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## Note

This number of the *STREAM Journal* presents a mix of articles from the Philippines, India, Nigeria and Vietnam, once again representing a range of issues around which the STREAM Initiative promotes learning and communicating about the livelihoods of fishers and farmers.

The first article by Tee-Jay A San Diego of the Philippines describes how he learned with community members by being involved in a project's activities, and how he "felt closer to the fisherfolk as [he] observed changes in their thinking by the way they reacted to particular fisheries-related issues and problems". Elizabeth M Gonzales's article, also from the Philippines, documents how an orientation was run with community members on an "alternative development approach to maximize [their] participation ... in local governance." She also introduces us to Manuel Puzon, a fisherman who developed leadership capabilities and "became a member of a pool of local trainers ... tapped to handle community seminars for fisherfolk organizations."

The third article – by B K Sahay, K P Singh and S N Pandeya – is about a Self-Help Group in Jharkhand State of India, how they got started and how they came together to handle a conflict involving an individual who tried to claim ownership of their community pond. In the *STREAM Journal's* first contribution from Africa, Yemi Akegbejo-Samsons reports on a study which "look[ed] at the impact of [urban agriculture] on the coastal riverine environment and the reality of water use and re-use in ... Ondo state" of Nigeria.

The final two articles from Vietnam follow from the special number of *SJ1(4)* on participatory livelihoods analysis. Pham Minh Tam and Trinh Quang Tu write about lessons they learned through the experience of carrying out livelihoods analysis using Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tools. Nguyen Van Tu and Nguyen Minh Duc then relate the use of a sustainable livelihoods approach in the implementation of a project aimed at "improv[ing] livelihoods of the poorest people in rural areas through sustainable aquatic resources management."

Happy reading!

Graham Haylor, STREAM Director  
William Savage, STREAM Journal Editor

## Group-building, Production Success and the Struggle to Prevent Capture of the Resource

B K Sahay, K P Singh and S N Pandeya

### Getting Started

KRIBP-E<sup>6</sup> activities on pond cleaning, removing weeds and use of lime were started in 1996 in Amber Toli of Nehalu cluster, of what was then Bihar state and is now Jharkhand. The community perennial pond (*Maria bundh*) of 1.96 acres was owned by villagers and used by everyone for bathing, cleaning animals and irrigation. Before 1996, there was no culture fishery. Then, the Young Generation Group (a Self-Help Group) of Amber Toli, with members from all 36 households, started doing aquaculture. They received training from KRIBP-E, and in June they stocked the pond with seed from SRI<sup>7</sup> (10,000 fingerlings of 30 mm). The villagers developed a schedule, what they needed from the project, what could be provided and who would do what. The group also decided members' roles and responsibilities for feeding, watching and other management practices. Villagers provided manure by basket, about 60-70 kg of dry cow dung per week. From the project came lime, rice bran and chemicals for precautionary treatment. Fingerlings were added to the *hapa* net, treated and released.

### Results

In 1996, there was no proper outlet facility and the group could not get a good yield. They harvested in March and got Rs 6,000. They had no big net and were not trained. They brought a net from another village, rented at Rs 200. In 1997, the community continued the activity and also added 2 kg of fingerlings purchased from the Bhamo local market. Harvesting of fish that year was comparatively better and they sold fish worth Rs 9,000; some of the older fish now were 3-3.5 kg. This time a net was borrowed from Birsa Agricultural University. They tried to check



Group harvesting the success

the outgoing fishes by making bamboo net. But due to heavy rain they could not succeed and so, like in 1996, they lost many fish. They then decided that until there was a proper outlet, they could not succeed, so they raised a proposal. With the help of the (now) GVT project, in 1998 an outlet was constructed with an investment of Rs 60,000. Community members also provided labor at a 50% charge of the labor rate.

By this time, the community and *jankars*<sup>8</sup> had received many training inputs from the project and their skills developed considerably. Group savings were about Rs 18,000 (12,000 in the bank at 12% annual interest; 6,000 in credit and savings at 5% per month). The lending rate in the village was 10% per month. In terms of marketing, if the group harvested 30-40 kg, they sold among themselves and to outside persons. When they harvest in March, a big crowd gathers. First they sell to the group at Rs 30, then to neighbors at Rs 40, and only then to outsiders, but there is never any left.

### Conflict – Encroachment by an Individual and Community Struggle

When the outlet construction was in progress in 1998, a person of the same village – who lived at Ranchi<sup>9</sup> and was employed in the survey office – represented to the GVT Bihar State Coordinator (SC), that this pond was his personal property, so please stop the work. But by that time the

6 DFID-funded project in eastern India of KRIBHCO, now the Gramin Vikas Trust or GVT

7 Society for Rural Industrialisation

8 Community members trained with GVT to be village specialists

9 Now the capital city of Jharkhand state

construction of the outlet was 80% finished. The claimant was requested by project personnel to settle it with the community amicably. Meanwhile, the claim paper presented by him was forwarded to the Circle Office (CO) Bero for verification about the ownership of the land, requesting the officer to give feedback to KRIBP-E.

The claim was found to be not genuine as there was no record in the revenue register for that land. Also revenue had not been paid to the office, which is required and supposed to be one of the major papers relating to ownership of the land. The claimant returned to the office with two other persons to discuss the matter with GVT's Bihar SC and Nehalu Community Organizer. They agreed that there was no objection to constructing the outlet for the benefit of the community, so it was completed. The Additional District Magistrate of Ranchi visited the pond in February 1998 to see the group's aquaculture activities and sanctioned a hatchery construction project of Rs 600,000, with the first installment of Rs 100,000 received late that year. They visited the site to plan and demarcate the hatchery.

Seeing the success of the pond and government assistance, again the claimant complained. So KRIBP-E requested the Circular Officer to make ownership clear, and papers were sent to LRDC<sup>10</sup> Ranchi. The claimant also tried to harvest the fish by hiring some "muscle men", but the villagers united and prevented him from harvesting. He also lodged an FIR<sup>11</sup> in the name of some group members and filed a court case for ownership of the pond.



*Pond with conflict – whose ownership?*

In 1970, there was a mass transfer of government land to the people – "distribution of Pata" – without following proper procedures. The claimant's paper (from 1977) was 27 years old and there was no record with the LRDC. The paper showed that the plot was fallow land while the Circular Office record stated that this plot has a *bundh* – a big earthen bund – which cannot be personal property. The *bundh* had been paid for by the Block Office, i.e., constructed by the government, in 1970. Therefore this must be government land.

The villagers held a meeting and collected papers related to the ownership of the pond. The case was transferred to the LRDC court with a recommendation from the Circle Officer in favor of the community. The group members also jointly represented the issues to the local MLA<sup>12</sup>, who also recommended to the LRDC in favor of the villagers – that this was a common village pond and did not belong to an individual. The case is still in LRDC court. The pond is presently under the complete ownership of the community and in 2002, they stocked 6 kg of fingerlings.

### Conclusion

The group is cohesive and has good understandings of their rights. They have strategic planning to fight with probable emerging situations. In the worst situation, they are planning for the development of some other ponds to continue this activity but will not allow their skills in aquaculture activities to dissipate.

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<sup>10</sup> Land Reform Deputy Collector, government official looking at land-related issues at district level

<sup>11</sup> First Investigation Report (a case has to be filed with the police after any incident)

<sup>12</sup> Local elected representative at the state legislature