

Natural Resource Management-An Option of Livelihood promotion

Sagar Club proved to be a successful Self Help Group, reflecting a stable and appreciable livelihood promotion. Sagar Club was initiated on 23-12-2003 with the assistance of Gramin Vikas Trust in Badbilla Village of Banisal Gram Panchayat of Mayurbhanja district of Orissa and there were 38 male members in total.

There was a high a high degree of homogeneity in the class and caste structure. All the 38 members were Adivasi (ST). Among all the members 36 were Below Poverty Line. Regarding the marital Status, all were married. Also the literacy position was high as out of 38 members, 30 members were literate.

The credit - Saving position of the group was quite remarkable. The bank linkage was done as early as possible i.e., on March 2004. The group was operating with two bank linkages. i.e., bank of India and State Bank of India. According to the president Mr. Raisen Murmu, they never kept fund in their hand rather regularly deposited all cash in banks and withdrawn when necessary. By 31 December 2004, the total deposits in the bank were Rs. 15,000.00. The bank managers of State Bank of India and Bank of India were quite happy with the banking operations of Sagar Club.

Sagar Club had better operational efficiency. Though the group was getting support from Gramin Vikas Trust, it had started managing itself with in few months of formation. The paper work, record keeping was done on regular Basis by the secretary Mr. Baidyanath Singh and Asst. secretary Mr. Dilip. The whole group was able to perceive the benefits from the SHG concept. Regular saving and credit was so to say inevitable. The group meetings were held once in a month with the participation of all the members. The decisions in the group were taken by the common consent of all the members and implementation of the decision was made by President and Secretary. The group members were regularly saving the monthly fees Rs. 10 and that was possible due to high peer pressure. The president and secretary proved their leadership by providing high motivation and encouragement to the members.

Livelihood Promotion through Group Action

There was a remarkable change in the livelihood options, livelihood opportunities and livelihood portfolios by the intervention by Sagar Club. Not only the members of Sagar Club but also the entire village was benefited out of this.

- **Livelihood Promotion through NRM**

Sagar club had taken many soil and water conservation measures for a better livelihood for the villagers. With the assistance and grant of Gramin Vikas Trust, Sagar Club had constructed field bund in 60 acres of crop land in Badbilla Village. These field bunds were built uniformly 3.5 feet height. For that Gramin Vikas Trust provided support in terms of construction materials, technical Knowhow and wage for the mason and Sagar Club provided free labour.

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Due to such an intervention, 30 acres of land which was lying barren for many years brought in cultivation. By checking the excess infiltrated rain water, the water availability to the standing crop was increased by 30 per cent. The productivity of paddy was increased due to increase in the availability of water. The villagers also started Rice-Fish cultivation. The Cropping intensity was increased by 20 percent and the productivity of paddy was increased by 25 percent (High water availability and high yielding seeds). Villagers started sowing high yielding varieties of paddy (Lalata, Surendra etc.) supplied By Gramin Vikas Trust.

Sagar Club used Hume pipes supplied by Gramin Vikas Trust as grant, for draining in and draining out rain water to the crop fields. By that the villagers got better control over rain water.

The field bunds of all the 60 acres of land of the villagers were covered by Cactus plant which firmly binds the soil. Also the Cactus plants protected the crop land from grazing animals.

Badvilla Village had 10 open wells but water of those wells suitable for drinking. During rainy season, muddy water was infiltrating into the wells and in other seasons all unwanted pollutants were entering into it. The water level from the surface of these wells was around 60 feet and much human energy was required to lift water from these wells.

The activities of Sagar Club were not limited to crop land and field bunds. It took an unutilized muddy pond (4000 Sq Ft) on contract for 5 years from Gram Panchayat office. The muddy pond was renovated by Sagar Club which was later utilized for fishery with the support of Gramin Vikas Trust. The average income from the pond from fishery was Rs. 6000 per annum out of which they were paying Rs. 3000 to Panchayat as per the contract. Seeing these problems, Sagar Club constructed cemented platforms with pulley for six open wells. Gramin Vikas Trust provided the construction materials and Sagar Club provided labour support.

- **Livelihood Promotion through Alternative Options**

Sagar Club developed alternative options for livelihood promotion through income generating activities. The group had taken cashew plantation in 10 acres of unutilized barren land. Gramin Vikas Trust provided cashew seeds and were grown into seedling by Sagar Club and planted. The group wants to provide a better management for the plantation which would manage the plantation effectively, efficiently and perfectly. The management consists of members of the group.

Livestock enterprises and Goatery were other activities taken by Sagar Club. There were altogether 100 goats and 30 cows managed by the members individually with the loan from their group.

Institutional Sustainability

The quality and institutional sustainability of Sagar Club was high and unquestionable. Though there were some weaknesses in the functioning of the group but the group hopes it will overcome very soon.

Value Addition for NRM - Approaches and Strategies

The biggest strength of Sagar Club was the support of Gramin Vikas Trust. On the basis of participatory technology development, Gramin Vikas Trust had conducted regular training and exposure visits for Sagar Club for soil and water conservation measures and other income generating activities. By that Sagar Club got a substantial technical expertise on soil and water conservation. The support of Gramin Vikas Trust was not purely a grant rather an initiation for participation in the work which developed a sense of belongingness in the work by the members.

The most appreciable action of Gramin Vikas Trust was the "Twin Support". Every grant of Gramin Vikas Trust preceded by a issue based capacity building for Sagar Club. So there was better understanding of the members of the action and participation in the activity.

ⁱ The Case Study is prepared by MPAssociates Pvt. Ltd., Bhubaneswar. The objective of the study is to understand the impact of SHG Revolution in Orissa.