

Introduction:

Social Action for Community Alternative Learning (SACAL) is a grass root level NGO working in 20 villages of 7 GPs of Gajapati District, Orissa. It is being supported by of IC/SDC. Its activities are concentrated in Mohana Block of Gajapati District having its Project Office at Chandragiri in Chandragiri Panchayat of Mohana Block. It's Head Office is located in Berhampur town and acts as a resource center for various training's & workshops related to the rural developmental activities such as Community Health, Mother & Child Care & Natural Resource Management aspects.

The activities undertaken during the period are basically to strengthen self – help groups for women, creation of awareness through information sharing and small-scale demonstration on Agriculture, Horticulture, Poultry Rearing and Goat Rearing under different Community Based & Group Based Mini Projects. Further to these Paddy, Maize, Vegetable, Mixed Orchard, Check-Dam construction is done under Community Based Activities. Poultry Rearing & Goat Rearing is taken under Group Based Activities. The present activities are implemented in 20 tribal villages of Antaraba, Badasindhaha, Chandragiri, Chandiput, Pindiki, Jeerango & Baghamari Panchayats of Mohana Block of Gajapati Dist.

Project Planning Process:

The half yearly progress report is suppose to give details of SACAL's performance & activities that starts from process of planning to executing the activities through Mini Projects keeping people at the center as the planner, implementer & owner of the programme.

It is the policy of SACAL to take beneficiaries into confidence in every step of planning, process & executing of any project.

It is a matter of satisfaction for the staff of SACAL that they're close to the villages & villagers of the respective area. Being close to them gives opportunities to know the people & their problems. Despite, villagers, SHG members, Members of Krushaka Sangha & Youth Club members were informed in the month of October 2003 to let know their problems at large to facilitate the Mini Projects for the year 2004.

During the month of October & November 2003 in number of meetings were conducted in respective villages the identified problems were discussed among villagers where women & men participated & took active part in finding solutions.

It may kindly be noted that SACAL by principle never assures or claims to solve the problems of people but assists the people to solve their problem by themselves. Awareness building is of course the foundation stone. Gender equity or involvement and participation of women & men close in numbers to each other while solving, problems is the key method in the philosophy of SACAL's work function.

Coming back to the stage of collection of all problems, it is appropriate to tell that, villagers in numbers of meetings fished out the problems of higher priority having concern to food security, which could be solved by the help of NRM. During the discussion among them-selves much awareness used to be created & developed. They argued and agreed to identify their roles, and take-up responsibilities in solving the problems while implementing the Mini Project.

The adage "every problem has a solution" helps them in these regular but number of sittings to identify the right agencies to which they could ask for the support, which they can't solve by themselves.

As the chart shows, under CBA/GBA villagers of respective villages have decided to take up the project by themselves. They have planned and made resolution to take up different activities of projects by

themselves along with the technical experts & concerned SACAL's staff members. SACAL was obliged to transfer the approved fund to the beneficiaries' account for the sake of transparency & to show less involvement in the execution of activities by which ownership & beneficiaries' participation in their respective programme was assured & they would understand the external environment better.

It is not easy to just facilitate the process. Unknowingly one gets involved in the implementation with a noble interest, which again breaks the principles of process of peoples' empowerment. It needs careful understanding the role & responsibilities SACAL has to play for which SACAL staff members always pondered over.

The chart attached separately would tell the details of dispatch of fund to the respective Groups.

It is desired, under the ISNRMPO & SACAL's partnership, the right problem must be identified by the people & to be executed by them. For doing these, human resource development is a necessary objective.

Numbers of training, workshop were conducted for beneficiaries & staff of SACAL. To some they had gone. To some they were invited to upgrade their skill & knowledge.

The chart of training & workshop is attached separately.

In some villages the tribal women have taken initiative to organize themselves under the umbrella of SHGs to quicken the process of their social economic development. In this field, SACAL is facilitating some selected villages. The list has presented some details of taken up Mini Projects either under the heads of Group Based or Community Based.

The chart is attached separately.

The details of the activities under CBA & GBA are follows:

Ruamba (Check – Dam): (Mini Project CBO)

The villagers of Ruamba depend on rain-fed agriculture mostly paddy on their sloppy rice field, which does not hold enough rainwater even during rainy days. Because of the sloppy nature of land, rainwater flows away.

All heads of the village (men & women) joined together to find any possible solution to store or direct – rainwater-going waste on nearby area to flow on their paddy crop as irrigation measure during rainy days. Being invited, SACAL as a friend of these villagers participated in number of meetings in search of any solution for the problem.

They decided to construct a check dam to direct or diverse stored rainwater to flow on their field. The beneficiaries called Junior Civil Engineer. The land was identified on which the dam to be set-up. The landowner agreed to give up as the villager helped him to acquire in lieu a suitable plot of land from village's community land. The responsibility was distributed. As per the estimation, it would cost about Rs.96, 000/=. Basing on priorities of different villages, SACAL could not but agreed to allocate Rs.84, 000/= from ISNRMPO's assistance. Nett deficit of Rs.12, 000/= made them to come to a resolution where villagers agreed to work for 7 days a week but against payment of 6 days wage. They agreed to supply (32 tractor loads) stones free of cost & as on this day nearly 80% of the job is done. Hats up to the beneficiaries. The way they worked, the way they are involved & working would probably help them to get the dam ready for service before the monsoon is actually set.

By drafts Rs. 80,000.00 was transferred to the bank Account of Meri Mahila Samiti, a SHG of the village Ruamba who took the responsibility of keeping Accounts & payments. This SHG have done wonderful executive performance. One should see, how they pay to the

Engineer, the way they force & negotiate transportation fare charge for materials.

It is probably a meaningful complement for them to say, other civil works could be given to them, which would be obviously done in right way within right time frame & within the budgeted amount. By resolution the villagers have agreed to look after maintenance of the dam in future at their expenses. The village development committee formed for the purpose has created spirit of sharing & caring, which would help them to undertake any project in future with the active participation of the women & men & even children who have contribute small but in meaningful way. The record of job progress and payment is maintained by the SHG.

Kantasaru (Mixed Orchard): Mini Project – (CBO)

Earlier the people of village Guriguda made resolution to plant fruit bearing trees which would affect their economy.

Because of different government sponsored projects available for the village Guriguda, the village Kantasaru undertook the plantation mini project.

The villagers of Kantasaru (male & female) were delighted to get the CBA – plantation mini project of their choice accepted. “Jiriho Grama Unayan Committee” was formed to take the responsibility. The beneficiaries agreed to plant Mango, Guava & Litchi in their respective land. A committee was formed to carryout the job & responsibilities. They invited block level agriculture officer and horticulturists to get them technical know how. It was their understanding to pay @Rs.5/- for a 3’ x 3’ x 3’ pit needed for mango tree. 2’ x 2’ x 2’ pits were dug for other plants against nil payment as their contribution.

The total land area chosen is of 10 Acres. The plants were purchased from Bhubaneswar by the beneficiaries. Ownership of plants is based

on the ownership of land with the law of equitability. During the meetings while resolution were made, different responsibilities were distributed amongst the beneficiaries.

They agreed to take care after plantation. So also protection of plants till they grow – up to 3yrs. would be the responsibility of the owners of plants. Watering plants during dry & hot period & after care would be the owner's responsibility. They will fence the plants free of cost.

In between the mango plants drumsticks will be planted and the life fencing seed & materials will be planted all over the plantation site for protection. People are waiting for the rain to plant the trees.

MAIZE: Mini Project (CBA)

The male & female villagers of village Nilakuti, Khariguma, Baunsuri & Padhigaon called number of meetings in their respective village to decide the process & practices of maize cultivation, area selection, seeds selection, distribution of jobs & responsibilities etc.

The processes of accepting maize cultivation as a strong medium to solve their immediate food insecurity problem as cash crop by all the above villages are more or less similar. Plethora of their problems were discussed and abandoned except maize cultivation. They had variances in their stands between members, which at last got dissolved by the help of number of discussion, arguments & consensus.

In their resolution, every course of action was discussed and they distributed responsibilities. In the course of discussion, duties & responsibilities of SACAL were too discussed & were made known to all, which is of course being abided by.

By the invitation of villagers of above villages, SACAL attended all meetings to facilitate the process.

The demonstration effect of maize cultivation taken up last year by some villages made impact on the attitude of the above villagers who made systematic resolution to adopt best process & method prescribed by local agriculture extension officer, JAO, Mohana.

They used to invite the local agriculture extension officer to help them during resolution making process. For transparency & empowerment exercise, SACAL transferred money to the beneficiaries through bank draft. Till the end of June all the inputs including the seeds as recommended by the JAO have been purchased.

Funds distribution chart is attached separately.

PADDY: Mini Project (CBA)

Village Nijuma of Pindiki Gram Panchayat and village Naringi of Chandragiri Gram Panchayat took paddy cultivation on 12 acres of land for each village. 12 households from Nijuma & 14 households from Naringi made them prepared to take-up paddy cultivation by making resolution where male & female beneficiaries were present in the number of meeting called on different dates.

By their invitation SACAL used be present to facilitate the meetings. Agriculture officer (extension) guided them while making Mini Project and connected budget to it. Rs.23, 000/= for each village Nijuma & Naringi were kept earmarked from ISNRMPO's assistance.

“Baptist Krushaka Sangha” of Naringi & “Sri Rama Krushaka Sangha” of Nijuma Village received money in the form of Draft from SACAL. With the recommendation of JAO, Mohana & Mr. A.Pattnayak, JAO (Plan), Bhubaneswar the beneficiaries of the groups purchased Puja & Surendra variety paddy seeds. Green manuring is done in Naringi. Each of the plots was inspected by JAO. By his instruction Dhanicha was cultivated for green manuring.

By the help of JAO people of Nijuma gave soil for testing against payment. It was taught by JAO, Mohana how to collect sample of soil.

Farmers of Naringi have already sowed paddy in their plots for its low land characteristic. Where as Nijuma has prepared the soil & waiting for right monsoon to go for sowing. However in both the villages training was conducted for the soil testing & paddy cultivation.

Dengama (Poultry Rearing): Mini Project (GBA)

12 SHG members of “Maria Mahila Samiti”, village Dengama of Antaraba Gram Panchayat of Mohana Block of Gajapati District made their poultry shed ready & sent one representative to bring 160 one-day-old chicks (Giriraj & Banaraj Variety) from CPDO, Bhubaneswar (Govt. of India) on 3rd April 2004. The mortality of chicks on arrival was 10.

As per the prescription of Dr. Indira Nayak of CPDO vaccination was given on due dates by the beneficiaries under the supervision of local VAS & SACAL staff members.

Adopting low input & available feed for the birds it was discovered a good amount of profit by the beneficiaries after the sales of livestock. The said profit amount is kept in the revolving fund of the group for recycling. By the experience gained from this activity of poultry rearing the beneficiaries are confident & could go for poultry rearing individually or jointly. They have pocketed a great lesson that 45 days of rearing poultry bird is the optimum time span to dispose the livestock to get highest return.

It is a great pleasure to inform, the beneficiaries constructed the poultry shed by themselves, purchased feed, looked after the birds as per the instruction of expert from CPDO & local VAS. Last but not least they shunned their fear & embarrassment to sale the livestock in the local market & gained the profit. They have placed another order of 150 one-day-old chicks of broiler variety to CPDO, Bhubaneswar that would be collected by the end of July 2004 as a recycle activity.

It was a problem to keep records of expenditure & earnings for the ignorance of group members. The staff of SACAL taught them the simplest method to keep the record for future reference & perusal. The register is maintained properly.

The nearby villagers used to visit the shed & encouraged the group members. The demonstration is over. The confidence on poultry rearing is gained. There is profit & it is proved. Sale of livestock is not a problem in the region. Fear of disease to the poultry is a myth for it could be tackled by the right vaccination at right time. Any one could go for poultry rearing with very nominal investment & could grow is the end slogan.

Kantasaru (Goat Rearing): Mini Project (GBA)

As their contribution, 12 SHG members of “Indira Swayam Sahayak Dala”, village Kantasaru, a shed of 12’ x 24’ was constructed for common goat shed. 2 males from the village & 3 females from the SHG took the lead role to buy local variety goats in the month of April 2004.

SACAL transferred the total fund Rs.16, 000/- to their SHGs savings account of Canara Bank, Chandragiri. Each beneficiary bought two local variety goats. As on this day there is nil mortality report. Local VAS was regularly contacted, vaccination on due dates were given by the peoples’ initiative & contribution.

The group members are ready with preparation & inventory for coming rainy days. Other SHG members are showing interest after observing this group’s activity, solidarity, involvement & interest. As it appears more SHGs would be going for goat rearing activity following the footsteps of Indira Swayam Sahayak Dala.

SACAL is equally serious to facilitate the members of this SHG with more information & technical know-how so that it could be a model to be replicated.

Learning's from the Mini Project:

1. If the people undertook the responsibilities, of course they do commit mistakes but from this they learn. But if responsibilities are thrust by SACAL unto the people the blame comes to the NGO & people are not allowed to learn & take things seriously. The affair becomes lifeless.
2. While discussing & planning with the technical persons, people inquire lot of things & they got the opportunity to go deeper into the matter & solve their problem related to their subject. Gradually they come to understand that this is 'theirs' and involvement comes into force.
3. When they pay for the services or goods they became judicious in spending the money & always try to extract the best of it. Example – negotiating with tractor, paying to the Engineer for check dam etc.
4. During the implementation of Mini Project people got the chance to interact & expose with market conditions, various marketing agents, institutions, which broaden their knowledge.

