November	Phunki scraping	Scraping knife	Permanent	1	200
	Pesticide spray	Insecticide	One season	125 ml	50
		Fungicide	One season	30 mg	25
		Gator sprayer *	Permanent	1	500
June	Scraping of harvested lac	Scraping knife	Permanent	1	100
	Total				2,150

* This is assuming that 5 rearers would share a sprayer machine.

the local communities. It is a traditional occupation of our people who are still significantly dependent on forests. The various features of this cultivation are not alien to them.

Fifth, our people can stay in the lac sector for an extended period. I believe outsiders will have to struggle a lot to enter into lac, as the basic requirements of this business do not suit them. Here every producer has lots of scattered variety of host plants. Also, since lac is not a very established sector, we can assume that big players will not venture into this sector soon, as we hear about for other sectors like poultry.

Sixth, it is humane and is something that is close to Pradan's values. It is an equitable source of livelihood. Everybody has equal

access to host plants. I can say with confidence that the poorest, meekest and the most alienated tribal (with some credit backup) would be the torchbearer of this programme.

The sector does not have any inbuilt gender bias in its production operations. Most tasks are not so physically strenuous. All activities, from pruning, inoculation, harvesting to even trading can be undertaken equally by men and women. Since it is community based, self-employed farming, there is no fostering of employee-employer relationships.

Seventh, the operations of this occupation matches with the labour surplus times of the calendar of our people. It is to be noted that there are no operations during Kharif (from June to October) in lac farming.

TABLE 3: Output From 10 tree unit size

Product forms	Quantity	Rate (Rs)	Income Amount (Rs)	Month
Phunki lac	2.5 kg	50	125	November
Harvested lac	90 kg	50	4,500	May

The operations of this occupation matches with the labour surplus times of the calendar of our people. It is to be noted that there are no operations during Kharif (from June to October) in lac farming.

Eighth, it is adaptable. Our people can adapt to the changing conditions in market structure, policies, cultural timings and new practices of this farming that we are introducing. The technology is simple and transferable with some designed trainings and guided follow-ups.

Last but not the least, from our team's point of view, we had no clear-cut vision for the people in the forest patches of our operational area but for lac. In fact we started putting up our tents in the woods only after we had lac in our livelihood basket. One of our colleagues had reported in his village study report that our people near forests bank heavily on lac for food sufficiency.

Dark Zones

Having enumerated the advantages, it is only fair to say that we are treading unknown waters here. We are yet to go through the entire lac farming cycle once. The experience elsewhere is rare and it is hard to pinpoint weak spots.

We are not sure of the science of lac farming yet. It is not a full-grown science like agriculture. We are new to this sector and are thus highly dependent on our partners (like ILRI) for managerial issues, brood, other inputs, technology and information on other actors. We need to expand our circle of control.

It is only fair to say that we are treading unknown waters here. We are yet to go through the entire lac farming cycle once. The experience elsewhere is rare and it is hard to pinpoint weak spots.

We also expect a struggle with local traders as we bypass them. The people we are

working with are also not very familiar with our agenda. This is true in a majority of the hamlets. These tribals (all Munda) are sceptical about us and the technology we are promoting on lac. Climatic changes (temperature, humidity, hailstorm, etc.) may drastically effects yield and it is difficult to have any control over it.

Although our product presently is crude (or stick) or seed (an intermediate product) lac, it is the potential movement in shellac sector that drives us. The demand conditions are favourable. The market of shellac has been growing in an average of 2.5% annually. The growth in the coming years is estimated to be 4-5%, which will sustain for another 3-4 years.

The total officially reported export in the year 2000-01 was around 5,670 tonnes, about Rs 94 crore in value terms. The internal consumption was around 4,750 tonnes. This figure is for shellac. For crude lac this means 20,800 tonnes. The main market is overseas, which consumes around 75%.

The production in our country has varied widely in past years. It varied from 10,355 tonnes in 1998-99 to 22,460 tonnes in 1994-95. This is an undesired setting because it destabilises prices.

The most opted channel of lac movement goes through producer to small traders on weekly village hats, to bigger traders. Bigger traders then sell it to processing factories through commission agents. Traders who buy shellac from small processors then export the processed shellac.

The sector is free from any regulations. Lac and shellac can be moved freely from

one state to another. There are no taxes in this sector.

There are basically three institutions promoting lac. SEPC (Shellac Export Promotion Council), IFP (Institute for Forest Productivity) and ILRI. Besides these, there are few NGOs and cooperatives that help in production and marketing.

Activity Template

Our beacon for all action in this activity is a 60-point activity template named Schedule Of Events for Lac 2002-03. This template has broadly 3 major phases.

- Beneficiary selection, training and implementation distribution phase;
- Inoculation and operations phase; and
- Growth monitoring and yield assessment phase.

This activity sheet clearly describes who will perform which activity and by what time. Our activities are reviewed in monthly lac team meetings and monthly supervisors meetings.

For data keeping at the beneficiary level, there is a Lac Card that registers all operations. Supervisors are maintaining this. There are also some MIS formats through which the data reaches our office where it is maintained in MS-Access. We are therefore able to analyse our progress (How many have sprayed? How many have not paid for brood?).

We are now in the second phase. Although the growth is normal, it is early to predict how the crop would be.

The availability of infrastructure for lac processing into seed lac (a semi-processed state) and shellac might increase sale prices. Producing various products like bangles, var-

nishes, toys, etc. from shellac could increase the returns to the families.

We would require insurance cover since climatic changes largely influence the lac crop. We are in touch with a couple of insurance companies in this regard.

We also intend to form lac growers' co-operatives for creating and monitoring facilities for seed procurement, marketing, storing produce, product development and quality control. We would strengthen this through training, information sharing and building linkages with access to external credit and marketing and processing facilities. This could also act as a system for insulation from price fluctuations.

We intend to form lac growers' co-operatives for creating and monitoring facilities for seed procurement, marketing, storing produce, product development and quality control.

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Dream Merchants in Baghbindha

Conducting and following up an entrepreneurial motivation training workshop among village youth in a Purulia village

Alok Jana

Our Purulia team has been working in Jhalda-1 block since 1996. We had signed a memorandum of understanding with the panchayat *samity* to implement a watershed development programme. The panchayat *samity* was responsible to supply programme funds available to it under the National Watershed Development Programme (NWDP). Our role was to organise the community, prepare plans and implement the programme.

When NWDP funds dried up, we approached Sir Ratan Tata Trust (SRTT) to fund some micro watersheds in Purulia. When SRTT approved this proposal, we set high targets so that we could achieve a visible impact within a short time.

This meant a correspondingly higher active involvement by the concerned villagers. When the working season started in March 2002, we observed very slow progress in Baghbindha village, where we were implementing a watershed programme with SRTT funds. We also observed that the existing office bearers of the watershed committee were not sincere on financial matters. My colleagues Arnab, Dinabandhu, Saikat and I held a meeting in the village to find out the reasons behind it.

Lacklustre Show

We found that the watershed committee members and office bearers were not involving the rest of the villagers in decision-making. They were moreover blaming the villagers that no one came to meetings. The rest of the villagers strongly contested this. We found that only a few persons could effectively relate to the purpose of the programme and

that the entire stake of programme implementation was on Pradan professionals.

The villagers thought that their role was only to demand what kind of assets they want under the programme and were unwilling to provide 'voluntary contributions' as per the design of the project. There was neither any regular community level review of work progress nor any demand for that. It was as if some contractor was implementing a government programme.

At the same time we observed in the meeting that a good number of young people were active, asking rational questions and raising the right kind of issues. They were showing an active interest but were not formally involved in the project management. They were merely working as labourers and earning wages.

Motivating the Youth

We thought it was not prudent to replace the existing elderly leadership with younger incumbents since such a selection process was bound to lead to a lot of political tension in the village. At the same time, we were determined to create some space for the enthusiastic youth, realising that giving them responsibility without some capacity building might further deteriorate the situation.

Accordingly, Arnab, Kuntalika, Saikat and I spent a day with 10 selected young persons from the village. We told them that we (Pradan) were outsiders and unless they came forward to take the responsibility of the organising their own people, we will not be able to implement the programme in their village. All

were eager to shoulder the responsibility. We then told them that they have to learn certain new things to play their new roles. We also talked about the challenges they have to face. All of them were enthusiastic and committed to work with us.

We then designed an exercise with our recently learnt EMT (entrepreneurial motivational training) skills. To build their capacity, we thought of helping them develop a stakeholders' identity so that they could develop a vision and also handle funds, keep accounts and conduct meetings. But most importantly, we thought to address their self-image, which would provide us with the right foundation.

Sense of Ownership

The EMT exercise was held at Purulia Indraprastha Lodge on August 1-3, 2002 and the trainers were Arnab and Dinabandhu. I was co-trainer. The trainees were Bijoy Mahato, Bharat Mahato, Chetlal Kiskoo, Debabrata Mahato, Kinkar Singha, Pratham Mahato, Sagar Mahato, Sandip Mahato and Suresh Mahato. All the 9 participants were volunteers from Baghbindha and had attended the Jhalda meeting. Our objective was to involve them into the programme and to build a sense of ownership over the watershed development programme so that they become genuine stakeholders.

We wanted to first identify their personal goals and then help them discover if the proposed watershed development programme and self-help groups have any potential to match their personal aspirations. If we found a match, we could then develop their plans around development projects being implemented in their village.

On the first day we registered the participants and introduced Pradan. The partici-

pants introduced themselves and we shared the objectives of the exercise. We helped the participants to share certain things according to a prefixed module. The questions included:

- Think of village that you would be happy to live in;
- Discuss how to realise it;
- What have you done so far to achieve the dream and what actions can you take up;
- What do you think what would happen if you succeed;
- What do you think would happen if you fail;
- What are areas that are your own problems;
- What are the problems beyond your control;
- How would you overcome those problems;
- Discern a single focus from the deliberation of individual stories.

We gave the participants adequate time to think and write, explaining whenever they stumbled. It was difficult to explain that they were expected to travel 10 years into the future, look back and remember what happened in their 'dream village'.

We then asked them to share their dreams. Our emphasis was on sharing and we explained that we could get nothing done collectively unless we did so. There was initial hesitation but gradually all were eager to share. Our role was to capture the salient points of the dreams and highlight those so that they got registered in everyone's mind. Most dreams were around good living for villagers, good health, no poverty, good agriculture, good education for all and so on.

One among us was writing these in chart papers, which we put up on the wall. The training got its own momentum at this point, which continued till last minute of the last day.

Once the participants shared their dreams, we

Box 1: Shared Dreams

- Everybody of the village will work together
- Everybody will do agriculture in all land and will earn money
- Everyone will be literate
- All fallow and tar land will be converted into mango orchards and people will earn more money
- Everybody will do fishery in the created water harvesting structures
- Development will reach the poor
- The poorer will be in better state
- Everybody will get sufficient food
- All houses will be pucca
- All youth will come under a village organisation
- There will be unity in the village
- Everybody will help each other
- Peoples will lead better life
- Everybody will practice good agriculture
- Poor people will not migrate
- There would be better roads, school, hospital and electricity in the village
- Poor people will spent their days in a better way
- Poverty will be overcome
- People will do second crop in all arable land using water from water harvesting structures
- Villagers will send their children to good schools
- Poor villagers would eat well
- Poor people will not be enthralled to moneylenders
- No mother and sister of the village will go to the forest to collect wood for sale to earn cash to run their families

followed up with a discussion on how they would strive to achieve these dreams. They listed out the components of the dreams that they thought achievable (See box 1). The feeling of the participants at this point was positive.

We then took the discussion forward by asking them what they have done so far to achieve these dreams and what action they think they can take up.

Significant Silence

There was significant silence at this point and most said they have not done anything. A few of them mentioned that they participated in a 'literacy programme'. Many felt lost at this point. How they could think of achieving all these at all! Is it their responsibility? Why should they do it?

At this point we encouraged the participants by saying that it did not matter if they have not done anything yet. What was more important was the fact that they felt these dreams were realistic and that they were willing to put in an effort towards realising them. We tried to make the process interactive so that everyone could articulate their feelings on imagining the success and failure of their dreams. We drove home the point that positive thinking by supplies us with the energy to work for success.

We ended the day's session with a tower building exercise to help them realise their potential. After the exercise individual participants got feedback on their potential on what they can achieve by their own despite the obstacles.

Day Two

On the second day we took the trainees on an exposure visit to a place where the villagers of similar profile have done remarkable work to develop their own village followed by a sharing on their realisa-

tion and learning from the exposure.

During the visit, the leadership of Sevabrata (the local voluntary organisation) shared their experience and work they have done since the beginning. The visit helped to boost the confidence of the trainees.

Day Three

The third day of the exercise started with participants sharing their experience of the exposure visit. All were hopeful about themselves and their future. They shared the second drafts of their dreams with more confidence. We helped the group to look at their dreams and identify the tasks that they could individually anchor. We also asked them to identify if they needed any support.

We mentioned at this point that Pradan's role in their context was limited the watershed development programme. We gave the group a clear idea of the watershed programme, its objective and status. We shared plans of the activities, the time it would take and the process of implementation. We also provided pointers at the tasks they could anchor in order to reach the overall objectives.

At this point we left the hall so that the group could deliberate among themselves and apportion tasks and responsibilities. The participants had identified a variety of tasks (see box 2 on page 16). We joined them after some time to help complete the exercise.

We received very positive feedback from the participants. Some said their lives are going to change after this training. Others felt that they could have done much more for the village if the training was conducted earlier. Most felt that before the training

they only thought of themselves. The training had taught them to think for others.

The trainers felt that the level of participation was high. The group worked on their dreams and tasks till late in the night on their own. We also felt that this training is useful to start any programme. We were however not sure whether the enthusiasm generated during the training could be sustained. We therefore decided to meet the participants on a weekly basis to follow-up the impact of the training.

Training Impacts

The EMT exercise had visible and quantifiable impacts. Within a month of the training the participants were able to implement activities worth Rs 1.25 lakh whereas they had been able to spend only Rs 2.4 lakh in the 5 preceding months. They also ensured contribution of activities on part of the villagers, which was not the case before the training.

The trainees also motivated other villagers and people of a neighbouring village to construct an approach road of one km through voluntary labour. This road was in a miserable condition even in summers. They also organised a forum called Janakalyan.

These youth have also made numerous plans. They have decided to form an organisation for overall development on the lines they had outlined in the EMT exercise (see box 2 on page 16). They will get 1% of the total cost of any activity as service charge of which they have decided to take 50% as remuneration (to be shared equally among themselves). The rest

Within a month of the training the participants were able to implement activities worth Rs 1.25 lakh whereas they had been able to spend only Rs 2.4 lakh in the 5 preceding months.

Box 2: Perceived Tasks

Tasks	Blocks	Help Required
Youth Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To motivate older people To explain clearly to the people People will not believe us To select the representative will be difficult To set up a constitution 	Pradan Pradan Pradan Self Pradan
Overcome Illiteracy	Book, pens, exercise books, kerosene, classroom, etc.	Pradan and Pradhan of gram panchayat
Earn from Mango Orchards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We do not know the technology Protection from livestock - need house, torch, weapons, fines, etc Protection for humans - need house, torch, weapons, fine setting, dialoguing with villagers 	Training by Pradan Financial and idea-support from Pradan and only house by ourselves
Better Agriculture, Second Crop, Vegetable Cultivation, Winter Paddy and Pisciculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We do not know the technology Protection from livestock - need house, torch, weapons, fine Protection for human - need house, torch, weapons, fine setting, dialoguing with villagers Finance 	Training by Pradan Financial and idea-support from Pradan and only house by ourselves Pradan
SHG by Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People will not believe us To motivate older and poor people To explain clearly to the people Finance for purchasing accounts books 	Pradan Pradan Pradan Pradan
Generating more work in the village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No funds 	Pradan
To help each other in stress situations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People will not believe us To motivate older and poor people To explain clearly to the people 	Pradan Pradan Pradan
Motivate people for village development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People will not believe us To motivate the older and poor people To explain clearly to the people 	Pradan Pradan Pradan

will be saved to build a fund for village development. They have grand plans for this organisation. These include:

- A plan for land that are not covered in the action plan of the watershed programme;

- Construct a canal for irrigation;
- Run a school for adults;
- To form SHGs with women;
- Plant trees on both sides of the approach road;

- Ensure that the medical doctor runs the village health centre at least 2 days a week;
- Organise a market in the village as the nearest market is not always approachable throughout the year;
- Ensure safe drinking water in each hamlet.

Enthusiastic Commitment

A small anecdote would help understand the commitment of the youth. Monsoon came late this year and the mango plantation programme was delayed. Mango saplings, brought from a nursery near Kolkata, arrived in Jhalda on a rainy afternoon in August. The vehicle carrying the saplings got stuck in a small stream, which can be otherwise forded even in the monsoons.

The place was about 3 km from Baghbindha. The 4,000 saplings, costing Rs 20 each, were offloaded on the bank of the river. We were worried that people of the neighbouring villages may take advantage of the rough weather. But these youth decided to protect the saplings in the night.

Next morning they carried all the saplings on their bicycles. One of them was supposed to attend his aunt's funeral. But he said, "This my test and I have to pass it. I have committed that we will do our best."

Situation on the Ground

We visited Baghbindha again in December, four months after the training in August as part of our efforts to reinforce the process of stake building. We intended to meet the youths we had trained and motivate some more. We did meet 11 more youths who had joined the initial team but were a little disappointed after interacting with them.

They complained about their difficulties in carrying out the responsibilities they committed to undertake. The morale was down.

They did not act as stakeholders. Rather, in most cases they had come to attend a meeting called by Pradan.

Our field visit also revealed that owners of the newly developed assets under the watershed development programme were not sincere enough and were not working as part of an organised community. They were behaving as isolated beneficiaries of a project.

On deeper probing we found that the trained youths did at first take a lot of initiative. The construction of the village road was an indication of that. Unfortunately a local political leader tried to get political mileage out of the work and published a report in a local newspaper.

This report critiqued the panchayats as inefficient. This created confusion and divided the members of the group and damaged the spirit of working together. This required matured tackling at the village level. Although we managed the problem at the panchayat samity level, the panchayat samity members but did not sit with the youths, the watershed committee and villagers to bring back mutual trust.

We also found out that new members joining the group did not get the opportunity to realise their roles. They had ended up being job workers for the watershed programme. There was no one to convey other developmental messages to them. There was therefore a need to help them to dream.

We have realised that one isolated EMT exercise is not adequate. The participants live in an environment full of adverse forces to pull them back. There are so many counter forces working within a village. They require continuous support from us till their dreams become reality.

The Poor in the Light of Law

A report on the proceedings of a preliminary workshop on pro-poor laws and policies in Jharkhand held in Ranchi on January 20

Nandini Sundar

UNDP and the Union ministry of rural development have 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 exercise. The researchers decided to focus on natural resource management and the functioning of PESA (Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas Act, 1996). The research would involve:

- 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;
- 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.

Pradan organised a workshop at Ranchi on January 20 to introduce the researchers and the research to people in Jharkhand, liaise with local experts and get advice on issues currently important in Jharkhand. The experts included senior officers from the government of Jharkhand, NGOs and activists. The researchers included Carol Upadhy (land), Sudha Vasan (forests), Videh Upadhy (water) and I (PESA and overview), with Madhu Sarin as the overall advisor. After the workshop, Pradan expanded the research team to

include Ramesh Sharan (land alienation), Nitya Rao (Santhal land rights) and Ajitha Susan George (mining).

The chief secretary of Jharkhand, Mr G Krishnan inaugurated the workshop. He gave a general overview of the prospects for Jharkhand and noted that the state government was planning to amend parallel state laws to bring them into line with PESA. He also noted that the industrial policy could not supersede Tenancy Acts but that their implementation depended on the integrity of the bureaucracy.

This was followed by 4 sessions on land, water, forest and PESA. In each session the researcher responsible introduced a list of questions and topics followed by a presentation by the secretary of the concerned department on the policies followed by their department. A freewheeling discussion and brainstorming session was to follow these sessions.

Land

Carol Upadhy outlined a list of issues that she felt would be pertinent to study. These included:

- Alienation of *adivasi* lands – loopholes in the SPTA (Santhal Parganas Tenancy Act), CNTA (Chota Nagpur Tenancy Act) and regulations that allow alienation to continue;
- Problems in administration and implementation of laws, especially with regard to procedures for restoration of alienated lands and maintenance of land records;

● Contradictions between customary practices and the legal regime and conflicts between the latter and local structures of power and authority with regard to control over land;

● Contradictions between customary rights and practices governing devolution of land and the law, especially with regard to women's rights to land (Does legal sanction given to 'customary law' in scheduled areas deprive women of rights they would otherwise enjoy under the constitution?);

● Alienation of land and implementation of land reforms in non-scheduled areas, especially the situation of dalits and other marginalised communities.

● Land acquisition for 'public purposes' and industry and consequent displacement (although this is the major source of land alienation today, this question will be addressed separately in the study).

Presentations by revenue secretary A C Ranjan and B K Sinha, director of the Administrative Staff Training College, Patna, followed this. Mr Ranjan outlined the activities of his department, now known as the Land Resources Department. He presented data on the distribution of government wastelands, ceiling surplus land, restoration of tribal lands, etc. He pointed out that 'alienation' is defined only with regard to *adivasi* lands and does not include encroachment of government lands. Provisions in the CNTA and SPTA are supposed to prevent alienation, but since under CNTA land sale between tribals can take place with the permission of the district commissioner, alienation has taken place on a large scale.

Under the provisions for restoration of alienated land, till 2001 86,449 cases involving

1,05,452 acres have been filed for restoration and 78,038 cases have been disposed of. A large proportion of these have been rejected. He noted that as per executive orders, when government land is distributed it must be given in the name of both husband and wife.

No Comprehensive Policy

Mr Sinha suggested that legal issues with regard to land should be viewed in an institutional framework and that there is a need to evolve a comprehensive land policy, which is lacking at present. He also said that the research should focus on procedural issues (such as the time it takes to fight land restoration cases), problems in the land survey and land records and the effect of urbanisation on the land market and access to land.

He pointed out that the traditional tribal systems recognised 3 kinds of rights -- individual, institutional and community. These were incorporated in the Munda Khuntkatti system under the British but there is now a need to synchronise this with PESA provisions. The question is how to protect tribal customary rights and institutional rights.

Mr Sinha pointed out that in the government's view 'alienation' includes only land that is alienated in violation of the law, but in the view of the National Committee on Alienation of Tribal Lands, of which Mr Sinha is a member, alienation should include land taken from Khatian Part II, such as conversion of forest lands.

The committee has also addressed the problem of land acquisition and displacement, pointing out that 40% of all displaced per-

The National Committee on Alienation of Tribal Lands has addressed the problem of land acquisition and displacement, pointing out that 40% of all displaced persons are tribals.

Women's land rights is a politically sensitive issue, as there is a fear that adivasi land will be alienated through marriage between adivasi women and non-adivasi men.

sons are tribals. He also said that land is linked to livelihood issues, productivity and the need for credit, noting that the Moneylenders Act still needs to be implemented.

Later, Dr Ramesh Sharan of Ranchi University provided some insights on land issues. He pointed out that even the

issue of 'alienation of adivasi lands' is complex. For example, in some areas Paharias are losing their lands to Santhals. There is a need to study what is happening to adivasi communities outside scheduled areas.

He argued that land alienation and restoration cases should be handled first at the *gram sabha* (village council) level and that it should be given powers to handle such cases since the district courts are overloaded. He pointed out that in the version of PESA introduced in the state, the requirement for the 'consent' of the *gram sabha* has been watered down to 'consultation'. He pointed to other problems that need to be highlighted. These included:

- Improper land records and the need to use modern technology to increase transparency;
- Settlement of disputes at the village level;
- Need to focus on the situation of the scheduled castes, which are the most vulnerable groups and who have lost land as Ranchi has grown and in other areas;
- The Coal Bearing Act is even more severe than the Land Acquisition Act, both of which enable land alienation;
- The CNTA has been watered down over time;
- There has been institutional failure both in the courts and the office of the District Commissioner. What alternative institutions are available to handle these cases, when most panchayats are non-functional?

Emami Murmu of the Pragatisheel Mahila Sabha in Dumka spoke about their efforts to ensure land rights for daughters in the Santhal community. They have filed more than 200 cases and have won 8. She pointed out that women's land rights is a politically sensitive issue, as there is a fear that adivasi land will be alienated through marriage between adivasi women and non-adivasi men.

Tribal leaders argue that in such cases the child should be considered non-tribal but in a recent case the High Court has ruled otherwise. 'Customary practices' of different tribal communities have not been codified but have been developed through case law, which have reinforced the view that tribal women in this region traditionally do not have rights over land, only limited rights to maintenance.

Water

The session on water laws and policies began with Videh Upadhyaya presenting his initial thoughts on the way the subject needs to be approached under the research project. He said that the dynamics of the emerging policy environment in the state needed closer understanding and the impact of national level schemes as well as new state policy initiatives like the Gram Bhagirathi Yojana should be ascertained.

He pointed out the need to explore traditional water management practices and their reflection within the formal legal frame. A special focus of the study could be the way water management needs to be carried out at the village level, with the kind of participatory structures needed for irrigation and watershed management and the role of panchayats. The role of the courts in shaping the legal regime also needs evaluation.

The state water resources secretary began by saying that the department primarily remains a works department with a pathological obsession with projects. He said that the future plan of the department is to be based on 2 main planks. The first is that the irrigation potential of the state needs to be actualised. He said that the department has undertaken the task of completing 5 major and 22 minor irrigation projects, adding that while these projects began in late 70s and early 80s, the work was stopped by 1990. The completion of these works was one of the priorities for the department and given the fact that they had taken so long to complete, it has become a major credibility issue with the government.

The second major pillar was to give minor irrigation its due. The strategy would be to focus on all that can be done in minor irrigation under the state policy initiative of the Gram Bhagirathi Yojana. The department is also carrying out a district-wise compilation of possible minor irrigation works.

Encourage Participation

He noted that while the department wanted to encourage participatory irrigation management and hand over the schemes to water users societies, they were not sure how to go about it. He also said that while some minor irrigation projects were handed over to users under the Bihar Plateau Development Project, others had been rendered dysfunctional.

Another aspect of this strategy would be the restoration of irrigation work. He pointed out that access and equity issues in water management are more 'cerebral issues' for us. He also provided figures of the cost involved in executing major and minor irrigation works, with minor irrigation works proving more cost effective according to

the department's own calculations.

The discussion on water policy and law issues began with the comparison of major and minor irrigation works in terms of their cost-benefit analysis. Another question was why the department was thinking of making water user societies in scheduled areas since PESA empowers the panchayats to manage water bodies. The secretary was also asked why they were planning to first construct minor irrigation projects and then hand it over to the village groups instead of involving them from the planning stage.

It was also suggested that check dams and lift irrigation schemes should not be seen in isolation. There is a developed strategy for watershed management for integrated water resources management, which can be utilised to create a policy vision for the state. It was also pointed out that there are hardly any lift irrigation schemes that are functional today. Madhu Sarin emphasised that the focus of the department needs to shift from supply side initiatives to demand-driven approaches.

Forests

The discussion on forest laws and policies began with Sudha Vasan outlining issues that would be pertinent to this study. This was followed by active discussion by participants after which forest secretary Mr Mukhtiyar Singh presented his views, highlighting the willingness of the forest department to work with others. Dr D K Srivastava and Mr Dharendra Kumar, senior officers of the forest department, also supported this with information

It was suggested that check dams and lift irrigation schemes should not be seen in isolation. There is a developed strategy for watershed management for integrated water resources management, which can be utilised to create a policy vision for the state.

and departmental perspectives. Some of the issues discussed included:

- Several participants highlighted joint forest management (JFM). Some saw it as an important and progressive new step and others thought it was unviable and unfair. Many felt that forests should be completely the responsibility of JFM committees, without any bureaucratic interference. Power, authority and control have to be shared for it to be truly 'joint'. Policies have to be made in a consultative manner and not imposed from above. What are the legal and institutional mechanisms for doing this?

The question of mining leases on forestland came up repeatedly. There is a need for the government and the people to sit together and identify specific inviolate areas where there can be no use of forests.

- There was much discussion on the extent of state involvement in sale of forest produce, the issue of distress sale of produce, state monopoly, middlemen and ownership and control of forest produce. Most participants felt that the state should play a facilitative role in non-timber forest produce (NTFP) sale but should not take a monopolistic stance. More control and ownership of produce should be given to local people. Participants suggested that *gram sabhas* should decide where to sell and to whom to sell and at what price. Seed money could be given to women's cooperatives, since women were involved with most of the NTFP collection. The ownership of NTFP should be given to villagers. What should be the extent and nature of the state's role in the collection, transport, processing or sale of NTFP?

- A question was raised on Mundari Kuntkhatti land. Mundari kuntkhattidars are at par with zamindars. Why should they

give a share of their forest produce to the government under JFM? It was also pointed out that the state government could always add amendments if the Indian Forest Act is not in consonance with customary laws and needs. What are the provisions in the forest acts and policies for dealing with such customary rights?

- It was suggested that all forest laws and policies now are only for the intermediate period until PESA becomes functional in the state. How does PESA affect JFM and all other existing forest laws and policies?

- Participants also felt that there was need for transparency in the forest department, understanding history and culture of functioning. The issues of forest workers and forest cases were highlighted.

- The question of mining leases on forestland came up repeatedly. There is a need for the government and the people to sit together and identify specific inviolate areas where there can be no use of forests. A Supreme Court Order to the effect that no NTFP can be collected from protected areas was problematic in a state like Jharkhand. The state government has requested the court to allow NTFP collection, as it has done in Rajasthan. What are the legal precedents and options in such situations?

PESA

Jharkhand passed its Panchayati Raj Act on March 30, 2001. It provides for a 3-tier system of village administration - panchayats at the village level, panchayat *samitis* at the block level and *zila parishad* at the district level. For general areas, the Act provides a maximum of 50% reservation for SCs, STs and OBCs. In scheduled areas, reservations will be proportional to the per-

centage of SCs, STs and OBCs in the population, not exceeding 80%. No panchayat elections have been held till date and no parallel laws have been amended to bring them into conformity with PESA. The debate over the domicile bill also has implications for the functioning of PESA.

The session on PESA began with a list of questions posed by me, followed by comments from Mr Sangma, Secretary, SC/ST Welfare. He noted that the Tribes Advisory Council had not been constituted when the Jharkhand PESA was passed. PESA was only later brought before this body, which expressed concern over some of its provisions like elections. Among the issues of concern that came up in his talk and subsequent discussion were:

- The relation between the traditional heads (Munda/Manki) and the elected *sarpanch* in a panchayati system;
- Whether devolution of financial powers given to the *gram* panchayat would trickle down to the *gram sabha*, since the 2 have different jurisdictions (one *gram* panchayat may cover several *gram sabhas*);
- Who was to recognise a *gram sabha*. They are meant to be self-defining, but this can be problematic. Does *gram sabha* mean the 'traditional' community *sabhas* (excluding women) or a general assembly of all adults in a hamlet?
- In Santhali villages, the Pradhans have the right to settle people and in several cases this right was being misused. What would the role of the *gram sabha* be in such cases?
- There is one demand that there should be no elections under PESA. It was noted that *gram sabhas* are effective in parts of Khunti sub-division, Porahat, Kolhan and Santhal Parganas and elections would spoil them. In West Singhbhum, Johar had organised *gram sabhas* after the Central Act was passed, but before the watered down Jharkhand Act came into being,

and had chosen village heads. Johar has filed a case against panchayat elections.

- Politicisation of the *parhas*.
- The need to look at tribal communities outside the scheduled areas.
- What would be the position of minor tribal groups like the Chik Barias?
- The need to look at scheduled caste communities, which suffer the maximum alienation.
- Existing laws may be stronger than PESA in terms of protecting tribal rights. The CNTA also has 14 sections dealing with customary law. This needs to be examined.

The last session, which was meant to be an open discussion on what other issues might be studied such as mining, could not be taken up for lack of time. However, the fact that mining came up repeatedly as an issue of concern suggested to the team that it was an issue that could not be ignored in the context of Jharkhand. Hence steps were taken to include this module.

People, News and Events

- Apoorva Shee of the Dumka team in Jharkhand was married with Sudipta on February 7, 2003. Srilata Patnaik and Jitendra Naik, both in the Balliguda team, were also married on February 7. Congratulations.
- Anish Kumar and Ramesh Sirpachey, President of the Pradan-promoted Kesla Poultry Samiti, attended a workshop on micro enterprise development organised by the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) and PRAGYA, an NGO, on January 29-30, 2003. Other participants included NABARD, SIDBI, DST, UNIDO, BAIF, Development Alternatives and groups from Ladakh and Himachal Pradesh.
- A sub-divisional level *mahila sammelan* (gathering of self-help groups) was organised at Karanjia on January 1, 2003. About 2,000 women gathered together under the aegis of the Mission Shakti programme, 800 of who were members of 81 Pradan promoted SHGs. Pradan was the only NGO to participate. The chief minister of Orissa, Naveen Patnaik, addressed the gathering.
- The IWMI-Tata water policy programme held an Annual Partners Meet in Anand in January. Over 100 participants were present. Manas Satpathy and Nivedita Narain attended on behalf of Pradan.
- Shubhanker Chatterji, based at Khunti in Jharkhand and Debarati Datta, based at Kesla in Madhya Pradesh, have resigned. We wish them success in their future endeavours.
- Twenty two Apprentices of the 26th and 27th batches of Development Apprenticeship Programme attended the first phase of the Process Awareness and Sensitivity module in 2 batches during February 2-7 and February 17-22, 2003. Deepankar Roy and Ramesh Galohda facilitated these modules.
- D Narendranath and Asif Zaidi attended a workshop organised by Aravali in Jaipur on micro-finance in Rajasthan from January 6-8, 2003.
- 35 Apprentices of the 25th and 26th batches attended the Village Study and PRA Workshop during February 24 - March 1, 2003. The programme was conducted in Jasidih and Kesla. The resource persons for village study were Satyabrata Acharya, D Narendranath, Nivedita Narain and Madhabananda Ray. Ajaya Samal, Avijit Mallick, Dhruv Mukhopadhyay and Rajesh Mit were resource persons for both Village Study and PRA Workshop. Mr Raadhakrishna and Mr Guruswamy from Outreach were also resource persons for the PRA Workshop.
- The Executive Committee met from February 1-15, 2003.
- Jui Gupta is attending a 21-day course on Gender Organisational Change and Agriculture and Leadership (GOAL) at the Wageningen University in the Netherlands. She is a recipient of the Netherlands Fellowship Programme.
- Exchange of Young Entrepreneurs (EYE) is a joint initiative between ICCO of The Netherlands and a network of managers and entrepreneurs in the Netherlands. Coordinated by Nelleke van der Vleuten in The Netherlands, EYE brought a small group of corporate people from The Netherlands on a visit here. A team of 2 Dutch participants, together with the Indian representatives, visited CINI, Dastkaar, IDE and Pradan. The Pradan projects they visited were at the sericulture and yarn production programme at Godda, poultry and mushroom at Kesla and dairy at Alwar. Khitish Pandya, Anish Kumar and Asif Zaidi accompanied them and participated during the entire event.



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.



Professional Assistance for Development Action (PRADAN)

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