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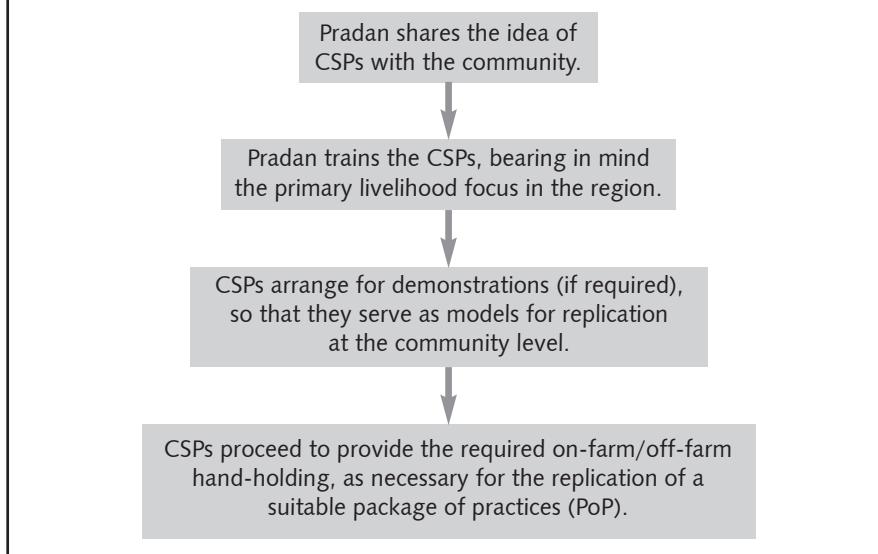
JOGEN KALITA

Choosing a service provider from within a community and getting the community to own the CSP is slowly gaining acceptance despite some initial reservations and hesitation.

Community Service Providers (CSPs) are village youth, who are trained to render logistic and technical support to the community, especially with a view to assist in the implementation of livelihood activities. CSPs are expected to provide livelihood support in a manner that will enable the local community members to fulfill their aspirations for better livelihoods and lives. CSPs are identified from within the community itself; it is believed that community members will be more willing to learn and take assistance from a CSP, who is one of their own. Furthermore, to ensure accountability as part of the system, part of a CSP's wage is borne by the community—the ultimate beneficiary of the services provided by the CSP.

The CSP is expected to act in a capacity no less than that of an entrepreneur, wielding expertise in some specific area or sphere that will contribute to the livelihood(s) of his concerned community. Pradan not only identifies the need for CSPs in a given community but also plays the vital role of training them so that they can satisfy the aspirations of the community members. The means by which CSPs are trained and deployed in the community is shown in the following diagram.

Diagram 1: Pradan's Model of a Community Owned CSP System



With the above understanding, Pradan has been trying to achieve these objectives in the field. However, the realities experienced by the Vidisha team over the last two years provide a greater insight into what may otherwise appear to be a simple activity.

In Vidisha, the communities were not interested in approaching the CSPs. For instance, if there was a pest attack in their fields, they would rather approach a shopkeeper and purchase pesticides, being fully aware that often the pesticides do not work and that they would have to buy another pack, thus investing double the budgeted amount for the purpose. This is also despite the fact that a CSP can suggest an alternative that is both cheaper and organic. Why then do communities not approach the CSP even when he/she is available and willing to help? The answer is simple: they have little or no confidence in a CSP. There are many farmers who will turn away from a CSP, fearing that she/he will try and convince them of a practice or approach that they are not ready to accept or cannot understand. At times, they may avoid the CSP believing that the alternatives she/he is likely to suggest will be more expensive than the 'tried-and-tested' practices.

Some drawbacks have emerged in the acceptance of CSPs by the community and in the functioning of the CSPs. The CSPs work well when the Pradan staff is with them but are slack and inactive when left to work alone. They think that their suggestions have a far higher chance of being taken seriously in the presence of a Pradan field staff member. Also true may be the fact that because the CSPs belong to the same community they serve, the community members tend to take them less seriously,

The Pradan team in Vidisha started its operations in April 2001 from Sironj block. In 2006, it started working in Lateri block too. The villages are multi-caste, each having people belonging to 13–15 castes. The Banjaras (nomads) from Rajasthan have settled in some of the regions. Scheduled Castes (SCs) form approximately 25% of the population, and mainly comprise Harijans. Mobilizing the community is a complex task. The very strong presence of traders in the area makes it difficult for the villagers to organize themselves. The major activities that the Pradan team has been engaged in are optimizing irrigation, enhancing crop productivity, promoting a Producer Company, goat rearing and promoting women's self help groups (SHGs). Pradan has reached out to about 5,000 families spread across 100 villages through programmes such as the Madhya Pradesh-District Poverty Initiatives Programme (MP-DPIP) and the Poorest Areas Civil Society Programme (PACS). In more recent times, the team is working in collaboration with the District Administration through programmes such as the Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) and the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojna (RKVY), which reaches out to about 3,000 households.

except when they are accompanied by Pradan staff. On occasion, the CSPs take shortcuts to fulfill the tasks assigned to them. At times, they resort to fabricating the data and prepare their reports from the comfort of their homes. Sometimes, they work for a few handful of families and use the data for everybody and produce fake data to obtain the part of their wages paid by Pradan.

The CSP has a very important role to play in reaching out to each family, to realize the desired level of change. The changes so desired by the community members in Vidisha are mostly concerned with their livelihoods. Improved livelihoods are perceived as the means by which they will be able to improve their overall standard of living. Better education and health facilities are also perceived as critical and important for the overall well being of the community. Pradan has sought to ensure, through proper orientation and training, that the CSP's role is wedded to the aspirations of the people. A CSP plays the critical link between the people and their aspirations; non-performance by the CSP can slow down village development processes to a large extent. The team in Vidisha has been grappling with this problem for the last two years. To analyze this further, let us look at all three actors contributing to the situation here—the community; the CSP and the Pradanites.

THE COMMUNITY

Pradan team members often make unsolicited visits to the villages, and this raises a lot of expectations in the community. The community develops the idea that the Pradan team is there because it has something material to give them, without their having to work for it. The community then starts demanding that they be provided with various facilities. The members of the team tell the villages that they may be able to help the villagers access various benefits but that the villagers have to be united and work together as group to avail of these benefits. Pradan is often confused as a giver of

Improved livelihoods are perceived as the means by which they will be able to improve their overall standard of living. Better education and health facilities are also perceived as critical and important for the overall well being of the community.

subsidies. This belief became entrenched in the mind of the community when on one occasion Pradan succeeded in leveraging a substantial amount of funds under MP-DPIP. The community members hope to rope in on cash benefits from the government through the facilitating agency. Very often, the SHGs rely on the services of the CSPs but are less than willing to bear even 10% of a CSP's wages. They expect that

this will be given by the government.

Recently, in an SHG cluster meeting at Churakheri village, a woman spoke about the CSP of that village who had taught her how to treat seeds very well. When she was asked what she had paid the CSP in return, she smiled and said that she had paid nothing. She was asked whether, at that moment, she thought that she should pay him. She responded affirmatively but said that she expected that the payment should be made by Pradan because she was too poor to pay. She was then asked how much she thought the payment should be. She said Rs 10 at least. We asked her how much soybean she needed to give him, that would equal Rs 10. She said half a kilogram. We then asked her how much soybean she had harvested last year from her plot. Her answer was 2 tonnes!

Without any doubt, the woman farmer is paying for many things. For instance, she pays fees to the doctor, pays for hiring the tractor and pays a high interest to the moneylender. She pays the bus fare when she travels by bus; she pays the labour she hires. She also pays for purchasing all

her personal effects; she pays for the electricity bills, for recharge vouchers of her mobile phone and so on. However, surprisingly, she does not believe that she needs to pay for the CSP's services.

Sometimes, community members do not want to pay for CSPs because the service is not so important to them or because they do not trust the CSP's level of expertise. They may also be tempted to think that the CSPs suggestions may really not bring about a change; they may prefer to follow the alternatives being adopted by some of their peers. But none of these held good in the example mentioned earlier. The CSP had provided the best service money could pay for, he had established his credibility by offering the right guidance and had still gone unrewarded.

THE CSP

The CSP is a kind of business person. She/he sells his expertise to earn money. This means she/he should have two basic qualities: (a) she/he should possess some unique expertise, and (b) she/he should be willing to sell her/his expertise. The latter quality is essential because she/he will be able to create a livelihood for himself; forging a livelihood on the expertise will ensure that she/he provides the best service, to remain in demand always.

When Pradan doles out payments to the CSPs, she/he does just as much as is necessary—nothing more, nothing less. She/he delivers only to such an extent as may be essential to ensure her/his sustenance. In a sense, it does not matter to her/him if real transformation takes place or not. This is primarily because there is no apparent difference between the client and the payers (both are Pradan). Therefore, the

CSP is not expected to nor is she/he needed to harbour a strong extension motivation. She/he gets paid for a service that she/he is required to deliver. To an extent, some community control is expected, and it is for these very reasons that it is best if a significant part of a CSP's fee is borne by the community itself.

THE PRADANITES

Apart from the institutional arrangements, there are norms, taboos, stigmas and other social restrictions that curb Pradan's intention to reach out. In such a complicated situation, the challenge lies in changing the mind-set of not only the target community, namely, the SHG women, but also half-a-dozen other players, mentioned earlier. The same is true for the CSP system. The need to institute a CSP system begins, as Pradanites, in our own minds because the desire to bring about a change in the community springs from our own minds and hearts.

Once we are ourselves convinced of the need of the system, we try to percolate it down to the community. We try to arouse the need for a CSP to cater to the community's need. In the meeting in which we seed the concept of this system, we begin by orienting the community members to better practices that can be adapted so much more easily with the aid of CSPs. For instance, if farmers practise the use of a judicious dose of fertilizers on their crop land, they will need somebody who knows about the correct fertilizer, doses, application process and so on to support them. The usefulness of CSPs is conveyed by asking the members frequently if it would be easier for them to raise loans with the help of a CSP. In other words, we refer to instances that make the

communities reflect on the true need for a CSP, thereby ushering in the idea of a CSP in the discussions. This question is usually received with an overwhelming response, so much so that, in one village called Salri, the villagers were willing to give up to 5% of their loan amount for the services of a CSP. It is very important to analyze whether the proposed system actually fits into the expectations of the community that we are interacting with.

Other important aspects are how we inculcate the qualities of honesty and enterprise in the CSPs, how they can be engaged through the year, and how they can earn well. One way of streamlining the process has been to have decentralized weekly CSP meetings, in place of the common practice of arranging meetings in the office. About 10 CSPs form one cluster, and meetings are organized in a central place in the villages. This ensures both accountability and transparency on the part of the CSPs in the long run. Their performance is then reviewed in the presence of the villagers; this may possibly convince the villagers of the need to support the CSPs and the good work they are doing. This has already been initiated in Sironj block with reasonable success, and we will shortly be extending it to Lateri. To strengthen the system further, the money contributed by Pradan is transferred to the community account, and the community is empowered to pay to the CSP. Likewise, a peer review system of CSP is to be initiated so that any CSP found lacking in the desired attitude

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and performance may be identified and asked to leave.

The following is a list of 'to dos' that can greatly optimize the CSP system:

- ◆ The real area of support of the community has to be identified as it has been done in Vidisha. The community needs to be convinced of the need for a CSP; and then oriented on how to identify one from amongst themselves
- ◆ Pradan has to orient and train the CSP. The training curriculum should be developed, bearing in mind the needs and aspirations articulated by the community members. Training should be participatory in design, with the community playing an overall role. The training needs should cover both technical and behavioural aspects.
- ◆ Pradan should help the community establish/evolve mechanisms that will enable it to elicit accountability on the part of the CSPs. The decentralized meetings, a system of payments that are routed through community based institutions and peer review are effective mechanisms in this sense.

Potential for Carbon Trading through the Raising of Host Plants of Tasar Silkworm

K. SATHYANARAYANA

Recognizing the growth potential of carbon trading, which is still in its initial days, this article explores more fully as to how the benefits of carbon trading can be linked to the tasar rearing activities that are being promoted by Pradan in the poorer regions.

Climate change is one of the most challenging environmental, economic and social issues facing the world today. Industrialization and deforestation have led to increased pollution and the emission of green house gases (GHGs), thereby bringing in change in the overall trend in climatic patterns. In the past decade (2000 to 2010), global carbon dioxide emissions have increased at an annual rate of 1.3%, equivalent to 300 MT. At the start of this decade in 2000, whereas carbon emissions were in the range of 300 to 500 million MT per year in the developing countries, it crossed the 1,600 million MT mark in the developed countries. Though GHGs can be reduced by reducing the consumption of fossil fuels, it is not practically feasible, in view of the increasing urbanization and industrialization.

India shares the global concern of climate change and is a party to various initiatives, namely, the Vienna Convention (1991), the Montreal Protocol (1992) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change—UNFCCC (1993). Besides, ratification of the Kyoto Protocol (1997) in 2002 imposes binding targets for reducing the combined GHG emission to 5.2% below the 1990 level, by 2012. This can be achieved through direct regulations, including incentives and/or obligations to reduce the net emissions of GHGs, or through indirect measures. The following three mechanisms were provided under the Kyoto Protocol to help countries or operators in developed countries to acquire GHG reduction credits or carbon emission reduction (CER) units, which are defined as the reduction of 1 MT of carbon dioxide emission into the atmosphere.

1. Joint Implementation (JI): Under this, a developed country with relatively high costs of domestic GHG reduction will set up a project in another developed country.
2. Clean Development Mechanism (CDM): Under this, a developed country can 'sponsor' a GHG-reduction project in a developing country, where the cost of the project activities is usually much lower but its atmospheric effect is globally equivalent. The developed country will be given credits

- for meeting its emission reduction targets whereas the developing country will receive capital investment and clean technology or beneficial change in land use.
3. International Emissions Trading (IET): Under this, developing countries can trade in the international carbon credit market to cover their shortfall in allowances. Countries can sell surplus credit to countries with quantified emission limitation and reduction commitments under the Kyoto Protocol.

The CDM allows emission-reduction (or emission-removal) projects in developing countries to earn CER credits, each equivalent to one tonne of carbon dioxide. These CERs can be traded and sold, and used by industrialized countries to meet part of their emission-reduction targets under the Kyoto Protocol, which can stimulate sustainable development. Transactions under CDM include equity investment in projects and receiving CERs in return (bilateral), purchasing CERs through forward sale through sales agreement (weak unilateral) and purchasing CERs through on-the-spot market trade (unilateral).

STATUS OF CDM PROJECTS

The CDM is seen by many as a trailblazer. It is the first global, environmental investment-and-credit scheme of its kind, providing a standardized emissions offset instrument, the CER. Operational since the beginning of 2006, the mechanism has already registered 1,769 projects; 4,200 CDM projects are in

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the pipeline through which over 290 crore CERs are expected in the first commitment period, that is, 2008–2012, of the Kyoto Protocol. Of these, India has over 400 projects to its credit.

CDM projects with over three years of operational experience have low global administration costs of below 1% and generate revenue of over \$ 1.5 billion through sale of CER units at US\$ 15 per unit. Whereas CDM projects are small and very often energy industries, it is estimated that those in the pipeline in 2006 would entail capital investment of US\$ 25 billion. Similarly, renewable energy and energy efficiency projects registered in 2006 were expected to entail a capital investment of US\$ 5.7 billion. Governments of developed countries, portfolio managers of carbon funds such as the World Bank PCF, corporate especially European companies under the EU-ETS scheme, and brokers/ speculators are the potential buyers of these CERs.

The CDM Executive Board is the regulating body that issues CERs, supported by validating and verifying bodies and national authorities. CDM projects include small-scale (less than 15 MW) and large-scale (more than 15MW) energy projects, and afforestation and reforestation projects. Not much action has been initiated as yet, however, under the CDM projects through afforestation and reforestation programmes.

Sericulture Industry and CDM: Two silk industries, namely, M/s Garden Silk Mills Ltd., Surat, Gujarat, and the Palsana industrial cluster, Gujarat, have been involved in the

small-scale (13.5 MW) natural gas-based package co-generation system for power generation and steam generation, using exhaust waste heat, CDM projects in India, with a crediting period of ten years and estimated credits of 5,86,124 units.

The main goal of the project was to improve productivity and profitability, and reduce the environmental impact of post-cocoon processing in the silk industry.

Further, The Energy Resource Institute (TERI) developed a gasifier suitable for the silk reeling industry under Swiss Development Corporation (SDC)-funded SERI-2000 project, which is now commercially marketed by two manufacturers. The main goal of the project was to improve productivity and profitability, and reduce the environmental impact of post-cocoon processing in the silk industry. Biomass gasifiers allow fuel savings of about 70%, representing 822 tonnes of fuel wood per year. This reduces the carbon dioxide emissions of the silk factory and decreases the pressure on the local forests. In addition, these systems also reduce the water consumption of the silk reelers. However, the above effort could not be sustained commercially for various practical reasons.

CDM and Afforestation Programmes: When agricultural land is no longer used for cultivation and allowed to revert to natural vegetation or replanted to perennial vegetation, organic carbon can accumulate in the soil. This carbon sequestration essentially reverses some of the effects responsible for the organic carbon losses from the soil when the land was converted to perennial vegetation. Though, there is a large variation in the length of time for and the rate at which carbon may accumulate in the soil, related to the productivity of the recovering vegetation, physical and biological conditions in the soil, and the past history of soil organic carbon

inputs and physical disturbance, soil carbon sequestration rates will get enhanced with changes in land-use and soil management. Of the 1,769 CDM projects registered, 1,297 are energy industries and only six belong to the afforestation/reforestation

category, indicating the unexplored opportunity in this sector.

Vegetation in the forests or in block plantations, raised under various developmental programmes, has the potential to earn substantially more from carbon trading, which could be a source for afforestation programmes. As result of the Bali Climate Summit, traders in the emerging European carbon market are buying carbon credits to meet new requirements for curbing GHGs. This attains national importance because the per capita availability of forest land in India is one of the lowest in the world—0.08 ha, against an average of 0.5 ha for developing countries and 0.64 ha for the world. The average annual rate of deforestation fell from about 1.3 million hectares in the 1970s to 3,39,000 ha in the 1980s and to about 1,29,000 ha during 1990–95; considering that the important objective of the National Forest Policy 1988 was to increase the forest/tree cover to 33% from the present level of 19.27%, increasing the green cover becomes priority.

The CDM project proposal should establish eligibility criterion, namely, the emission additionality (real, measurable and long-term GHG mitigation, calculated with reference to a baseline) and financial additionality (procurement of CERs should not be from the Official Development Assistance). The CDM

projects should also be oriented to improving the quality of life of the poor from the environmental standpoint. The following aspects should be considered when designing a CDM project activity:

- a. **Social well being:** The CDM project activity should lead to the alleviation of poverty by generating additional employment, removing social disparities and contributing to the provision of basic amenities to people, leading to improvement in the quality of life of people.
- b. **Economic well being:** The CDM project activity should bring in additional investment, consistent with the needs of the people.
- c. **Environmental well being:** A discussion must be held on the impact of the project activity on resource sustainability and resource degradation, if any, due to the proposed activity; its bio-diversity; its impact on human health; reduction of levels of pollution and so on.
- d. **Technological well being:** The CDM project activity should lead to transfer of environmentally safe and sound technologies that are comparable to best practices in order to assist in upgradation of the technological base. The transfer of technology can be within the country as well from other developing countries.

Scope of Afforestation through Tasar Host Plants in Private Wastelands: The parameters indicated make the raising of host plants of tasar silkworms more suitable for

Agro-forestry such as raising tasar host plants in private wastelands not only has the potential to store carbon but also addresses the need for alternative livelihoods for the tribal populations, who currently benefit from deforestation.

consideration under CDM. Although afforestation has the potential for earning revenue through carbon trading, the forest-based carbon market will be complicated, keeping in view the various Forest Acts in force. Agro-forestry such as raising tasar host plants in private wastelands not only has the potential to store carbon but also addresses the need for alternative livelihoods for the tribal populations, who currently benefit from deforestation.

Whereas afforestation projects can be carried out on lands that have not been forested for a period of at least 50 years, reforestation projects can be carried out on forested land that has been converted to non-forested land. The Indian criteria and requirements for these projects include a tree crown cover of 15%, a land area value of 0.05 ha and a tree height value of 2 m; this best fits the raising of tasar host plants in private lands.

In view of the problems encountered in the maintenance of over 7,500 ha of arjun/asan plantations raised in revenue/forest lands under Inter State Tasar Project (ISTP) in different traditional and non-traditional tasar producing states—most of which could not be utilized for tasar silkworm rearing—the successful raising and utilization of host plants of tasar silkworm in over 1600 ha. of private lands of tribals under SGSY Special Projects in Bihar and Jharkhand, have given new opportunities in this field. This attains significance in view of the huge demand-and-supply gap in tropical tasar silk in the country and the fact that land resources are better managed and utilized under private ownership to avoid conflicts that may arise

with respect to ownership and income sharing. Such initiatives and activities such as agro-forestry extension, environmental education, micro-credit, marketing assistance, active stakeholder participation and group approach make them more sustainable besides paving the way for social inclusion and empowerment of tribals. The management of soil health is priority for the rearers because plantations on such land will help them rear tasar silkworms, ensuring profitable and sustainable economic returns for over fifty years and allowing for expansion, through minimum maintenance and better management practices.

CDM PROJECT SUBMISSION, PROCESSING AND APPROVAL PROCESS

The National Clean Development Mechanisms Authority (NCDMA) is a single window clearance for CDM projects in the country. The project proponents are required to submit one copy of the Project Concept Note (PCN) and Project Design Document (PDD) online, as well as hard copies for examination by NCDMA. This is to be followed by a presentation. Once the members of the Authority are satisfied and after necessary clarifications/modifications, the Host Country Approval (HCA) is issued by

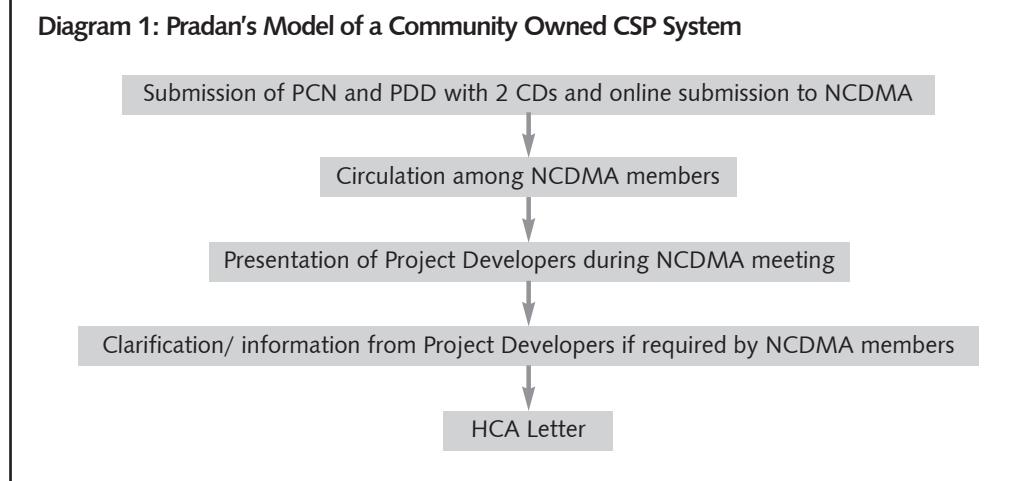
the Member-Secretary of the NCDMA, that is, the Secretary (Environment and Forests), Government of India.

In order to be considered for registration, a project must first be approved by the Designated National Authorities (DNA). The NCDMA has the powers to invite officials and experts from the government, financial institutions, consultancy organizations, non-governmental organizations, civil society, the legal profession, industry and commerce, as it may deem necessary for technical and professional inputs, and may co-opt other members depending upon the need to interact with the concerned authorities, for matters relating to CDM. It also can take up any environmental issues pertaining to CDM or sustainable development projects as may be referred to it by the central government, and can recommend guidelines for consideration of projects and principles to be followed, for according HCA.

METHODOLOGY FOR CARBON ASSESSMENT

The methodology adopted for assessing forest and tree carbon stocks uses primary data of the soil carbon pool and secondary data of the growing stock from various

Diagram 1: Pradan's Model of a Community Owned CSP System



sources for estimating the biomass carbon by adopting conversion factors from various studies by the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE).

It is established that highest carbon sequestration rates (0.1–0.25 MT/ha) are associated with trees rather than with herbaceous crops and, consequently, growing trees can cause marked increases in the level of soil carbon. Furthermore, in case of afforestation programmes, the inclusion of litter reverses the decrease in soil carbon so that the amount of carbon in the soil and litter layer is greater than it was under the preceding pasture. This attains importance with respect to tasar host plants, the biomass of which will be consumed only once a year but compensated by the silkworm litter because the rearing is carried out on the trees.

Issues to be addressed: The demarcation of the project boundaries, the quantification of

It is established that highest carbon sequestration rates (0.1 – 0.25 MT/ha) are associated with trees rather than with herbaceous crops and, consequently, growing trees can cause marked increases in the level of soil carbon.

CERs, validation and verification, and environmental and social sustainability are some of the major issues to be addressed in these projects.

The demonstration of land eligibility is a very important criterion. In the afforestation projects, the proposed land should have been in the non-forest category for fifty years before the project begins, and the land use change from non-forest to forest must be defined through tree crown cover, tree height and land area. Further, the complex methodology involved, the difficulty in proving land eligibility and establishing a baseline, the expensive and limited data and maps, and the limited expertise available in this field are the some of the areas that need to be looked into for bringing in additional and recurring income avenues to these poor tribals. This can best be achieved by involving some professional NGOs for the purpose.

Life in a Maria Village

PRADYUT BHATTACHARJEE

Kaleidoscopic images, which typify life in a village in Bastar, bring forth the flavour, warmth, simplicity and aspirations of the Marias.

PROLOGUE

It was love at first sight—the pristine beauty silhouetted by the mighty Kanger Park, the undulating terrain and the stone tiled mud houses—I was hooked! I was in a Maria village. These impressions of time spent in the Kukripani hamlet of Darbha block of Bastar district are forever etched in my mind. The hamlet is situated about 35 km from the headquarters and far away from the din and bustle and complexities of our lives. On an idyllic Sunday, I had set off on one of my regular explorative expeditions in and around Bastar when I stumbled upon this hamlet and subsequently decided to do a part of my Village Stay and Study here.

THE FIRST DAY ALWAYS THE HARDEST

My first day in Kukripani was hectic. I went around the hamlet, familiarizing myself with the unknown faces while searching for a chord to build a rapport (which is not so easy). Finally, I called it a day and threw myself on the makeshift bed in Sannu Poreyami, my benevolent host's, house. I do not know why he asked me to stay at his house in the first place; my Koya Mata (the Maria dialect) vocabulary was limited to "*Nawa peder Pradyut*" (My name is Pradyut) and "*Nawa lona Assam ta mende*" (My home is in Assam); even my Halbi, the lingua franca of Bastar, was pathetic.

I recall my first Village Stay six years ago in Khunti, Jharkhand. I had stayed over at a village called Chukru. It was tough and my mind was in a tizzy with a dozen existentialist questions: What I am doing? Why? Is this my cup of tea? Today, after so many years of working in the field, I am facing the same problems but with a small difference. The experience of the last six years has instilled confidence in me and I have a pragmatic attitude to new hardships. However, some questions still haunt me: What is the way ahead of this quagmire called poverty? What are my approach and strategy? How am I going to continue to nurture my attachment to working at the grass roots level without neglecting the responsibilities mandated by my new role as a leader

of an upcoming team? The answers are not forthcoming, yet striving to get them is the only solution.

PAIKA, THE OUTSIDER

My initial attempt was to form Self Help Groups (SHGs) in Kukripani. I had to have all my wits about me. I used a mix of Halbi, Koya Mata and Hindi to reach out to the people. As part of the initial efforts, about 38 families have been organised into SHGs, or as we locally call them the *Swa Sahayta Samuhs*. It was not easy sailing. People were sceptical. Someone remarked, "The *paika* (outsider/city person) is playing smart. He is going to dupe us." Their earlier experiences, in which the many groups formed under SGSY were either non-starters or the personal fiefdom of the *sachiv* (*panchayat* Secretary) and the three office bearers, made the villagers wary. I desperately needed a few confidantes in the hamlet. Luckily, there were two precocious youths, Sukhram Baghel and Santuram Korram, who were mischievous but remarkably smart. They helped me not only with my Koya Mata but also in building the much needed rapport. With their support, I managed to convince the village women, the *didis* (*nanno* in Gondi), to form two groups.

That day was a day of jubilation for me. Two SHGs—Gangadei Mata (12 members) and Jalinin Mata (16 members)—were born and I was the proud father. Each group had only one member, who could barely write; yet again, Sukhram and Santu were the saviours—they became the *lekhpals*—the official writers for the groups.

***According to the
Marias, a Gond tribe,
"Heaven is a big
endless forest with
lots and lots of mahua
trees, and Hell is a big
forest devoid of
mahua trees."***

"*Dada, have food with us today,*" Sukri *nanno* invited me with all the sisterly affection. I was startled. The transition from *paika* to *dada* is overwhelming. How soon relationships can be established with a little empathy and trust, and how soothing and serene

is the company of these wonderful unassuming people!

IN SEARCH OF EL DORADO

Everything was hunky dory till that fateful day when I found Santu missing from his home. His mother Mangaldei and father Baman were despairing and desolate. I got to know he had fled to Bhadrachalam in Andhra Pradesh in search of greener pastures. Maybe to work in stone quarries, brick kilns, marble factories and other umpteen such clandestine enterprises where the work environment is inhuman (where the labour is forced to work for 14 hours at a stretch in the most rigorous of conditions) and payments are meagre (many manage just enough to get back to the villages virtually penniless). This is the story of so many Santus because forced migration to places such as Vishakhapatnam, Kirandul (the iron ore mines), Hyderabad, Raipur, Nizamabad and even as far as Chennai and Goa is pretty common among the men, post the kharif season, to ensure round-the-year food sufficiency. The agents of different industries, mines and factories lure the villagers with dreams of easy money. The families left behind are a distressed lot.

One such *nanno* is Faguni whose husband Raju has been away for work to Hyderabad for the last eight months. She has neither heard nor has she received any money from him. She fends for herself and her two

children, aged 5 and 2, by wage earning, collecting Non Timber Forest Produce (NTFP) and relying on Antyodoya Yojna for 35 kg rice at Re 1 per kg. The Employment Guarantee Act is in shambles. Migration, indebtedness (there is a *Haat* Bank where one can avail of loans in the *haats* from mobile moneylenders at exorbitant rates, sometimes as high as 120–140%), land mortgage and liquor selling are at an all-time high. Most of the loans availed of from the groups are for buying *Irū* (mahua) for making liquor. When I tried to encourage the members to take loans for productive purposes, they countered me saying, "Where is the other option? There are no irrigation facilities with all these wretched fallow lands and many of our men folk migrating to other areas. What are we supposed to do, *dada*?" I was taken aback; so much for my moralistic attitude. Maybe the search for El Dorado should go on.

A BOTTLE OF KAL, A GLASS OF PEJ AND LOTS OF LOVE

The *bedde* (priest/exorcist) is chanting some words in Koya Mata. Lakhu's young child has fallen ill. So Lakhu and his wife, Mase, have arranged for a *Katla*—an exorcism of the ghosts that have gone into their child. They have arranged all the things ordered by the *bedde*—bow and arrow, black cock, pork meat, *landa* (rice beer), jaggery, puffed rice and, of course, *kal* (mahua drink). All my implorations to take the child to a doctor had failed. Lakhu said, "You know, *dada*, Lakhma *bedde* has strong powers. My son will definitely get cured. After all, we have been relying on Lakhma *bedde* for so long." He then offered me a bottle of *kal*, which I had to drink from a *doppa* (a cup made from *sal* leaves) or else the spirits would get angry. Thus, my tryst with faith and superstition continues.

"*Dada*, you seem to be hungry. Why don't you have *pej* with us?" Sukri *nanno* asked one hot afternoon. I was indeed hungry and welcomed the offer. I also wanted to taste *pej* or *java* of which I had heard a lot. *Pej* is a delicacy, a syrupy product made of boiled rice, millet and maize. It is an instantaneous energizer. Most families in Bastar have *pej* for lunch. She also gave me rice and *basta* (bamboo shoot). I will always remember the lunch, served with so much of love, in this modest house. The other *nannos* had come to see how a city person had food with them. The love and affection that I saw in their eyes bowled me over. Often when I visit the village, the *nannos* offer me food. Initially, I was reluctant, lest it became a habit; I do realize, however, that it is purely out of concern and love that they offered me food. So now I accept the offers gleefully. Life is not that complex after all. Life is indeed beautiful.

A DAY IN JHIMO'S LIFE

Jhimo is a perennially moody *nanno* of Jalinin Mata SHG and is its only literate member. She is a mother of three daughters and an infant son. Her average day begins with getting up as early as 4.30 in the morning. After her morning ablutions, she fetches water from a place one kilometre away. She then prepares *pej* and cooks rice for the family. She goes to the nearby *rann* (about 4 km away) to fetch firewood and collect NTFPs, which fortunately is in plenty, with a lot to pick such as tendu, sal seeds, sal leaves, *kosa* and *aam chur*. In between, she rears the cattle too. On most days, she works as labour on the road being constructed under PMGSY and earns Rs 100 wage per day. On Saturday, she goes to nearby Neganar *haat* to buy essentials such as oil and salt, and sells mahua, which she prepares twice a week and which fetches her Rs 20 per bottle. In the evening, she has to bring water again and cook food. I wondered

how she finds the time and energy for all these activities, with her tiny toddler clinging on to her. Life has taught her to be resilient.

I became intrigued by her after a rather poignant incident. She came for one of the group meetings in a slightly intoxicated state. The other members severely castigated her and threatened to expel her. Even her husband forbade her from attending any more meetings. I spoke with her. She broke down completely and started sobbing saying that she is an orphan and her husband keeps on mistreating her; out of frustration, she had started drinking. She then took the drastic step of leaving her family (including her infant son) for her maternal home. Finally, I asked the SHG members to apologize to her and admonish the husband. Only then did she relent. I realized that the poor too have feelings (often, they are stoic). They also cry when hurt.

THE DREAM MERCHANTS

Mahadev Mandavi is a street-smart young Maria, with dreams and aspirations that are uncommon for tribals. He enrolled in a chain business recently. He travels to nearby villages and convinces people to join him because the more people he can enrol, the more will be his incentive. Once he has 27 pairs of customers, he will earn Rs 10-12 thousand a month. Fuelled by this prospect, he sells his dreams to other gullible youths. Such chain businesses and pyramid schemes are a rage nowadays in Bastar, with hundreds of young boys and girls enrolling in them lured by hopes of easy money, which more often than not are belied; most of these ventures are either fraud or not as remunerative as projected. Many such investment schemes have

duped many poor families into depositing money with promises of making it double or treble in a year. With no sustainable livelihood means, these phoney companies thrive in Bastar.

THE WINDS OF CHANGE

"*Dada, we want to make the labour payments tomorrow. Please write a letter to the SBI, Tokapal.*" Sukri, Fagni and Jhimo *nanno* called me one morning. My heart filled with pride and exhilaration. The wheels of change are clearly in motion. These shy *nannos* are now responsible members of the Project Execution Committee (PEC) to implement and monitor INRM activities in the village, including land levelling, horticulture and plantation, 5%, WHTs, etc. The PEC, or *Bahele Samiti*, formed exclusively with members of the two SHGs, is responsible for sanctioning of an activity, withdrawal of money, making labour payments and also monitoring the implementing quality in a transparent manner. Payments are now made at 15 days' interval, something unheard of in NREGA. Hidma, a wage earner, told me during once such payment day, "*Dada, this system is so simple but so effective. Can you also make the panchayat people adopt this?*" I tried to explain to him about grass roots democracy, whose *panchayat* it is and that the SHG members had rights and duties to clean the system. His incredulous look told me that I have still a long way to go to ensure this.

When my colleague Shashikant and I decided to organize a Gram Sabha Resource Management Plan, GSRMP (the name itself is a misnomer because there is no *gram sabha* per se, just a facade manipulated by government representatives), we encountered scepticism and disbelief. Many believed it was a

loan trap or a motive to take away their land (all the land grabbing incidents by various steel companies, particularly in the nearby Lohandiguda added fuel to this belief). Most important, nobody was willing to accept our rather utopian idea that women could handle the programme. We were, in fact, branded as '*Dada log*' or naxalites, out to spread our propaganda. Undeterred, we carried on, and our persistence bore fruit. The *nannos* are a confident lot now and they are learning the nuances of earth work, muster rolls and other technicalities. Sukri and Lalita are, in fact, going to nearby villages and even their maternal homes to propagate the virtues of joining SHGs. Paslo, Maddo, Lachandei and Aasmati are taking up new crops and

techniques such as maize, SRI and tomato for the kharif season. They are now confident about starting something new such as kusumi lac and vermi-compost.

EPILOGUE

I cling to these small acts of hope, which are actually "a giant step for 'womankind' (the *nannos*)". Amidst mayhem and gory violence, the real protagonists—the people—are taking centre stage. For a development practitioner, there is no other way but to go to the community because that is where the real learning ground is. Bastar will continue to intrigue and mesmerize me with its vibrancy, mysticism and yearning to break free from the set stereotypes of tribal life.

*"I believe that imagination is stronger than knowledge,
That myth is more potent than history.
I believe that dreams are more powerful than facts,
That hope always triumphs over experience.
That laughter is the only cure for grief.
And I believe that love is stronger than death."*

Robert Fulghum

Van Utthan Sansthan: Securing the Commons for the Common Good

VIVEK VYAS

Developing degraded forest lands through collective management by the tribals and in collaboration with the government, the VUS seeks shape democratic institutions, and conserve land rights and tenure of communities on these lands.

Van Utthan Sansthan, or VUS, (meaning Forest Promotion/Protection Society) was established by Seva Mandir in 1995 in Jhadol block of Udaipur District. VUS is a network of Village Forest Protection Committees (VFPCs) promoted by Seva Mandir and working in alignment with the Joint Forest Management (JFM) policy of the government. Since its inception, VUS has been actively involved in its mandate of collective management, and protection and management of degraded forest areas.

Seva Mandir has been actively involved in helping marginalized tribals through various natural resource management efforts such as agriculture, watershed development, afforestation on private and common lands, and JFM on forest lands. Seva Mandir's work is based on the premise that improvement in the natural resource base leads to improvement in the livelihoods of tribals because they are predominantly dependent on land. A majority of its interventions have been routed through the formal and non-formal village institutions such as the Gram Vikas Committees and Forest Protection Committees (FPCs). The focus of such institutions has been on promoting collective action to bring about the development of common property resources (CPRs) such as forests, and pasture lands. Common properties that comprise revenue waste lands, grazing pastures and forests constitute about 70% of the total land whereas forest lands in themselves account for nearly 40% of the total area. Thus, most of Seva Mandir's development interventions in the village are centred on CPRs.

EXPERIENCES IN JFM

In pursuance of the National Forest Policy 1988, the Government of India (GoI) issued guidelines in June 1990 instructing all states to adopt the new concept of managing forests, popularly known as JFM, in which the local people protect forest lands and help in the regeneration and management of these, in collaboration with the forest department (FD). The villages, in return, are entitled to the usufruct rights over Non Timber Forest Produce (NTFP) , fodder, fuel wood and a share in the timber proceeds of the final harvest.

Seva Mandir's involvement with the JFM programme dates back to over a decade and half. Seva Mandir started the first JFM in Rajasthan in 1992 in Shyampura village in Jhadol tehsil, after the state government of Rajasthan issued a resolution on JFM in 1991. The government order was viewed as an opportunity for village groups and NGOs to contribute to the development and management of state forest lands, access to which had hitherto been denied. Seva Mandir started work on the scheme to regenerate degraded forest lands through FPCs that were registered with the forest department. The degraded forest lands of these villages were afforested with financial aid from Seva Mandir. By 2006–07, Seva Mandir had developed 1,210 ha of forest land under 19 different JFM sites. The last decade has seen an appreciable spread of JFM in physical terms. A critical concern remains about moving towards the actual goal, that is, the empowerment of the communities through the decentralized management of forest resources.

PROBLEMS IN THE JFM PROGRAMME

The FD and the village communities are supposed to work together as equal partners in the JFM programme. In reality, however, this relationship appears to be skewed; one partner, that is, the FD, acts as a patron and has control of all the regulatory and decision-making powers whereas the other partner, that is, the community, is relegated to the client status. At the micro level, there is a lack of awareness of the FPCs about the ideology of the JFM resolution and to the spread of the programme. Important issues relate to an

The Government of India issued guidelines in June 1990 instructing all states to adopt the new concept of managing forests, popularly known as JFM, in which the local people protect forest lands and help in the regeneration and management of these, in collaboration with the forest department.

awareness of operational guidelines such as membership pattern, structure of executive committee, meetings, the role of the panchayat members and the forest officials in the committee, the memorandum of understanding and its significance, the election process, the protection of developed JFM areas, the encroachment problems and so on. The FD followed a target-based approach for the spread of JFM to greater areas whereas the FPCs looked upon the

massively funded programme as an opportunity to earn wage employment, with no clue about the incumbent responsibilities of protection and management. In many cases, JFM was being practised with scant regard for traditional users, their access and rights vis-à vis their institutional or legal rights. As a result, many conflicts simmered among neighbouring villagers over the issues of curtailed access and disputed boundaries.

GENESIS OF THE VUS

The need to have a block-level network of FPCs was recognized during the course of Seva Mandir's work in JFM. This was because many aspects of JFM required institutional interaction at various levels. In the initial years, Seva Mandir decided to support these fledgling FPCs and contribute to institutional interaction at various levels from the village to the FD, for balanced negotiation and resolution of impending issues. Seva Mandir was, thus, able to build the capacity of a few FPC members so that they could take up these issues with the FD officials. The presence of a platform as an interface was considered essential for a dialogue between the community and the FD.

Seva Mandir then constituted a network of FPCs in 1997; this was an informal group of FPCs, comprising the FD, NGOs and even self-initiated groups that engaged in forest protection meetings regularly, under the banner of Seva Mandir, to deliberate on the issues concerning the implementation of JFM in the field. Thus began Seva Mandir's efforts at organizing the FPCs of Jhadol block into a block-level network called Van Utthan Sansthan. Over the years, the VUS worked on enhancing awareness about JFM and safeguarding land-based CPRs from encroachment. The VUS was finally given formal shape on 28 March 2003 when it was registered under the Societies Registered Act.

In June 2005, a workshop was held to define the vision and mission of the organization and the direction that the VUS should take. One option was to work like a development agency and the other was to take up networking and advocacy in a big way (ultimately shaping a mass movement). Finally, the following conclusions were arrived at.

- ◆ **Vision:** To work for securing the commons, specifically the forests, for the common good.
 - ◆ **Mission:** To generate networking and awareness regarding criticality of commons, especially the forests.
 - ◆ **Long-term Goals:** Shaping the work of democratic institutions such as the FPCs and the Eco Development Committees (EDCs) to enable conservation of land rights and tenure of the community as a whole on forest lands.
 - ◆ **Short-term Goals/Objectives**
1. Liaise with the FD to improve institutional interaction, and improve the collective bargaining power of VFPCs vis-à-vis the FD.
 2. Initiate conflict resolution among VFPCs by way of dialogue and negotiations

3. Spread awareness about the provisions of JFM to newer villages.
4. Training and capacity building of VFPCs.
5. Thwart attempts at illicit access to forest lands.
6. Policy advocacy on state resolution on JFM through field research.

From the initial 22 FPCs, today VUS has become an umbrella of 100 FPCs, which share grievances as well as experiences. VUS has a 15-member executive body with a President, a Vice-President and a Secretary, who carry out its activities on a voluntary basis. These 15 people are experienced leaders from the Jhadol *taluka*, who have gained the respect of the local people because of their sustained efforts in forest protection and regeneration.

ACTIVITIES OF VUS

- (i) Awareness building on various issues of JFM through monthly meetings and cluster-level meetings of FPCs, in which issues related to the formation and the registration of FPCs, as well as management issues are discussed. VUS has also been undertaking the formation of FPCs and registering it with the FD.
- (ii) Issue-based meetings with the FD: Most of the issues raised in the cluster meetings and which need intervention of the FD are taken up in these meetings.
- (iii) Training and capacity building: The VUS has been working organizing trainings of FPCs on implementation, management and re-election issues. VUS has also been helpful in training of Van Sahayogis, a scheme initiated by the FD.
- (iv) Conflict resolution: The VUS has been working on the issue of resolving conflicts with regard to boundaries, grazing and other traditional rights, which the

- adjacent FPCs have to face when they try to develop their JFM areas.
- (v) Releasing land under encroachments: VUS is helping FD to check illegal privatization of forest lands.
 - (vi) Advocacy at the district and state levels: The VUS has shown how active advocacy can lead to the successful management of common property resources. Over the issue of obtaining a JFM lease from the FD, it was found that the FD was reluctant to grant permission in certain cases. Therefore, three members of the VUS, accompanied by Seva Mandir staff, went to Jaipur in 2000 and advocated for the speedy grant of the JFM sites. They met the Chief Conservator of Forests and explained their eagerness for participatory forestry. They also got the opportunity to meet the forest minister Beena Kak.

The VUS has also helped with re-organization and re-election of FPCs. In 2005, 39 such FPCs were re-organized by the members of the executive body of the VUS to ensure that they are truly representative and comprise proactive members. Moreover, 27 FPCs were formed afresh. However, many problems were faced when it came to the registration of these FPCs by the FD. The FD refused to accord recognition to the re-organized committees and the efforts made by the members.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES OF THE VUS

Spreading the JFM concept to other development blocks: Members have started visiting other blocks such as Kherwara, Kotra and Gogunda. Given the incidence of encroachment in these areas, it seems imperative to sensitize the institutions in these areas.

ENCROACHMENTS ON FORESTS

The forest land of Bada Bhilwara village was encroached upon by the people of neighbouring Tundar as well as a few families of Bada Bhilwara. The villages in the area are single caste tribal villages, the encroachments are thus made by members of the same community. The VFPC members of Bada Bhilwara opposed this trend and lodged a complaint against the encroachers with the local FD Beat office. The officials from the Beat Office visited the site and convinced the encroachers to release the occupied land. But the encroachers did not yield and the problem persisted. The VFPC members then contacted the members of the VUS, and with their support, contacted the Division office in Udaipur. The VFPC members along with the representatives of the VUS met the Conservator of Forests and apprised him of the situation. An FD team was sent to the site to evict the encroachers. The encroachments were removed and the forest land belonging to the village Bada Bhilwara was reclaimed. The VFPC members then submitted a proposal to enclose the area and develop it under JFM. The proposal was ultimately sanctioned in December 2002. This success has paved a way for more such people's associations to come together and resist the privatization of common resources.

Moving towards eco-development: The VUS has been in regular touch with the FD to extend its work in the Phulwari ki Nal Sanctuary. The sanctuary is home to a number of endogenous species. Senior officials of the wildlife department have been contacted. Some of the wildlife has been venturing into the programme villages because of their loss of habitat. Seva Mandir

has been attempting to pacify the people and reduce the man-animal conflict in such areas.

VUS members have also tried to intervene and (a) promote modalities for eco-development and the modalities involved in through the formation of the EDCs, (b) to prevent the illegal felling of trees, and explore (c) benefits through NTFP collection, physical works and that can be conducted in the sanctuary areas and the prospective benefits of tourism.

FOREST RIGHTS ACT 2006 AND THE WAY AHEAD

The recent enactment of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act 2006 recognizes and vests forest rights and the occupation of forest land in forest dwelling scheduled tribes (STs) and other traditional forest dwellers, who have been residing in the forests for generations but whose rights have not been recorded. This is a welcome step but it will also lead to the illegal privatization of forest land. As per the Act, all encroachments till 13 December 2005 will be regularized and given rights over land, which is under cultivation. This would do a lot of damage to the forest area. *Panchayats/gram sabhas* have been given the right to receive claims, inspect the areas and recommend cases for regularization to the Sub Divisional Committee. The VUS has discussed the provisions of the Act with the FPC members. It insists that the FPCs take active part in the *gram sabhas* and place the actual position of encroachments before the *gram sabha* and put up valid objections, if any, about regularization. Although it is not possible to cover all the *panchayats*, the VUS will try to cover at least Kotra and Jhadol blocks. They have found support for their discussions in the villages. The role of the network is to evince institutional

support from the FD, through collective bargaining and negotiation. The network is being looked upon by the member FPCs as a forum wherein the members can voice their concerns and issues regarding JFM. This federation has been contributing in dealing with complex administrative procedures. More important, the federation's steadfast stand on the issue of encroachment has helped in the removal of encroachments through composite dialogue between the villagers and encroachers.

In this regard, the Community Forest Rights (CFR) proposals as per the aforesaid Act are being pursued at the *gram-sabha* level. Seventy of the ninety proposals submitted have been approved/accepted at the *panchayat* level and supporting documents are being secured. The VUS has also consulted with the tribal commissioner of the region, who has promised action and issued directives to the FD so that progress can be made. Special *gram sabhas* were organized and CFR claims have been submitted with proof of settlement records, evidence of village elders, plans of the FPCs, and verification by *gram sabhas* and *sachivs*. Seventy-five proposals were filed in June and July 2010 and are being verified at the village level.

With regard to constructive sensitization, the members have continued with their resource management and awareness generation endeavours. These include cluster meetings (*baithaks*) at the *van nakas* and the monthly *baithaks* in Jhadol. Amidst all this, the VUS is gradually seeing the transformation of its own goals and role from a persuading agent for ecological security to a prospective internal agency that has to assume a much more active role in the way people lay their stake on forests and protect these from falling prey to individualization.

Integrated Innovations in Development

RANJIT GUPTA

Using a conceptual framework Prof. Ranjit Gupta suggests ways to address poverty and development.

The challenges confronting the development of rural India are varied and complex. So are the problems impeding its development. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that numerous and varied approaches, strategies and programmes, both conventional and innovative, are underway in various parts of the country.

However, the search for innovations in development must continue because otherwise it is likely that we may get bogged down to doing more of the same, notwithstanding the changing complexity of the macro-micro interface. Therefore, it is desirable and important that along with existing models of development, attempts to explore, design, test and fine-tune alternative paradigms of development should continue—a paradigm that may accelerate the development of the rural economies in general and of the disadvantaged groups in particular.

This would involve experimentation and the patience to observe, learn and adapt. In well-established and growing organisations such as Pradan and DHAN Foundation, it would also demand the ability to take risks, commit and spare the required resources and create space to experiment with untested concepts and designs. The concept and the design to seed it need to be based on:

- ♦ The learning and strengths of the development models that have made significant impact in empowering disadvantaged groups, enabling them to become self-reliant, and democratic peoples' organisations (POs) such as savings and credit self-help groups (SHGs) of women and wetland farmers' associations (WFAs), promoted by PRADAN and DHAN Foundation. WFAs refer to the lift irrigated farmers groups or associations (LIFAs) in the case of Pradan and Tank Farmers' Association (TFAs) in case of DHAN Foundation.
- ♦ Application of science and scientific knowledge to foster technological change appropriate to rural economies in the context of rapidly changing macro environment. NDDB's Amul at Anand and BAIF's Orchard or Wadi Development Programme in Bansda-Dharampur-Kaprada can be cited as examples.

COMPLEX OF DEVELOPMENT INNOVATIONS

Using these as the software and hardware of a system (as in computers) the design should aim at developing an integrated complex of development innovations or innovative thematic programmes, the foundations of which could be the existing thematic programmes that have enabled Pradan and DHAN Foundation to build

and sustain savings and credit SHGs of women and LIFAs and TFAs (or such POs, if differently named) to conserve, use and manage soil and water resources for cultivation.

The proposed design should aim at not only upscaling or locating the existing thematic programmes in existing or new rural locations but also on the support of these to introduce, try out and build at least two more thematic development innovations. These two would include improved dryland farming, including improved irrigated or wetland agriculture, and processing and marketing of selected farm or agro-products.

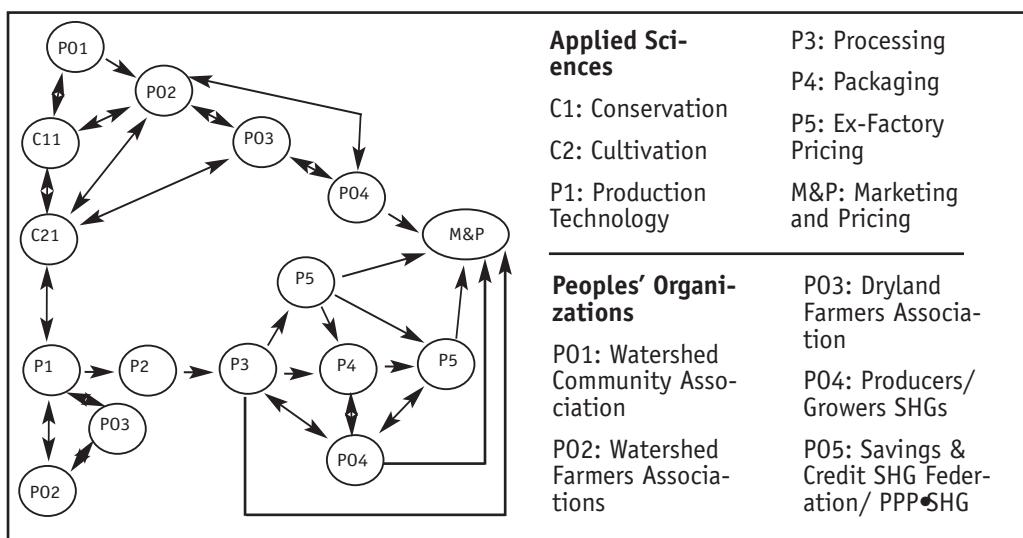
The two should be so placed that together they help promote the vertical integration of backward and forward linkages in agricultural production or natural resources such as silkworm rearing for silk production through and by building POs of participating stakeholders, including landless labour and POs such as Dryland Farmers' Associations or DFAS for procurement, processing, packaging and marketing of processed agro-products such as pickles, pulp and silk yarn and cloth. The term integrated is used here to imply that

the complex of four (or five) thematic programmes shall be so placed that they reinforce each other, thus making the whole larger than the sum of parts (see box).

To summarize, some of the challenges that the proposed framework or design seeks to address include the following:

- Building POs with emphasis on value-based (normative) enabling processes along with conservation and management of natural resources such as those available to rural communities and on which their livelihoods depend, with emphasis on the application of science and scientific knowledge to propel technological change appropriate to the context.
- Using the two concepts, 'small is beautiful' and 'big is bountiful', as two rings of a chain reinforcing one another and not as two irreconcilable concepts, which most development organisations (NGOs in particular) tend to view. We can cite examples of Lijjat Pappad and sugar co-operatives of decentralized sugarcane growers in Maharashtra.
- Promoting an anchor activity through

Vertical Integration of Backward-Forward Linkages Through Peoples' Organizations



the vertical integration of conservation of natural resources, production, processing and marketing of selected farm and off-farm produce in a block or watershed of 10,000 ha or more, offering reasonably high growth potential in the identified area. And in the process, release the forces conducive to generating vibrant rural economies in and around the identified area. The examples include BAIF and DHRUVA's Wadi Development Programme in Bansda-Dharamput- Kaprada, sugar co-operatives in Maharashtra and dairy co-operatives in Gujarat.

- ◆ Implicit in the third challenge is the challenge of making rain-fed agriculture rewarding and attractive, notwithstanding the vagaries of the weather.
- ◆ Finally, the challenge of designing and promoting an organizational model or system to face and manage the foregoing challenges, one that works and helps build a work culture that encourages and supports 'innovations in development' without interruption.

The examples of the 'complex of development innovations' illustrate at best one or two features of the proposed concept and design and not all the features as a whole, which is what is implicit in the framework outlined to address the five challenges as a whole through the proposed integrated complex of development innovations and innovative thematic programmes. Another point to note is that each of the examples cited has yet to attain full or fuller potential inherent in the model, even in the limited sense of being representative of some of the features of the proposed integrated complex.

Conversely, there is considerable scope and need for innovating the model under reference further. It will take time to evolve, stabilize and grow. It is not necessary to

mount all the four thematic programmes simultaneously right from the word 'go'. But the preparatory work to launch and seed these in selected locations has to be initiated simultaneously and sustained concurrently by a team of at least 4-5 development professionals. The team will also have to remain in place in the selected rural locations right from the preparatory stage to seeding, nurturing, evolving and building the integrated complex, say, for three to five years.

TAKING THE PLUNGE

Do I sound too ambitious, utopian and unrealistic? Perhaps yes. Surely no, as far as I am concerned. Indeed, as is my wont, I have taken the plunge along with a group of 13 graduating students of DHAN Academy's Programme in Development Management (PDM) to face the challenge upfront. All of them will graduate shortly and join the as yet amorphous body the Pradanites and DHANites call 'Development Professionals'.

I have taken them under my charge and am exercising them vigorously and rigorously to help them gain down-to-earth knowledge, insights, learning and skills during the past three months of their PDM. This they are doing through 9 projects linked with one another through a design I described as integrated complex of development innovations. They are based in two selected locations in two districts of Tamil Nadu and one location in Karnataka.

The set of nine projects for each of these locations will culminate with the preparation of a location-specific; three-year action plan. The three teams of PDM students will themselves prepare the respective plans. As soon as they graduate, each team will kick-start the arduous journey, to locate, implement, build and sustain the integrated complex of development programmes and innovations as explorers or pathfinders.



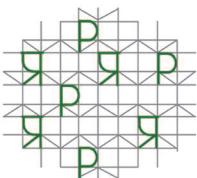
A study of several parameters shows that the raising of host plants of tasar silkworms is suitable for consideration under Clean Development Mechanisms (CDMs). CDMs make for a market in themselves, and agro-forestry such as raising tasar host plants has the potential to both store carbon and address the need for alternative livelihoods.



Pradan is a voluntary organization registered in Delhi under the Societies Registration Act. Pradan works through small teams of professionals in selected villages across eight states. The focus of Pradan's work is to promote and strengthen livelihoods for the rural poor. It involves organizing the poor, enhancing their capabilities, introducing ways to improve their income and linking them to banks, markets and other economic services. The professionals work directly with the poor, using their knowledge and skills to help remove poverty. NewsReach, Pradan's monthly journal, is a forum for sharing the thoughts and experiences of these professionals working in remote and far-flung areas in the field. NewsReach helps them to reach out and connect with each other, the development fraternity and the outside world.

NewsReach is published by the National Resource Centre for Rural Livelihoods, housed in the Pradan Research and Resource Centre.

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