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International Day of Forests: forest education
and sustainable rural societies



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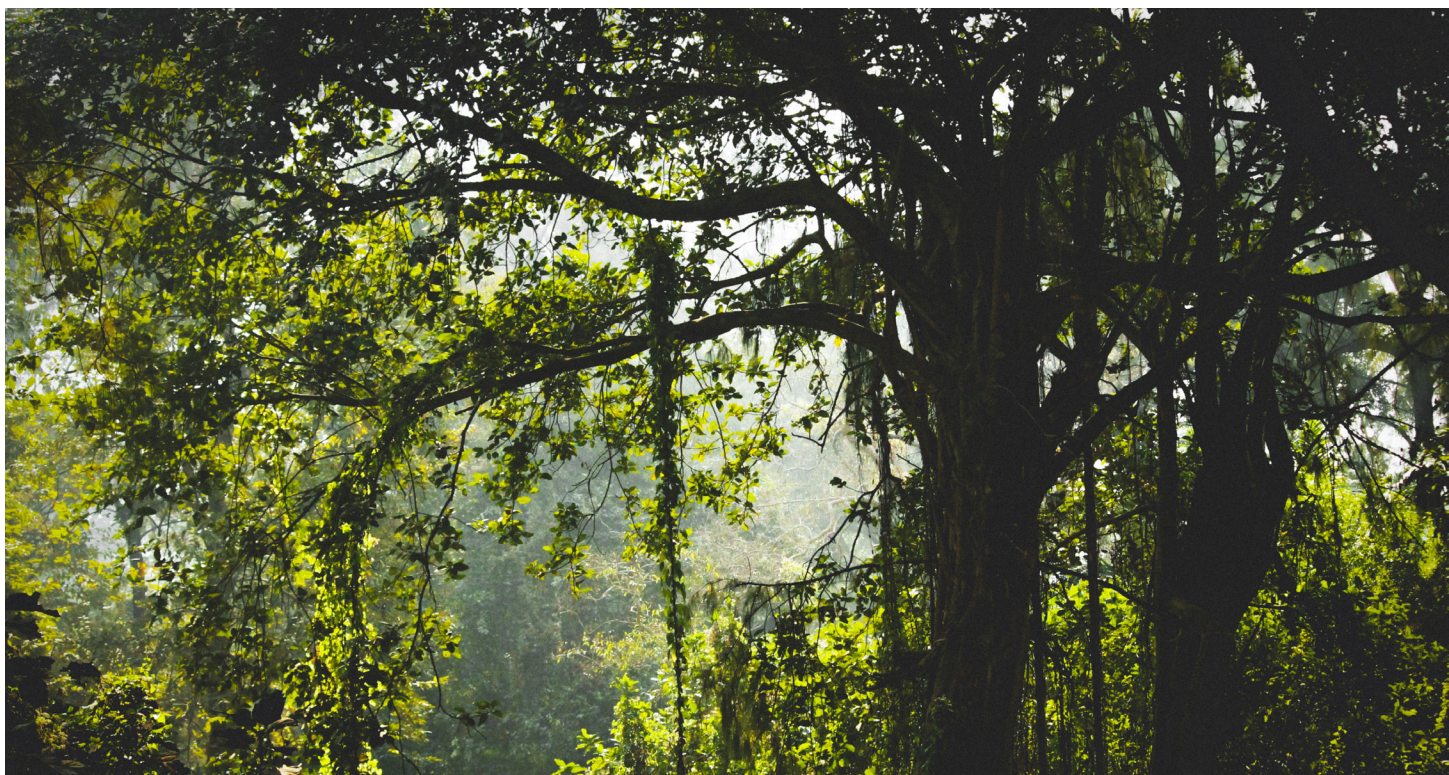
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International Day of Forests: forest education and sustainable rural societies

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When we breathe fresh air and consume clean water, we may not directly relate it to forests. But we do realise the importance of greenery and the beautiful nature around us. Many aspects of our life, including our survival in a way or other depends on the forests when we use natural resources, build houses or use medicines. We are yet to fully appreciate the importance of forests in providing ecological services and contributing to the well-being and prosperity through their sustainable use, thereby meeting the aspirations of both current and future generations. Nevertheless, it has been proven time and again of the critical contribution of forests in our chase for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Combating climate change, sustainable livelihoods and poverty alleviation are some of the SDGs where forests play a major role. Most of developing world still derive their vital resources from forests in the form of food, medicine, and livelihood

and tourism revenue.

However, callous attitude towards conservation and ever increasing demand of the burgeoning human population, rapid urbanisation and diversion of forest for agriculture have seen the precedent loss of forests at an alarmingly high rate. In a recent report by UN's Department of Social and Economic

Learning to love forest could be better appreciated with direct involvement of primary stakeholders i.e., the villagers living near and within the forests

Affairs, it is claimed that the world losing 32 million acres of forest every year due to deforestation. This extends the direct threat to 80 per cent of the world's terrestrial biodiversity and significant contribution to global warming through emission of carbon due to major dent in one of the largest carbon sink.

Forests in India

Forests in India continue to vanish, notwithstanding the disposal of vibrant and comprehensive National Forest Policy (1988) which emphasised its protective role for forests in maintaining ecological balance and environmental stability with the recommendation of maintaining 33 per cent forest cover. Due to an increase in human and cattle population, forest areas have been cleared for agricultural and other developmental purposes. Moreover, infrastructure development in form of railways, roadways, dams, projects, bridges, etc., have added heavily to the decline in the forest cover. India has lost large forests to 23,716 industrial projects (14,000 km²) and unquantified, but significant area to forest fires in the past 30 years. In spite of annual afforestation rate of 0.57 per cent, with the high rate of deforestation of 2.5 hectare of forest per minute, India is heading towards desertification.



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According to the Forest Report of 2017 (published in 2018), India's tree and forest cover has registered an increase of 1 per cent (8,021 km²) in two years since 2015. The total forest cover is 7,08,273 km², which is 21.54 per cent of the total geographical area of the country. Forest and tree cover combined is 8,02,088 km² i.e., 24.39 per cent of the total geographical area. India is ranked 10th in the world, with 24.4 per cent of land area under forest and tree cover, even though it accounts for 2.4 per cent of the world's surface area and sustains the needs of 17 per cent of human and 18 per cent livestock population. As per the latest Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) report, India is placed 8th in the list among the top ten nations reporting the greatest annual net gain in forest area.

It was felt at various international forum that the world was underestimating the importance of forests and least concerned to the global policymakers. This was flagged for noting the useful contribution of national, regional and international actions during the International Year of Forests in the year 2011. The UN general

assembly in its 67th session in the year 2012 passed a resolution to establish 21st March as International Day of Forests for raising awareness at all levels in order to strengthen the sustainable management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests and trees outside forests for the benefit of current and future generations. The UN general assembly considered that there is no globally recognised date as such for celebrating and pursuing activities related to awareness and sustainably managing the forests beyond the International Year. It also took a note of various reports and international affirmations, mainly the Food and Agriculture Organisation's sixteenth session of the conference held by the organisation during 6th to 25th November 1971, which supported the establishment of World Forestry Day on 21st March of each year. The International Day of Forests encourages the people to organise activities related to all types of forests and trees outside forests, such as tree planting campaigns, formulating ways to stop deforestation, etc. It provides a wonderful opportunity to learn more about forests and their importance by

sharing views and ideas and working together to recognise the role of forests in combating climate change strategies.

The United Nations assigns specific themes each year for raising awareness and sustainable management of forests. This year, the theme for 2019 is 'Forests and Education' with a message 'Learn to Love Forests'. It promotes the importance of education at all levels in achieving sustainable forest management and biodiversity conservation. The major goal is to educate people to understand that healthy forests lead to development of resilient communities and prosperous economies across the world.

Education can be considered as an essential tool for sustaining our forests. The Agenda 21 of the Earth Summit (Rio de Janeiro, June, 1992) considered education as the vehicle for providing environmental and ethical awareness, values and attitudes, skills and behaviour that are essential for sustainable development. Therefore, 'Forests and Education' is an appropriate theme to address Agenda 21, which is an action plan towards sustainable development.

The pivotal role of forests in achieving the targets of SDGs by 2030 is undoubtable. While the SDG 15 is specific to forests encouraging 'sustainable maintenance of forests', 'combating deforestation' and 'halting the loss of biodiversity', our forest health is going to decide how likely we are going to achieve other goals such as no poverty, no hunger, good health and well-being, affordable and clean energy, climate action and create ecological balance. In the recent years, the process of deforestation has been slowed down due to persistent efforts worldwide. In this view, 'International Day of Forests' is an important event to impart education about forests and their conservation along with meeting the requirement of SDGs.

Forest and education: Indian rural context

The FAO's key messages regarding 'Forest and Education' for the 6th International Day of Forests, which can also be linked to the Indian rural development perspective viz;

Understanding our forests and keeping them healthy is crucial for our future:

Forest provide important resources to the rural and traditional societies associated with forest ecosystem. With around 1.73 lakh villages located in and around forests, India has a substantial rural population living in close proximity to the forest with their livelihoods critically linked to its resources (MoEF, 2006). The challenge is to evolve sustainable rural societies, striving to keep the ecosystem services of forests intact.

You're never too young to start learning about trees: Educating children right from an early age to bond themselves to trees and forests creates future generations which are conscious about the benefits and the need to manage them sustainably. Rural kids

are well connected with nature, but the curriculum needs to talk about the local biodiversity and its importance.

Both modern and traditional knowledge are key to keeping forests healthy:

Preparation and maintaining of People's Biodiversity Register (PBR) at Gram Panchayat level, which already has the provision through Biodiversity Management Committees (BMC) in India. The PBR also documents the traditional and local knowledge practices associated with biological and forest resources. Rural and indigenous communities also have vital experience and knowledge to sustainably harvest the forest resources, thereby ensuring protection of the forest.

Investing in forestry education can change the world for the better:

Adequate investment on forestry education across by the all stakeholders in research and capacity building through flagship programmes for rural development such as Mhatama Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) and Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) – Watershed Development Component will arrest deforestation and restore degraded lands. Such healthy and restored forests will benefit us to realise the Sustainable Development Goals mentioned earlier. For instance, sustainable livelihoods for rural communities and conserving biodiversity.

Women and men should have equal access to forest education: Like many developing countries, the rural women in India are closely associated with natural resources and forests. Women from villages located in and around forests have been traditionally managing forest resources. Giving equal access and involvement in forest education and capacity building will empower the rural women for sustainable management of forests and biodiversity.

In the Indian rural context, forest conservation took a phenomenal change when the National Forest policy (1988) was implemented, where the traditional and rural societies living close to and within the forests were involved as partners in sustainable management of forests. This was a deviation from the commercial benefit approach to a inclusive conservation model. Subsequently, legislations such as Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act of 1996, Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (the Forest Rights) Act of 2006 were also enacted to recognise and guarantee tribal and forest villages for their tenure rights over forest, although with intermittent success.

Forests and sustainable rural societies

To strengthen the involvement of rural societies and local governance of the forest, village lands and their biological resources, the Biological Diversity (BD) Act, 2002 of India for conservation of biological diversity was envisaged. It provides mechanism for equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the use of traditional biological resources and knowledge. The Act was enacted to meet the obligations under international Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), to which India is a signatory, which is again an outcome of Agenda 21 as mentioned earlier. It paved the way for involving villages under the Panchayati Raj system to form Biodiversity Management Committee (BMC) under every Gram Panchayat. The BMC may undertake activities related to conservation and benefit sharing through convergence mode, involving several flagship programmes and government schemes related to rural development, agriculture development and forest departments. The provisions in the BD Act and conservation of forest and



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biological resources can be brought in the planning process of Gram Panchayats. MGNREGS could be a good point to begin with, as it already has the guidelines for convergence. Moreover, more than 60 per cent of the budget under MGNREGS is allocated for activities related to natural resource management. However, convergence of BD Act objectives with government schemes and linking it to the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) is a challenging task. It will lead to planned activities by villages for the conservation of biodiversity and forests. Training and capacity building at various stakeholders' level is required for envisaging such tasks.

Another challenging task as a strategy could be the idea of carbon auditing at village / Gram Panchayat level. As already mentioned, forests are the second largest sink for carbon after oceans. Sustainable forestry practices can increase the ability of forests to sequester atmospheric carbon while enhancing other ecosystem services such as improved soil and water quality. Carbon Audit, more commonly referred as 'carbon footprint' is a measure of the exclusive total amount of carbon dioxide emissions that is directly and indirectly caused by

an activity or is accumulated over the life stages of a product, process or system within a well-defined boundary.

India has committed to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide it produces for every bit of economic output or gross domestic product (GDP) by 33 to 35 per cent from its 2005 level by 2030 and will create an additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent through additional forest and tree cover by 2030. Moreover, to meet its goal of increasing the carbon sink, it has planned to implement the Green India Mission and other programmes of afforestation. Therefore, India has resolved itself to be a strong leader on climate action. Climate change and reducing carbon emission have historically focused on setting 'top-down' targets which drove national action. However, to achieve the climate change reduction targets (COP 21) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a more focused 'bottom-up' approach involving village level initiatives is also required.

Low carbon societies such as rural ecosystems play an important role in achieving the balance between economy, society and environment

for a sustainable future. Realising this, a carbon strategy is needed at village/panchayat level planning and Carbon Audit could be the first step in developing the carbon strategy. To begin with, it may include some of the practical steps a village/ Panchayat may adopt along with the agricultural practices to secure dependable food supplies and livelihoods. Additionally, it could be achieved while decreasing greenhouse gas emissions or increasing carbon sequestration, thereby decreasing future climate change.

The way forward

Empowering villagers (primary stakeholders) through education and capacity building will enhance their direct involvement in the sustainable management of forests. It needs to strategise policies towards bringing conservation of forest and forest resources in planning process through local self-governance. The current GPDP needs to be extended to accommodate conservation of forests, trees outside forests and natural resources in general. Using convergence and people's plan approach can be an innovative way of bringing the rural societies in an empowering mode for conserving forests and its biological diversity. The new National Forest Policy (draft NFP 2018) which is taking shape, needs to address the above-mentioned approaches and strategies, where public-private partnerships are likely to be promoted. It is also an appropriate time to recognise the role of local governance and Panchayats by the revamped NFP in sustainably managing forests and combating climate change.

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The idea of a model village



While referring to model villages in India, included in the SAGY (Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana) guidelines - Punsari Gram Panchayat in Sabarkantha district of Gujarat is being addressed as an exemplar. The very idea of a model village is notional or a composed perspective. Therefore, the idea of a model village, and the methodological canvas used for exploration, and to be able to offer an explanation are of interest. This empirical verification attempted understanding and explaining: what is special about Punsari that it has become a reference point for model villages in India ?

Introduction

The idea of model village is old, whereas the question of what elements make up a model village is still new and perplexing. It is new because development is a process of continuous change in a variety of aspects of human society. This process of change has a tendency of always continuing from one outcome to another, encompassing multiplicity of elements in an overlapping manner. Hence, understanding and explaining a model village is always intricate.

The scale used for measuring 'a model village' necessarily has to be varying depending on the other factors that come into play such as size of the village; community composition; location-specific advantage and disadvantage; the presence or absence of external

inducement and so on. The implication is a universal scale and measuring the development of a given village can become confounding due to the error of some extraneous variables coming into play such as the ones mentioned above – importantly, external inducement through special project assistance; socio-political forces, and location-specific advantage and disadvantage a village experiences. It means that a given village if it has almost reached the stage of becoming a model for others to emulate or some indicators falls short by some measure can be expressed only with certain delimitations, and it cannot be presented in widespread terms.

The easiest thing about model village, perhaps, is to dream about one. Attempting to create a model village even on a paper is highly demanding. Issues come up from several different

doors. For instance, one might ask if the basic facilities and services are fine; how about farm and non-farm related developments; how about rural employment generation and livelihoods diversification; how about rural arts and crafts and so on and so forth.

Punsari Gram Panchayat (GP) in Sabarkantha district of Gujarat is recognised as a model for emulation. This GP is referred to in the guidelines of the Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) (MoRD, 2014). In order to understand and explain: what makes people call Punsari a model village, one needs to figure out the perspective on the explanation. Getting into perspective demands dispelling the misconceptions about the idea of a 'model village'. During the course of this empirical study, and on-the-spot reflections sustained at Punsari, correcting certain misconceptions about



model villages is required. These are:

Misconception – 1: The immediate perspective of a model village is ‘a village complete in all respects’.

For instance, the SAGY guideline provides a robustly exhaustive outline, which by all means, can be considered to be theoretically complete as well. It is a comprehensive framework ‘to draw ideas from’. However, it is ‘not a blueprint’ that one shall try to ground every element mentioned in it. In a study of a model village, as the study unfolds, one gets to recognise that there are several facets or strata of development. These stages tend to be gradual, progressive and often overlapping. They are not admission-restricted compartments like how rural development is dimensionally captured in a college syllabus for each department to deal in a given subject matter. It is no blueprint with certain requirements one needs to fill-in, in order to qualify for a village to become ‘model’. In any ‘developed village’, by all accounts, there could be certain elements overwhelmingly present and certain elements conspicuously absent. The point is that a model village cannot be complete in all spheres of development one might wish to see on the ground. We need a proper sense of perspective delimiting our framework for

understanding.

Misconception – 2: There is an ultimate destination which is perfect (or pinnacle of development a village must touch) to qualify for being called a ‘model village’.

There is no stage called the ‘pinnacle of development’, the definition of which describes the ultimate destination a village must reach, so as to qualify for being called a ‘model village’. One cannot say that development practitioners and professionals are directing villages towards ‘that ultimately perfect destination’. It can be any comprehensive listing like it is given in SAGY guidelines, or the norms given under human development index, it is always relative and progressive, with a possibility for further perfection. It is not a run towards a finishline. Therefore, by one scale, a village could be addressed as developed, and by another it could be measured as lacking.

This is based not only on this author’s experience in trying to understand and explain Punsari Gram Panchayat, but also is the reality in measuring nations based on Human Development Index (HDI). The HDI is constantly evolving, and the indices are relentlessly being made better and sharpened year after year since 1990. The best brains in the world

are working on constructing the indices and measuring human development. We are not fully convinced as yet, that here is a completely perfect set of index that measure development flawlessly. In the last 25 years, we have developed robust tools, but not one that can be claimed as ‘totally perfect’. The minimal required is holding a perspective and determining ‘a framework to understand and explain’.

From whatever direction, you pose a question to the Sarpanch of Punsari GP, who has been the linchpin behind developing this GP as a ‘spoken about’ Panchayat in the country, his stand is: persistent addition of rural social infrastructure shall progressively improve the quality of life of rural people. Therefore, this study on Punsari model Gram Panchayat primarily took the perspective of ‘rural social infrastructure’. The next question one needs to seek answers to is what has made Punsari so special and widely spoken about Gram Panchayat and what has it to offer for rural development practice?

Let us take the idea of ‘micro credit and group lending’ for an analogy. The essence or the central idea of ‘Micro Credit Programme’ is if you take care of household economics by creating a mechanism for uninterrupted money flow into households, rural economic development shall automatically take place. What made this concept succeed was that the idea has been put to use with several different contextual modifications to suit varying community mindsets and abilities in different villages, regions and continents (Muhammad, 2008). It was not a blueprint operationalised all over the world; rather it is the basic tenets and undercurrent that made the operational mechanism robust; and the micro credit programme a thumping success all over the world.

Similarly, what is the central idea (bottom-line) of Punsari model? Focus on basic rural social infrastructural facilities like providing safe and adequate

drinking water; basic healthcare facilities; schooling of children; arrangement for regular street cleaning; toilet for every household, which implies that Punsari Panchayat performs what the Article 243G in the Eleventh Schedule of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act demands from a Gram Panchayat. Through this performance, the Panchayat has secured its place as a regular functional Gram Panchayat. Secondly, going further beyond the mandate to provide next level facilities such as internet connectivity (Wi-Fi), public address system, CCTV cameras at important places like schools and ration shop, banking beyond the bank hours through SBI Customer Service Point and ATM at village level, have made Punsari a 'spoken-about' Gram Panchayat in the State and also in the country. The weighted average of the community satisfaction also has shown more than 4 score on a 5-point scale indicating that people are 'fully satisfied' about the entire facilities available in the Panchayat.

Enabling development to take place by persistently expanding rural infrastructure theoretically means activating 'trickledown effect' to work gradually, which has been done in Punsari. This can perhaps be viewed as a blend of the basic needs theory, along with letting the trickledown effect operate through persistent expansion of rural infrastructure. The sustainable functioning of the infrastructure created has been ensured through arrangements such as 'management by GP', 'management by SHGs', and 'management through private sector' / 'government sector involvement', etc.

Understanding and explanation

In trying to understand a model village, the first thing we need to be clear about is that 'the very idea of a model village is notional. It is a frame of mind/a mental state—or a composed perspective/intellection. Some villages after a prolonged engagement provide the essentials for building certain line of

argument that becomes 'definitional of a model village'. We cannot speak about model villages, sans the socio-political context (Oyen, E2002). From each model village we may be able to construe 'the constituents' that typify a model village. There cannot be one hallmark or unvarying visage which we can label as model village. There is no gold standard to compare with. However, we can recognise the attributes; document the processes that led to certain characteristics that singled a village out, as pick of the bunch.

A model village, by and large, does provide a concoction which may or may not be replicable; or it can be viewed as a development version that is illustrative. A version that contains several significant developmental fortunes and renders itself uncomplicated for scaling up becomes sought-after, like the Micro Credit model of Bangladesh.

Each village is different. We are going to be imprudent in our explanation, if we attempted providing blanket-type constituents that go into making a model village. We can draw lessons from some of the existing model villages – not only of Punsari's, but also of others. It will not be methodological - rather mythological - if we try to replicate Punsari as a non-parallel example, not taking into cognizance the socio-political context in which it has operated – including the local leadership and official support. Measurements can be claimed to be robust within a conceptual framework, or within the perspective it is argued. The point is Punsari has operated in a certain socio-political context, which may not be the same all over. In the same vein writes Robert Chambers (1997:84) that one village, Ralegaon Shindi, in Maharashtra, has been repeatedly cited as a model for sustainable environmental management, for decades, although accounts agree that it has most exceptional and unusual leadership.

The study of a model village can provide much interesting and relevant

insights. But history is full of examples of how such studies are made for propagandistic purposes to show that their own model is the superior one in the atmosphere of political and ideological confrontation. Many researchers have taken great pain to paint their own models in as bright colours as possible – as if everything fell in place only because of, and after the intervention. Development researchers and development practitioners in many instances played the game of comparing ideally functioning models of their own with other systems as they function in a less perfect reality (Pretty, 1995) that degenerates into subjective value judgments or propagandistic statements. Therefore, in studying and emulating model villages, one needs to be wary of false comparisons and variables being intentionally over-emphasised or unintentionally underplayed, etc.

Conclusion

Perhaps, what is intelligible is, we can deduce the characteristics that Punsari has to offer as constituents of a desirable pattern and certain principles and values that Punsari considered imperative / non-negotiable during the process of creating Punsari version of development. We can claim that we have arrived at these principles and values from our own experiments in Punsari Gram Panchayat alone. All said and done, we may have to go for a participatory plan with the community wherever we propose to make an intervention, bearing in mind the principles and values that facilitated transformation of Punsari Gram Panchayat, or any model village for that matter rather than recommending that model to be adopted as a blue print. Perhaps, that sounds as an intelligible proposition.

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Greater discussion around disposal and sanitation during menstruation takes the front seat during International Women's Day celebrations



Dr. W.R. Reddy, IAS, Director General, NIRDPR and Dr. N. V. Madhuri, Associate Professor, CGSD along with girl students who attended the Women's Day celebrations at the Institute

The International Women's Day was celebrated with great enthusiasm at the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj on 8th March 2019, organised by the Centre for Gender Studies and Development. In pursuit of abolishing gender gaps in all walks of life, NIRDPR strongly pushes for the creation of equal opportunity ecosystems for all genders. Following that pursuit, the celebration of International Women's Day for this year was dedicated to menstrual health and hygiene of adolescent and young women.

On this occasion, NIRDPR launched a CSR project for providing sanitary napkins to school girls in collaboration with Bharath Dynamic Limited, Hyderabad. The programme was part of a MoU between NIRDPR and BDL (Bharath Dynamics Limited) under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) signed on February 05, 2019. The leadership from BDL

Shri S. Piramanayagam, Director (Finance), and Shri S. Narayanan, General Manager were present for the occasion. The programme was also attended by

Shri. K. Satyanarayana Reddy, District Educational Officer, Ranga Reddy District. 200 adolescent students from neighbouring government schools were invited to take part in the programme.

The Academy Award winning short directorial "Period. End of Sentence" by Rayka Zehtabchi was screened for the audience. The movie screening was followed by a panel discussion on menstrual health by three eminent panellists,

Dr. Anita Rego, Public Health Professional, Hyderabad, Prof. Y. Rama Padma, veteran demographer from the Indian Institute of Health and Family Welfare and Smt. K Surekha Reddy, Head of the Corporate Social Responsibility department of Welspun Group for Telangana. Dr. W. R. Reddy, Director General, NIRDPR presided over the occasion.

The programme started with lighting of the lamp by Dr. W. R. Reddy, Director General, NIRDPR along with the dignitaries. The Director General NIRDPR addressed the enthusiastic crowd of children, staff and faculty of NIRDPR.

Following the address of the Director General, BDL-NIRDPR programme was launched by distributing packets of sanitary napkins to selected schools children. Shri. S. Narayanan, General Manager (P&A), BDL addressed the audience about the project titled 'Awareness Creation and Free Supplying of Sanitary Napkins to Girl Students of Government Schools in Ranga Reddy District, Telangana'.

After launching the BDL project, the short film on menstrual hygiene was screened. The screening was followed by a detailed panel discussion by three experienced panellists. The panellists pointed out that the vulnerabilities relating to menstrual health are multi-faceted and adolescent women should not be considered a homogeneous group as there are socio-economic identities that intersect with gender. They also pointed to the need for greater discussion around disposal and sanitation during menstruation, alongside the availability and access to menstrual hygiene products. The programme ended with a vote of thanks from the organisers and farewell lunch for the invited children.



It is common to hear 'Annam Parabrahma Swaroopam', which means 'food is God's personification'; 'Annadata Sukhibhava' which means 'Let the person who donated the food stay happy'. These proverbs emphasise the importance of food in our daily life. One may find from the Vedas that the parting direction of a Guru to his disciples, at the time of leaving Gurukulam, was to grow food grains. In his magnum opus 'Arthashastra', Kautilya advised that a king should show favour to his subjects by providing them with seeds and provisions during famine; as such, the kings in ancient India used to maintain emergency food stock and the people were encouraged to have their own 'grain reserves' for a rainy day. Swamy Vivekananda states that we can't teach philosophy to the hungry. In fact, food is the basic physiological necessity as per Maslow's theory on hierarchy of needs. According to Shenngen Fan, Director General of IFPRI (International Food Policy Research Institute), it is meaningless to achieve all other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) without addressing hunger and malnutrition by 2030. Apart from food, the citizens should have access to

safe drinking water, sanitation, quality education and affordable healthcare in the realm of sustainable development.

Food Security is the situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (World Food Summit, 1996). Indian government introduced numerous measures to address food insecurity in the independent India namely constituting Food Grain Policy Commission (1947), setting up of Food Corporation of India as well as Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices in 1965, launching of a revamped Public Distribution System (1992), introducing Targeted Public Distribution System (1997) and finally passing National Food Security Act, 2013. However, about 5 per cent of Indians go to bed without having two square meals a day according to the National Sample Survey Organisation. In fact, these are the people who really suffer from food and nutritional insecurity. Hanumantha Rao C. H. and Radha Krishna (1997), concluded that the poverty alleviation

programmes in India, including Public Distribution System (PDS), are top down approaches and hence suggested that the beneficiaries need to be made partners in the design and implementation of the programmes through local Panchayats. Khera (2011), estimated the proportion of food grains diverted from the PDS to the open market. A survey of 1000 rural households in Bihar reveals that the performance of PDS has significantly improved after the implementation of National Food Security Act, 2013 (Dreze et al., 2015).

According to a recent report from IFPRI, India was ranked 103 in Global Hunger Index (GHI) out of 119 countries surveyed in 2018. With a score of 31.1, India suffers from a level of hunger that is serious (GHI score of 20-34.9 is considered as serious; while score of 10-19.9 is moderate, score of below 10 is considered low. While a score of 35-49.9 is alarming, score of 50 and above is extremely alarming). Some South Asian countries like Sri Lanka (84), Bangladesh (88), Myanmar (77), Nepal (72), and China (29) received better ranks than that of India. In fact, we are better than Pakistan

Table 1: Per Capita Availability of Food in India vis-à-vis Other BRICS Nations

Country	Calories (KCal/day)	Proteins (Grams/day)	Fruits (KG/year)	Vegetables (KG/year)
Brazil	3,286	94.5	139.2	53.9
Russia	3,358	101.3	68.4	109.7
India	2,455	60.0	51.5	80.5
China	12,161	407.2	347.9	666.1
South Africa	3,007	83.5	39.1	45.3

Source: Food and Agriculture Organisation, 2016

(106) and Afghanistan (107) in this regard. The proportion of undernourished in the Indian population (14.8 per cent), prevalence of wasting in children under five years (21 per cent), stunting in children under five years (38.4 per cent), and infant mortality in children under five years (4.3 per cent) are the main parameters while reckoning GHI score. The above figures are quite disturbing since the demographic dividend of India depends on these human development indicators. Sanitation/open defecation is found to be a critical determinant of child malnutrition, particularly stunting. Stunting and wasting are nutrition indicators for the SDGs. Children are particularly vulnerable to nutritional deficiencies.

Food Security has four dimensions namely i) availability of food, ii) access to food, iii) utilisation of food and iv) stability in production of food. Here, one must keep in mind that availability of food does not automatically ensure food security, unless people have purchasing power. Though access to food relies on income level of the citizens, the government has been doing its bit through implementation of Public Distribution System, Integrated Child Development Scheme, Mid-day Meal Scheme, and Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, etc. Utilisation of food relates to preparation, use and nutritional content of the food consumed by the people. The government has been supplying food grains and cereals through Public Distribution System to ensure meaningful food and nutritional security to the people. Thanks to Green Revolution, India achieved stability in production of food as the production of food grains reached 279.5 million tonnes in 2017-18. Per capita availability of food in India vis-à-vis other BRICS nations is depicted in Table 1.

It is evident from Table 1 that per capita availability of food in India in terms of kilo calories as well as proteins is on the lower side vis-à-vis other BRICS countries. However, India is in a slightly better position in terms of per capita availability of fruits when compared to South Africa; similarly, India is better than South Africa and Brazil considering the per capita availability of vegetables, but China and Russia are a way ahead of us in this regard. So our focus should be on providing more calories and proteins to the poor and hungry to enhance their food and nutritional security; as such, people should not only include staple food items like rice and wheat but also consume pulses to fight against malnutrition. This may happen when we create sustainable livelihoods for the bottom of the pyramid population and increase their purchasing power.

According to the World Bank data (2012), around 27 crore Indians reportedly were below the poverty line. According to the World Economic Forum, 13.9 crore poor people resort to inter-State migration in search of livelihoods in India. Hence, accessibility to food is a major issue for these people. Besides this, the living conditions of these migrated people in urban slums are deplorable as they do not have any access to Roti, Kapada aur Makaan, which are basic universal needs of human beings. Death is the most serious consequence of hunger, and children are the most vulnerable in this context.

In light of the above, the government may seriously think of removal of 'dual pricing system' in the PDS so as to prevent leakage/diversion of food stocks to the open market; to compensate for this policy change, Direct Benefit Transfer to the poor may be a viable option.

Alternatively, food coupons/stamps may be distributed to the deserving poor through local Panchayats. Wasting of food in social ceremonies is a crime which needs to be controlled by using social media through development of Apps for re-distribution of food to the needy orphans or beggars. It is pertinent to mention that Hare Krishna Movement launched by Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation, Akshya Patra, Save Children, Amma Canteen, etc., are noteworthy models for replication in other parts of the country. The private initiatives in providing food to the hungry will not only substitute the efforts of the government, but will also result in nutritional security to the poor.

Income status bears a positive relationship with consumption of pulses, milk, fruits, vegetables (leafy), meat, oil and sugar. Hence, nutrition education is required to ensure that pregnant and lactating mothers do eat at least one fifth more than their habitual diet. For instance, Ammu Foods Unit, Kudumbashree Nutrimix Consortium, etc., in Kerala engage SHGs in production of hygienic and nutritious food supplements for children and pregnant women, thereby ensuring nutritional security.

Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam states that India would achieve sustainable development when its citizens have free access to food and nutrition, clean water and sanitation, income generation, health care, education and capacity building, electricity, telecommunication systems and financial services. To achieve sustainable development through food as well as nutritional security, we should try Public, Private, People Partnership model (involving community, private parties and the government as partners) to say goodbye to hunger.

Dr. M. Srikanth

Associate Professor & Head

Ms. A. Sirisha Reddy

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NIRDPR

National seminar on Population Dynamics in India and its Implications on Health and Environment



Dr. W. R. Reddy, IAS, Director General, NIRDPR delivering a speech during the inaugural session of the national seminar

The Centre for Wage Employment with the help of the Centre for Post Graduate Studies, Centre for Human Resource Development and Centre for Research & Training Coordination & Networking organised a national seminar on 'Population Dynamics in India and its Implications on Health and Environment' in collaboration with the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) at NIRDPR during March 7-9, 2019.

The following were the themes of the seminar:

I. Marriage, Fertility and Family Planning • Marriage and Family • Female Education, Employment and Fertility • Abortion and Pregnancy Outcome • Family Planning and Unmet Need

II. Adolescent Health and Well-being • Parental Influence on Child and Adolescent • Substance Abuse and Risky Behaviours • Youth and Employment • Reproductive Behaviour and Sexual Health

III. Environment and Population Health • Geographical Disparities in Health • Environmental Influence on Health • WASH and its Linkages with Health • Climate Change and Disaster

Management • Nutrition and Food Security

IV. Healthcare System and Policy • Healthcare Expenditure and Financing • Health policies and Programmes • Diseases and Healthcare

V. Rural Poverty, Unemployment and Migration • Wage Employment and Migration • Remittances and Rural Development • Agricultural Distress and Migration • Left-behind Women/Families

VI. Population Ageing • Population Ageing and Health • Elderly Care and Living Arrangement • Social Security and Policy

VII. Gender Issues

VIII. Data and Demographic Methods

In the inaugural session on the first day, Dr. W. R. Reddy, Prof. K S James and Chief Guest Shri Rajeshwar Tiwari addressed the audience. The dignitaries spoke lucidly on various aspects of population, environment, health, exploitation of natural resources, changes in family dynamics, need for improving rural areas to sustain, etc.

Following the inaugural session, plenary session on '25 years of ICPD: Lessons Learned and Challenges' was held. The panellists Prof. K. Srinivasan, Prof. Leela Visaria, Prof. Ravi K. Verma and Dr. Shireen Jeejeebhoy spoke elaborately on how the ICPD had significantly changed the way of looking into the reproductive and child health issues. India abolished the target-setting approach in family planning programmes immediately after the ICPD, but even now they do govern the programme and population policies have still now targets relating to fertility. During the discussion, panellists also raised questions whether there has been a convergence among the RCH related programmes after ICPD. They also asked whether gender issues are adequately addressed.

The issue of quality education for successful transition from adolescent to adulthood still remains a big concern. Despite social norms prohibiting girls and boys mingling with the opposite sex, some adolescence experience premarital sex and the percentage is increasing. Here, the question is whether they practice safe sex. Unless we accelerate various programmes in achieving the SDGs, we are likely going to miss the boat



Faculty members of NIRDPR with other participants at the national seminar

once again.

by some anthropometric measures.

Technical sessions

Six technical sessions were held on the first day of the seminar and a total of 24 papers were presented. The paper presenters belonged to Banaras Hindu University, SNEHA, Mumbai, Delhi, Thanjavur, Bangalore, Burdawam, West Bengal, University of Delhi, Srinagar, University of Madras, Thiruvananthapuram, University of Kerala, ISEC, and IIPS, Mumbai.

First session on family planning saw three delegates presenting papers. All of them used NFHS4 data. A paper highlighted that abstinence and infecundity are the most important reasons for non-use of contraception. Other paper concentrated on various schemes that are addressing the maternal and child healthcare, including nutrition in Tamil Nadu, while another one was about the fitness of moment estimation procedure in estimating the impact of factors determining contraceptive use.

In the second session on marriage and fertility, a paper discussed how the fertility level has declined in Andhra Pradesh from 1971 to 2016 and emphasised on the need for encouraging education of girls for reducing number of childbirths. Other presenter indicated that social support is one of the significant factors for marital happiness. The significant impact of medical termination of pregnancy on fertility decline in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka was well highlighted. A paper elaborately discussed the significant decline in consanguineous marriage in Tamil Nadu during 1990s to 2015. Further, there was a highlight on the discrimination in fertility

Third session was on maternal and child health and gender issues. In this session, the rising trend in delivery of baby through caesarean section was discussed in detail. A paper discussed the scenario of MCH outcome in the context of three delays model while another tried to throw light on the causes of violence against women. Also, it was noted that the State of West Bengal did not adequately address the issue of trafficked sex worker's welfare and rehabilitation while dealing with the health issues of sex workers.

In the fourth session on reproductive behaviour and sexual health, it clearly emerged that there is a need for enhancing the knowledge and understanding of sexual and reproductive health concern among the young adults; there are evidences of indulgence of adolescence in risky sexual behaviour; the importance of contraceptive use among the youths in India; how a school-based awareness programme can help in increasing the health hazards of tobacco use and growing challenges of youths in the rural areas.

The fifth session dealt with child health and nutrition issues regarding SWABHIMAN Project. In this session, a total of six papers were presented. During discussions, it became very clear that there is need for improvement in traditional birthing practices in Gujarat; women from Gujarat consume more frequent and diversified food items compared to the women in Maharashtra; there is a well-defined seasonal variation in the prevalence of wasting of children; women and children with malnourished

status were considerably high among the food unsecured households in both Gujarat and Maharashtra; MUAC can be used to assess thinness in adolescent girls, especially in absence of BMI; the prevalence of under nutrition is higher amongst children not consuming cereals, milk and milk products.

The final and sixth session was about nutrition and food security. As such, in this session discussion revolved mainly around the nutritional issue and food security. Summing up the discussions, it may be concluded that the continuum of food chain is a major nutritional problem in India.

The second day of the seminar started with the second plenary session on the theme 'Policy Implications of NFHS-4 Findings.' The session was chaired by Dr K. S. James, Director, IIPS Mumbai and the panel included stalwarts from the field such as Dr. B. Paswan, Dr. S. K. Singh, Dr. H. Lhundgim, Dr. L. K. Dwivedi and Dr. Pedgaonkar. The deliberations included a vast gamut of dimensions ranging from family planning, nutrition, child health, mortality and fertility and the NCDs. The panel highlighted the crucial issues and the ways forward.

The rest of the day saw nine technical sessions.

Technical session 7 dealt with the theme 'wage employment and rural development' where six papers that mainly dealt with remedies for curbing malnutrition in India, ICT interventions, Poshan Abhiyaan implementation, women's education and employment, livelihoods under MGNREGS and livelihood analysis of the vulnerable sections such as the differently-abled under MGNREGS were presented.

Continuing with the theme, the technical session 8 on 'Employment and Livelihood' had three paper presentations that discussed employment and livelihood issues, model villages, livelihood opportunities, nutrition definition and migration issues under MGNREGA.

The technical session 9 was on the theme 'Climate change and environment.' It had papers dealing with issues related

to safe drinking water and sanitation, impacting of rapid urbanisation and evidences from Indian demographic and health surveys on spatial variation.

The 10th technical session dealt with four papers on the theme 'healthcare' and it focused on IFA and anti-natal care, AYUSH and other critical issues related to nutrition of children.

While the 10th technical session mainly dealt with healthcare of children, the 11th technical session had papers deliberating on 'adult health.' The presenters discussed cumulative life table ratios, gender disparity in adult mortality, issues related to NCDs, dengue, diabetes mellitus and tuberculosis. The 12th technical session focussing on

'migration' had deliberations revolving around policy perspectives, internal-inter-State, and distress migration and factors determining the same.

The 13th technical session dealt with 'population ageing and health' with papers presented on mental health, health status of the aged and the elderly, the various challenges related to morbidity and quality of life.

The 14th technical session was in line with the previous session on 'elderly care and healthcare expenditure.' The presenters discussed vital issue related to health care expenditure, regional variations, coping strategies and state interventions. The last session of the day was on health policy and programmes.

The participants discussed healthcare expenditure and income, HIV/AIDS and STDs, healthcare services utilisation and health insurances.

The organising committee included IIPS, Mumbai Patron: Prof. K. S. James, Director & Sr. Professor, Prof. H. Lhungdim, Dr. Dhananjay, Dr. W. Bansod, Dr. Pralip K. Narzary, Dr. Preeti Dhillon, Seminar Secretary, Dr. P. Murugesan, NIRDPR, Hyderabad Chief Patron: Dr. W. R. Reddy (IAS), Director General, NIRDPR, Patron: Prof. Jyothis Sathyapalan, Head, CWE, Dr. Digambar Chimankar, Dr. P. Anuradha, Dr. Lakhan Singh, Dr. Rajesh Sinha and Dr. Akanksha Shukla, Dr. Sonal Mobar Roy.

Training programme on Open Source GIS Tools for Forest Resource Management



Shri H. K. Solanki, Senior Assistant Professor, CGARD (14th from left) with other participants who attended the training programme

A training programme on 'Open Source GIS Tools for Forest Resource Management' was conducted in collaboration with Forest Department, Government of Rajasthan during 28th Jan to 1st Feb, 2019. Birla Institute of Scientific Research (BISR), Jaipur collaborated the programme on the request from

Department of Forest, Government of Rajasthan and National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR) played a key role as faculty/ resource persons.

A total of 28 participants including four Indian Forest Service (IFS) officers of 2016 batch and 12 Rajasthan Forest

Service (RFS) officers along with IT staff and other officials attended the course. A range of Forest department officials from different cadre and IT experts participated in the event. The inaugural session was attended by Dr. N. C. Jain, IFS, PCCF, WF & PS;

Shri K. C. Meena, IFS, Additional



Participants during the training programme

PCCF, Wild Life; Smt. Shailaja Deval, IFS, CF, Wild Life, Department of Forest.

During the course of the programme, an introduction to the technology was given and possible applications were discussed. Also, some of the free and open source tools were introduced during training along with sufficient hands-on experience. The tools are follows:

- OSMAND (Android and IOS-based mobile mapping application)-removes need of using handheld GPS if accuracy between 5-10 meters is required
- Open Data Kit (ODK) - android based tool to collect and aggregate multi-geographic, multi-attribute information in multiple mobiles
- QGIS as a data creation, consolidation and analysis platform

During the training, Dr. Mahaveer Punia, Head, Remote Sensing, BISR, Jaipur, discussed about the concept and applications of remote sensing. Dr. N. C. Jain, PCCF, WP & FS, Department of Forests, Government of Rajasthan attended the programme for ODK sessions. He held a detailed discussions with the resource persons and participants. Based on the instructions and advice of Dr. N. C. Jain, staff from IT and GIS division of Forest Department also attended the relevant sessions of the programme.

Shri. Narendra Singh, ODK expert & Data Manager, Indian Institute of Health Management and Research (IIHMR), Jaipur took sessions on ODK applications and installation of server computer. Rest of the sessions were handled by Shri H. K. Solanki.

On the third day, a half-day field visit was arranged to the nearby Jhalana Wild Life Reserve for mobile-based data collection of forest point assets and tracks using free and open source OSMAND and Open Data Kit (ODK) mobile mapping applications. Apart from the collection of point assets, all the participants collected at least one track data in the middle of a selected same track by their mobiles in offline mode.

In addition to mobile-based data collection, wildlife surveillance and anti-poaching system of Rajasthan, mainly designed from five major wildlife reserves of Rajasthan were also visited.

Later, the data was imported, visualised and analysed in desktop QGIS software and Google Earth. It was found that all the tracks were falling within 8-10 metres of the width range. Hence, it was fairly concluded that with the help of OSMAND mobile app and by using standard mobile, field data may be collected with five metres of error, in similar kind of terrain conditions. The collected data was downloaded and

visualised in GIS environment.

For further actual data collection in the Forest Department using ODK, a server computer was configured for ODK aggregate by the resource person

Shri Narendra Singh. Also, ample knowledge and hand-on sessions were delivered on Open Source QGIS software as a central data visualisation, analysis and map composition platform.

Course material and post-training support

Course Material was provided through Google drive sharing and subscription of YouTube channel (dedicated for the GIS related material). For post training support, a membership was taken by all participants in a dedicated WhatsApp group, created for the Forest Department of Government of Rajasthan in previous training. Apart from this, it was advised to the participants to join a dedicated LinkedIn group being managed by course director Shri. H. K. Solanki, for his GIS training participants. Possibility of live support through free Team Viewer remote desktop access software was also described and demonstrated.

Valediction and feedback

In valediction session, Dr. G.V. Reddy, IFS, PCCF; Dr. N.C. Jain, IFS, PCCF; and

Shri Anurag Bhradwaj, IFS, Additional PCCF, IT, Department of Forests interacted with the participants and took their feedback. During valediction, training summary was presented by courses director for the ready reference of officers and participants.

Coordinators

Shri H. K. Solanki, Senior Assistant Professor, CGARD coordinated the course. Dr. G. V. Reddy, IFS & PCCF, Training, Research, Extension and Evaluation (TREE) coordinated the programme from Department of Forests, Government of Rajasthan. Dr. Mahaveer Punia, Head, Remote Sensing Division, BISR Jaipur coordinated the programme from BISR.

Regional workshop-cum-training on Preparation of Village Development Plan under PMAGY and Integration with GPDP at SIPRD, Guwahati, Assam



Dr. T. Vijaya Kumar, Head, CESD (1st row, 3rd from left), Shri Deepak Shah Under Secretary, MoSJ&E, Gol (1st row, 4th from left) and Dr. Satya Ranjan Mahakul, Assistant Professor, CESD (1st row, 1st from left) with the other participants of the workshop-cum-training programme

Centre for Equity and Social Development, NIRDPR organised a two-day regional workshop-cum-training on Preparation of Village Development Plan under PMAGY and Integration with GPDP at the State Institute of Panchayat and Rural Development, Guwahati, Assam during 1st-2nd March, 2019. In this workshop, a total of 48 officials representing Assam and Tripura have participated.

The workshop was inaugurated on 1st March, 2019 with a welcome note by Shri. Surajit Borgohain, Deputy Director Training of SIPRD, Assam. With a focus on the importance of Village Development Plan under PMAGY, the inaugural address was delivered by Shri. Arvind Kumar, Director, Department of Social Justice & Empowerment, MoSJ&E, Government of India. He emphasised on different socio-economic monitorable indicators and

revised guidelines of PMAGY. Further, he discussed the modalities of placing the monitoring committees and their composition at various levels like village, State, district and Centre. Dr. T. Vijaya Kumar, Associate Professor and Head, CESD emphasised on the need of capacity building of the Committee members and the functionaries on various survey formats, use of MIS and the methodology to be adopted for development of Village Development Plan (VDP), and integration with Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP). The two-day workshop-cum-training covered various aspects regarding implementation of PMAGY that included presentations on survey formats, revised guidelines, introduction to new website of PMAGY, Management Information System for PMAGY, preparation of VDP, convergence aspects of PMAGY, skills for integration of VDP with GPDP, hands-on experience for

the participants on data entry, use of MIS and planning for utilisation of Gap filling funds for the development of model villages under PMAGY.

The workshop-cum-training came to an end on 2nd March, 2019 with the valedictory address by Dr. R. M. Pant, Director, NIRDPR-NERC. He underlined the development of disadvantaged communities through proper planning at the village level, specifying that integration with GPDP under PMAGY is critical through effective team leadership for building the model villages.

The workshop-cum-training was coordinated by Dr. T. Vijaya Kumar, Associate Professor and Head, CESD, Dr. Satya Ranjan Mahakul, Assistant Professor, CESD, Shri. Surajit Borgohain and Shri. Pabitra Kalita, Deputy Directors of SIPRD, Guwahati, Assam.

Library Talks on Geoinformatics Applications for Rural Development



Dr. N. S. R. Prasad, Assistant Professor, C-GARD delivering a talk on 'Geoinformatics application for rural development' during the 'Library Talks', Smt. Radhika Rastogi, IAS, Deputy Director General, NIRDPR and Dr. Akanksha Shukla, Head, CDC are also seen

The Centre for Development Documentation and Communication at NIRDPR launched Library Talks as an initiative to organise academic discussions and debates on various topics that can benefit the faculty members, staff and students of various centres. Library Talks on geoinformatics applications for rural development was held on 12th March, 2019. The key speaker was Dr. N. S. R. Prasad, Assistant Professor, C-GARD.

Dr. Akanksha Shukla, Head, CDC, introduced the guests and welcomed the audience comprising faculty members, staff and students of NIRDPR.

What is GIS?

A geographic information system (GIS) is a framework for gathering, managing, and analysing data. Rooted in the science of geography, GIS integrates many types of data. It analyses spatial location and organises layers of information into visualisations using maps and 3D scenes. With this unique capability, GIS reveals deeper insights into data, such as patterns, relationships,

and situations, helping users make smarter decisions (*source: <https://www.esri.com/en-us/what-is-gis/overview>*).

Dr. N. S. R. Prasad provided key information on the subject geoinformatics and its applications in the field of rural development. GIS stores both spatial and non-spatial data in different layers like administrative divisions, water availability, resource maps, etc. This information helps one in analysing an area's location, its conditions, trends (be it agriculture, water or housing patterns) and also helps in modelling that area.

GIS is integrated with remote sensing. The sensors used in remote sensing collect data in the form of images, and provide specialised capabilities for analysing and visualising these images. Dr. N. S. R. Prasad, while discussing some of the advantages of remote sensing, put forth that, it can further be used productively know the locations of wasteland, which can be productively used to generate income and employment. It will also help in watershed management.

GIS can be used in agro-climatic planning, where it can be used for soil mapping, finding dominant crop types, crop suitability, drought assessment, crop insurance mapping, land use pattern, land degradation, irrigation, elevation, rainfall, temperature and for knowing other cultural features of that area.

GIS can also be integrated with government schemes like MGNREGS and be used for developmental planning monitoring and management of roads. GIS is effectively useful in administrative and development sector, especially in disaster management, ground water management, flood mitigation, flood warning system. It can also help in asset monitoring under various government schemes like Swachh Bharat Mission.

The speaker, Dr. N. S. R. Prasad, also spoke extensively on 'Bhuvan Panchayat'. Bhuvan Panchayat is a web portal that functions on crowd-sourcing approach. It offers high resolution data of a region which helps in visualisation.

Smt. Radhika Rastogi, Deputy Director General, NIRDPR, appreciated

the team of C-GARD for coming up with good research in the field of GIS, which is useful for effective monitoring in

administration.

Towards the end of the programme,

Dr. Akanksha Shukla thanked the speaker for an enlightening session.

CDC Initiatives

Former NIRDPR faculty member selected as group manager for UN project on gender integration



A former faculty member of National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Dr. Sridhar Seetharaman has been selected as group manager for UN project on gender integration in mainstream development.

The project is on gender integration in mainstream development of the Canadian economy. It is a UN assignment for a period of five years commencing from the fall of 2019. It carries UN Scale of GS 7 (US \$ 450,000) per annum. Four candidates were globally selected to cater to the needs of the 10 provinces and 3 territories of Canada and Dr. Sridhar has been assigned the provinces of Ontario and New Brunswick and territory of Nunavut. He will coordinate the activities of the four groups besides being the leader of Group 1.

Dr. Sridhar Seetharaman joined NIRDPR, Hyderabad in August 1982 and retired from the services of NIRDPR in September 2014. During his tenure at NIRDPR, he developed expertise in the areas of women empowerment, women entrepreneurship, total quality management and control, gender justice and wrote books on the same.

In May 1998, he prepared a

report on gender mainstreaming - conceptual framework, methodology and presentation of good practices for the Gender Budget Cell of the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India.

At NIRDPR-NERC, Guwahati, he served as a Training Coordinator (August 2008 - June 2012), where he developed expertise in gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting. As Gender Budget Consultant, he assisted the Governments of Nagaland and Tripura in engendering their State Plans. The product was the preparation of Gender Budget Manual for Nagaland and Tripura.

He also prepared a development policy paper on gender equality and steps to improve it - case studies of Greece, Hungary and Slovakia as part of his assignment with the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), Prague, Czech Republic, for a period of six months (June 2016 - January 2017). This paper on development policy was accepted by EIGE and the respective countries. Incidentally, these three nations have the lowest rate of gender equality in the European Union. The coverage of gender equality in Greece, Hungary and Slovakia is 50.00, 50.80 and 52.40 per cent against the European Union average of 66.2 per cent. He was one of the members who developed a detailed guide to help European Union Institutions and governmental bodies to incorporate a gender perspective at each stage of the policy cycle. The result was 'Gender Mainstreaming: Helping to Build a More Equitable Society', which identified 15 methods and tools providing guidance on how to integrate gender through policies and women's representation in different areas of society.

His treatise on gender justice was very much appreciated and resulted in the presentation of a paper on 'Gender Mainstreaming in the European Union Climate Change Policy and its Relation to and Coordination with the Union's Migration and Development Policy' at the workshop on Gender Justice and the European Union's External Policies at the University College, Dublin, Republic of Ireland (November 29 and 30, 2018).

Dr. Sridhar organised several training programmes on total quality management, gender budgeting and auditing, gender justice and women's empowerment and related sessions on these themes at Administrative Staff College of India, Hyderabad, Telangana; Jawaharlal Nehru Architecture and Fine Arts University, Hyderabad, Telangana; Kerala Institute of Local Administration, Thrissur, Kerala; Fiscal Policy Institute, Bengaluru, Karnataka. He is a visiting Professor to the United Theological College, Bengaluru, Karnataka, where he takes sessions for Diploma students on Women's Studies and handles Women's Studies for the degree students at Serampore University, Serampore, Hooghly district, West Bengal. He is the recipient of Best Citizen of India Award, 2014 and the Champion of Children Award, 2014.

Dr. Sridhar Seetharaman is currently Advisor (Gender and Rural Development), Arupa Mission Research Foundation, Bhubaneswar, Odisha since 2015.

In recognition thereof, Dr. Sridhar has 'Gender Integration in Mainstream Development of Canada' and assigned the Provinces of Ontario and New Brunswick and Territory of Nunavut as Group Leader in addition to being the overall group leader for the four groups.

Regional workshop-cum-training on Preparation of Village Development Plan under PMAGY and Integration with GPDP at Mysuru



Dr. T. Vijaya Kumar, Head, CESD addressing the participants during the workshop-cum-training programme

Centre for Equity and Social Development, NIRDPR organised a two-day regional workshop-cum-training on Preparation of Village Development Plan under PMAGY and Integration with GPDP at Abdul Nazir Sab State Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (ANSSIRDPR), Mysuru, Karnataka during 5-6 March, 2019. In this workshop, a total of 60 officials representing Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Telangana participated and deliberated the planning issues of PMAGY.

The workshop was inaugurated on 5th March, 2019 with a welcome note by Shri Arvind Kumar, Director, Department of Social Justice & Empowerment,

MoSJ&E, Government of India. He emphasised on the revised guidelines of Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana and explained various socio-economic monitorable indicators. Further, he discussed the modalities of forming the monitoring committees and the composition of committees at various levels like village, State, district and Centre. Dr. T. Vijaya Kumar, Associate Professor and Head, CESD while discussing on the importance of Village Development Plan, emphasised the need of capacity building of the committee members and the functionaries on various survey formats, use of MIS and the methodology to be adopted for development of Village Development Plan (VDP), and

integration with Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP). The two-day workshop-cum-training covered various aspects regarding the implementation of PMAGY that included presentations on survey formats, revised guidelines, introduction to new website of PMAGY, Management Information System for PMAGY, preparation of VDP, convergence aspects of PMAGY, skills for integration of VDP with GPDP, case study of Nagaland on communitisation of education, hands-on experience for the participants on data entry, use of MIS and planning for utilisation of gap filling funds for the development of model villages under PMAGY.

The workshop-cum-training concluded on 6th March, 2019 with the valedictory address of the Deputy Director of ANSSIRDPR, Mysuru. In his speech, he focussed on the development of marginalised communities through proper planning at the village level under PMAGY. The workshop cum training was coordinated by Dr. T. Vijaya Kumar, Associate Professor and Head, CESD; Dr. Rubina Nusrat, Assistant Professor, CESD and Shri Abu Bakar, Faculty of ANSSIRDPR, Mysuru, Karnataka.

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