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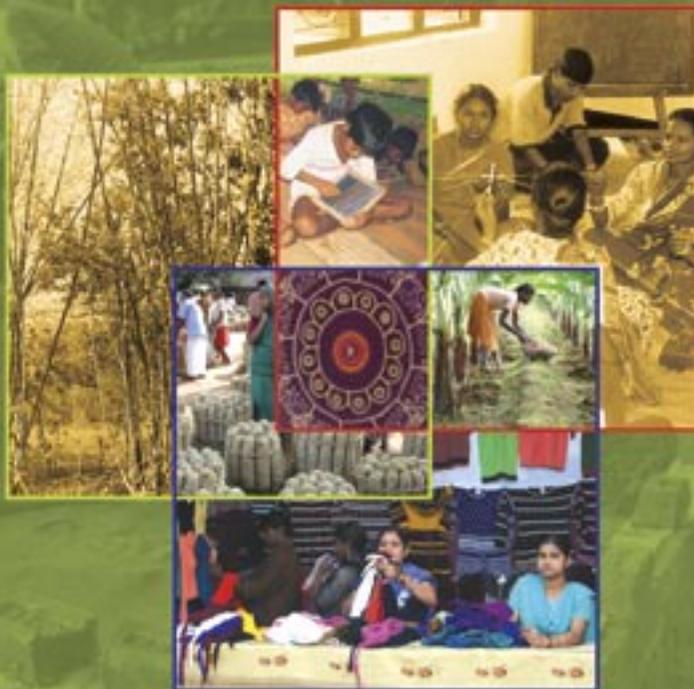
Social Science and
Development
Research Institute

Empowering Tribals

Progressing from Partnership to Ownership

The Story of A Cluster of Tribal Villages in Mayurbhanj Orissa,
working with SSADRI and the ILO-INDISCO Programme

INDISCO Case Study No. 9



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INDISCO Case Study No. 9

by

Nityananda Patnaik

Edited by

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The ILO's Inter-regional Programme to support the Self-Reliance of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples through Cooperatives and Self-Help Organizations (INDISCO) has been operating since 1992 to promote decent and productive employment opportunities among tribal people through participatory, culturally appropriate and community driven initiatives. During that period, the programme has improved the living and working conditions of thousands of tribal people through the creation of sustainable livelihoods and employment opportunities in Asian and African countries including the Philippines, India, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

The project implemented in the Mayurbhanj District of Orissa in India, is among these initiatives and is in fact the most comprehensive and oldest of the projects which has received multiple donor support.

Speaking of India, the ILO has been greatly appreciative of the supportive policies and special programmes for improving the lot of the numerous, over 500 tribal communities, exceeding 8 percent of the country's population. The task is indeed a daunting one, considering their wide diversity and numbers, most living in geographic exclusion and difficult terrain. It is therefore not surprising that despite these commendable efforts a vast majority of the tribals continue to remain socially and economically disadvantaged, and at the lowest rungs of the country's informal economy, comprising the illiterate, unskilled, semi skilled and home based workers.

Hence the very first INDISCO initiative commenced in India, in consultation with the Government in 1992. A fact finding and needs assessment survey was undertaken across the tribal belt, which highlighted the need for consultation and informed participation of the people in developing their own, culturally compatible and community driven initiatives, on their own terms. Small pilot projects in the states of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar (now Jharkhand) and Orissa (1993-2000) successfully put these recommendations into practice and demonstrated the grassroots-up approach to tribal empowerment.

With the commencement of the second phase of INDISCO in India, the small project in Mayurbhanj, Orissa was expanded with a view to demonstrating the cluster and cooperative approach to tribal employment initiatives (2001 – 05). This project sought to demonstrate the empowerment that comes with organizing. The ILO recognizes the potential offered by cooperatives as economic enterprises which organize, lend a collective voice and legal recognition to the members, as well as

social protection to them and the communities in which they live. They have the flexibility to institutionalize any kind and level of activity, including unskilled labour, and meet the need to formalize the informal structures which may not be as sustainable. Moreover, the cooperative values and principles of democratic membership and mutual help are especially conducive to the tribal pattern of community living. The project capitalized upon the tribal strengths of traditional skills, community solidarity, mutual help and homogenous membership within one cluster or ethnic unit, in the process of formalizing the enterprises into member-based self-supporting cooperatives. The implementation of the project activities has been greatly facilitated by the adoption of the Model Cooperative Law in the State. The new Orissa Self Help Cooperative Societies Act (2001) has been availed of, and in keeping with the ILO policy on promotion of cooperatives (ILO Recommendation No. 193). The project has demonstrated on how these enabling policies can be translated into practice on the ground, and in turn, yield lessons which could have a further bearing on the policy environment.

The ILO would like to acknowledge the Government at national, state and district levels, for the collaboration and interest in this small initiative, which was made possible with financial support of DANIDA, CIDA, the Netherlands and Rabobank Foundation in the first phase, and of AUSAID and MIGROS Cooperative Federation of Switzerland, in the expanded phase of the project. The invaluable guidance of Mr. M.M.K. Wali, and all members of the INDISCO National Advisory Committee provided useful insights along the way. The implementing agency Social Science and Development Research Institute, under the able supervision of Dr. Nityananda Patnaik, has been a long standing partner and an effective interface between the ILO and the tribal beneficiaries, throughout the process. Finally, it is the participation, the cooperation and the unfailing spirit of the tribal people of the project cluster in Mayurbhanj, who saw the project through its ups and downs, and have now evolved to a stage when they are ready to take over where INDISCO leaves off.

However, in view of the limitations of time and resources, the project has succeeded in only triggering the process. It rests upon the administration to carry the process forward along with the people, in order to make it truly sustainable and a model worthy of replication.

This case study by Dr. N. Patnaik is a documentation of the process to date. Indeed, the journey has been a long and fruitful one, with many lessons learned along the way. Taking cognizance of these in a wider replication of this model on strengthening tribal livelihoods initiatives, will have made the effort fully worthwhile.

Leyla Tegmo-Reddy
Director and ILO representative in India

Jurgen Schwettmann
Chief, Cooperative Branch
ILO Geneva



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The Partnership with the ILO started in the year 1992 when Mr. Jürgen von Muralt, Director, Enterprise and Cooperative Development Department, of International Labour Office, Geneva, visited Keonjhar district of Orissa. This inspiring visit not only confirmed his conviction that something needed to be done to improve the working and living conditions of tribals in the area, but also gave birth to the idea of initiating a pilot-testing project. I will always remember him fondly for his concern for the poor tribal people and his determination to do something for them.

When the INDISCO Programme was started in the year 1993 by the Cooperative Branch of the Enterprise and Cooperative Development Department of the ILO, Mr. Huseyin Polat, INDISCO Programme Coordinator also visited Orissa while the village level project was being implemented in Durgapur. Thereafter we met several times and discussed the implementation of the Pilot Project. As a firm believer in participatory planning, he was aware of how projects have failed many a time due to “top-down” planning. I am always grateful to him for his understanding, cooperation and out of the way help in sustaining the Project, which saw several phases of implementation and expansion in a period of 10 years.

The INDISCO programme at New Delhi functioned with an Associate Expert and later with a National Coordinator to monitor the Pilot Projects, which were being implemented in four States of India. These were in Orissa, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar. I had the opportunity to work together with Mr. Jan Ole Haagenzen, Ms. Ryanka Melita van Breugel, Mr. M. M. K. Wali, Ms. Zothanpari H. Tuli, and finally Ms. Dilnawaz L. Mahanti. They were all different in their ideas and approach, but all were concerned for the development of the tribals. For me it was a great experience working with all of them. I am thankful to all of them for their understanding, cooperation and timely support.

I also appreciate and thank all the Directors of the ILO New Delhi office, and their officials, who have always supported the INDISCO initiative and cooperated to make this programme a success in India in the last 10 years.

My sincere appreciation to all the Government officials of various Departments, at the Centre, State and District who worked hand in hand for the betterment of the tribal people in the project area. Without their help and cooperation it would not have been possible to reach where the project stands at present.

I would like to thank my project staff who were sincere, honest and dedicated. They understood the pain, the difficulties of the tribal community and worked tirelessly to achieve the goals set by the project.

Last but not the least I am most thankful to the community who trusted us and followed the path shown by the project. Many a times they lead the way and showed us the path. I am particularly grateful to the women who ventured out and lead the way. This project would not have become successful without their dedication and sincere efforts.

Nityananda Patnaik
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This case study documents the process initiated by the INDISCO Programme of the ILO, in partnership with Social Science and Development Research Institute and the tribal people of Mayurbhanj District in Orissa, India. The first pilot phase successfully put into practice the ILO's policy on consultation and informed participation of the people in their own development initiatives. In keeping with the recommendations of a terminal tripartite evaluation, the second phase of INDISCO was launched with an expanded project in the pilot region of Mayurbhanj, with AUSAID support in the first three years followed by MIGROS Cooperative Federation of Switzerland, in the final year.

The expanded project covered a tribal cluster of 40 villages, and sought to test the cluster and the cooperative approach to tribal empowerment. It is based on the rationale that an ethnic unit comprising socio culturally compatible tribal communities, would be more conducive to tribal cooperative enterprise. With the overall objective of developing a model of decent and productive employment opportunities among tribal people through their self reliant cooperatives, the major components of the project focused on :

- (i) Organizing and institutionalizing, building upon the tribal strengths of community solidarity in the process of evolving the informal village institutions into formal self supporting cooperatives and credit systems. Based on the ILO policy on promotion of cooperatives (ILO Recommendation No. 193), the project adopted the new Orissa State Cooperative Law on self reliant cooperatives, and demonstrated the possibilities it offers towards organizing the most marginalized. By the end of the project period, the primary village level savings and credit cooperatives and the producer cooperatives, federated as the Mayurbhanj Adivasi Cooperative Mahasangha Limited, with a view to taking over and sustainably managing all activities initiated during project period.
- (ii) Capacity building with vocational and managerial skills for productive employment, towards supplementing subsistence agriculture with opportunities for additional income. Traditional natural resource based occupations of *sabai* cultivation and rope making, and *saal* leaf cup pressing were upgraded. The expanded project saw diversification into additional enterprises in horticulture and non-land based occupations in appliqué, machine knit garments and other simple skills, along with enterprise development. The project succeeded in generating well over the targeted 3,000 jobs, women accounting for over 50% of all employment initiatives.

- (iii) Credit support through a revolving loan fund, managed by the women, proved crucial to leveraging savings for capital investment, and was instrumental in freeing the people from the clutches of the money lender. A total sum of INR 1,999,360 was provided in phases over the project period. By the end of the project period, the fund was institutionalized as a community credit mechanism, under the management of the tribal federation.
- (iv) Linking up with administration at the district, state and national levels, and institutionalizing a two way dialogue for policy integration. At local level, the project linked up with the *Panchayati Raj* institutions (decentralized local self governance), line departments and training institutions, for provision of support services which are expected to continue for sustainable self management of the enterprises in the long term.

The project has also demonstrated the need for an integrated approach to all round development, with particular emphasis on :

- Women's empowerment and gender equity
- Youth employment and integration as community mobilizers and in forest protection
- Non formal education for children towards mainstream schooling and functional literacy for adults
- A rights approach to general awareness on relevant issues, including on policies and programmes for tribal development and on accessing them

While the processes at project level have only just begun and are expected to continue under local ownership of the beneficiary community, with necessary support of the local administration, the broader objective of demonstrating a replicable model of tribal employment initiatives, has indeed been achieved. Wider replication of this integrated, participatory, cluster and cooperative model in the implementation of larger programmes for tribal development, would go a long way towards economic mainstreaming of the excluded, and in their all round empowerment process.

The case studies and stories that feature in this document, are literal translations into English from the local language, as cited by the beneficiaries.

Introduction



Deep in the forests of Mayurbhanj lies the hamlet of Upersahi in the village of Nichuapada. Barely four years ago, the santhals of Nichuapada were struggling to make ends meet. Endowed with rich natural resources and traditional skills, yet oblivious of their market potential, they remained victims of exploitation by middlemen and caught in the vicious cycle of indebtedness to moneylenders. The family of Champa Murmu was one of the 197 families of the village, subsistence farmers or landless labourers who worked for meager wages, and steeped in debt. Derided by her in-laws for being a worthless burden, and what's more, with 3 additional burdens in the form of daughters, there seemed little assurance of even one square meal a day, let alone education for her girls. Champa could not even dare to dream of a better tomorrow...

Today, Champa is a proud owner of an expanding business in livestock. She was able to help her husband Dakhin Murmu, to start his own carpentry shop, from a part of her earnings. She is a member of the savings and credit cooperative of her village, and has a saving account of Rs.6,870 in the neighboring bank. She is now a respected member of her household as well as of the village community. Her wish to feed well and educate her three girls is now realized.

So it is with the inhabitants of a cluster of 40 tribal villages in the Baripada and Moroda Blocks of Mayurbhanj District. There seems to be a new awakening. Most of the villages boast of a literacy centre – be it a brick structure or a thatched roof on bamboo poles, set up by the people themselves, for they know the importance of preparing their children towards mainstream schooling. The neighboring wastelands, which were neglected barren land, are today lush with sabai grass plantations. There is a sense of purpose as the women, men and youth organize themselves towards economic as well as social empowerment. There is a sense of activity with the beginnings of new enterprises, new awareness, and with it, new hope. Today, the people of this cluster can dare to dream and bring themselves together, to realize their dreams.

What was it in the last four years that brought about this transformation? How did it all begin? ...

2.1 The Initial Testing and Preparatory Activities of 1992 – 93

The ILO-INDISCO partnership with tribal peoples of Mayurbhanj, Orissa dates back to the very first INDISCO initiative in 1992 with a fact finding and needs assessment survey of the Tribal people in India¹. The survey covered the States of Bihar and Madhya Pradesh (undivided), Gujarat and Orissa, which together account for more than half the country's tribal population. While analyzing the developmental impact of tribal-related initiatives and investments of the Government, the study pointed out that the reasons for outputs that lay well below expectations, lay not so much in overall policy prescriptions and investment objectives, as in the instrumentalities of implementation. Excessive reliance had been placed on bureaucratic initiative and management. The participation of the local tribal communities, who were supposed to be the intended beneficiaries, was not sought nor their own needs perception understood. These communities had therefore remained by and large indifferent to the schemes meant for their development.

The findings of the first phase of the survey were discussed in July 1992 at a National Round Table organized by ILO in collaboration with the Ministry of Welfare. The Round Table recommended the initiation of pilot projects in each of the four states with the objective of experimenting with and demonstrating appropriate participatory organizational designs and processes to secure optimum community involvement. These it was hoped, could then be institutionalized in the delivery mechanisms of government's tribal development programmes.

In accordance with these recommendations, the ILO undertook to initiate pilot projects in each of these states. It was however, considered desirable to undertake a "testing project" for one year in one single village in the first instance, to gain first hand experience of the methodology and approaches. The village of Durgapur was chosen for the purpose, comprising 120 Bhumij households spread in five hamlets, in the Moroda Block of Mayurbhanj District. The results of this testing initiative in 1993, were encouraging.²

¹ MMK Wali, Tribal People in India, ILO Cooperative Branch, Geneva 1993

² On the Road to Self Reliance – a story of the tribal women of Durgapur village INDISCO Case Study No. 2, Cooperative Branch, ILO Geneva, 1995

Introducing the District

In human history, Mayurbhanj presents a panorama of many millennia. It is a tiny spot on the Surface of the earth. Yet man has lived on this spot for over fifty thousand years. Early man left footprints in the shape of crude tools hewn out of stone. Its people still roam the forests in search of food, as was done for countless years. The Similipal hills, still untrodden in many parts have a charm of their own. Rich in resources, they stand in their virgin glory with captivating scenery, with animals and plants flourishing in their natural habitat. Mayurbhanj is peopled largely by Santals who are closely knit and are proud of their heritage.

Mayurbhanj had the distinction of being administered by a ruling family in unbroken continuity for over a thousand years, until it merged with the State of Orissa in 1949. The name Mayurbhanj indicates that the State was named after two medieval ruling families, the Mayuras and the Bhanjas. Mayurbhanj is the northernmost District of Orissa, covering an area of 10,418 sq Km, with a total population of 2,223,456 of which the total tribal population is 1,258,459 according to the 2001 census data.

2.2 Developing a Participatory Development Approach - the pilot phase with DANIDA and CIDA support (1993 – 2000)

The testing project gave way to small pilot initiatives, “Testing Alternative Approaches to Tribal Development” 1994 – 1999, covering about ten to thirteen villages per project in the Dahod District of Gujarat³, Jhabua in Madhya Pradesh, Ranchi and Latehar in Jharkhand, and Mayurbhanj in Orissa⁴. The pilot phase successfully demonstrated the participatory and integrated approach to tribal empowerment. While focusing on the three components of institution building, capacity building and policy dialogue, the projects responded to the felt needs of the people as identified by them, ranging from watershed management, to functional literacy and awareness generation on issues affecting them. The outputs in terms of employment generation, as well as the overall economic and social empowerment, were noted to result in a significant reduction in distress migration, stable family and living conditions with better health and education for the children.

³ Working Together for a Better Future – Tribal Communities in Gujarat working together with Sadguru and the ILO-INDISCO Programme INDISCO Case Study No. 5, ILO New Delhi, 2000

⁴ “We Created Jobs...” Tribal Communities in Orissa working together with SSADRI and the ILO-INDISCO Programme INDISCO Case Study No. 6, ILO New Delhi, 2000



Speaking of the pilot project in Moroda Block of Mayurbhanj, Orissa, it covered ten villages, comprising 604 households of which 532 were tribal. Employment activities chosen by the people, were predominantly based on upgradation of natural resource based traditional occupations: improved sabai grass plantation and rope making, saal leaf collection and cup pressing with simple technological inputs, and sericulture. Typing and tailoring, introduced as non- farm activities, were

also popular. A revolving loan fund for capital investment on easy terms, helped them out of the clutches of the moneylender. By the end of the five years, income levels had doubled, people had started their own savings accounts in the neighboring bank, every village boasted of a non formal education centre for children as well as adult functional literacy, and the overall morale was high. As noted by the tripartite terminal evaluation team, “a range of non tangible effects on women have been reported: Women are more outspoken, self confident, they share experiences and are motivated to further initiate activities and explore their own potentials”⁵.

The participatory development approach

The participatory approach promotes a structure through which community aspirations and goals are expressed and implemented on the basis of a prioritized list of felt needs and village development activities, in which they may nevertheless need technical help and financial support. It is based on active interaction of local communities in their needs identification, and in the project designing, implementation as well as evaluation processes. They are made aware of all aspects of the project, expected outputs and potential benefits. It builds on people’s strength and capacity to solve their own problems. Local ownership is a crucial ingredient of the participatory approach. Its absence will quickly manifest itself through activities dying out after the support agencies stop providing resources. Indeed, the approach requires in depth knowledge of the area and the people.

- INDISCO Case Study No. 6
ILO, New Delhi

⁵ INDISCO-India, Testing Alternative Approaches to Tribal Development, Terminal Evaluation Report, ILO Geneva, 1999

Further Expanding the Participatory Process

3.1 The expanded phase with AUSAID support (2001 – 04)

The above referred Terminal Evaluation Report at the end of the pilot phase, recommended that an expanded project be developed with a similar approach and with the same implementing agency. Further, the demonstration effect of the earlier ten pilot villages, had its desired impact on the thirty neighboring villages of the cluster, who for long had been eager to join the process. Thus the second phase of INDISCO in India was initiated with AUSAID support, “**Socioeconomic Empowerment of Tribal People through the Cluster Approach, in Mayurbhanj, Orissa**” (March 2001-February 2004).

Originally planned for a duration of five years, it had to be reduced to a duration of three years in compliance with donor requirement.

As an extension of the earlier pilot phase which covered 10 villages, the expanded project included 30 new villages to cover a cluster of 40 villages (50 hamlets) spread over 5,012 hectares, comprising a total number of 2,958 households, of which 2,216 were tribal households with tribal population of 11,851.

3.1.1 Rationale Behind the Cluster Approach

The project took cognizance of the socio-political dynamics that exist among tribal communities. It sought to test the cluster approach, based on the rationale that taking a cluster or ethnic unit of socioculturally homogenous tribal villages as one development unit (rather than a Block) would be more conducive to collective cooperative enterprise. The tribal communities inhabiting this cluster comprise the Santhals, Bhumij, Kolha and Khadias. These communities have a peculiar social organization in their culture. They are divided into such social organization like family, clan lineage etc., in their respective cultural setup. Families belonging to a single lineage live in villages which are near to each other and associate together for various agricultural activities and social events such as marriage and death rites.

	Old	New	Total
No. villages	10	30	40
No. Households			
Tribal	523	1693	2,216
Non tribal	81	661	742
Total	604	2,354	2,958
Population			
Tribal	3,204	8,647	11,851
Non tribal	313	3,080	3,393
Total	3,517	11,727	15,244

Hence introduction of any development programme becomes easier while taking villages of a single cluster as one development unit. Their adoption by the tribal communities becomes quicker in the absence of any inhibition or conflict among the inhabitants, while building upon the tribal strengths of community solidarity, member homogeneity, common needs and mutual help, all of which are necessary for cooperative functioning.

3.1.2 Objectives

With the overall development objective to contribute towards sustainable socioeconomic empowerment of tribal people in India, the AUSAID phase of the Project set out to achieve the following immediate objectives :

1. Establish a strong organizational base building upon traditional institutions, towards ensuring continued self management of all activities initiated during project period
2. Generate employment opportunities through building capacities in natural resource use and other self employment activities, and credit support
3. Promote awareness and all round empowerment, collective voice and action
4. Demonstrate a model for wider replication, through linking up with local, state and national administration

3.1.3 The Preparatory Activities

Frontline Staff were selected from the project villages, on the basis of their relatively better education and literacy levels, and leadership qualities. Ten extension workers and thirty village level animators were chosen, to focus mainly on the thirty new villages while the older pilot villages were expected to continue with their activities. The staff underwent initial training-of-trainers on group dynamics, organization and participatory approaches in project management. Being part of the community, the staff could employ their own traditional methods of story telling, folk dance, song and drama, which the people could identify with. Further, as part of the community, they were envisaged to provide future leadership in the cooperative institutions to be set up in the project, towards ensuring their sustainable self management.

Base line Survey of the project villages was undertaken in the first instance, with the Centre for Development, Research and Training (CENDERET) of the Xavier Institute of Management (XIM) Bhubaneswar, who assigned the task to its North Orissa Resource Centre (NORC) in Baripada. A draft report of the findings was shared at a meeting of the Project Steering Committee (PSC), chaired by the Dist. Collector, Mayurbhanj. Data on household incomes, was however found to be debatable. The headquarters of CENDERET therefore undertook to repeat the survey at its own initiative, as a Benchmark study in 2002, covering the 30 new villages added in the expanded project. The survey employed participatory rapid appraisals (PRA) including social and resource mapping done by the villagers, focus group discussions as well as individual interviews.

Findings showed that 70% of the households had nuclear families with average family size of five members.

Total illiteracy was significantly higher among the tribal households and a considerably lower number of them (5.1%) matriculated from school, as opposed to their non tribal counterparts (14.5%)

The main primary occupation was noted to be small scale farming, the cultivation pattern being mono cropping, centered mainly on paddy on average landholdings of 1.34 acres,

Total Illiteracy	Men %	Women %	Overall %
Tribal	40.12	68.23	53.86
Non tribal	25.65	48.19	36.68

which were however, fragmented. Of the total number of 1,371 such fragmented land holdings, only 166 were irrigated and the rest were un-irrigated, rain dependant uplands, resulting in frequent crop failure. Agriculture alone being insufficient to provide subsistence, the people have traditionally been putting their forest resources to economic use, such as saal leaves and other minor forest produce (MFP) collection and sale of mahua flowers and seeds, kendu leaves, kusum seeds, honey, resin and lacquer. Income from this source was also found to be negligible. Every household had livestock in the form of cattle, pigs, goats and poultry, which however did not yield much income. It was noted that milch animals were used for ploughing and for manure, while the milk was not used for human consumption or sale.

The second major source of livelihood was Sabai grass cultivation and rope making. 91% of the households were noted to be engaged in the latter activity, which yielded average annual earnings 3.7 times higher than cultivation. While the average price per quintal of grass was Rs. 117, that of the rope was Rs. 1,015. The value addition of this traditional family occupation is tremendous.

The table below summarizes the economic activities with their average annual returns. The few service providers engaged in petty business were observed to be better off. A large number of households engaged in local wage labour while a few ventured out to fetch better returns on their labour.

Occupation	Av. Annual Income (INR)	Observations
Agriculture	1,788 1,089	Excluding implicit cost of own labour Including implicit cost of own labour
Sabai cultivation	1,050 (tribal HHs) 1,818(non tribal HHs)	Av. yield/acre : 3.04 quintals Av. price per quintal : Rs. 117.20 Av. yield/acre : 4.46 quintals Av. price per quintal : Rs. 202.50
Sabai Rope making	3,952	Av. price per quintal : Rs. 1,015 Value addition 3.7 times more than cultivation (91% HHs engaged in this traditional occupation)
Saal leaf collection	871	Women's occupation (33% HHs)
Saal cup pressing	1,677	Saal cup pressing machines provided in pilot project (43% HHs engaged)
MFP collection & sale	318 – 490	Women's occupation (40% HHs)
Petty business	4,056	100 tribal HHs – grocers, mechanics, blacksmiths, priests, vaidis (traditional medicine men)
Wage labour - agric.	1,635	1 cropping season, 2.6 months/year (88% HHs)
construction	3,684	5.5 months /year (55 % HHs)
Migration	4,286	Av. 4 months/year (18.4% HHs)
Av. Annual Income/HH	13,254 5,272	Excluding implicit cost Including implicit cost
Income Distribution	<5,000/-: 25% <10,000/- : 61% >10,000/-: rest	Income distribution heavily skewed towards lower levels; Modal class : Rs. 5,000-9,999/- category

While the average annual income was computed at Rs. 13,254 per household, the income pattern was predominantly skewed towards the below Rs. 10,000 level. No significant difference was noted between the income of tribal and non tribal households. In view of the interest expressed by some non tribals to join the project, and in order to avoid conflict which would be detrimental to the project, a conscious decision was taken to include the interested non tribal households which were below the poverty line.

Process of Selection of Economic Activities in the Expanded Phase was based on the traditional occupations of choice, which had been pursued in the pilot phase, namely sabai grass cultivation and rope making, saal leaf collection and cup pressing. Ecological concerns however, lead to the need to diversify into other economic activities. Consultations with the people were undertaken, in order to ensure that cultural sensitivities of the community were borne in mind. For instance, the benchmark survey had strongly recommended dairying as a lucrative option, considering the preponderance of milch animals. The idea however was not acceptable to the tribals, who consider milk as being a prerogative of the calves, and not for human consumption. So too, the profusion of bamboo groves in the region, lead to the obvious suggestion that bamboo artifacts be produced, as they have a good market. This idea too was rejected by the tribal communities, as this trade is practiced by the scheduled castes of the region. (see also section 10)

The idea of diversifying into horticulture and kitchen gardening found popular acceptance, the tribals being close to their land and cultivation activities. Consultations with the Horticulture department proved encouraging. It was still felt important to consider other non-agro based activities, with a view to ease the pressures on land. The younger generation of tribal women finally identified two new activities. They were eager to learn skills in the colorful appliqué work which is traditional to another part of Orissa called Pipilee and which finds wide popularity within and outside the state. Feasibility of machine knit garments was also studied and found it would have a good local market. Hence the women enrolled themselves for these two new skills, for which the services of vocational trainers were engaged.

3.1.4 Summary Outputs

The above period of three years saw the emergence of strong self help groups of women in each of the 40 villages, and of employment activities by men, women and youth in the chosen traditional as well as new enterprises, with credit support, through the revolving loan fund (RLF).

Funding constraints following the first year of the project, made it difficult to meet the budgeted requirements of RLF. The pilot villages however, got together to lend a helping hand to the 30 new villages of the cluster, with carving out a portion of the RLF provided to them, during the pilot phase.

By the end of this 3 year period, a total number of 2,330 jobs were generated, as opposed to the target of 3,000 jobs, due to shortage of credit availability and time. The project had reached a critical stage when the people's high aspirations needed to be met with additional credit and training support. The SHGs were ready to start formalizing themselves as self supporting cooperatives, with a view to giving themselves the cooperative advantages of legal recognition, economies of scope and scale, and with a view to future sustainable self management of the enterprises initiated during project period. It was therefore felt necessary to continue the project for an additional year, in order to enable the formalization process, with necessary capacity building in cooperative management, without which the new enterprises would not be able to sustain themselves in the long term.

3.2 Towards full tribal ownership – The final phase with MIGROS support (2004 – 05)

In view of the above concerns, MIGROS Cooperative Federation of Switzerland kindly came forward with timely support and agreed to lend financial assistance for an additional phasing out period, “**Building Capacities Toward Sustainable Tribal Cooperative Enterprise in Mayurbhanj, Orissa**” (July 2004 – June 2005). In keeping with the cooperative principle of cooperation among cooperatives, MIGROS set an example of North - South partnership, towards assisting the marginalized in their empowerment process through the cooperative fold, and making a place for themselves in a competitive market economy.

3.2.1 Rationale Behind the Cooperative Approach

The poor and the marginalized have not the ability to withstand the fiercely competitive and exploitative market forces, in their individual capacities. This project sought to demonstrate the empowerment that comes with organizing.

Why Cooperatives ? It is true that self help groups (SHGs) make a good starting point towards collective action. But for the purpose of ensuring long term sustainability, it was felt necessary to

formalize the informal SHGs into legal entities such as registered cooperatives, functioning under a set of their own bye laws and with personal stakeholding. This would ensure better member participation and accountability, with all members taking their role more seriously, in managing their own enterprises on a sustainable basis.

Cooperatives lend themselves to any form of activity and skills level. Being economic enterprises with a strong social mandate, they respond to the various dimensions of poverty. While creating economic opportunities with the cooperative advantages of providing economies of scale and

The answer to poverty lies in “...strong local communities, strong local leadership and strong local solutions. Cooperatives have proved to be a key organizational form in building new models to combat social exclusion and poverty...”

Mr. Juan Somavia, Director General, ILO

scope, joint innovation and capital, cooperatives, by their very nature, include security and social protection through mutual assistance and, most importantly, empower the poor through recognition as a legal entity, bargaining power and representation.

Hence this project sought to combine the comparative strengths peculiar to tribal communities, and to the cooperative form of organization, towards their empowerment process. The tribal strengths of community solidarity, mutual help and commonality of purpose, coupled with traditional skills, have been capitalized upon, in combination with the cooperative advantages, to open up new possibilities towards improving their economy.

The MIGROS phase therefore had a major focus on formalizing and consolidating the informal SHGs into cooperatives, while strengthening member capacities towards ensuring their effective self management in the long term.

3.2.2 Objectives

With the overall development objective to contribute towards decent and productive employment initiatives through cooperative enterprise among the socially and economically excluded tribal peoples, this final phase of the expanded project set out to achieve the following immediate objectives, with particular focus on addressing long term sustainability :

1. Ensure sustainable self management of all self supporting tribal cooperatives, through appropriate need based capacity building and infrastructure support
2. Meet the employment target of generating atleast 3,000 jobs overall in the expanded phase (2001 – 05) through additional skills development and credit support
3. Demonstrate a viable model of tribal cooperative enterprise, for wider replication and policy integration.

Throughout the process, while the focus was on the three major project components of organizing, capacity building and promoting links and stakeholder dialogues towards policy integration, the approach had to be essentially wholistic to integrate issues of relevance to the people and in response to their felt needs. Following is a description of how these processes evolved with time

The Process of Institution Building – evolving into formal cooperatives

Community solidarity is an integral part of the survival systems in tribal culture. Members of lineage groups cooperate in various activities such as construction of dwellings, hunting and gathering of forest produce, harvest, festive occasions, marriage and death ceremonies. Such cooperative endeavors are termed as Ansir among the Santhals. Hence the concept of group or collective action is integral to tribal living.

Tribal communities also have their own institutional structures. Every tribal village has its council of village elders vested with the authority to administer and make decisions. Hence the idea of organizing themselves into village development committees, women's self help groups or Mahila Mandals, and youth groups, was naturally appealing. The 30 new villages had the additional advantage of having observed the institutional functioning of the pilot villages.

Each village was thus enabled to democratically elect its Village Development Committee (VDC), comprising secular and religious heads, men and women leaders of the various occupational groups and the panchayat representative. An extension of the traditional primary village organization vested with the responsibility to safeguard the traditional norms, culture and value systems, the VDC further linked up with the village panchayat and developmental programmes in collaboration with the statutory Gram Panchayat. A total number of 40 VDCs had initiated their own village development funds and prioritized activities, while mobilizing community action and participation.

Women's mahila mandals (SHGs) which initially centered around savings and credit functions and income generation, also provided a platform to address social issues and ensure the smooth running of the non-formal education (NFE) centres in each village. The organizing process of SHGs was richly supplemented with intensive training sessions in group dynamics, functioning and management, imparted to the frontline staff and group leaders. The first year of the project focused on trainings in SHG formation, rudiments of maintaining accounts and financial statements. The expertise of a local training organization, ANWESHANA, was employed for the purpose. By the end of the first year, the women's SHGs were able to function and initiated their savings and credit activities, including managing the RLF allocated to their respective villages. A total number of 46 SHGs were formed, as some villages had large hamlets.

36 Youth Groups / Clubs (Yuvak Sanghs), nine of which were formally registered under the Societies Act, were made responsible for environment and forest protection, a responsibility they discharged effectively (as noted later). The youth

clubs also managed the sports activities of their respective villages and were active participants in the awareness generation programmes along with the project staff, utilizing the traditional role play (jatra) as the medium, enriched with a blend of traditional as well as modern musical instruments. Undertaking public works such as road construction and repair, maintenance of village infrastructure, also formed part of the youth activities.

The groups functioned with a set of their own bye laws. Regular meetings were held to bring all members up to date, resolve disputes, and participate in the work- planning. These village level institutions culminated at the cluster level, as the Tribal Multipurpose Labour Society (TMLS) registered under the Societies Act - an extension of the pilot project TMLS, with a total strength of 92 members representing their respective village groups.

As the Project entered its second year, the informal women's SHGs had consolidated themselves with their savings and credit activities, and the various employment activities by the men women and youth were initiated. The concept of formal cooperatives was introduced. The cooperative advantage was explained to the people, in terms of economy of scope and scale, legal recognition for credit and related support services, functioning within a legal framework of their own bye laws, with a view to future sustainable self management of their own enterprises. The idea of registering themselves as formal cooperatives was new to the people, and though appealing, was not without initial apprehensions. Here again, traditional methods of sensitizing through role play and drama, helped in generating awareness of the new possibilities open to them as formal cooperatives, and helped in allaying fears to an extent.



This period coincided with the enactment of the new Orissa Self Reliant Cooperative Societies Act (2001), which promotes member based self-supporting cooperatives, and is in line with the ILO Recommendation No.193 on Promotion of Cooperatives (2002).

The Project availed of this opportunity to link up with the Cooperative Department of the State, which evinced a keen interest in the initiative, a first of its kind on tribal empowerment through employing the new cooperative law. The Orissa State Cooperative Union (OSCU), through its Centre for Cooperative Management (CCM) in Baripada, was thus commissioned to undertake initial training sessions on cooperatives and their functioning based on cooperative values and principles, followed by practical aspects of management, accounting systems, framing of bye laws, roles of the general and executive bodies, the officiating board members, etc.



By the end of the third year, the SHGs felt ready to initiate the registration process. The first batch of 15 SHGs were enabled to draft their own Articles of Association (bye laws) and got themselves registered under the new Act, as Primary Village Savings and Credit Cooperatives, at the office of the Deputy Registrar of Cooperative Societies (DRCS) at the District Headquarters in Baripada. The official process, which was meant to have been simplified, was still found to be a long and laborious one, requiring a great deal of paper work and numerous trips to the HQs.

With the start of the final year (MIGROS phase), a federation of the primary structures was democratically elected, 2 members from each of the 52 primaries. The criteria for selection of the federation members was based on education and literacy levels as well as leadership qualities. Hence many of the project staff- the extension workers and village animators, got absorbed into the federation, irrespective of gender. This was considered necessary in view of the importance of better literacy levels and management skills of the leaders, towards active member participation in the federation and effective representation of all the village primary cooperatives. The Executive Committee comprises of nine members, five of whom are women. The project linked up with the Institute of Cooperative Management (ICM) in Bhubaneswar, the State affiliate of the National Cooperative Union of India (NCUI), for training the federation members in three phases. The federation got itself registered as the Mayurbhanj Adivasi Cooperative Mahasangha Limited (MACM) on 30 June 2005.

The capacity building inputs throughout the process, were in keeping with the felt needs of the people as they gradually evolved from informal institutions to formal, registered cooperative structures. While the participants in these training activities were restricted to the federation members/ leaders and staff, it was felt necessary to disseminate the same to all primary members at the village level, in a more simplified, audio visual manner. Hence village level training activities were undertaken by the trained leaders, to cover all the 40 project villages, over a period of six months.

The cluster was envisaged to ultimately have 46 Savings and Credit Cooperatives (evolved from the 46 Women's SHGs) and 6 Producer Cooperatives, one for each of the employment activities. Concerted efforts were made to formalize all the informal SHGs who were pending registration. However, the cumbersome paperwork and procedures allowed for registrations in a phased manner, of a few groups at a time. By the end of the final year, a total number of 29 primary savings and credit cooperatives, and 2 producer cooperatives were registered, in

addition to the secondary (federation), which then took over the responsibility to facilitate the process of registering the balance groups, with the help of the CCM in the District Headquarters.



Smt. Renu Singh, Secretary of Primary Cooperative

I am Smt. Renu Singh, 24 years old and belong to the Bhumij community of Kalaraphulia village. Since we were very poor I had to discontinue my studies from Class 8 and was married off to Mahendra Singh of the same village. We have one acre of wasteland for Sabai cultivation and one acre of agricultural land for paddy, which

was insufficient to feed my family and it was difficult to send our son and daughter to school.. I had a great desire to do something to tide over our financial difficulties.

When the new project started in our village, we were happy to join as we had seen the progress made by our neighbors in the pilot project. A Mahila Samiti was first organized in the village and I was elected as the assistant secretary. My husband was made the village animator. Our Mahila Samiti received a share of the Revolving Loan Fund from the TMLS and we distributed loans for various income generation activities. I worked hard at maintaining accounts of the samiti. We met at regular intervals and also discussed various development programmes of the village. We first had leadership trainings to leaders of the SHGs to understand our role and function and how to manage our own SHGs. This helped a lot to build our confidence. Later various trainings were conducted by outside agencies to make us understand about a Cooperative and its management, accounting, framing of the by laws , etc.

Now our Samitee, which was a SHG, has taken a big step by registering itself as a cooperative. Elections were conducted and I am proud to say that I was chosen as the Secretary of our savings and credit cooperative. Soon we felt that just managing our savings and credit activities was not enough. We wanted to start some new economic activity as well, from which we could all earn more. Although we were nearing the end of our project period, it is fortunate that a training was organized on Entrepreneurship development and on some new simple vocational skills. We have decided to start making spice powders and other grocery items, pack them with the label of our cooperative and sell in the local market. I am also thinking of setting up a shop to sell our products. I can now send my children to school. As a leader in my village, I am also encouraging other women to improve their lot, and to educate themselves and their children.

Job Creation – traditional and new occupations



As noted during the benchmark survey of the new project villages, the people are largely engaged in marginal farming, which being insufficient, has had to be supplemented by income generation from other natural resources, typical of the region. Minor forest products or agro-forestry practices such as cultivation of Sabai grass grown in waste lands and sal leaves plucked from sal bushes grown in forests, alongside rearing of tasar silkworms, also play an important role for the communities in the area.

The Pilot Project had focused primarily on generating extra income from rationalizing and improving the organization of traditional natural resource use. It may be mentioned here that even though the people make use of natural resources such as sal leaves, sabai grass, many tree species, minor forest produce, etc, they do not have any legal right over them. Except the paddy lands, all other resources belong to the Government. In some cases even the homestead lands on which residential huts have been built belong to the Government.

5.1 Sabai Grass Cultivation and Rope making

This traditional occupation has been promoted in the project through providing credit and enabling large areas of wasteland to be brought under improved methods of sabai cultivation, which increased productivity. It requires a one time investment and the returns come in after two years for a period of fifteen years without any further investment. During the pilot phase, 195 acres of degraded wasteland were cultivated by 177 beneficiaries, with a total investment of Rs. 910,000 by WFP⁶ and INDISCO. The yield of 243,750 kg of grass from the year 2000 onwards, is computed to bring in a total sum of Rs. 731,250 per year (approx US\$ 16,850) upto the year 2014. This ensures an average annual income of Rs. 4,130 per beneficiary.

⁶ The project activities attracted direct support from WFP, towards sabai cultivation

Likewise in the expanded phase, 328 households from 11 villages took up sabai cultivation under the project in 2001, covering a total area of 290 acres, expected to yield 362,837 Kg of grass from the year 2005 onwards, upto 2019. This would ensure an additional total annual income of Rs. 2,177,022 each year (approx US\$ 50,173) amounting to an average annual income of Rs. 6,637 per household.



Jagen Kumar Hembram

I am Jagen Kumar Hembram, of Majhiani village. My parents are illiterate. With the help of the Project Adult literacy programme my father can sign and read and write to some extent. I had a great desire to be educated. Therefore I started my education and went up to matriculation where I failed in the examination. I discontinued my

studies and wandered about without doing any work. My uncle took me to Chhatrapur and helped me to get work under a Contractor in the Railways. Since the contractor did not pay wages regularly, and misbehaved I left the job and came back to my village. I had no work for sometime. In the meantime the Mahila Samitee was organized in our village. I came to know the Samitee was going to disburse loan to individuals and groups for taking up various income generating activities. I contacted the Samitee's President and requested her to help me out. She advised me to select an appropriate income generating activity and to apply for a loan to the Samitee. I applied for a loan for cultivation of Sabai grass and my application was forwarded to the TMLS. The Project Manager visited my field and discussed with me regarding cultivation of Sabai grass. He was kind enough to have recommended my case to the TMLS. I got the loan of Rs. 8,000 and planted Sabai grass on 2.5 acres of land. From the fourth year I got approximately 50 mds (2000 Kgs) of grass from my land. I stored the grass for two months, which brought me a better price of Rs. 300 per md. The sale proceeds of the grass brought me Rs. 15,000. I started clearing the loan at Rs. 400 per term and I was free from debt in two years. This year, the members of my family also started making some ropes out of the grass, which I sold in the market. Additional income was generated from this enterprise. My family is now so much better off. I have already opened a savings bank account in Baitarani Gramya Bank and have started saving to meet my various other requirements.

Rope making has been the most popular traditional family occupation which the people are adept at, and engaged in by almost all households. The value addition is tremendous, three times

that of grass, as noted by the benchmark study. The local village Haat which is organized every two days a week at Dantiamunha, serves as a trading centre for the sabai ropes for which there is a ready market locally as well as in the neighboring states. In the pilot phase of the project, 410 beneficiaries were assisted and the expanded project enabled another 956 beneficiaries, as individual or group enterprise, to enter and expand their sabai rope business through RLF and market support.



A Mahila Mandal's Success Story

We are the members of Kapuramuli Mahila Samitee of Chilabasa village. Our Mahila Samittee was formed in the year 2001. We have 30 members in our Samitee, and have elected our President, Secretary and Treasurer. Each member saved Rs.10 monthly in our Mahila Samitee savings account, which is with the Baitarani Gramya Bank at Dantiamunha.

We decided to take up rope making business as a group. In 2001 we borrowed Revolving Loan Fund of Rs. 10,000 from the TMLS and invested it in buying 41 mds of grass worth Rs. 8,200. We distributed this grass among members and sat down in the literacy classroom to make ropes. Out of the 1640 Kgs of grass, 1312 kgs of rope was produced. We sold the ropes in the market at Rs. 12 per kg, fetching Rs. 15,744. Our net profit was Rs. 5,744. We paid up our loan instalments of Rs. 750 every month. As we started expanding our business we also saved more money in the bank. In the meantime the Project approached NABARD for additional credit support, which was provided as refinance to the Baitarani Gramya Bank. We were provided with Rs. 10,000 as additional credit support, to expand our business even further. We got 85 mds of grass and distributed among the members. Out of 3400 Kgs of grass we made 2735 Kgs of ropes, which fetched us Rs. 32,820, i.e. exceeding Rs. 1,000 per member. However, while we are clearing the loan, each member takes home between Rs. 400 to Rs. 450 per month from this group enterprise. Now at present we have repaid the project RLF with interest. We have also almost completely returned the loan received from the Bank.

We are now eager to join other rope makers in forming one cooperative. This way, we will be able to get more credit, procure larger bulk amounts of grass at much cheaper wholesale rates, have common storage sheds and also negotiate better prices for our produce.

5.2 Saal Leaf Cup Pressing

At the time of the Pilot Project, Revolving Loan Funds had been provided to ten Mahila Mandals to support their business based on Sal leaf collection and sal leaf cup making. Around 510 villagers were engaged in collecting Sal leaves from which they earned Rs. 20-25 per day (approx 4 hours work). The leaves then were supplied to the 5 sal leaf cup production units. A total of 59 leaf cup making machines were purchased by the project and were used by the Mahila Mandals. 375 persons were trained out of which 90-96 were employed in the project and 279 were working in nearby places and towns earning between Rs.750 to Rs.900 per month.



Later in the expanded project another 20 leaf cup machines were purchased with WFP support and installed in two multipurpose work sheds also supported by the WFP, in Kissantandi and Kalaraphullia villages. 135 persons were trained out of which 90 found employment in the project and the rest, in the neighboring places.

Privatization of the Electricity Board and consequent levy of tariff at commercial rates, has now made this activity unviable for the people. Whereas they were charged a fixed rate of Rs. 600 per month previously, each unit with average production of 200 bags of leaf cups (3,000 cups per bag) yielded a net profit of about Rs. 400 per month per unit, after deduction of labour charges. With the new hike in tariff, each unit is now charged between Rs. 2,000 to Rs. 3,000 per month, resulting in grave losses to the units. Unfortunately, this activity, which had found great popularity with the people, due to the value addition with the use of simple technology, is now being discontinued.

While promoting value addition at the primary level is often recommended by development planners, it needs to be enabled in practice through supportive policies and measures which would facilitate such value addition and economic returns for the poor.

Entering New Economic Activities

With the increasing pressure on the ecology and natural resource use, it was felt necessary to diversify into other economic activities in consultation with the people. The process of selection of the new income generating activities in the preparatory phase of the expanded project, has been described earlier.

5.3 Horticulture and Kitchen Gardening

A total number of 859 beneficiaries from all the forty villages took up kitchen gardening and horticulture. Banana, mango, lemon and coconut plants were provided through linking up with the Horticulture Department. Seed packets of various vegetables at subsidized rates were also supplied. Eight villages took up maize cultivation extensively. A total area of 32 hectares is presently under horticulture and kitchen gardening, in the individual backyards or small plots of land.



The project promoted high yielding tissue culture banana plantation. A demonstration plot was developed on the premises of the community center and interested farmers were provided training and know-how for raising the plants. In the year 2001 around 4,000 tissue culture plants were sold to interested beneficiaries in the project as well as to outsiders. This was followed by sale of 5,000, 8,000, 7,800 and 4,600 plants in subsequent years. The plantation of tissue culture banana as a commercial

enterprise is very profitable. In one acre 1,250 plants are planted. The cost of raising till fruiting is approximately Rs.45 per plant in nine months. The return per plant is approximately Rs.95 at a minimum in nine months. A farmer can earn approximately Rs.62,500 per acre in the first 9 months and Rs. 35,000 every six months from the second crop onwards, till new plantation is undertaken after 2 years.



Story of Mr. Pravakar Mohanta – a fruitful enterprise

I am Pravakar Mohanta, aged 32 years and belong to Sangadi village. Ours is a very big family and it was difficult to make ends meet with the meager yield from our plot of land. My wife and I had to work as wage labourers in other fields, and still found it difficult to sustain the family.

I approached the project manager who introduced me to the idea of starting my own banana plantation. He arranged for the horticulturist to show me around the plot that was developed at the Community Centre by the Project Manager, and explained the economics. I was very impressed and discussed the idea with my family, who were also very supportive about taking up this activity on 1 acre.

The Project Manager then advised me to take a loan from the Samitee. I applied to our village Samitee who agreed to provide me a loan of Rs. 10,000. I bought 1,000 seedlings of tissue culture banana and planted them in my field. But I had to invest nearly Rs. 45,000 in my plantation,

considering all the inputs required. My father who had saved Rs.30,000 gave all his money for this venture. We sold vegetables from our fields for Rs. 2,700 and some more money was generated from our wage labour. The Horticulturist frequently visited my banana field and advised me on how to take care of the plants. Within 10 to 12 months time I got bananas from my plants and sold them in the market in phases. I sold each bunch at Rs. 95 to Rs. 120, fetching me a total sum of around Rs. 93,890. I also sold about 1680 seedlings, which came out from my banana plants at Rs. 5 per seedling, fetching another Rs. 8,400. A part of the money received by selling my proceeds was used in clearing my loans including interest to the Samitee. I have also returned the Rs. 30,000 to my father. A sum of Rs. 3,600 was used for transport of all the banana to the market. At the end of the first return from the banana plantation we earned approximately Rs. 52,090 as net profit. I now have a fixed deposit Rs. 10,000 in the local bank. My family is grateful to the Samitee, the Project Manager, Horticulturist and for the Mayurbhanj Project which helped us in this fruitful enterprise. I am now planning to expand the plantation in another 1 acre of land.

While it is profitable, the tissue culture banana plantation is very capital intensive, requiring a larger initial investment which not many can afford. Hence it has been adopted in only two villages, while cultivation of coconut, mango and lemon found greater popularity in all the villages. Mushroom cultivation has been taken up on a trial basis at the community centre, and upon its success it will be taken up by interested groups as an enterprise. Kitchen gardening requires small investment and has been adopted by almost all households on patches of homestead lands, for purpose of self consumption as well as sale of the produce.



Hiramani Murmu starts small and improves her lot

I am srimati Hiramani Murmu, a Santhal of Dhanghera village. We have one acre of agricultural land but our produce was not sufficient to feed us for the year. My husband had no other work and it was getting difficult to survive. When the Mahila Samiti was organized in my village, I joined up and came in contact with the Project Manager who advised me to start vegetable cultivation on a part of our homestead land. To begin with, I took a loan of Rs. 1,500 to plant tomato seedlings in 0.3 acres, and produced 600 Kg. of tomatoes which I sold at Rs. 5 per Kg., fetching me a total of Rs. 3,000. This encouraged me to try maize cultivation on another 0.3 acres. I planted 6,000 maize plants, and irrigated the land with the help of a pumpset which I got on hire from the project. I sold the produce in the local market and earned another Rs. 10,000. I have cleared up my loan and now with the guidance of the horticulturist, am planning on expanding into various vegetables and crops which will bring me handsome returns.

5.4 Applique work

A form of colourful applique work is traditionally typical of a place in Orissa by the name of Pipilee, and hence is popularly known as Pipilee work. During the selection of new economic activities in the expanded phase, as described above, the younger generation of tribal women were eager to learn this skill and produce various colourful items which are popular within and outside Orissa. Upgraded sewing machines and related equipment were provided and a trainer from Pipilee was engaged. By the end of the expanded project, a total number of 150 women were trained, of which 126 joined the group enterprise. The group has however faced difficulty in finding a steady market and has had to rely upon exhibitions and trade fairs within and outside the state. While they have the potential to produce items worth over Rs. 200,000, the uncertain market keeps them from realizing their full potential.



A Story of the Appliqué unit by Basi, in charge of the unit

When the project started in 2001, we were 60 women and girls eager to learn this trade and make some extra income. We had a trainer from Pipilee for this purpose, and new machines to work on, in a workshed in Kisantandi. We started commercial production within one year, and made artistic, colourful items such as wall hangings, bags, letter pouches, lamps shades, cushion covers, purses, etc. (Upon seeing us, many more women joined this skill training and by the end of year 2004, 150 women had been trained).

We needed money to buy raw material and approached the Kissantandi Mahila Samitee for RLF of Rs.5,000, which was granted to us. We used this to produce 65 pieces of wall hanging, and 30 pieces of lamps shades, which were sold in Pipli market, fetching us Rs. 9,900. This was encouraging and with the help of the project manager and trainer, we ventured into various exhibitions held at Paradeep, Cuttack, Bhubaneswar and Sambalpur. We then made bold to take our products to trade fairs in other states such as West Bengal, Rajasthan and Delhi. But our margin of profit was low, as we had to spend money on our travel and related expenses. As demand in the local market is limited, we have to depend upon these exhibitions, when members earn about Rs. 20 to 40 per day, depending upon their output. So far, our group has earned a net profit of about Rs. 26,670. We are capable of producing and earning so much more, and we only need the opportunity to sell.

We are now getting ready to have ourselves registered as a producer cooperative. Related papers and documents are being made ready for this purpose. Then we hope to get better recognition and seek a steady market for our products.

5.5 Machine Knit Garments

Women engaged in the second non-land based enterprise of machine knit garments, have a different story to tell. Starting with 60 young women trained on 15 machines procured from Kolkata, a buy back arrangement was initially made with the supplier of the machines in the first year of the project. Within 6 months of training, the first batch of 37 women started commercial production with a loan of Rs. 10,000 from the RLF. Items produced during the training period, also found a market in the local village haat. Thus the women got monetary returns even during the training period, which encouraged more to join this skill. Considering the popularity and assured market, 20 more machines were procured in the final year of the project and a total number of 160 women underwent training, with more waiting their turn.

In the year 2005, the Mayuri Wool Knitting Cooperative was formalized, comprising 75 members who are fully engaged and earning Rs. 1,300 to Rs. 1,750 per month. With a loan of Rs. 100,000 from the project RLF, the cooperative linked up with six Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (JNVs) or residential schools in the district, to provide 1,500 sweaters for the students. Having gained a reputation for its quality work, the cooperative has been procuring fresh orders which include sweaters for schools under the Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) of the District. Woolens worth more than Rs. 200,000 have been produced in the year 2005. With more women eager to join the cooperative after completion of their training, a larger capital of Rs. 500,000 is being sought from the Cooperative Bank for purchase of more and upgraded machines, so that production capacity can meet the increasing demand. Clearly, there is no looking back for the young enthusiastic women members of this cooperative enterprise.



Story of the Mayuri Wool Knitting Cooperative Ltd.

We are Bharati and Samayika, President and Secretary of our cooperative. We had started off as a small self help group, with an assured buy back arrangement with the machine supplier in Kolkata. We soon realized however, that this arrangement was less profitable to us as most of the money was used to meet the travel and transport

expenses. So local dealers were contacted from neighboring Dantiamunha, Betnoti, Chitrada, Baripada and Balasore, who gave their specifications and our trainer trained us accordingly. Our project manager then contacted the Principal of the JNV at Salaboni near Betnoti, who visited our Centre and placed orders for 90 sweaters. We worked diligently and completed the order in good time. This marked a new beginning for our unit, with fresh orders pouring in from other JNVs of Keonjhar, Chuda, Balasore..... We urgently needed to raise more capital and increase our production capacity, to meet the increasing demand.



In response, the project provided us with 20 more machines so we now have 35 machines in all, which have helped to a great extent in meeting the increasing orders. But we felt sorry to have to turn down one really big order worth Rs. 475,120 from the Paradeep Port Trust for 2,770 sweaters, within 45 days. This would have required advanced machines and a large capital to meet the order within the time limit.

At this stage, we were introduced to the idea of forming ourselves as a self supporting cooperative, and were explained the benefits. We would be able to get more credit from the cooperative bank and buy raw material in bulk at cheaper rates, and manage our enterprise ourselves in the long run. 75 of us, who had gained expertise in the skill, got ready with the necessary papers and approached the DRCS at Baripada. The 23rd day of June 2005 was a big day for us, when we got ourselves registered as the Mayuri Wool Knitting Cooperative Limited. At present, each member of the cooperative is able to complete atleast 2 sweaters a day and earn Rs. 40 to 70 per day, or about Rs. 1,300 to 2,000 per month, according to her production. Each member contributes Rs. 50 per month to the cooperative savings account. As we are doing well, we have also decided to retain our trainer, and have taken over the payment of his salary after the ILO phased out. We have applied to the Central Cooperative Bank at Betnoti for a loan of Rs. 500,000 which will enable us to modernize our equipment even more and accommodate more members to join the unit to increase our production capacity. We plan on decentralizing the unit, to solve the space crunch at the Community Centre, so some members who live far can operate from home.

As we do good work and supply the finished products within the given time, we have gained a good reputation. Our cooperative participated in the 53rd year celebrations of the Jagadhatri Mela in 2005, and was awarded the second prize for popularity and sale of produce at the fair. We are even more proud to say that on the occasion of the 52nd All India Cooperative Week, our cooperative received the award for the best producer cooperative in the year 2005 – 06, from the President of the District Cooperative Union himself, in the presence of ministers and other dignitaries. This was a very big moment for us and we are happy to get such recognition. We have therefore pledged to continue our good work and expand our business to include more young women in this profitable enterprise.

5.6 Masonry

Employment opportunities in the construction and allied sectors are only second to that of agriculture. Development projects need skilled manpower for their execution. Though large manpower is available, the lack in skills leads to poor quality of construction. The hands on skill development training for semi skilled masonry workers in the project villages, was undertaken with the purpose of facilitating them to earn a respectable living in their locality itself, and deliver better quality services at minimum cost.



The project collaborated with UNDP – Orissa, who have initiated the propagation of low cost, disaster resistant construction technology in a big way in the state. Artisans’ SHGs have been facilitated to federate, from which the technically competent entrepreneurs have come together to form the Development Technocrats Forum (DTF), registered at District level. The DTF at Balasore undertook the training of 20 masons in the project, on skills in rat trap bonded brick work, reinforced brick lintel, filler slabs, plank and joint roofing systems, towards reducing the overall cost and bring safe housing within the reach of the poor. Being labour intensive and ecofriendly, the technology was well received by the masons, 15 of whom completed the training successfully and have found gainful employment.

5.7 Other New Income Generating Skills & Entrepreneurship Development

Towards the end of the project, as the savings and credit function of the primary village level cooperatives was consolidated, the members started feeling the need to engage in some additional income generating activity towards supplementing their incomes. In response, the project collaborated with a local Business Development Service (BDS) provider. Five new simple skills were identified in consultation with the community and training undertaken for batches of 25, in manufacture of marketable consumer items: candles, spices, savoury snacks, chalk and phenyl. These enterprises are projected to yield monthly incomes of Rs. 6,000 to 8,000 to the groups. Related training in market survey and entrepreneurship development, was also



Gender disaggregated data on employment generated (2001 – 05)

Sl No.	Item	No. of Beneficiaries	Men	Women
01	Sabai grass business	192	185	7
02	Sabai grass rope making	956	218	738
03	Sabai grass Cultivation	352	349	3
04	Appliqué	126	-	126
05	Machine Knit Garments	160	-	160
06	Horticulture and Kitchen Garden	859	624	235
07	Sal leaf cup making	144	64	80
08	Sal leaf collection and business	358	37	321
		3147	1477	1670

undertaken. Being new activities, provision has been made for some on-the-job facilitation and problem solving, as the groups progress. ILO tools on “Start Your Business” were effectively used in developing a simple reference material for future reference by the new entrepreneurs.

With the introduction of new income generating activities described above, 115 new jobs are expected to have been created. In addition, credit support alone has enabled the people to create new occupations for themselves. During the pilot phase, a group of 26 enterprising youth from village Bandasahi, constructed a fishing pond and started pisciculture which continues to fetch them Rs. 20,000 per season. Animal husbandry, silviculture, bee keeping, rice milling, retailing of various items including minor forest produce, carpentry, repair shops, etc. with the help of small loans, helped generate additional employment during the pilot as well as the expanded phases to at least 100 beneficiaries.

From Revolving Loan Fund to Community-based Credit Facility – building a true microfinance structure from scratch

It is well acknowledged that tribal peoples have had difficulties in accessing and managing credit, in many cases ending up indebted to private money lenders, with interest on loans as high as 10% per month or 120% per annum. The multi-level problems involve lack of education, low literacy rates and the lack of appropriate village based institutions for micro-credit.

The credit component of the project, in the form a revolving loan fund (RLF) therefore, not surprisingly, found greatest favour by the poor beneficiaries. In the course of the pilot phase (1994-99), a total sum of Rs. 882,540 was provided, reaching about 46% of the population. Small loans were taken by 1,491 beneficiaries as capital investment on easy terms, at an interest rate of 10% per annum. During the expanded project (2001-05), a total sum of Rs. 1,116,820 was provided in phases. 1,726 beneficiaries (897 women and 829 men) availed of RLF in the expanded phase. The total sum of money held by the

Revolving Loan Funds received over time 1994 - 2005

Year	Instalments (INR)	Total
1994-1995	251,730	251,730
1995-1996	280,810	532,540
1996-1997	250,000	782,540
1998-1999	100,000	882,540
2001-2002	235,000	1,117,540
2004-2005	223,170	1,340,710
2005-2006	658,650	1,999,360

Revolving Loan Fund taken by beneficiaries in the expanded project (2001-05)

Sl No.	Employment activity	No.of Benefeciaries	Men	Women
01	Sabai grass business & rope making (New Vill)	365	87	278
02	Sabai grass business & rope making (old Vill)	375	184	191
03	Appliqué	48	-	48
04	Wool Knitting	75	-	75
05	Horticulture and Kitchen Garden	542	528	14
06	Sal leaf cup making	90	30	60
07	Sal leaf collection and business	231	-	231
		1726	829	897

community under the RLF, inclusive of loan interest and member savings, amounts to Rs. 2,133,698. The repayment rate is 78%.

Additionally, small loans were also taken for petty business in MFP, livestock, trading, repair and other shops, etc.

Management of the RLF was initially with the apex Tribal Multipurpose Labour Society(TMLS), with facilitation from the implementing agency. With the new cooperative structures initiated in the expanded phase, the management was transferred to the Mayurbhanj Adivasi Cooperative Mahasangha (MACM) Ltd., which has representation from

all the primary village cooperatives. The federation was provided with additional training in accounting systems, in collaboration with the Institute of Cooperative Management. Need was still felt for a professional accountant, who was identified to facilitate in streamlining the accounts of all the primaries. A sum of Rs. 45,000 was earmarked from the RLF funds, towards payment for the accountant. Rules on the operation of the RLF were jointly formulated by the members of the MACM and the ILO. In view of the operational costs, members agreed that the rate of interest on loans be raised to 15%. Group enterprises would be granted loans upto Rs.100,000 while individual loans would have an upper limit of Rs. 10,000. Terms on eligibility, loan processing and repayment, transparency in audit, monitoring and reporting, etc., were specified and on the basis of which a formal agreement was entered between the MACM and the ILO. With the operation of the RLF firmly with the community cooperatives federation, it is envisaged to be gradually institutionalized as a community owned credit facility, managed in accordance with the terms and conditions laid down by the federation.

Leveraging savings: The concept of saving is unknown among the tribals, who have been accustomed to living from one day to the next. The successful implementation of income generating schemes, coupled with motivation and guidance by project staff, mobilized the women to initiate small savings. The project RLF was used to largely supplement their small savings, for capital investment. Such personal stake-holding was considered necessary, however small, to introduce a sense of ownership and responsibility. The RLF operation therefore encouraged more people to have savings (even if only as a means to availing of this credit

Mutual help in action

The budget during the AUSAID/DANIDA supported expanded project, had allocated USD 24,000 towards RLF over the duration of three years. While the budgeted sum of USD 5,000 was released in the first year, it was not possible to release the balance amounts as planned, on account of donor constraints. This unforeseen development posed a problem to over 1,600 beneficiaries of the 30 new villages who were waiting for the credit facility. In order to help tide over this problem, the ten pilot villages decided to pool a significant portion of their RLF, with the 30 new villages of the cluster. This enabled 835 new beneficiaries to avail of the RLF, which went on to prove the project hypothesis of mutual help within a cluster of ethnically homogenous groups. This indeed, was cooperation in action.

facility). Prior to the operation of the Pilot Project, not a single tribal household of the project villages had a personal saving account. By the end of this period in December 1999, 324 beneficiaries had opened personal saving accounts in the local banks as well as in the local post office, with a total saving of Rs. 288,445/- (US\$6,753).

By the end of the expanded project, the number of individual savings accounts had increased to 1,753. The women's self help groups and savings and credit cooperatives, have generated a collective savings which has been pooled with the interest on RLF loans, to amount to Rs. 179,338. The village development fund amounts to Rs. 43,206.

Freedom from debt bondage has been one of the important outcomes of the project, with the help of the easy credit facility from the project RLF, and the resultant increase in incomes. Of the estimated 318 families indebted to money lenders, 238 had freed themselves of all debt and the rest were on their way.

Leveraging external credit : Initially, the project RLF was the only source of credit for capital investment available to the people. With gradual success in their economic activities, the women's SHGs were emboldened to approach other microfinance institutions. SSADRI played a vital role in facilitating such external credit linking, with the District Industries Corporation, the Small Industries Development Bank, the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) etc. A total number of 30 SHGs were provided refinance of Rs. 10,000 each by NABARD, towards supplementing credit from RLF and expanding their business activities.

Literacy, Education, Awareness

— importance of the integrated approach in the empowerment process



As noted by the benchmark survey, the communities in the project area, like most tribals in India, retain high rates of illiteracy. They have little access to information, making them easy prey to manipulation and exploitation by outsiders. While technical training and organization building may lead to immediate quick fix improvements of increased income, it does not necessarily strengthen the general capacity of the community to understand the issues at stake and control their own development processes. Building on human resources towards wider all round empowerment, is a fundamental ingredient to ground income generation programmes in a broader process of development. In recognition of this need, an integrated approach was adopted to include general awareness raising on issues of relevance, literacy and non formal education.

Each village set up its own non formal education (NFE) centre, with the village animator in charge. Initially, the centres were set up with the purpose of preparing the children towards mainstream schooling. Over 1,978 children have attended during the expanded project period, and more than 397 of the older children, mainstreamed into the neighboring regular schools. The project collaborated with the State Resource Centre (SRC) to train six of the village animators in improved teaching methods. The NFE centres of the project received recognition from the district education authority, who absorbed eight of the centres into the Education Guarantee Scheme of the Government.

As the women's SHGs initiated their savings and credit activities and small enterprises, they came to realize the need for functional literacy and basic skills to enable themselves to manage their own accounts and records. In response, Adult Literacy classes were initiated, and attended by 849 adults (503 women and 346 men).

Awareness on broader issues of relevance, has been an important part of the integrated approach. In collaboration with the Public Relations Centre, the SRC, UNICEF, State Departments of Health, Forestry and Education, audio visual materials were put to good use, while the traditional jatra (drama), role plays, song and dance techniques employed by the local staff and youth groups, found greatest popularity and receptivity to concepts on :

- Health care, family planning, immunization, prevention of malaria, TB, polio, HIV/AIDS
- Education
- Gender issues and the girl child
- Ill effects of alcoholism
- Food habits, sanitation and hygiene
- Forest and environment protection
- Organizing into SHGs and cooperatives, importance of savings, etc.

A total number of 18 health camps and 7 veterinary camps were organized in association with the local government and public health centres.

The project invited local functionaries – the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA), Integrated Tribal development Agency (ITDA) and other line departments to appraise the people of ongoing programmes and schemes meant for tribal development, with a view to capacitating them to independently access the services which are their rightful due.

SSADRI further supplemented the process with sessions on the ILO policies on tribals as well as on cooperatives, in addition to the national policies and programmes.



Land and Natural Resources

— contributions to protection initiatives



The initial fact finding survey in 1992 had revealed the need for a wide range of activities to restore the ecological stability of the area. Land and water management schemes and technical guidance have focused on the prevention of soil erosion, water harvesting and conservation, afforestation, development and reclamation of degraded lands and development of small irrigation structures.

In all villages, monthly meetings were held with the attendance of village elders, self help group members, cooperative members and the youth groups, to discuss on all important issues concerning protection and regeneration of the forests, prevention of forest fires in the summer, and utilization of degraded lands for sabai grass cultivation. As noted earlier, a total area of 485 acres of wasteland was brought under sabai cultivation, which, apart from generating 1,000 man-days of employment per year, served to check soil erosion to a large extent in the project area.

The 36 Youth Groups have been instrumental in forest protection and regeneration activities of the project. Jungle Suraksya Samitis (forest vigilance committees) were set up by the youth to guard their forests from tree felling and poaching by outsiders. Technical guidance on social forestry, farm forestry and pasture development was provided to them with the help of the District Forestry Department. In appreciation of this community initiative, the Forest Department has been providing generous grants-in-aid towards developmental activities which have further helped to encourage the youth.

Fagu Soren of Ramnagar village, and Secretary of the Bhanjbira Mati Jungle Surakhsya Samiti, shares his story

I am Fagu Soren, Secretary of the Bhanjbira Mati Jungle Surakhsya Samiti. My village and some adjoining villages were witness to deforestation, which was extensive. When the Mayurbhanj Project was launched in the year 2001, our village was selected as part of the cluster. The Project Manager, Extension Worker and myself being the Animator, had several meetings with the villagers of Ramnagar and adjoining villages regarding environment protection and forest conservation. The Mahila Mandal, VDC and all the villagers realized the importance of this critical issue. It was realized by the villagers that a time will come when there will be no forest.

In view of this grave threat to our forests which are dear to us, a committee was constituted with youth from the villages of Ramnagar, Heseldihi, Baghuasole, Gunjsahi, and Kumbharadubi. From each village, 6 to 7 members were selected daily on a rotation basis to carry out night duties in the forest area. The group of 30 took turns daily to keep vigil for the protection of the forest. The group regularly announce in the area that forest fire is completely prohibited, no permission to cut any kind of trees and hunting in forest. Any person found disobeying will be fined upto Rs.10,000 and will be handed over to the Ranger or DFO of the forest department for legal proceedings.

In the year 2003, the Project Manager helped us in registering our committee under the Forest Department. We received a Grant-in-aid of Rs.15,000 as first installment and Rs.14,000 as second installment. Seeing that we are doing good work, the Ranger came and surveyed our five villages. Together with him, the Project Manager, and the VDC, we prepared a list of developmental activities to be initiated in these five villages. In the year 2004-2005, the Samiti received even more grant-in-aid of Rs.337,000, out of which Rs.75,000 was used for road repairing of village Ramnagar, Rs.120,000 was used for construction of one community center for the Samiti, Rs.100,000 was used for deep bore wells for irrigation and agriculture development and Rs.40,000 for construction of two watch towers.

As a result of our protective efforts, the forest has become dense with trees. With the regeneration of the forest, more leaves fall to the ground and get decomposed. In the rainy season rainwater flows from the forest to the cultivation land, helping enrich the soil. Now for the year 2005-2006, our Samiti will receive a similar grant-in aid for taking up development activities in Heseldihi village very soon. Likewise, all the villages of our Samiti will be covered.

Gender Mainstreaming

— from passive to active project partners



At the first community meeting held in Durgapur village in the year 1992, the men sat in the front and the women sat silently at a distance of 20 feet behind, reticent to participate in the discussions. Today, the women of the area have come a long way. As the key players in all project activities, they have taken over the lead role in decision making of their own SHGs and cooperative structures.

Women's empowerment, in terms of their economic as well as social development, has been a major focus of the project from its beginning. Sensitizing and awareness programmes through role plays etc., on the importance of women's education and their equal participation in village affairs, addressed the community as a whole, especially the village elders and opinion leaders.

Women's SHGs (which later evolved into the village savings and credit cooperatives) were made responsible for the project RLF management, who had the final word in identifying the beneficiaries in their respective villages and recommending them for loans. This gave a big clout to the women in the village community. Further, their increased earning capacity and the resulting economic benefits to the family, succeeded in bringing about a gradual change in perceptions. This was evident through the men folk helping in transporting the women to the training centre and taking over child care responsibilities, while their women folk attended the training sessions.

Organizational strengthening through regular capacity building on group dynamics and women's leadership development, has been instrumental in their empowerment process. Intensive trainings in SHG, followed by cooperative management, aided by functional literacy, accounts and record keeping, awareness on banking and credit management, followed by personal

Special consideration should be given to increasing women's participation in the cooperative movement at all levels, particularly at management and leadership levels.

- ILO Recommendation No. 193 on Promotion of Cooperatives, Sec II.7 (3)

interaction with administrative officers and bank managers, exposures to trade fairs at local district level as well as other states, all went towards the confidence building process. Their transformation from silent labourers to vocal decision makers and participants in their own development initiatives, has turned them into active project partners.

This special focus on gender mainstreaming all through the project period, has resulted in gender equity in terms of job creation, economic as well as social empowerment. As indicated above, women generated more than 50% of the employment initiatives in the project. The primary village level savings and credit cooperatives comprise of women only, while the producer cooperatives have a mixed membership. The federation of the primary cooperatives, the Mayurbhanj Adivasi Cooperative Mahasangha Ltd., comprises about 90% women and five of the nine Board members are women. Six of the eleven project members and leaders, who have been elected to the local panchayats, are women. The women of the project have indeed succeeded in breaking the “glass ceiling”.

There are many cases of individual women who have played a pivotal role in the women’s empowerment process...



Deola Majhi tells her story..

I belong to the Santhal tribe of Dhobanisole village. When the project started in 2001, I was happy and proud to be selected as one of the ten extension workers. So far, I was only a housewife, engaged in my own household activities, but the project gave me a chance to venture out and utilize my good qualifications to improve the lot of my people.

The staff orientation trainings helped us to function as effective leaders and mobilizers. I improvised our traditional forms of song, dance and drama to generate awareness on various issues, including the importance of education to girls and women, and helped in gradually changing the community perceptions with regard to women and other issues. We encourage equal participation of men and women in any important decision making. I have seen a gradual change in the personality of the women, who are now more confident and able to give voice to their aspirations.

There has been a change in my own personality. I have become a confident community leader. So although it is unfortunate that the ILO had to phase out of the project before our cooperatives were fully established, I and my colleagues have pledged ourselves to continue the process that we started during the project, towards sustainable tribal cooperative enterprises. I am confident that our dream of tribal self reliance will become a reality and this will be a model project for all to follow.

The Participatory and Consultative Process — ensuring cultural compatibility, incorporating indigenous knowledge systems and practices (IKSP)

As pointed out in the initial fact finding survey, excessive reliance of the people on bureaucratic initiative has made the people inactive and did not show much progress in their living condition. The top down approach evoked little participation of the people in the various programmes meant for them, but which the people could not identify with. Therefore a shift towards active, informed participation of the people was adopted in the implementation process. This is much in keeping with the ILO Policy on working with tribal peoples (through its Conventions 107 and 169), based on the two fundamental principles of consultation and informed participation. This form of a community driven and community owned approach, fully ensures cultural compatibility of all initiatives, while integrating their own perceptions on development, which the people can identify with and hence stand a greater chance of success.

Hence the project involved the beneficiary community right from the planning stage. For instance, their involvement in work-planning and drawing time lines, took note of the sowing and harvest seasons, traditional festivals, during which periods it would be futile to carry out any project activity. As noted above, it also took note of the cultural sensitivities in the process of selection of new economic activities. For instance, while the bench mark survey had recommended dairying as a lucrative option, it was evident that dairying would not be acceptable to the people who consider milk as being a prerogative of the calves, and not for human consumption. So too, while bamboo groves grew in profusion in this region and were cultivated for trading and used as natural fencing round their lands, the idea of producing and selling artifacts made of bamboo would have been the obvious occupational choice to an outsider. It was however explained by the people, that this was traditionally the occupation of the scheduled castes and was therefore not practiced by the tribal communities.

There exists a tacit understanding on the pursuance of certain occupations by certain groups (thereby not encroaching upon the others' livelihood source), which an outside agency would not be aware of. The vital importance of consultation and the peoples' informed participation in their own development planning, is therefore obvious.

The participatory process encouraged the integration of indigenous knowledge systems and practices (IKSP). Apart from sabai grass cultivation and rope making, saal leaf cup pressing, honey extraction, tasar silk worm rearing and silk yarn production, their vast knowledge of medicinal plants was also promoted. Revival of indigenous seed varieties of paddy, which are hardy and drought resistant, (but facing extinction) was encouraged.



Tribal Life & Culture

— contributions of the project to cultural survival

Tribal life and society is characterized with:

Geographical and cultural isolation, and resultant stability of their cultural norms

Group identity and cultural self image

Limited world view and historical depth, merging into mythology

Emphasis on tradition

Emphasis on group self sufficiency

Universality in the application of norms

Limited population density, hence limited innovative potential

Merging of the natural with the supernatural, resulting in a blending of the sacred with the secular

Culture comprises the whole frame work of beliefs, symbols and values with which individuals define their world, express their feelings, make their judgements, and behave with one another according to the prescribed norms of the society. Culture also includes speech; knowledge, customs, arts, technologies, ideals and rules and the whole mass or body of culture, the institutions and practices and ideas constituting them can be expressed in a single term 'Cultural Tradition'.

The strength of the project lay in drawing upon the cultural practices of the people, and in turn, contributing towards their survival. The Santhals are great story tellers. The old Manjhi of a Santhal village is a repository of folk tales, based on legends and mythology relating to the creation of the world, or simple anecdotes. Legends like the Virsikha –worship of saal trees, the one sided thatching of the Jaher-Era roof, the hen sacrifice, bride price, etc. and popular folktales of various birds and animals, are gradually getting forgotten by the people. These were revived and extensively used in the NFE classes to convey messages to the adults and children alike, in a way that would engage their interest, with better receptivity.

The local festivals were given due importance, as also the traditional song, dance and drama. Songs are classified as : *Social songs*, sung in name-giving ceremonies, marriage and other occasions; *Ritual songs* sung during festivals such as Dahar Serenj or Mag Bonga (first festival in the month of February), Baha Serenj (Flower festival when the Jaher Era is worshipped), Rinja Serenj (Gamha festival when

the cattle are worshipped), Dasain Serenj (Durga Puja); Agricultural songs such as Lagre, Dahar, Golwari, Dasae. There are also love songs, wedding songs, even divorce songs, songs dedicated to nature, flowers and birds. The extension workers and village animators improvised upon these to create new motivational songs related to group formation as SHGs and later as cooperatives, giving expression to their dreams and aspirations and how they would succeed.



The jatra, a local form of drama, extensively practiced by the youth groups, found wide popularity in the process of disseminating messages and awareness raising. Various traditional dance forms such as the Baha, Dang, Dahar and Lagene, were used to further enrich the process while encouraging their cultural survival.



Infrastructure – how project (directly and indirectly) contributed to the physical and social infrastructure

12.1 The importance of physical infrastructure for the development of social infrastructure

The wide range of project activities created the need for additional space in the villages for the purpose of the various group enterprises, to conduct meetings, trainings, and to hold literacy classes. The project acknowledged this need for some physical infrastructure building as an important condition for long-term sustainability and social development.

Community Centre - At the end of the first pilot phase, a training cum community centre was constructed in village Nuasahi at a total cost of INR 600,000, with funding from ILO as well as the WFP. The Project office was also housed here during the project period, with its maintenance being supervised by SSADRI. At the end of the project, the people's representative body, the Mayurbhanj Adivasi Cooperative Mahasangha (MACM) Ltd., has taken over the maintenance of the community centre, which will continue to be utilized as a common meeting place by the community, apart from its use as a training centre for future training sessions, and production activities for some of the group enterprises.

Land - During the expanded phase, about one acre of land was allocated by District authorities to the Tribal Multipurpose Labour Society (which has now been absorbed into the MACM). This plot of land has been used by SSADRI to practise tissue culture banana plantation, while at the same time, using it for purpose of demonstration to interested beneficiaries, during the project period.



Multipurpose Worksheds

- Project activities had attracted additional WFP support during the pilot phase, by way of multipurpose worksheds. These were initially constructed in the pilot villages of Nuasahi, Badajamboni, Masinasol, Karanjia, Durgapur and

Bandhasahi, at a total cost of INR 900,000 in phases, over 1997 – '99. Two additional worksheds were constructed in the new villages of Kissantandi and Kalaraphulia, in 2001 – '02 with direct WFP funding of INR 500,000 during the expanded phase. These have greatly supplemented the project by enabling the training cum production activities, literacy classes, and providing storage space for sabai grass as well the project equipment.

Equipment - Equipment provided for the purpose of vocational skills training cum production, over the total period, include:

Pilot phase :	
Leaf cup/plate pressing machines	59
Sewing machines	23
Type writers	7
Bicycles	14
Motorcycle	1
Expanded phase:	
Upgraded sewing machines (for appliqué)	8
Knitting machines	15
Upgraded knitting machines.....	20
Pump sets (for agriculture/horticulture).....	5
Television set	1
Material for horticulture/banana tissue culture	
Cost sharing for a tractor	

Ownership of all physical infrastructure rests with the community, under overall supervision of the MACM, and will be suitably utilized towards generating revenue for its maintenance as well as functioning of the MACM.

12.2 Social Infrastructure

Initial experience with the single village initiative in Durgapur, followed by the pilot experience, clearly indicated the importance of a wholistic, integrated approach. While the focus remained on organizing and employment generation, one could not afford to overlook the needs related to the broader community developmental issues, that impacted upon the lives of the people and in turn, on the project outputs.





Literacy and education occupied a significant place in the project activities. The progress made by the pilot villages in this regard, inspired the 30 new villages of the expanded cluster, to set up their own literacy sheds in each village, be they brick structures or simple thatched roofs supported on bamboo poles. In response to the importance placed by the people on non formal education for their children (and later for adults) the first three years (AUSAID phase) of the project allocated a part of its budget specifically to this activity. Budget support was discontinued in the final MIGROS

year, with the intention of gradually getting the people to take over responsibility of paying the village animators for continuing with the NFE component. Achievements in NFE are elaborated in section 7. Its further expansion and linking up with the District initiatives, are described in section 14.



Health was given its rightful importance. The project organized a number of health camps and veterinary camps, with health checkups, immunization and generating awareness on the prevention of common diseases afflicting the area. This helped create a general health consciousness among the people, including hygiene and sanitation, nutrition and safe drinking water. Kitchen gardening, adopted by almost all the households at varying levels, has helped promote consumption of a variety of vegetables and fruits, including green leafy vegetables, tomatoes, brinjals, bananas, carrots, papaya and lemon.

Tribal Cooperatives and Self Governance

– linkage with the Panchayati Raj

The twin objective of the tribal sub-plan has been spelt as creation of an adequate impact in the socio-economic field and termination of exploitation. Exploitation of tribals occurs through extortion of usurious rates of interest, fraud in purchase and sale, payment of wages much lower than the statutory prescribed minimum, debt bondage, liquor vending and in various other forms. Regulations under the Fifth Schedule and other legal enactments have been framed to protect them from exploitation. However, legislation is no guarantee. It has to be backed up with strong and sustained measures. Credit and marketing has a high priority both as a protective as well as developmental measure.

The cooperative structures initiated in the project, while building their capacities in both areas of activity, recognized the limitations of working in isolation. Need was felt for a support system towards their long term sustainability, and the importance of linking up with the broader developmental activities of the government at local level, through the panchayati raj institutions. A training session on Panchayati Raj, invited the Sarpanch, Nayab Sarpanch and secretaries of the panchayats to interact with the groups on ongoing developmental activities under the panchayats. They were in turn informed of the project enterprises and their potential contributions to the functioning of the panchayats. It was envisaged that this would result in a two way process, with the panchayats awarding works to the tribal cooperatives who belong to the area, rather than to the outside contractors, and the cooperatives in turn providing good quality work, and improving their own local economy. A closer link has been established between the two institutions at grassroot level, through eleven of the project members, elected to the local panchayats.

Name	Gram panchayat	Village	Designation
Ms. Basi Hembram	Bhaliadiha	Majhiani	Ward Member
Mr. Singray Tudu	"	Kisantandi	P.S. Member
Mrs. Damayanti Soren	"	Nichuapada	Ward Member
Mr. Raghunath Soren	"	"	Ward Member
Mr. Sukul Chandra Soren	"	Khejuria	Ward Member
Mrs. Lalita Tudu	Sankhabhanga	Baghuasole	Ward Member
Mrs. Hiramani Soren	Sureidihi	Ramnagar	Sarpanch
Mrs. Samabari Singh	Durgapur	Chillibasa	Ward Member
Mr. Rabindra Singh	"	Asanabani	Ward Member
Mrs. Budhini Singh	Dantiamunha	Dhobanisole	Ward Member
Mr. Budhu Singh	"	Dhobanisole	P.S. Member

Linking up with District, State and National Partners – participating in the development process

14.1 Institutionalizing a process of dialogue

The ultimate purpose of this small project being, to demonstrate effective implementation modalities for tribal development, the project sought to secure the interest and close collaboration of the Government, civil society and tribal representatives, through institutionalizing committees at three levels :

- (i) Project Steering Committee (PSC) at project level, chaired by the District Collector cum Magistrate and comprising the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA), the Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA), the Cooperative Development agencies at District level, Block Development Officers, Horticulture, Education and relevant line departments, the Panchayat representatives and the tribal representatives of the project beneficiary community, and the implementing agency, SSADRI.
- (ii) The State Level Monitoring Committee (SLMC) was instituted at the instance of, and chaired by, the Commissioner cum State Secretary of the Tribal Welfare Department, at the start of the expanded project. It comprised of the Orissa State Cooperative Union, the State Resource Centre and relevant line departments of the Government of Orissa, and the implementing agency.
- (iii) The INDISCO National Advisory Committee (INAC) at national level, is chaired by the Secretary, Ministry of Tribal Affairs of the Government of India, and comprises of the ILO's nodal Ministry of Labour, and of Agriculture and Cooperation, the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes, civil society organizations engaged in tribal development, academicians, and tribal representatives.

It was envisaged that the Committees would meet at regular intervals to monitor and coordinate the project progress, beside other INDISCO initiatives, and in the process, provide a platform for a two way dialogue between the grassroot tribal organizations and the administrative authorities. However, the frequent change in officials especially at state and district levels, posed a challenge towards securing continuity and sustained interest of the concerned functionaries. Challenges notwithstanding, efforts would continue under the tribal federation, to hold regular meetings in close coordination with the Panchayats, Blocks, ITDA, DRDA, DRCS, etc., and invite the District Collector as the chairperson. This would serve as a permanent forum at the local project level, and enable a continued dialogue between the community and the concerned authorities.

At national level, the INAC provided an effective interface between the tribal representatives and Government, providing an opportunity to bring up broader issues of concern beside the INDISCO initiatives, and thereby enabling grassroots experiences to bear upon the policy environment. The continuance of such a forum beyond INDISCO, would indeed ensure a continued social dialogue towards more consultative and participatory processes, and conducive policies.

14.2 Linking up with ongoing Programmes

Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) of the Government was launched in 2003, with the purpose of introducing primary education in villages with no government sponsored school within a radius of 1 km. The functioning of the project NFE Centres attracted the support of the EGS scheme. Eight of the NFE centres in villages of Nuasahi, Nayanagar, Heseldihi, Jhinkiriasol, Idar, Kadamsole, Tadki and Kumbhardubi, were adopted as EGS schools in the year 2004, covering 254 children. The provision of mid day meals has greatly improved the attendance. Learning materials, stationary and the teachers' salaries are borne by the scheme, including a contingency for maintenance of the literacy centres.

Community participation is secured in all the villages, through 'Sikshya Committees' comprising the mothers, who are given the responsibility to monitor the attendance of the children as well as of the teachers, supervise distribution of the mid-day meals and undertake maintenance of the literacy sheds.

Watershed Management Programme of the Soil Conservation Department was initiated in 2005, known as the Jala Bibhashika Mission. Eighteen of the project villages, under five representative committees, have been linked to this five year programme, constituting the construction of cross dams, ponds, canals, sabai grass and tree plantation. 90% of the cost of construction of the infrastructure will be borne by the Government, while 10% will be raised by the Committees, towards future maintenance of the infrastructure developed.

As part of the programme, self help groups are promoted to take up income generation with their own savings supplemented with a revolving fund of Rs. 5,000. Two project villages of Kalaraphulia and Nahasole, have been provided funds, and more are in the pipeline. Some of the project extension workers have also been absorbed by the programme, such as Mr. Sala Tudu who is Secretary of one of the committees, drawing a salary of Rs. 600 per month, and Mrs. Chitta Hembrum who has been inducted as a Committee Organizer, with a salary of Rs.300 per month.

Support and linking up with other programmes of the ITDA and DRDA, the Horticulture department, the Education and Extension programmes, Health department, NABARD, and not least, the Cooperatives Department at District level, have been part of the project activities from the beginning. As stated earlier, functionaries in charge of these schemes have been invited to generate awareness on the ongoing programmes for tribal development, and on accessing the same. Links with NABARD and the District Industries Corporation have also been established, as described earlier.

Operationalizing Policy – translating State policies as well as ILO policies into practice on the ground

The national priority on addressing the problems faced by the unorganized sector and the marginalized tribals in particular, finds expression through a policy statement of intent of the present Government, called the National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP) document. In recognition of the particular vulnerabilities of the tribal people who comprise the lowest strata of the unorganized workers, the CMP lays great emphasis on promoting viable livelihood strategies in tribal areas. Their rights over minor forest produce, and ownership rights over mineral and water resources, have been underlined. Community forest management, minor irrigation of tribal lands and land redistribution are to be promoted. Decentralization, through implementation of the Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act, towards promoting local self governance and empowerment at the grassroots, make a significant part of this policy document. The draft National Policy on Tribals, followed by a stronger piece of proposed legislation, the Scheduled Tribes (Forest Rights) Bill, elaborate upon the forest dwelling tribals' rights to their forest habitat and natural resources. These are all largely reflected in the ILO's Policy on Tribal Peoples, through its Convention no.107 (1957, ratified by India in 1958) and Convention no. 169 (1989), which recognizes and respects ethnic differences and the right to determine developmental priorities on their own terms.

The cluster/ethnic unit approach adopted in the project, was in recognition of the ethnic cultural differences which need to be preserved and respected, while working towards their economic mainstreaming. The principle of consultation and informed participation, which is central to the ILO's policy on working with tribal peoples, was demonstrated at all stages of project planning and implementation, as described above (section 10).

The peoples concerned shall have the right to decide their own priorities for the process of development as it affects their lives, beliefs, institutions and spiritual well-being and the lands they occupy or otherwise use, and to exercise control, to the extent possible, over their own economic, social and cultural development. In addition, they shall participate in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of plans and programmes for national and regional development which may affect them directly.

- Article 7.1, ILO Convention
No. 169 (1989)

The National CMP also places great emphasis on reviving and strengthening the cooperative sector. The National Policy on Cooperatives (2002) seeks to promote the adoption of new cooperative laws by states, to encourage self supporting cooperative societies, with autonomous, democratic and professional management. It may be added here that this policy document was largely influenced by the earlier rounds of consultations on the

ILO Recommendation No. 193 on the Promotion of Cooperatives, which provides a policy framework for member owned and managed cooperatives. It further elaborates upon the role of its tripartite constituents, and advocates a shift towards a supportive rather than regulatory role of the State.

The project sought to demonstrate the cooperative advantage towards sustainable group enterprise within a legally recognized framework as opposed to the informal SHGs, which nevertheless, serve the useful purpose of initiating the institutionalizing process in the pre-cooperative stage. In the process of linking up with the cooperative sector at the national, state as well as district levels, a two way partnership has been established. The project generated an appreciation of the participatory and culturally appropriate methodologies among the state and district training functionaries. It also generated a greater awareness of the possibilities offered by the new state cooperative law adopted by the state of Orissa, towards empowerment of the marginalized rural and tribal communities.

Governments should promote the important role of cooperatives in transforming what are often marginal survival activities (sometimes referred to as the 'informal economy') into legally protected work, fully integrated into mainstream economic life.

- ILO Recommendation No. 193 on Promotion of Cooperatives, Sec II.9

Basis for Replication – learning from the tribals

The project experiences have provided valuable insights in terms of participatory, culturally appropriate techniques for raising awareness and aspiration levels of the people, in grassroots organization building and in identification of their felt needs, in cooperative management of activities by the community's own organizations, in skills development, and more importantly, in the modalities of approach to secure people's involvement in their own development process.

It has established that credible and capable NGOs provide an effective interface between development partners and the community. Using the navigational skills of local NGOs can activate government agency funds, which often remain inactive or under-utilized due to lack of appropriate delivery mechanisms and their relevance to the felt needs of the people. Getting them to think and vocalize their concerns requires patient and sustained interactions with the tribal communities. While this process took its own time, the concerns expressed by the people related to :

Land and natural resources; environment and ecological preservation; human rights, discrimination and exploitation; indebtedness; self governance and self reliance; education and training needs and related support systems for marketing of produce; language and cultural survival; indigenous knowledge and intellectual property rights; social and economic underdevelopment. The project sought to address most of these concerns either directly or through linking up with the relevant support systems.

To identify their social protection needs, informal focus group discussions revealed an interesting solidarity system practiced within the community at village level. During times of need by any member (marriage/death rituals, illness etc) the community contributes at the rate of 5 Kg rice per household. There was no awareness of any external insurance provider. Priority areas for risk coverage were – medical insurance, crop insurance (during periods of flood) and education. In the context of proposed legislation measures for social security in the unorganized sector, it would be important to consider means of responding to the social protection needs as identified by the people in remote tribal regions, without eroding their age old solidarity systems.

As described in earlier sections, cooperation is an integral part of tribal life, more so within a cluster of ethnically compatible communities. However, extending such cooperation into the formal registered cooperative societies, was a new concept that presented challenges related to their low levels of literacy, exposure and awareness. Hence the introduction of formal cooperatives needed to be preceded with intensive awareness measures through traditional media, coupled with ongoing capacity building towards self management. This led to a gradual appreciation of the need to formalize their group enterprises for long term sustainability. In the process, additional training needs (such as in accounting systems, entrepreneurship, etc) were identified and voiced particularly by the women. The training initiatives which were introduced as a response to their demands, were noted to have a greater impact. This clearly underlined the need for inbuilt flexibility in work plans and timelines in the development process, if it is to have relevance and the desired impact.

The cluster and cooperative approach adopted in this project, received due recognition at the national level. The final meeting of the INDISCO National Advisory Committee (INAC) in July 2005, while appreciating the soundness of this approach, intended to advocate it to the state departments for tribal development. While the model provides a basis for replication, it goes without saying that the modalities would need to be adapted to the specific cultures and situations. An open minded approach to learning from the tribal people being addressed, and responding to their felt needs, is a necessary prerequisite to any development initiative with them.

Lessons and Best Practices

Many valuable lessons have been learned and best practices derived, during the course of the project.

17.1 Strategies in project design

- The socio-political dynamics in tribal societies need to be recognized while designing development initiatives in tribal regions. Inter-tribal rivalries would disrupt smooth functioning, while the cluster approach, i.e. taking one ethnic unit comprising socio culturally homogenous groups as one development unit, is more conducive to collective cooperative functioning.
- Ownership needs to be vested in the people, to ensure cultural compatibility as well as sustainability of the initiative. This necessitates a participatory, consultative, community centered approach towards identifying their own felt needs, objectives, and facilitating member driven initiatives.
- Gradual expansion of a project from a single village, and a small demonstration pilot comprising few villages, makes the desired impact on neighboring villages. Seeing is believing, and makes for a convincing strategy. Based on pilot experiences, an expanded model can be developed as a response to the demands of the people, which makes it 'their' initiative.
- Project designs and time lines need to be realistic and in keeping with the pace of living and methods of functioning, of the local people. Tribal people need time to absorb new developmental concepts and training inputs, and cannot be rushed. Donors and development agencies need to take cognizance of these factors and involve the beneficiary community while agreeing upon a realistic time frame and expected outputs.
- Further, flexibility needs to be built into the project design in terms of work planning and budget lines, in order to be more responsive to the cultures (eg. local festivals and events may influence the work planning) and felt needs as the project evolves (eg. need for additional training inputs in functional literacy, accounting and entrepreneurship development). This further underlines the need for participatory planning at every stage.
- Stakeholder consultations with Government, tribal representatives, civil society organizations and academicians engaged in tribal development are necessary at the start of, and during the initiative, to ensure its relevance in the national context. It needs to address the national priorities (in this case, on tribal development and cooperative promotion) as well as those of the beneficiary communities.

- Implementation of the enabling policies into practice on the ground, result in grassroots experiences for policy dialogue and integration. It is important to institutionalize this process of two way dialogue and provide a platform where the grassroots experiences can be shared and concerns brought to the notice of policy makers.
- Partnering with an implementing agency/NGO at local level, has the advantage of communication in local language, rapport with the local community and better receptivity. In the process, the NGO is in a position to exercise strong influence on the people, who may run the risk of getting too dependant upon the implementing partner. The choice of a professional implementing partner is therefore crucial to facilitate community ownership and self reliance of the people, rather than dependence in the long term.
- Frontline staff (extension workers/village animators) from within the beneficiary community, who are part of the culture and who the people would identify with, is a sound implementation strategy.
- Tribal development projects need to recognize the sensitive issue of non- tribal households belonging to the same region and of similar socio economic status as their tribal counterparts. Their total exclusion from the development process would give rise to inter communal friction which is to be avoided in the interests of smooth functioning of project activities.

17.2 Implementation

Vocational Skills Training & Employment

- Economic enterprises building upon natural resource based and traditional occupations, with simple technological and skills upgradation, make a good starting point. However, to ease the pressures on land, the younger generation of tribals are more open to diversifying into new skills and employment avenues for non-land based enterprises. The crucial importance of participatory identification of these new enterprises, is amply illustrated in sec. 10.
- Value addition at the primary level bring better returns from their natural resources including forest produce. Policies need to encourage such primary level value addition that ensure that the wealth accrues to the people who are at the lowest end of the supply chain (eg. the recent hike in electricity tariff at commercial rates, has been counterproductive in this regard, and discouraged the people from continuing with the saal leaf pressing unit).
- Tribal people are habituated to living from one day to the next, and look for quick monetary returns from their work. Any form of vocational skills training needs to bear this in mind, and secure some earnings while the training is in progress. Hence, linking up vocational training with production and marketing, stand a better chance of success than just training as a stand alone activity (especially if it is long term).
- Activities requiring low capital investment and hence involving low risk, have been more acceptable, while high capital intensive/high risk economic activities cannot be expected to succeed with the poor tribals. (eg. the tissue culture banana plantation, requiring high initial investment, was taken up in only two villages, as opposed to other low investment horticulture plantations and kitchen gardening, practiced by almost all households).

Credit

- Credit support on easy terms, such as a revolving loan fund, is crucial to meet the capital investment needs of the small enterprises, while leveraging their savings. It has been key to their economic empowerment process, and emergence from the debt trap.
- Some amount of personal stakeholding is important for a sense of ownership and accountability, and responsible management.
- A community owned credit mechanism needs to be institutionalized for sustainable management by the community, with appropriate capacity building in accounting systems and related matters. This has proved challenging, and brings out the need for a suitable period of hand holding before the community can fully take over the process.

Education, Literacy, Awareness

- Tribals are acutely aware of the constraints faced by them on account of their illiteracy, which is closely linked to their disempowerment and vulnerability to exploitation.
- Adult literacy training, when introduced in response to the felt need of the people as they start managing their own credit and enterprises, gains greater relevance and resulting impact. It needs to be functional and application based.
- Non formal education for children at the village level, is effective towards mainstreaming them into regular school.
- Animators/teachers belonging to the same village, ensure the cultural compatibility of the curriculum.
- Teaching methodology needs to be child friendly. Tribal folklore, proverbs and tales are a rich source of sound cultural values and serve as useful motivators in education.
- Awareness generation on relevant issues needs to utilize traditional media of song, dance and drama, for greater acceptability and impact.
- Combining awareness with income generation, assists communities in obtaining the means necessary to improve their practices, such as in health and education.
- Integrating the education/awareness component in a livelihoods project, is necessary towards building confidence, self esteem, and the resulting capacity to engage with the outside world.

Natural Resource Management & Environment

- Indigenous practices in sustainable NRM are integral to tribal culture. The environmental conservation and forest restoration programmes become more effective if they partner with the local communities and recognize their contribution to safeguarding their ecology. Youth groups in particular make effective partners in forest protection.
- Natural resource based economic activities, increase the relevance of their sustainability through prudent use.
- Broader environmental conservation activities rely on securing and clarifying long term tenure and rights of the tribal people to access resources in their own habitat.

Gender

- Women are generally found to be more receptive to ideas and concepts that are new to them (such as saving up for the future, adult literacy, formal cooperatives, etc) and show greater foresight than their male counterparts, especially when they see benefits for their children and family. They therefore make active partners in the development process.
- Gender mainstreaming efforts need to include the men folk and address the community as a whole, especially the village elders and opinion leaders, in order to bring about any change in perceptions and practices.
- Women can manage their savings and credit functions with greater responsibility and discretion. Therefore putting women's groups in charge of the credit component, apart from ensuring its proper management, gives them a clout with social recognition and respect.
- Needless to add, the importance of capacity building and appropriate training at all stages, with necessary technical support, cannot be overestimated. It is a crucial prerequisite to women's empowerment and confidence building, their equal participation in the decision making process and in ensuring gender equity in leadership positions.
- Community based projects such as this, cannot succeed without the inclusion and active involvement of both genders. Singular focus on women tends to make the men folk feel left out of the development process and sharing of responsibility. This would result in lack of total community support and commitment, which would be necessary for long term sustainability.

Institution building

- An initial study of the existing traditional institutional setup at the village and cluster levels, helps in the process of extending these into groups and committees to undertake project activities.
- The evolution from informal to formal institutions needs to be a gradual process, with a great deal of need based capacity development. They need time to become receptive to new structures and to prepare themselves towards self reliance (dependant as they have become on external support). They cannot be rushed into accepting change, or building their own capacities.
- While tribal people are cooperative by nature, the idea of getting themselves formally registered under a law becomes a matter of concern and they need convincing in terms of added advantages (such as recognition as a legal entity, easier access to support services, credit and markets, economies of scope and scale, etc).
- Long bureaucratic procedures with extensive paper work in the registration process, discourage the people from proceeding with getting themselves registered as cooperatives. These need to be greatly simplified, if the poor and the semiliterate are to be encouraged towards formalizing their enterprises.

17.3 Sustainability

- While a certain length of hand holding may be required beyond the project period, it should not be confused with encouraging indefinite dependence of the people in managing their enterprises, which would be undesirable and go against the concept of member-owned and managed cooperatives.
- For long term sustainability of group enterprises, it becomes necessary to formalize the informal self help groups into legal entities such as self reliant cooperatives, functioning under a set of their own bye laws and with autonomous, professional and democratic self management.
- Federating the primary village level cooperatives into an apex secondary structure, ensures a permanent representative body to provide services and backward - forward linkages in the long term. Their special training needs also need to be addressed, to enable members to play their leadership role efficiently.
- Frontline staff from within the community itself, provide for future leadership in the community cooperatives and federation, with their relatively better education levels, leadership training and experience during project period.
- Cooperatives at the grassroot level need ongoing technical support to facilitate their self-management. Hence the establishment of “Facilitation Centres” by the Cooperation Department would serve as a back stopping mechanism and ensure their institutional sustainability. Similar referral centres for mentoring and on-the-job problem solving in vocational skills and entrepreneurship, would also go a long way towards holding the enterprises together.
- Linking up with local training institutions to provide for future training needs is important, particularly towards preparing a fresh cadre of leaders for democratic management.
- Linking up with local government structures at district, block and particularly the panchayat level, is essential towards ensuring future support and sustainability of the grassroot cooperatives. Institutionalizing the links in the form of a steering committee, chaired by the District Collector, would further strengthen the process in the long term.

Summary Conclusion

The poor and marginalized tribals have not the ability to withstand the fiercely competitive and exploitative market forces, in their individual capacities. This project sought to demonstrate the empowerment that comes with organizing. The tribal strengths of community solidarity, mutual help within compatible ethnic units, uniformity of purpose coupled with traditional skills, have been capitalized upon, in combination with the cooperative advantages of legal recognition, economy of scope and scale, support services and linkages, to open up new possibilities towards improving their economy.

This project, which has been modest in terms of scale and resources, has succeeded in meeting its larger objective of advocating a cluster and the cooperative approach to tribal empowerment. Its replication on a wider scale, as intended, would indeed go a long way towards improving the social and economic scenario of the marginalized tribal regions. It gains greater relevance in the present day context of globalization, which threatens to widen the gap between the excluded, from economic mainstreaming.

While at the conceptual level, the approach is indeed sound, its application on the ground is not without challenges. As noted above, the process of transformation to formal institutional mechanisms, is a long and laborious one, requiring a great deal of on going capacity building as well as confidence building. The new Cooperative Law on self supporting cooperatives adopted by the State of Orissa, was availed of by the project, as an enabling policy. It however, needs to be matched with a more enabling environment on the ground, in terms of simplified bureaucratic procedures, which otherwise tend to scare away the poor and the semi literate. Training support systems need to be upgraded and in keeping with the spirit of the new Act. Such measures, as also advocated in the ILO Recommendation No. 193 on Promotion of Cooperatives, would go a long way in implementing the new progressive trends in cooperative policy in the country, towards promoting self reliant cooperatives.

It is therefore evident that while promoting self reliance of the community, the role of Government and related support systems, cannot be undermined. Speaking of this project, within its constraints of time and resources, it has succeeded in triggering a process which has only just begun. While the cooperative structures are at a fledgling stage, the aspiration levels are high and need to be sustained with timely interventions and necessary technical support of the District administration and related departments, towards enabling the people to manage their own enterprises on a sustainable basis.

Long years of dependence on the well meant developmental efforts of external agents, have eroded the age old tribal spirit of self reliance and turned them into passive recipients. There is now a wide acknowledgement of the need to reverse this trend of 'passive dependence' to 'active participation'. In the process of establishing a true partnership with the community, this project has demonstrated the crucial importance of a consultative process in programme planning and implementation, in order to ensure its relevance to the people, and thereby gain their informed and active participation in their own development process. A paradigm shift to such a 'grassroots- up' approach, with ownership of the initiative resting with the beneficiary community, makes for meaningful and sustainable development.



List of Abbreviations

AUSAID	Australian Agency for International Development
BDS	Business Development Services
CENDERET	Centre for Development Research and Training
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DFO	District Forest Officer
DRCS	District Registrar of Cooperative Societies
DRDA	District Rural Development Agency
DTF	Development Technocrats Forum
GP	Gram Panchayat
HH	Household
ICM	Institute of Cooperative Management
IKSP	Indigenous knowledge systems and practices
ILO	International Labour Organization
INAC	INDISCO National Advisory Committee
INDISCO	Interregional Programme to support Self Reliance of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples
ITDA	Integrated Tribal Development Agency
JNV	Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya
MACM	Mayurbhanj Adivasi Cooperative Mahasangha
MFP	Minor Forest Produce
MIGROS	abbreviation in German, a large cooperative federation in Switzerland
NABARD	National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development
NCMP	National Common Minimum Programme
NCUI	National Cooperative Union of India
NFE	Non Formal Education
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
OSCU	Orissa State Cooperative Union
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RLF	Revolving Loan Fund
SHG	Self Help Group
SLMC	State Level Monitoring Committee
SRC	State Resource Centre
SSADRI	Social Science and Development Research Institute
TMLS	Tribal Multipurpose Labour Society
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VDC	Village Development Committee
WFP	World Food Programme
XIM	Xavier Institute of Management

ANNEXURE - 1

Villages Under Mayurbhanj Project

Sl.No.	Name of the GP	No.	Revenue Villages	Hamlets	
01	DANTIAMUNHA	01	Pallaboni		
		02	Dhobanisol		
		03	Sikharaghati		
		04	Assanbani	01	Uparsahi
				02	Talajahi
		05	Chilbasa		
		06	Bhlukchua	03	Bhaluchua
				04	Sukhilakhadi
		07	Nuasahi		
		08	Badajamboni	05	Kharia Sahi
02	VALIADIHA	06	Sasa Sahi		
		09	Majhiani	07	Uparsahi
				08	Talajahi
		10	Nichuapada	09	Khadia sahi
				10	Uparsahi
				11	Talajahi
		11	Kenduchatia	12	Kenduchatia
				13	Baunsabani
				14	Nuasahi
		12	Kadamsol		
		13	Kisantandi	15	Uparsahi
				16	Talajahi
		14	Tadki		
		15	Idar		
		16	Kalaraphulia		
		17	Khejuria		
		18	Masinasol	17	Uparsahi
				18	Talajahi
03	SUREIDIHI	19	Bandhasahi		
		20	Jhilliriboni		
		21	Jhinkiriasol		
		22	Gondigadha		
		23	Nahasol	19	Uparsahi
				20	Talajahi
		21	Uparsahi		
		22	Talajahi		
		24	Ramnagar		

04	SANKHABHANGA	25	Heseldihi	23	Uparsahi
				24	Talajahi
		26	Baghuasol		
		27	Gunjusahi		
05	CHANDANPUR	28	Baidipur	25	Naya Baidipur
				26	Puruna Baidipur
		29	Kumbhardubi	27	Uparsahi
				28	Talajahi
		30	Badapeta	29	Uparsahi
				30	Kendusahi
				31	Indira sahi
				32	Kitadihi
		31	Chandabila	33	Dahi sahi
				34	Chingaldihi
		35	Muchisahi		
				36	Puruna sahi
				37	Tinildihi
		32	Dhanghera	38	Sanmundari
				39	Dhanghera
		33	Karatpeta	40	Kendudihi
				41	Kanatpeta
06	HALADIPAL	34	Dongarbila		
07	GADIGAON	35	Sangadi	42	Uparsahi
				43	Talajahi
08	DURGAPUR	36	Durgapur	44	Badasahi
				45	Kendusahi
				46	Dandasahi
				47	Bedasahi
				48	Prunadihi
		37	Dhansul		
		38	Chuasol	49	Uparsahi
				50	Talajahi
		39	Satsol		
09	KHDISOLE	40	Karanjia		
09	Gram Panchayats	40	Villages	50	Hamlets

ANNEXURE - 2

List of Primary Cooperatives and Federation

Sl.	Name of the Cooperative	Village Name
01.	Maranburu Mahila Self-Help Cooperative	Nayanagar
02.	Maranburu Mahila Self-Help Cooperative	Asanbani
03.	Kiyajhari Mata Mahila Self Help Cooperative Ltd.	Kalarafulia
04.	Marang Sanjam Mahila Self Help Cooperative Ltd.	Nahasole
05.	Mahalaxmi Mahila Self Help Cooperative Ltd.	Jhinkiriasole
06.	Biduchandan Mahila Self Help Cooperative Ltd.	Tadki
07.	Kapurmuli Mahila Self Help Cooperative Ltd.	Chilabasa
08.	Maa Laxmi Narayan Mahila Self Help Cooperative Ltd.	Dhobanisole
09.	Maa Subhalaxmi Mahila Self Help Cooperative Ltd.	Ramnagar
10.	Maa Durga Mahila Self Help Cooperative Ltd.	Khejuria
11.	Maa Saraswati Mahila Multi-purpose Cooperative Ltd.	Sikharghati
12.	Baura Pradhan Mahila Multipurpose Cooperative Ltd.	Karatpeta
13.	Utnabh Rakab Mahila Multipurpose Cooperative Ltd.	Baghuasole
14.	Rilamala Sawnta Susar Mahila Multipurpose Cooperative Ltd.	Baidipur
15.	Rilamala Mahila Multipurpose Cooperative Ltd.	Dhanghera
16.	Bhanja Parayani Mahila Multipurpose Cooperative Ltd.	Chandabilla (Dahisahi)
17.	Kiya Sindur Mahila Multipurpose Cooperative Ltd.	Badapata
18.	Adim Awar Mahila Multipurpose Cooperative Ltd.	Sangadi
19.	Janam Aya Mahila Multipurpose Cooperative Ltd.	Kumbhardubi (Talasahi)
20.	Debati Mahila Multipurpose Cooperative Ltd.	Gandigadha
21.	Matrushakti Mahila Multipurpose Cooperative Ltd.	Nichuapada (Talasahi)
22.	Maa Mangala Mahila Multipurpose Cooperative Ltd.	Nichuapada (Darakhudi)
23.	Malibaha Mahila Multipurpose Cooperative Ltd.	Nichuapada (Uppersahi)
24.	Shivasakti Mahila Multipurpose Cooperative Ltd.	Nichuapada (Sanjambani)
25.	Saraswati Kaudimany Mahila Multipurpose Cooperative Ltd.	Kenduchattia (School sahi)
26.	Golang Gulachi Mahila Multipurpose Cooperative Ltd.	Gunjusahi
27.	Jaheraya Mahila Multipurpose Cooperative Ltd.	Kadamsole
28.	Mayuri Wool Knitting Producer Cooperative Ltd.	Nuasahi
29.	Sarna Sal Leaf Producer Cooperative Ltd.	Kisantandi

FEDERATION

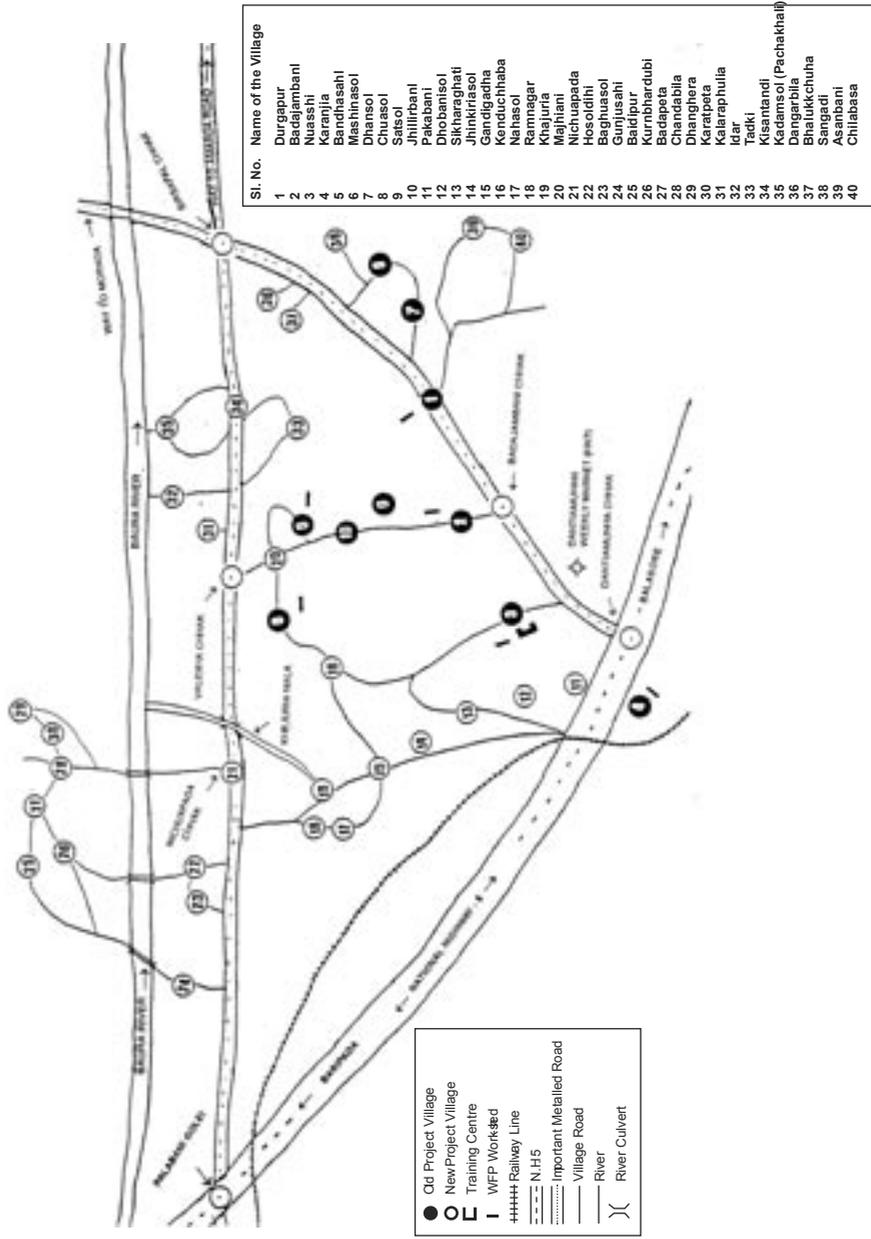
01.	Mayurbhanj Adivasi Cooperative Mahasangha Ltd.	Nuasahi
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ANNEXURE - 3

Project Map

MAYURBHANJ PROJECT, ORISSA

District - Mayurbhanj, Block - Morada and Baripada



List of INDISCO Case Studies

INDISCO Case Study No. 1 : Marginalized by Development – Indigenous Women of the Cordilleras, ILO Geneva, 1994

INDISCO Case Study No. 2 : On the Road to Self Reliance – A Story of the Tribal Women of Durgapur Village, ILO Geneva, 1995

INDISCO Case Study No. 3 : The Way We Live – Indigenous Practices of the Ifugaos, Atis and Badjaos of the Philippines, ILO Geneva, 1996

INDISCO Case Study No. 4 : “Once We Were Hunters” – Stories of the Bantangans of Mindoro, Philippines, ILO Geneva, 1997

INDISCO Case Study No. 5 : Working Together for a Better Future – Tribal communities in Gujarat working together with Sadguru and the ILO-INDISCO Programme, ILO New Delhi, 2000

INDISCO Case Study No. 6 : “We Created Jobs...” – Tribal communities in Orissa working together with SSADRI and the ILO-INDISCO Programme, ILO New Delhi, 2000

INDISCO Case Study No. 7 : Weaving a New Web of Life – Community driven and Participatory Approach to Indigenous People’s Development in the Philippines, ILO Manila, 2001

INDISCO Case Study No. 8 : “Power from the Mountains – Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices in Ancestral Domain Management: The Experience of the Kankanaey-Bago People in Bakun, Benguet Province, Philippines”, ILO Geneva 2002

INDISCO Case Study No. 9 : Empowering Tribals – Progressing from Partnership to Ownership, The story of a cluster of tribal villages in Mayurbhanj Orissa, working together with SSADRI and the ILO-INDISCO Programme, ILO New Delhi, 2006

