

**Report of the**  
**Planning and Orientation Meeting for Field**  
**Based Research on Indigenous Production**  
**Systems**

**24<sup>th</sup> March, 2017**

**Organised by**

**AGRAGAMEE, At/PO. Kashipur, Dist. Rayagada,  
Odisha India**

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The first meeting of the Advisory Committee for the project Strengthening Local Farming Systems for Food Sovereignty took place in the Nabakrushna Choudhury Centre for Development Studies, Bhubaneswar, on 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2017. The meeting was attended by 35 participants, which included NGO representative, environmentalists, researchers, academics, and bureaucrats. The Introduction and context of the meeting was outlined by Mr. Achyut Das. Prof. Radhamohan gave the inaugural address, and Shri Rangalal Jamuda gave the key note address. Welcoming the participants, Shri Achyut Das stressed that Agricultural development and food and nutrition security are of prime importance for the wellbeing of tribal communities today. However, these efforts need to be taken up with sensitivity and understanding, as tribal eco-systems have been severely undermined by the onslaught of commercial and exploitative forces over the last several decades. Without this, development interventions only lead to further destruction of the fragile eco-systems, and result in hardly any improvement of the quality of life. However, sensitive intervention is essential considering the extent of poverty and underdevelopment in the tribal hinterlands, especially in states like Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, etc. Thus development planning and intervention must necessarily take a holistic approach, keeping the people, and the eco-system as the central focus.

#### 1. Household Food Security:

- Establishment of Community Grain Banks in villages managed by women
- Promotion of Ecological and nutrition sensitive Agriculture by support for people centred development of Land, Water and forest resources, and measures Bio-diversity conservation;
- Ensuring effective people's and specially women's participation in local governance processes, and designing programmes for the MGNREGA, NFSA etc.

- Focus on Forest Protection as Forest gives the best Food and Nutrition Securities.
- Pro-poor policy Advocacy
- Recognise the Role of Women in Agriculture and ensure their priorities and perceptions are included in development plans

## 2. Development of Eco-Village :

Tribal villages have both natural and Human Resources need to be developed which need to be developed in a holistic manner. Tribal communities should be supported and encouraged to develop them in the Gandhian Model of Gram Swaraj where self-reliance is the core, and the needs of the most vulnerable sections are taken care of. The eco-villages will be based primarily on a. Sustainable and ecological Family Farms and b. Development and management of commons in keeping with the priorities of women and to meet the livelihood needs of the community. In particular, there should be certain processes as follows:

- A development path that is based on traditional and indigenous cultures
- Design with Nature – using permaculture principles, eco-building, harnessing renewable energy, waste-management, recycling of bio-mass
- Promote Organic, locally-based food production and processing
- Strengthen the Governance System based on tribal-self rule and ensure conflict resolutions.
- Ensure Education for All

## 3. Policy Change:

There are no clear cut policies for promoting and ensuring Food, Nutrition, Livelihood as well as Ecological Securities to the tribal and other vulnerable communities that will be sustainable. For this, a proper analysis of all the relevant policies legislations, programmes and practices is essential. As it is known, in all tribal areas, there are forces and countervailing forces that are determining the direction of the

development. Some policies are definitely pro-tribal and pro-poor whereas some policies are definitely anti-tribal and anti-poor. While some of legislations are extremely good and well-intended, there is very poor implementation. One such example MGNREGA and other could be PESA. The violations of these Acts are widespread. But there has to be a proper visualisation of the following:

- National Orientation of Food Production Programme
- Review of all Agricultural Technologies applicable to the Tribal Areas
- From Green to Evergreen Revolution
- Promotion and support for Nutrition-sensitive agriculture,
- Women's priorities to be factored in policy planning and formulation as well.

Within this context, he outlined the main purpose of the meeting as follows:

- ◆ Suggestions for research design on Tribal Production systems
- ◆ Suggestions for design of a training manual for organic farmers

Inaugural Talk by Professor Radhamohan:

In his inaugural address to the meeting, made the following points:

- ◆ Education is essential for tribal communities, however, the present system of education alienates them from their land and agriculture. This needs to be addressed,
- ◆ Tribal family economics is highly affected by unchecked liquor brewing in all places. This phenomenon needs to be understood properly for any development of tribal communities
- ◆ A worse problem than left wing extremism in the tribal regions in the landlords' exploitation
- ◆ Forest guards have a vested interest in shifting cultivation

This was followed by the Keynote Address by Shri Rangalal Jamuda, Chairman, Odisha State Food Commission:

The research is very necessary in the context of the all prevailing food insecurity in the tribal regions. The key points to keep in mind for this research are as follows:

- ◆ Slash and burn cultivation: this was the major livelihood of the people in the past. However, as tribal communities educated their children, the extent of Slash and burn went down, also, it resulted in almost all the top soil being washed down, and became unviable. So slash and burn cultivation is very peripheral to tribal people now
- ◆ The National Household Food Security Programme was envisioned as a programme for food and nutrition of the poorest of the poor. However, in the process of legislation, mostly, only the food aspect remained. In Odisha, the Act provides for 82% coverage of the beneficiaries. However, despite this, several of the really poor are excluded. The Government sought to take action to punish those with false identification, but then refunded the money.
- ◆ In many villages, and towns, the dalit and tribal communities are excluded, whereas, others have cards
- ◆ The Nagada incident has parallels in several parts of the state, yet, we do not know how to reach them. In this context, everybody should read, Shri Achyut Das' book 'Ehimany bhi Banchibe'.
- ◆ Commercial farming gives almost no profits to the farmer, but ten times more profits are taken by the traders, however, tribals are increasingly turning to commercial cropping because of falling productivity of their land
- ◆ It is a myth that Rs.1 rice is making people lazy. A person needs about 15kgs of rice a month. So she will have to work to earn the rest of the 10kgs.
- ◆ There is thus a need for collective thinking about the problems, and for working out the solutions.

## Technical Session I:

### Discussion on Tribal Production Systems and their Correlation with Nutrition and Food Security Research:

This session was chaired by Dr. Srijit Mishra. A presentation on the draft design for the study was made by Ms. Vidhya Das. Valuable inputs were provided by Mr. Ekadashi Nandi, Dr. Saxena, and Mr. Vikas Ratha. These along with the overall discussion helped to improve and fine tune the research design for the tribal regions. The discussion drew on the following suggestions for improvement and ensuring a more relevant research design:

- ◆ The Study design is poorly focused: it is not clear whether it seeks to study vanishing knowledge systems, or the existing production systems. The word vanishing is problematic
- ◆ There needs to be distinction between study of temporal and spatial changes. The temporal change analyses are highly subjective, and cannot be accepted for larger policy discussions,
- ◆ The study is too ambitious in terms of its scope given the short time and budget
- ◆ The study period needs to be one year, to understand the seasonality, and the annual cycles,
- ◆ Tribal agricultural practices vary from region to region, those in higher altitudes have different cultivation practices, we cannot have one generalised design for all.
- ◆ There is need to review the existing literature.
- ◆ On methodological aspects, and design of questionnaires, there are existing methods that can be used. Eg.: Sudha Narayanan's study, and Nitya Rao's Study.
- ◆ There is need to increase the credibility of the study, for ensuring policy impact,
- ◆ Farmers' testimonies need to be recorded on the use of pesticides and chemicals, the compulsions, and the impact.
- ◆ Need for study of organic processes and manures used by farmer, like earthworm manure, etc. and their impact, and benefits,

## Technical Session 2:

### Farmers' Training Manual for Organic Farmers:

The session was chaired by Shri Debesh Padhi, and the draft design for the Manual was presented by Suresh Bisoyi. The manual content, and target audience focus was analysed and improved by inputs of Dr. P.C. Lenka, Dr. Rashmi Mishra, Dr. Sabarmatee, Ms. Pushpanjali Satpaty, Dr. P.V. Viswanath, Mr. Ranglal Jamuda and Dr. Rashmi Rekha Samal. The following points ensued during discussion:

- ◆ Proper pruning of fruit trees, and tree crop management to increase yield need to be included
- ◆ As most farmers also have cattle, there needs to be section on animal husbandry and livestock management
- ◆ Post harvest management, food and fruit processing, processing without chemicals, marketing and value chains need to be included
- ◆ Important conservation measures, including nutrient recycling, rainwater harvesting, cropping systems and combinations for best pest management, should find place in the manual
- ◆ Caring of commons,
- ◆ Certification,
- ◆ Traditional, land management, terracing, and conservation systems like land and water management amongst the Saura, need to be included
- ◆ Improving yield through trellis systems for climbers and other cucurbits should be described

The meeting ended with a Vote of Thanks by Shri Achyut Das.

# Participant List

## Planning & Orientation Meeting

**Planning &  
Orientation Meeting**

**24th March 2017**

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