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Harnessing Women Power to Eliminate Poverty

NRLM complimented for its 'organic, pragmatic approach'

The National Mission Management Unit (NMMU) met on October 23 for a stimulating interaction with Magsaysay awardee, Shoaib Sultan Khan, founder-director of Pakistan's National Rural Support Programme (NRSP). Mr. Khan was also Senior Adviser (1995-2000) to the UNDP South Asian Poverty Alleviation Programme (UNDP-SAPAP), which launched a pilot poverty alleviation project involving self-help groups (SHGs) in Andhra Pradesh.

He was accompanied by Dr. Rashid Bajwa, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Pakistan Microfinance Network as well as the NRSP Microfinance Bank, Ms. Shandana Khan, Chief Executive Officer of Rural Support Programme Network (RSPN) and Ms. Roohi Khan, who was formerly with the UNDP.

He exhorted the NMMU team not to lose sight of the goal, i.e. poverty eradication and to remember always that this "really is the justification" for the existence of NRLM.

He emphasised the need to build financially sustainable and viable institutions of the poor and for the people, urging participants not to look upon the NRLM programme as "a mere service delivery" undertaking.

He commended the "organic pragmatic approach" of the Mission to social development, citing the example of Andhra Pradesh, where, in districts such as East Godavari, samakhyas (SHGs) have joined hands to form a mahasamakhyas (federation). He expressed admiration for the federations, which are "doing everything imaginable" towards social development and also commended the involvement of government officials (such as the Collector of East Godavari) in creating this "beautiful" framework of grassroots institutions.



Secretary's visit to Jharkhand

Shri L C Goyal, Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), visited the Jharkhand State Rural Livelihoods Mission (JSRLM) recently to understand the impact of Aajeevika on rural poor. He interacted with Self Help Group (SHG) members in Angara Block of Ranchi District. Budhni Devi, a SHG member who has started a small poultry farm by availing credit through the SHG appreciated the programme for its pro-poor and pro-women approach, saying that it is "really for women." Savitiri Devi, a lac entrepreneur from Gotidih, in Sursu Panchayat said that thanks to the Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP) scheme under Aajeevika, lac production in her village has shot up tremendously. She claimed that her Panchayat sold lac worth Rs 1 crore thanks to MKSP.



Shri Goyal remarked that it is the leadership of the women's SHGs that are making a difference to the rural communities and helping the poorest among them to improve their livelihoods and living standards.

National NRLM Writeshop – December 11-20, 2013 at NIRD, Hyderabad

The second annual national 'writeshop' of the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) focused on the NRLM roll out processes in general and, in particular, the implementation processes for the next three years.

This included discussion on the key 'guidance documents' of the Mission – viz., the model Community Operational Manual, the model HR (human resource) Management Manual and the model Financial Management manual. There was also discussion on induction modules for staff, communitisation/collectivisation, community cadres and their capacity building modules, unit costs and phasing plans for state annual action plans.

The ten-day writeshop, began on December 11, and culminated with the State Mission Directors' Conference on December 19-20, 2013. It saw participation of about 200 Mission Officers from State Mission Management Units (SM-MUs) of 25 states and one Union Territory – State Mission Managers for Human Resources, Institution Building, Capacity Building, Social Inclusion, Financial Inclusion, M&L/

MIS, Livelihoods, Finance Management, Procurement, Knowledge Management and Communication, etc., as well as the resource persons and agencies of the states, such as PRADAN, New Concept, Digital Green and MYRADA. Additional/Deputy CEOs and COOs of a few states also participated. The following outcomes emerged from the writeshop:

- ◆ appreciation of the NRLM processes, theory of change, values and non-negotiable principles;
- ◆ why NRLM works with women;
- ◆ state phasing plans for districts/blocks, staffing, funding and outcomes/results;
- ◆ model HR manual and staff induction modules;
- ◆ agreement on increased communitisation/collectivisation up to the cluster (sub-block) level;
- ◆ protocols/processes for nurturing Community Cadres and community capacity building modules (outlines) and processes;
- ◆ protocols, processes and timelines in resource-intensive partnership & non-intensive blocks;
- ◆ model Community Operational Manual (COM)
- ◆ State specific COM, HR manual, special package



and unit costs for NE and other hill states;

- ◆ model FM manual;
- ◆ understanding of systems (HR, KM, MIS, M&L, FM, Procurement);
- ◆ agreed unit costs (revised based on experience so far);
- ◆ Annual Action Plan (AAP) template, processes; and
- ◆ draft state action plans for the next three months and the next financial year (2014-15).

NRLM customises activity mapping for PRI-CBI-SHG interface

The recommendations of the role of the Expert Committee headed by Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar form the basis of the NRLM guidelines on the role of PRIs

NRLM has customised the activity mapping template recommended by the report of the Expert Committee on Leveraging Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) for improved service delivery. Headed by former Union Minister of Panchayati Raj, Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar,

the Report exhorted central ministries to map the activities of centrally-sponsored schemes (CSS). The Report, which was submitted in April 2013, said that this would help to clearly demarcate roles, responsibilities and authority of the PRIs.

Based on the recommendations of the Committee, NRLM has developed its own template for activity mapping. This was endorsed at the Validation Workshop held on December 16, 2013, in Hyderabad.

The committee recommended, among others, that:

- ◆ PRIs and Gram Sabhas should have centrality in planning and implementation of all NRLM programmes; it also noted that direct participation of the poor is needed, through Gram Sabhas, in the conceptualisation, organisation and delivery of services.
- ◆ CBOs could act as community wings of the panchayat, or as thematic or cross sector structures to generate demand, suggest priorities and be a vehicle for convergence of resources and services.
- ◆ Public resources to people's organisations ought to be routed through PRIs for rule-based transfer without

any space for patronage or pilferage.

While the Committee's rationale for the activity mapping was to ensure clarity of the roles of administrative bodies at the central, state and local levels of government, NRLM has taken these recommendations for activity mapping as generic and is committed to customising these in the context of the administrative realities of each state and specific PRI systems. The customised activity maps would have to be incorporated in the state specific Community Operations Manual (COM) of NRLM and linked with the State's Annual Action Plan (AAP).

NRLM will facilitate, in collaboration with the (RGP-SA), content development and training for PRIs and SHGs on their workings. NRLM has also invested in setting up pilot projects in states for determining the contours of engagement of the PRI with CBOs.

Workshop on bonded labour focuses on six states

The National Consultation on Rehabilitation of Bonded Labour held on December 2-3, 2013, focused on the pilot initiatives in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh and Bihar

to rehabilitate bonded labourers and eradicate the system of bonded labour.

Among the speakers at the two-day workshop were Shri K B Saxena of the Council for Social Development, who chaired the inaugural session; NRLM COO Smt Sarada Muraleedharan; Secretary, Department of Panchayati Raj, Shri D K Singh; Director, Government of Odisha, Shri D V Swamy; State Mission Director, Odisha Livelihood Mission; ILO Deputy Director Smt Pannudda Boonpala; UNDP Poverty Unit Programme Analyst, Smt Shashi Sudhir; State Programme Manager, UNDP-Odisha, Dr. Ambika Prasad Nanda; and Smt Smita Premchander from the NGO, Sampark.

MoRD has also joined hands with the Bandhua 1947 national campaign for abolition of bonded labour.

Participants also suggested that:

- ◆ identification of bonded labourers, especially child workers, must be done urgently;
- ◆ the NRLM programme needs to scale up faster and that the government has to take the responsibility of replication of good practices and not just do pilots;
- ◆ efforts at social inclusion must be accompanied by financial inclusion initiatives; and



- ◆ there must be context specific convergence of existing schemes so as to reach out to a larger population.

Shri K B Saxena said that bonded labour arises as a result of caste-based inequalities and that the system is persisting because of an unresponsive governance structure and because even trade unions are not interested in organising the bonded workers, who are mainly in the non-formal sectors. He also observed that the economic globalisation and the existing political structure are aggravating the system of bonded labour.

The workshop emphasised that the key strategies to eliminate bonded labour include preventive steps, rescue/release and rehabilitation and, finally, monitoring to ensure that the workers are not forced back into bondage. For this purpose, convergence and co-operation with other government agencies – especially in law enforcement – is imperative. It concluded with recommendations for the way forward, including suggestions for modalities

for 'at risk' households in accessing entitlements and linking them to MGNREGS on a priority basis.

The state action plans

The action plans of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh prioritise rehabilitation of bonded labour

SRLMs of these states are focusing primarily on bonded labour, which includes people who have been recently rescued. While all the states also listed focus on 'at risk' families, the specific delineation varied across states: in Odisha, the 'at risk' households include migrants and families of migrants; and in TN, these include tribal households and migrants.

The challenges common to all the states included:

- ◆ breaking inclusion barriers: challenges in accessing existing entitlements;
- ◆ issues of distance and access (physical and social), specially the lack of adequate public transport;
- ◆ awareness gap, because of low literacy and education levels as well as lack of transparency in government programmes; and
- ◆ trust deficit, because

of the failure of earlier government programmes.

Against this background, all states identified awareness building as one of the primary entry level activities. This would be accompanied by activities such as: mapping of village labour and economic resources, existence of bonded labour, and the formation of SHGs.

In identifying households for inclusion in the NRLM programme, several proxy indicators – outside of the routine socio-economic indicators – have been suggested like migration and landlessness. Identified households could be mobilised through organisations such as SHGs, associations of bonded labour or occupation specific organisations or collectives.

States have also discussed issues of capacity building, the role of Mission staff and various partners, as well as the structures and scope of MIS and monitoring systems. In the capacity development plans of all state action programmes, the focus is on building capacities of PRIs and CBOs (especially the VOs and Federations).

RSETI Diwas

The Hon'ble Minister of Rural Development, Shri Jairam Ramesh, called upon banks to step up support to the Rural Self Employment Training Institutes (RSETIs), especially in training programmes, and recommended instituting an independent evaluation of the performance of the RSETIs. He was speaking on the occasion of the second 'RSETI Diwas', which celebrates the day (November 21) on which the MoRD and Government of India, decided to replicate the RSETI model nation-wide.

The second national meet of RSETI stakeholders, held in New Delhi, honoured 233 institutes with the best performance records. Canara Bank and Syndicate Bank were adjudged as the best among banks in promoting the most number of well-performing institutes, followed by Andhra Bank and the State Bank of India. Karnataka was adjudged the best state for nurturing the maximum number of well-performing institutes, followed by Andhra Pradesh and Kerala. The banks also finalised a time bound plan for all RSETIs

to meet a minimum performance standard.

Aajeevika Skills – Skill Development, a core element of the Aajeevika programme

Consultation with National Skill Development Council (NSDC) and Sector Skill Councils (SSCs), 8 October 2013

The Hon'ble Minister of Rural Development, Shri Jairam Ramesh chaired the consultation on convergence opportunities between the MoRD and the SSCs in strengthening the skills development programme. Over 200 delegates, including representatives of Aajeevika Skills, NSDC and SSCs participated in the consultation.

The Minister emphasised that while quality of training is important, quality placement and retention in the jobs are more so. He said that the programme would place special emphasis on young women and called on the programme implementers to take support from SHGs.

The consultation concluded with delineating areas of partnership between MoRD and the NSDC.

Workshop on Outcome Based Assessments on Qualification Packs (QP) and National Occupational Standards (NOS), 22 October, 2013

The workshop on outcome based assessments on QP and NOS aimed at helping implementing agencies to understand how to align their curricula to the QP and NOS standards. Chaired by MoRD Secretary, Shri L C Goyal the workshop saw 70 participants from PIAs and SSCs. A brochure on the subject was released at the workshop, which concluded with the decision to have course compliance certificates issued by the SSCs to the PIAs.

Technical Consultation on Curriculum, Assessment & Certification, 24 October

The Technical Consultation on Curriculum, Assessment & Certification was conducted with the support of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). ILO would provide technical assistance in the implementation of the Aajeevika Skill Development Programme (ASDP), beginning with strengthening the programme guidelines and

systems related to curricula, assessment and certification using available resources, both in the public and private domains.

NRLM considers options for rehabilitation of persons engaged in manual scavenging (October 9, 2013)

Aajeevika – NRLM, Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), and UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) jointly organised a workshop to discuss issues related to rehabilitate people engaged in manual scavenging and other unhygienic occupations. The one-day workshop at New Delhi was held in the context of the recent passage of the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013.

The workshop was chaired by the Hon'ble Minister of Rural Development, Shri Jairam Ramesh, and Hon'ble Minister of Social Justice & Empowerment, Smt. Kumari Selja. MoRD in partnership with UNDP, proposes to undertake pilot interventions in partnership with the Ministry of Railways and other relevant

ministries under the NRLM programme. The workshop also called for convergence of schemes and initiatives in various ministries and departments in GoI.

The workshop recommended the following specifications:

- i) identification of persons engaged in such occupations;
- ii) understanding the provisions of the new law as well as best practices/successful rehabilitation strategies;
- iii) drawing up strategies for action, with special focus on the six states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra; and
- iv) exploring the scope for partnerships.

The Roundtable focused on several operational issues

The Second UNDP Roundtable on NRLM was held on October 3-4, 2013 to discuss Social Inclusion and Capacity Building Strategies under NRLM. The First Roundtable was held in 2011, when NRLM was still in the initial stages. Additional Secretary (MoRD), Joint Secretary (RL), Country Director, UNDP, representatives

of CSOs, NRLM Partner Agencies and NMMU participated in the Roundtable.

The Roundtable concluded that NRLM needs to focus on the following aspects in:

- ◆ Clear and strong definitions for identifying the poor.
- ◆ Strong motivation, orientation and capacities of staff and other workers for success in meeting the NRLM goals.
- ◆ State support for the SHGs and strong role for CBOs.
- ◆ Focus on collective action and incentivisation.
- ◆ Specific livelihood activities for each community group, keeping in mind their capacities and requirements.
- ◆ Intensive hand-holding and close supervision of all community groups.

Jharkhand workshop emphasises convergence

The two-day national workshop, held on September 2 and 3, 2013 saw active participation from representatives of NRLM as well as SRLMs from Maharashtra, West Bengal, Karnataka, Kerala, Odisha and Jharkhand.

All speakers – including MoRD Principal Secretary, Shri R S Poddar, Additional Secretary Shri S M Vijayanand, Joint Secretary in-charge of MGNREGS Smt Aparajita Sarangi and Joint Secretary (RL Division) Shri T. Vijaykumar emphasised that since the goals of both NRLM and the MGNREGS is poverty alleviation, convergence between these two programmes would benefit the poor.

The workshop recommended that workers' groups, along the lines of the self help groups, should be made mandatory. It also recommended that all members of existing SHGs should be trained in how to access MGNREGS benefits so as to ensure that every poor household of all the villages are covered under the scheme.

The workshop also discussed the following:

- ◆ the impact of MGNREGS in discouraging distress migration in Bolangir and Nuapada districts of Odisha;
- ◆ the role of Gram Sabhas in livelihood planning, as shown by tribal communities in Maharashtra;
- ◆ the impact of MGNREGS on institution building, with focus on the Kerala experience;
- ◆ watershed management

planning and development through a panchayat-led livelihood initiative in Hatgamaria Block of West Singhbhum District, Jharkhand;

- ◆ Bihar's successful experience of advance payments through cluster level federations (CLFs);
- ◆ enabling women's participation in convergent action for livelihoods, which presented the example of the Kudumbashree network of neighbourhood groups;
- ◆ the West Bengal PRI-NRLM roadmap for convergence, where SHGs worked with the panchayati raj institutions; and
- ◆ Participants emphasised that SHGs can play a significant role in effective implementation of MGNREGS by working with panchayati raj institutions

NRLM workshop on impact evaluation

A two-day workshop on monitoring and evaluation under NRLM was jointly organised by NMMU and World Bank. The workshop held on August 12-13 at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi, was attended by State Project Managers (SPM), Monitoring and Evaluation teams of various



SRLMs, representatives of World Bank, NMMU, Joint Secretary and Additional Secretary, MoRD and representatives of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). The State Mission Directors joined the workshop on the second day.

Inaugurating the workshop, the Hon'ble Union Minister of Rural Development, Shri Jairam Ramesh, said that impact evaluations are crucial for strengthening the core NRLM interventions of building institutions of the poor. Creating access to finance for programmes for developing skills and

other such interventions of institution building, financial inclusion, livelihoods promotion, skill development, MKSP and RSETI is also very important. Various methodologies on impact evaluation/assessment and their implications for different phases of the Mission initiatives were discussed. The states presented their plans for commissioning baseline studies, MIS-based monitoring, process monitoring and community monitoring activities with support from the MoRD and The World Bank.

NRLM Mission Director, Shri T Vijay Kumar emphasised the need for mainstreaming the role of the community institutions in undertaking regular monitoring and evaluation. He also stressed the need for

providing training on requisite skills to the community institutions to fulfil this role.

Proposed Events in next quarter

- ◆ NMMU Mission to the states
- ◆ Induction of National Resource Pool of NRLM
- ◆ Visioning exercise for Chhattisgarh State
- ◆ Workshop on MIS analytic, AAPs (SPIPs) and Baseline & Process Monitoring
- ◆ Workshop/Meeting with SLBC conveners on NRLM.
- ◆ Workshop on e-FMS
- ◆ MKSP quarterly progress review meeting



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