

# jeebika

WESTERN ORISSA RURAL LIVELIHOODS PROJECT

July 2005, No 5



## *Steering committee meeting*

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Steering Committee Meeting of the Western Orissa Rural Livelihoods Project (WORLP) was held on 5 July 2005 at Rajib Bhawan in Bhubaneswar. The meeting was chaired by the Agriculture Production Commissioner, Dr R N Bohidar, IAS.

The Committee approved the Capacity Building Plan for the year 2005-06 and also decided to constitute a 'Technical and Operations Committee' within the Orissa Watershed Development Mission (OWDM). This Committee, to be chaired by the Director, OWDM, will address the technical and operational issues for meeting the objectives of WORLP. It will take decisions regarding the hiring of national and international consultants and the procurement and purchase of equipment and other goods and services. These functions are presently being handled by the Project Support Team (PST), which is scheduled to withdraw from WORLP in March 2006.

Several other important issues were discussed, including the need for five-year plans and a Human Resource Policy and the extension of livelihood activities to non-WORLP watersheds.

# DEVELOPMENTS



## Watershed selection and guidelines

David Gandhi, Capacity Building Expert of the Project Support Team (PST) reports that WORLP has completed the selection of micro-watersheds in Kalahandi and Bargarh districts. The project will cover six blocks (60 watersheds) in Kalahandi and four blocks (40 watersheds) in Bargarh. A suitable selection process evolved through multi stakeholder consultation, using an approach which was integrative and transparent. The process was open-ended, and went through these different stages: consultation, indicator screening and selection, elimination, data collection and entry, clustering and finally ranking.

All the watersheds delineated in the blocks were screened, using the selection criteria contained in the Watershed Atlas developed by the Orissa Remote Sensing Application Centre (ORSAC), which had prioritised the watersheds based on various physical parameters. Thereafter various social parameters such as the percentage of Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribes, landless households, small and marginal farmers, access to drinking water, health and communication, contiguity of watersheds, ability of community to participate etc. were also considered. Information on the various government schemes which had been implemented in the watershed villages was also collected and used in order to determine the treatable areas.

The entire process was undertaken by the district level teams and facilitated by Mr P R Choudhury, Natural Resources Management (NRM) consultant, engaged for the purpose. WORLP will be publishing the Standardised Watershed Selection Guidelines based on this experience.

## Collective marketing

In the Turekela and Patnagarh blocks of Bolangir a quiet revolution has started. For years the villagers have collected mahua flowers and sold them individually to the local traders (kutchia). But now, MART, with the help of the local Livelihood Support Teams (LSTs) has shown the villagers a way to get better returns for their effort, through collective marketing.

In March, when the collection of mahua flowers was at its peak, the members of 18 self-help groups (3 in Bahabahal, 10 in Bhaguapada, 4 in Gadgabahal and 1 in Pandaripani) were advised to hold on to the produce so that they could realize a better price by selling collectively to big traders (mahajans). The self-help groups (SHGs) bought the mahua flowers from their members at the prevailing market rate of Rs. 700 per quintal. Members were paid according to the quantity they committed. The members were also taught the proper techniques for drying and storing the mahua flowers.



*SHG member processing mahua flowers in Bolangir*

*Discussing prices and logistics with a mahua trader at Lathore*

In order to understand the realities of selling to higher markets it became vitally important for the self-help group members to visit all the nearby markets to understand market dynamics, check out prices, trading terms and conditions offered by various traders, and to identify potential traders for linkage. They also had to learn how to negotiate prices and other terms and conditions of trade. Several visits were made to the markets by the members, who were always accompanied by group leaders.

A bulk trader from Lathore offered the highest price and also agreed to lift the produce from the villages. Around 388 quintals of mahua flower were sold collectively. The members were able to get an extra Rs. 150-165 per quintal. The 12-member Santoshini SHG of Bhaguapada invested Rs. 28,000 and was able to earn a profit of Rs. 7,767 within a month. Thanks to this hands-on process, the SHG members have now understood the benefits of collective marketing and are planning to initiate similar action for other major produce, says Lingaraj Otta, the Project Director, Watersheds, Bolangir.

Now the project should build capacity to ensure strong social mobilisation and leadership development at the group and community level. The community needs to learn how to add value to the product through sorting and grading. The project should also address the issues related to infrastructure such as drying platforms, weighing machines and village level storage and provide continuous interaction and interface with markets and develop a Market Information System (MIS). This will help to build an effective collective marketing system at the village and cluster level.

## Cropping systems

Anup Das, the Natural Resource Management Specialist, Project Support Unit, says that, as part of the implementation of the cropping systems strategy for this kharif season, demonstration plots of some High Yielding Varieties (HYV) of paddy, pulses and minor millets have been established in some farmers' fields in Bolangir and Nuapada.



# COMMUNITY CHRONICLE



The Project Implementing Agencies (PIAs) have been able to procure the desired varieties either from the Agriculture Department or from private sources for programmes such as seed exchange, seed multiplication, crop demonstration and backyard plantation of tuber crops. Apart from this, the project has also provided seeds.

With the growing demand for tuber crops in the project areas, almost nine tons of yam (Orissa elite variety) have been supplied to three watersheds in Saintala, Deogaon and Agalpur blocks of Bolangir district.

The strategy for yam cultivation has been changed from backyard farming to patch plantation. This will ensure seed multiplication enabling farmers to procure planting materials locally for the next season and reducing their dependence on other sources. This will increase the cultivation of this variety in the locality.

Some selected self-help groups will take responsibility for overall maintenance of plantations and the sale of produce. The self-help groups will keep some of the produce for their own consumption and for planting materials for the next season. After they have returned an equivalent amount to the quantity received from the project, they will sell the remainder to the watershed committees.

The Agriculture Department has given the project a large number of mini kits (paddy, pulses and oil seeds) for adaptive trials in the watersheds. These mini kits have been supplied free of cost to farmers in the WORLP watersheds. The monitoring and documentation process will be carried out jointly by the Agricultural Department and WORLP.

## The ducks that laid the golden eggs

Jemani Behera, an illiterate woman from the Sundhi (OBC) community lives in Kantapali village of Babupali-Kantapali micro-watershed in Komna block of Nuapada district. Though she owns 2.5 acres of land and is a small farmer, there was never enough for the family of eight. Every year, after the kharif harvest the entire family used to migrate to Andhra Pradesh to work in the brick kilns.

Biranchi Mahapatra of Council of Professional Social Workers (CPSW) reports that this year things have changed. Jemani Behera's children are going to school. Her husband has a brand new bicycle. And it all started with three ducks.

In 2003, CPSW, the PIA for WORLP helped in the formation of six SHGs in Kantapali. Jemani joined the Maa Laxmi SHG. At first she thought it was a parallel system of moneylending at a lower rate of interest, but this perception soon changed. She gradually developed enough self-confidence to venture into rearing ducks to earn a living.

Duckery is a viable enterprise in this area because the Moti variety can resist drought. The ducks are more resistant to diseases than poultry. Ducks are also in demand in the rural areas, as most of the women of western Orissa eat only duck meat and no chicken or mutton.

In 2004, Jemani bought 3 ducks (1 male and 2 females) through WORLP for Rs. 500 on condition that she would give 3 ducklings back to the SHG when the eggs hatched. Jemani found the business very simple because ducks lay about 68 eggs in a year. By February 2005 Jemani had 63 ducks, each weighing around 2.5 to 3 kgs. She had already returned 3 ducks to the SHG as promised and sold 55 ducks @ Rs. 160 each to a vendor at Patnagarh of Bolangir district, earning Rs. 8,800.

This year Jemani's family did not have to migrate. She has been able to save money in her SHG without too much difficulty. Using the SHG's revolving fund she has now taken certified paddy seeds to grow on two acres of her land. This year she expects better profit from the duckery and her fields. Her life has turned around, thanks to the ducks.



# EVENTS AND NEWS

## Developing communication material

A workshop was organised on 28 and 29 June at Bolangir to finalise the form and content of WORLP's communication material being developed in Oriya. Twenty two project communication point persons from Bolangir and Nuapada districts attended the workshop which was facilitated by Regional Centre for Development Cooperation, Centre for Water for Life, Bhubaneswar.

The content for the communication material was grouped under various objectives. Several titles were mooted for the proposed monthly wall magazine. The title, in the local Sambalpuri dialect, '*Amar Jami Amar Paen*' was selected because it captures the essence of a watershed. It also gives the reader a sense of belonging.

## Training in enterprise promotion

Mr Subodh Mahapatra, Livelihoods Specialist, PSU, attended a training programme on "A Market Development Approach to Enterprise Promotion: Using Market Research for Program Design" conducted by EDA Rural Systems, Gurgaon in collaboration with The Society for Enterprise Education and Promotion (SEEP) Network, USA. The programme was meant for managers and professionals from development organisations who are involved in designing and implementing enterprise promotion programmes.

Mr Mahapatra felt that the training was very useful and the concepts were relevant for a livelihoods project like WORLP. He plans to share the learning with the district teams through an interactive presentation.

## Orientation programme

An orientation programme was conducted on 15 and 16 July at the Centre for Development Research and Training, Xavier Institute of Management, Bhubaneswar (CENDERET-XIMB) for the project management teams of Kalahandi and Bargarh and the new members of the PSU team. The programme was inaugurated by the Director, OWDM, and coordinated by Mr Bipin Das of CENDERET.

The participants were introduced to the WORLP objectives, strategies, approaches, processes and activities, using a combination of theoretical frameworks supported by practical insights. A similar programme is being planned for the newly appointed Livelihood Support Teams of Kalahandi and Bargarh.

## Aquaculture

The portable hatchery that was installed at Bifenjore in March, was successfully tested in June. The technical team from Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture, headed by Dr B C Mahapatra and supported by Mr D Majhi demonstrated its operation and maintenance to the self-help groups which will eventually take charge of its operation. This live demonstration was an

integral part of the training programme on hatchery operation and test spawning conducted by Dr Graham Haylor and Dr S D Tripathi from Support to Regional Aquatic Resource Management (STREAM). The event was coordinated by Mr Khandagiri from WORLP and Mr Bhawani Panda from Sahabhagi Vikas Aviyan (SVA).

## Health

From 13 to 15 June a training programme for community health workers (CHWs) was organised by Ayuskam, who are implementing the "Accelerating Health Services through Community Participation" project for WORLP. Ten CHWs participated in the programme which was held at the Kendumunda project office.

The resource persons included the Medical Officer, Community Health Centre, Sinapail, the Medical Officer, Ayurvedic Dispensary, Kendumunda and Dr Ajit Panda, of Ayuskam.

The programme aimed at improving the knowledge and skill of the CHWs in the areas of safe practice of medicine and prevention and management of RTI/STI/HIV/AIDS and referral services. The programme also hoped to help the CHW to become a recognised and friendly health service provider at the community level.

## Non Timber Forest Produce (NTFP)

SRUSTI, an NGO based in Khariar, has been contracted to undertake training and capacity building in the processing and marketing of select NTFPs in parts of three blocks in Nuapada. This is the fourth assignment and will be the last under the NGO proposal category. When it ends in February 2005, the collaboration is expected to have developed a Market Information Hub and market linkages for select NTFPs. Market Information Booklets will also be published.

## Block printing

A batch of twenty women members of self-help groups have been trained in block printing by Centre for Culture and Development Action. The programme, which ended in June, has been a great success and has generated demand for similar programmes in other places in the project as well.

## Selection of watersheds

In Jharbandh, Gaisifet, Padampur and Sohela blocks of Bargarh district, the ground-truthing exercise for the final selection of watersheds has been completed. The exercise was conducted on the basis of the recommended list of watersheds developed through a detailed screening process.

## Livelihood Support Teams (LSTs) in Kalahandi and Bargarh

In June the LSTs for Kalahandi and Bargarh were contracted through CENDERET and Gramin Vikas Trust. A total of ten LSTs (6 in Kalahandi and 4 in Bargarh) have been selected.

## Project Implementing Agencies (PIAs) for Kalahandi and Bargarh

In Kalahandi, the NGO PIAs have been selected. The selection process is under way in Bargarh. The GO PIAs have yet to be selected in both districts.

## New arrivals...

WORLP would like to welcome those who have recently joined the project and wish them all the best.

### Project Support Unit (PSU)

*Dr Rajeev Sharma* is the new PSU coordinator cum Communication Specialist. He is on deputation from the Veterinary Department. He has had worked with bilateral projects in extending livestock service delivery through participatory processes. He also specialises in Human and Institutional Development. *Mr Rajib Nag* is the Systems Analyst. He has more than 11 years of experience in the field of Information Technology. He has developed software programmes for various organisations including government undertakings.

*Mr Anup Das*, who had joined as a member of the Capacity Building Team (CBT) in Kalahandi in May 2005 has been appointed as the NRM Specialist. *Mr Satyajit Mansingh* who has joined as Finance Administrator holds ICWA qualification. He has experience of working in government social sector projects like the District Primary Education Programme. He has also worked in the corporate sector. The Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist post is expected to be filled soon.

### Project Director, Bargarh

*Mr K C Aich* has been appointed as Project Director, Bargarh. He takes over from Dr Sarat Behera, Project

Director Nuapada, who was holding the additional charge for Bargarh till now. Mr Aich belongs to the Soil Conservation Department and has experience of working in externally funded watershed projects.

### Capacity Building Team (CBT) member in Kalahandi

*Mr Suvendu Singha* joined the Capacity Building Team (CBT) in Kalahandi district on 1 June 2005, as the Livelihoods Specialist. He has a postgraduate degree in Rural Development and has 14 years of experience in the areas of micro-finance, livelihoods approaches, micro-enterprise, aquaculture and livestock management.

## And a departure...

### Capacity Building Team (CBT) member in Nuapada

*Mr Ranjan Sharma*, who was part of the Capacity Building Team in Nuapada left the project in June. Ranjan had worked as Micro-Finance Specialist since February 2003. He was also coordinating the aquaculture development activities for the project. He will be missed for his initiative and the enthusiasm with which he took on responsibilities. He has now joined Gramin Vikas Trust in Madhya Pradesh. We wish him success.



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