PRASARI

Annual Report

2012
The real need at community level is yet to be figured out.

It's not a matter of pride that we can impose our development strategies on communities without taking their concerns into account.

Understanding their perspective

Communities are normally perceived to be inefficient at decision making for themselves. More often government and other development agencies promote development programs in backward areas without considering their concerns. In India this is a big drawback to the development sector. Interestingly the ideal system is there in place in government and that is the Panchayeti Raj Institution. This would work best if the people at grass root level are provided with more information and trainings on how to collect the best information from the local communities. This is important from the perspective that the data that government receives many a times is not correct and this is the data based on which government makes policies. We need to look into this closely and should work in such a way that the perspective at community level and at policy makers' don't mismatch.

Ensured access to the service for secured and sustainable livelihoods for the poor, especially the women to lead dignified life.

Our vision

Our mission: working with and for the poor towards secured and sustainable livelihoods.
I am privileged to share that PRASARI has completed its five years in this year end (2011-12). We started our journey in a single village of the Sundarbans with a single farmer and five years down the line we have reached to 67 villages of the coastal Sundarbans and Himalayan Dooars in the districts of South 24 Parganas and Jalpaiguri of West Bengal through our direct intervention programs with the under-privileged families. My sincere thanks to my colleagues based at Teams in the Fields and putting splendid efforts towards enhancing well-being of the families we, work with and for. We are thankful to Sir Dorabji Tata Trust and NABARD for continuously supporting us to put in the SRI practice across a vast region of West Bengal and reaching out to a farmer base of over three thousand five hundred. We also owe our SRI-Success in the State to the State SRI-Learning Alliance – “Banglar SRI”.

The continuous support from the Panchayeti Raj Institutions, Dept. of Agriculture, Fishery and Livestock Development (GoWB) we have been able to bring in the convergence in allied services for the families in Agriculture, cattle management and fishery. We are optimistic that in the long run our association with the Govt. would facilitate us to reach out to the more and more numbers of the poor villagers.

In this year our joint work with Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO of UN) and Internal Water Management Institute (IWMI) in finding the Agriculture Water Management Solutions for Small Holders in West Bengal has ensured our positioning in the State, all West Bengal districts beyond our direct operational area, in the State Secretariat and Planning Commission of India. We owe our external positioning to FAO of UN, IWMI and State Directorates of Line Departments.

We are thankful to the villagers and SHG ‘didis’ whose end to end support has been ‘forcing’ us to be with them and work together. With an endeavor of reaching to a larger and larger poor mass of India, I remain”,

(GOURANGA BANERJEE)
PRASARI is a livelihoods promotion institution registered under Societies Registration Act. The Organization works with a mandate to fulfill the need for professional services to disadvantaged families in the society. PRASARI adapts double folded approach to ensure the quality services for the poor, namely- indirect support services (partnership mode) and direct implementation of the livelihoods programs. Its partnership mode emphasize on providing support to the organizations in development sector, initiatives on positive contributing towards the (State, local Govt.) policies addressing the needs of the underprivileged section of the society. Under its direct implementation mode PRASARI is increasingly responding to the emerging challenges of livelihoods through its activities with and for the poor.

To reach out to the network of major development stakeholders, PRASARI strongly focuses on working in collaboration with Panchayeti Raj Institutions, thus to ensure a cumulative coverage for vulnerable categories across a larger region.

Legal Status
Rajarhat PRASARI is registered as a society under the West Bengal Societies registration Act (1961). It has been registered under section 12AA and 80G(5)(vi) of the I.T. Act, 1961. The Governing Body constitutes of seven members. They include individuals from professional and management background with sound experiences of the development sector.

Values
Rajarhat PRASARI work with and for the community to enhance their livelihoods that centers around Natural Resource Management (NRM). The organization facilitates optimal use of resources and services for community benefit. Following are the core values of the Organization to move with.

Our Values
Inclusion, Innovation, Excellence, Transparency, Integration, Sustainability, Team work, Cost optimization, and Collaboration
Subhendu Goswami
President
MBA in Rural Management-XISS
A good mix of experience at the management level in corporate & Development sector. Currently working in TATA BP Solar as Regional Manager.

Priti Das
Treasurer
MBA-Marketing and Rural development
10 yrs. of experience in capacity building and strategic planning support to at least 50 grass root NGOs working in the realm of livelihoods and microfinance. Worked in CARE CASHE Program.

Gouranga Ranerjee
Secretary
B.COM
Ten year experience in providing capacity building services to NGOs/MFIs in development sector.

Dr. Dipankar Saha
Member
Ph. D, FZS (Cal), 24 years of experience on managing large livelihoods programs based on natural resource management, agriculture and fisheries. Experience in operation and program management and research under ICAR (Indian Council of Agricultural Research). Dealt with a large number of International and National agencies through consultancy.

Arpita Chaudhuri
Member
M.S.W
Ph. D, FZS (Cal), 24 years of experience on managing large livelihoods programs based on natural resource management, agriculture and fisheries. Experience in operation and program management and research under ICAR (Indian Council of Agricultural Research). Dealt with a large number of International and National agencies through consultancy.

Purna Chandra Sahoo
Member
CAIIB, B.Sc.-Agriculture (H)
Having more than 25 years of experience in Sr. Management capacity in Nationalized Bank (UBI) and as Chairman of Mallabhum Grammeen Bank.

Soumyajyoti Choudhury
Member
M.A - English
15 year experience as journalist
Chief Editor - UNI

Sri. Dipankar Saha
Chairman of Mallabhum Grammeen Bank.

Soumyajyoti Choudhury
Member
M.A - English
15 year experience as journalist
Chief Editor - UNI

PRASARI was registered initially in the early 2007 to provide an integrated microfinance and livelihoods services to the rural and urban communities. Microfinance to begin with experiences a gap with its essential part of livelihoods. As the covered community was mostly based at the urban slums and the organization's scanty experience to deal with urban livelihoods, the approach did not work well. The whole objective of integration got diluted without any positive impacts in the livelihoods of the microfinance 'clients'. Revisiting the vision and mission of the Organization, PRASARI changed its approach to interventions with the livelihoods of the rural poor since mid-2008. The first activity under PRASARI's banner was put in the rural Sundarbans through system of rice intensification (SRI) on a leased-in land by a landless farmer Shambhunagar Village of Gosaba Development Block in the said delta. PRASARI had the human resources to deal with the SRI system but the major dilemma was to put in the technology in the coastal saline delta for the first ever time that too in the summer, when salinity reaches the peak in the agriculture land. In the very next season in 2009 PRASARI demonstrated Kharif SRI with 152 farmers in 147 Bigha (1 acre=3 Bigha) of land in the Shambhunagar Gram Panchayet of the Gosaba block under the grant support from Sir Dorabji Tata Trust (SDTT). To establish the community base, PRASARI worked in close collaboration with local government (PRI systems). Almost all the farmers covered under the programme harvested a minimum of 50% of the increment yield through this organic system of agriculture. With a strategy to work with the PRI system PRASARI could reach out to five times coverage in terms of number of farmers and the gram Panchayets, indeed in the Gosaba block and introduced the technology in the adjacent Basanti Block. Since then, PRASARI pursued SRI as the only activity to reach-out to more and more number of farmers.

In this up scaling phase of SRI under the support from SDTT, PRASARI put its rigorous effort to saturate six adjacent GPs of the Gosaba block. In the month of May-2009, when all the base works were under the completion to put the SRI seedlings, entire Sundarban was affected by the devastating cyclone-Ayla. The entire Block was left with 600 acres of the agricultural land to put immediate crop. Relief had been an urgent need for the homeless Ayla victims spending nights on the existing riverbanks to support them with food grains to survive and medical support. With a support from Jamshedji Tata Trust PRASARI run a month-long programme to provide relief support to over 3500 families in one of the most affected delta named Kachukhali. The relief programme consisted of supply of food grains to each member of every family; baby food to all the babies below five years, special food to the pregnant mothers and three consecutive phases of residential medical support in the villages under the direct treatment of seven qualified doctors from Kolkata. The entire relief operation was managed and neatly implemented with a splendid and very active support from the local PRI body and their election opponents.

25 young volunteers nominated by the PRI from the local area worked day and night under PRASARI's leadership to help the delta to manage the initial shock.

After the initial shock, rehabilitating the livelihoods of the people in the delta became a major issue. As almost all the agricultural land was under saline water inundation there had been no hope for the immediate agriculture production from the most dependable natural resource-land. There are no demonstrated livelihoods activities 'show case' ever to counter post saline inundation scenario. With this findings, PRASARI started it's experimentation on post calamity livelihoods activities under Post Ayla Long Term Livelihoods Initiatives (PALLI) with a financial support from SDTT. As agriculture land became un-productive for the initial years, the experiment phase took up goat, pig and fish rearing as the pilot activities for feasibility testing since 2010. The activities were decided through a series of informal consultation with the local villagers.
-sultation with the local villagers and the PRI. Based on a year of experience it seemed, fish as an intervention exhibited tremendous return potential for the villagers in the delta, pig also show its promise as a viable activity for the tribal and the goat rearing requires further detail experimentation to comment on.

This learning has now facilitated PRASARI to integrate the activities for better livelihoods of the delta people e.g. SRI with rice and mustard, fisheries, goat or pig rearing depending upon the family castes. Harvesting rain water to ensure sweet irrigation supply in the winter and summer crop has also been seen as a potential activity for the delta communities.

As seen above, SRI has been the most successful activity PRASARI could demonstrate in Scale. This has facilitated PRASARI to enter into another SRI virgin belt of West Bengal in “Duars”. PRASARI has a solid delta SRI experience to work with a cumulative number of over 2000 families in the Sundarbans, in a very first attempt almost 1700 families of Malbazar, Nagrakatta and Maynaguri Block of Jalpaiguri district have been covered by the team based at Malbazar, in a single season.

Human Resource Development

Capacity building for livelihoods’ is the most prioritized vector PRASARI works with. PRASARI emphasizes on building the capacity of the community it works with and the capacity building of the staff members is also looked after with major importance. Any intervention in the community comprises of two parts namely-building the capacity around the activity and then putting it in place.

A series of pre-during and post activity discussion platforms are organized. To transfer the stake, the community is facilitated to plan, design, estimate and implement. Exposures to the demonstrated sites and visioning of the family members are a couple of tools used to nurture community members apart from regular technical trainings. PRASARI works through locally field based teams led by professionals. There are low cost educated rural youth works directly with the families with the support from the Village level resource persons. These village level resource persons (VRP) are nominated by the village community for availing door-step services from them. Once the VRP’s are recommended and shortlisted, they undergo a series of motivational and technical training under the mentorship of PRASARI’s experienced professionals or the experienced professionals hired by PRASARI. The developmental debates are encouraged among the staff members and thus it helps maintain a good environment where a new comer can always challenge the oldest member of the team.

The team members also undergo regular training programme on their psychological development and growth. It’s an in house product exclusively designed for the PRASARI staffs in a residential campus, where there is no reach of the field activities. Apart from the internal programme the core team members often take part in National and International HR capacity building programs for their growth.
District 24 Parganas (S)

SRI (System of Root Intensification)

Supported by SDTT

Gram panchyet-Sambhunagar, Kachukhali, Bipradaspur, Pathankhali

No of farmer 5161

PRASARI has been carrying its SRI campaign forward although there is no major external funding support. In Sundarbans and Duars PRASARI has all together covered 5161 farmers practiced SRI in 1700 acres of land. We experimented with SRI-mustard, wheat, maize and even jute which provided a significant incremental yield to an extent of 33 to 70%.

Research (Prasari & BCKV) supported by SDTT:

SDTT has been supporting a joint on-farm and station research by BCKV and PRASARI. The key aspects are as follows. The objective of this research is to obtain a ‘scientific’ brand to the research findings to advocate the policies. No. of Farmer 14 (Every season) x 2 Locations

Season – Boro
Aspect: 1. Nutrient Management
2. Weed Management
3. Water Management

Season – Kharif
Aspect: 1. Weed Management

PRASARI being one of the pioneer SRI promoting organization in West Bengal has taken initiative of on-farm research towards standardization of the practice in West Bengal. PRASARI has been financially and technical supported by Harsha Trust (SRI-Secretariat for SDTT) to carry out the research on age of seedling, nutrient management, spacing, weeding and water management aspects. The research is yet to reach three consecutive years to make scientific comments but findings are very interesting so far.

The research program is supported by Sir Dorabaji Tata Trust; this research work on SRI is being implemented jointly by BCKV & PRASARI.

The research program is also supported by Dr. Norman, pioneer of SRI promotion during his visit to Sundarbans.
We are in the middle of this research and would be in a solid position to negotiate based on the research data “directly conducted by renowned Scientists with us”.

**Location – 1) GP Bipradaspur, Gosaba, 24 pgs. (S)**

It is important to understand the nature of different interventions as they can potentially affect the production in short or long term. We are strictly putting combinations of different aspects and monitoring their impact over growth and overall production. We feel fortunate that different research institutions are partnering with us to have visual impressions; BCKV (Bidhan Chandra Krishi Viswavidyalaya) is doing research with us in different Gram Panchayets in different districts.

We believe that these research would directly influence farmers on grass root and policy makers at its top end; no many researches have been done in India that are directly concerned with System of Rice Intensification. SDTT is promoting this kind of on-farm research so that we can have improved understanding on different aspects of it.

**2) GP kalinagar, Ulubariya, Howrah**

Usually in on-farm researches, we involve farmers directly and they themselves implement the whole scientific methodology; input support cost is provided by the research agency and hence farmers can fully appreciate the whole new methodology which is in bigger sense different from the traditional pattern of cultivating rice in the region.

This is interesting because we have promoting SRI in the region for last couple of years but still, we always have to worry about a standard package of practice. This kind of on-farm researches would help us standardize the POP for the paddy. If successful, the learnings would be applicable in other crops for sure.

Not all the farmers would understand the scientific methodologies at once, so it is extremely important that scientists develop a simple methodology easy to adopt by the poorest of the farmers. Only this way can be justified the importance of this kind of researches. Sundarbans are very vulnerable to saline inclusion due to natural calamities and hence researches undertaken here can be having broad perspective even for those areas where there is no problem of salinity at all.

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**SRI – Supported by NABARD**

**Gram Panchayet - Bali**

No. of farmer 776, Area- 101.56 Ha

In this NABARD supported programme extension of SRI in the remotest delta is the focus. This initiative has been ensuring an incremental yield of 30 to 705 mostly in rice and mustard. Organic nutrient application practice is one of the highlighting points under this initiative.

There were repetitive technical training programs for the group of farmers before putting every steps in the field. There were four different phases of the technical training programme, started with the good seed selection and seed treatment procedure and preparing the nursery beds. The training for different groups were immediately followed by the demonstration on field. The next phase of the technical training and the demonstration for the farmer’s pool was transplanting young seedlings from the nursery bed to the main field. The final couple of phases were technical training on weeder operation and disease and pest management on rice. The disease and pest management training had a series of sub phases: class room training on identifying disease and pests of rice and their remedies, on field visit with the group of farmers to identify the disease and pests in the field itself, preparing the organic plant extracts to counter disease and pests.

History: Bali-1 Gram Panchayet came into the PRASARI’s SRI picture due to a Gosaba block Panchayat Samity level workshop concerning all the Gram Panchayat Pradhans and Krishi-sanchalaks of all the GPs in the block in October 2008. The workshop mainly focused on the SRI findings in the Shambhunagar GP of the Block and role of PRI to put the technology in a larger scale across the Block. The GP-Pradhan of the Bali-1 exhibited tremendous interest about SRI for his area. A kishan mela was organized by the GP keeping SRI in the focus and a series of video shows were displayed for the farmers of the area. The interest started growing among the farmers on SRI. So to state, PRASARI’s entry in the GP took place through this kishan Mela.

The scenario got changed severely due to Ayla (the cyclone) on 25th May-2009 in the area. Bali being located at the mouth of the Bay of Bengal and the last delta before the sea, got entirely flooded with the saline sea water. The Kharif 2009 season could not be caught as there was no scope for growing rice on saline soil and water indeed.
INTEGRATED LIVELIHOODS PROGRAM

Any intervention of PRASARI in any village starts with preparing maps to assess the needs. Maps covering the resources, land use and ownership pattern help us to decide the intervention pockets and activities. The maps are actually prepared by the villagers only on properly scaled revenue sheets. There are 3 different kinds of maps needed for this purpose:
1. Resource Map (Mouja Wise)
2. Land use map
3. Ownership vs. Land use map
These maps are the back bone for recommending robust livelihood activities as they are results of rigorous thinking process and based on the village’s actual situation. Villagers make these maps themselves and all the maps are actually based on village resource map; a map which defines the actual village boundary, land and houses, and other natural resources from that area. This kind of map can usually be obtained from the Gram Panchayet office and then villagers can start working on it.
Villagers involvement makes it flawless planning for the area as they understand the area more than we do. Hence livelihood planning are much trustworthy compared to any other methodology.

SHG/SGSY promotion & Nurturing and interventions

SHGs are the key platforms to intervene in the operational villages. The intervention plans and monitoring is done through SHGs only. Regular SHG meetings actually make the monitoring and activity identification very easy and with distributed stakes. It’s a rigorous exercise spending the entire day with husband and wife from the families to come out with net planning for the entire year to reach out to a set income enhancement target for each of them. Several following sittings actually helps to schedule the activities across the year for the families and worked out financial investment required then further matched with the available fund (loan +Savings) with the groups.
There are several key issues come out from the planning put forth for further action with the PRI and Govt; the joint review process at the yearend actually evaluates the set income target vis-à-vis the achievements and key learnings of failures.
No. of SHG – 35; Members – 412
No of SGSY -49, No of member -560
Following are some of the key highlights of the activities come out from the annual plans:
Goat rearing (capacity building Training, Nurturing, vet care (especially vaccination), proper follow-up and BFT training) - No. of families covered – (776 direct & indirect)
Vaccination program – other livestock (cow, pig, etc.) - No. family covered - 276 (direct & indirect)
Vegetable plan (capacity building Training, Nurturing, proper follow-up) - No. family covered - 376 (direct & indirect).

All these livelihood programs are run with the support from different donor organizations and are playing a significant role in the lives of the people over there.
Sundarbans are a group of different islands and the life is very difficult over there. Lack of drinking water, agriculture usable water and poor connection with the main land are some of the problems over there. PRASARI has been trying to uplift their economic situation by running various kinds of innovative programs.

Promotion of SHGs (Self Help Groups) and is also among our mandates. Weekly sittings with them for sake of monitoring and promoting livelihoods are the agenda. For this, we go for annual planning as well so that it can be understood what the SHG members are thinking of this year for sake of intervention.
We have field staff that we recruit from over there only and community has thus door step service. This is beneficial for the community as they don’t have to go to main land in order to have access to service such as vet care, vaccination etc. We provide this kind of service regardless of the nature.
In case we find it difficult to provide trainings on our own, we contact our district government officials and they help us out from the situation.
Organization of vaccination camps, awareness camps, training of disease pest management are some of the common activities that are done every year; in year there was a widespread outbreak of PPR among goats. Our staff worked day and night so that we could control this disease. Unfortunately, several goats were dead by the time we could reach the help but intervention ultimately saved thousands of other goats in the vicinity. We vaccinated in such a way that can be considered as a fire wall.
Similar to department of agriculture, we have a very strong relationship with department of Animal husbandry; training program, medicine, vaccination program etc. are provided occasionally.

The mass awareness programme was organized by the GP to cover 986 farmers from all the Samsad; 30% of them were women. The module encompassed, video shows on SRI, comparison of SRI and traditional rice cultivation and cross checking the shared findings through on field exposure visits by the farmers in their own villages.

Imparting training for the women from different SHGs and the groups under SGSY had been seen as a primary activity to disseminate the technology. GP organized the training of 172 Women who had gone through a day-long rigorous training followed by the on field exposure to compare SRI and non-SRI plots.

This year we mainly aimed at motivating people towards demonstration and the capacity building of the different section (e.g. women, laborers, primary farmers and potential adopters) around SRI. The intensive awareness programme has raised the knowledge and confidence of the community but it is felt, it requires some more on field demonstration and monitoring to ‘break the ice’.

The process has been documented for every step through digital photography for the future use in the area. A concrete MIS has been developed to track the data and the quality of the process in the area. The MIS has been distributed in four different phases namely: pre-transplantation, transplantation and first weeding status, Second weeding and interculture, crop harvesting. There is a detail design and MIS to collect the exclusive data of the 10% SRI farmers.

Sundarban’s delta are potentially vulnerable to PPR among goats and it spreads like epidemic; immediate vaccination is a must in these situations.
VISION:

“The vision of Banglar SRI is to forge a broad alliance of organizations and collective action, from the village level up to the whole state, and across all sectors – public, private, academic, and grassroots, with civil society providing ‘glue’ for their cooperation – to banish food insecurity and create economic opportunities on a widespread basis as all citizens in West Bengal can benefit from increased productivity of our land, labor, water and capital resources”.

History:
The members from “Banglar SRI” have been putting an effort to facilitate a meeting with the Ministry of Agriculture (GoWB) to discuss upon the scopes for scaling up SRI in the State through the Govt. and Civil Society partnerships. The Minister-in-Charge (Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Affairs, GoWB) advised that a program to sensitize the Agriculture Line Dept. Officer would ease the environment of discussion on SRI, across the table. Apart from that the members of the “Banglar SRI” also felt the need of a state level program involving the Line Dept. officers at the State Head quarter and in the districts, farmers, political decision makers, Scientists, Academicians and Civil Societies. Other development stakeholders visited to PRASARI’s field for mutual learning. IWMI-Bangladesh and Sri Lanka team had a couple of days visit to interact with our SHG families on their livelihoods initiatives.

Collectivization of the SRI promotion efforts has become a felt need in the State of West Bengal. With the objective of promoting a state-level SRI learning forum, Banglar SRI has been evolving as a platform with the participation from the various SRI promoting and facilitating organizations. There are the representatives of academia in the “Banglar SRI” adding values to the forum. The forum undertook to make consistent and persistent efforts toward SRI promotion and scale-up in the State.

First State Level symposium organized by Banglar SRI in Kolkata
The “Agriculture Water Management (AWM) Solutions” project funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) aiming at designing AWM strategies for smallholder farmers in sub-Saharan Africa and in India.

The goal of the project was to stimulate AWM investment, policy and implementation strategies in the project countries through concrete, evidence-based knowledge.

In early 2010, as a part of this project, IWMI organized a stakeholders’ consultation meeting on AWM in Kolkata to discuss the most promising AWM solutions in West Bengal. The very purpose was to deal with the further efforts of analyzing potentially suitable areas where AWM can make a difference; mapping out livelihood zones in WB along with identification of main constraints was among the crucial aspects of this exercise.

PRASARI as a local partner to FAO of UN conducted various workshops starting from state level to district level depending on the necessity. Senior Officers from different Line Departments (Agriculture, Animal Resources, Fisheries, Science and Technology, Water Resources Development) of Govt. of West Bengal, Panchayat and Rural Development Dept., NREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act- Cell, GoWB), Departmental Heads and Senior Professors from BCKV, NGO representatives from different districts and individuals (with Natural Resource Management expertise) contributed their best in these workshops.

**METHODOLOGY**

During the workshops, participants were facilitated to define the zones; participants used different maps such as AEZ map, soil map, map for rainfall pattern etc. in order to have a broader understanding of the area and then, based on group discussion, their experiences and perceptions they tried to define all the zones within the state of West Bengal.

Three different kind of mapping exercise was done -

1. Livelihood zone mapping
2. Priority zone mapping
3. Solution mapping

Every mapping exercise was validated in the field exercises against the similar parameters.
This wasn’t easy to figure out solutions for each zone and hence solution mapping was done.

**DIALOGUE PROGRESS**

**Expert Consultation - Livelihood Zne Mapping**

Kolkata November 2010

Before any measures could be considered for AWM as an entry point to improve livelihood zones, it was important to define the zones. So the process of delineating the zones started.

Blank maps were provided to all the participants with the plan for initial sitting assuming that participants would later reassemble all the zones. With the help of guiding questions, participants, on the normal blank maps of West Bengal provided delineated the boundaries of zones’ with similar living conditions. There were no assumptions made before the workshop started so the findings only boosted up the process of finding entry points for AWM. Initially the numbers of zones were many for all the groups but later during the discussions there was a tendency of reunion/splitting for different areas within a zone and among zones. So number of zones increased for some and decreased for others.

As a result of group discussions and a brainstorm session, participants were successful in differentiating the state zone-wise but, surprisingly many of them were contrasting in nature with the AEZ map.

Parameters used by the participants to define the zones –

1. Climate
2. Main source of living
3. Main crops (rain fed/irrigated)
4. Farmers’ typology
5. Main constraints for livelihoods
6. Access to market
7. Population (Rural)
8. Rural poverty
9. Water related issues
10. Seasonality
11. Frequency of floods/droughts
12. Other issues such as migration, ethnicity etc.

**Validation - LZ AWM Potential mapping**

Kolkata July 2011

Here is the maps that FAO prepared for the purpose of validation; this AWM potential map shows where AWM can be the entry point for improving livelihoods and where to prioritize investments in AWM to have the maximum impact on rural livelihoods. High potential areas are those showing the highest potential for AWM investment.

These areas are identified on the basis of three guiding principles:

a) where water is available
b) where the target beneficiaries are mostly located; and
c) where water is key for livelihoods.

Participants raised too many questions and later it was decided to conduct more workshops in order to validate the current map.
Option 1: Improving Access to Groundwater; rural electrification for pumps

The solution would entail to reduce the cost of irrigation by providing a one-time capital cost subsidy to electrify 50% of pumps over the next 5 years in districts underlain by alluvial aquifers. This would also include a change in the electricity tariff structure to catalyze re-emergence of competitive groundwater markets, so that small and marginal water-buying farmers can access affordable irrigation services.

Option 2: Temporary diesel subsidies for pumps

The solution would entail the provision of a diesel subsidy to farmers owning less than 1 ha of land and no electric pumps, up to a maximum of 100 liters of diesel/ha, to help reduce the cost of cultivation.

Option 3: Water harvesting ponds

The solution would entail to rehabilitate/build small water harvesting ponds (hapas) to store rainwater and increase recharge. The introduction of “hapas” would provide many benefits including enabling farmers to cultivate previously fallow land, higher crop intensity, new crops, more livestock and fish.

Livelihood-based demand

The livelihood-based demand is assessed through the analysis of the livelihood context of the zone. In particular, the context is assumed to be more favorable in zones with relatively higher prevalence of:

1. Marginal and small farmers
   - Farmers currently owning pumps are mainly marginal farmers. In addition, given the capital investment, farmers who own the land are considered to be more willing to invest on this technology
2. Higher cropping intensity
3. High cropping intensity
   - This is associated with this technology that implies the production of rice and high value crops for market sales.
**Potential beneficiaries and application areas**

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<tr>
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<td>43</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>5.70%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>149</td>
<td>250</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>2.10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2166</td>
<td>4358</td>
<td>3.80%</td>
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**Investment cost (Million US$)**

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<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
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<td>Diesel subsidies</td>
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<td>13.2</td>
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<td>1.8</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>max</td>
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<td>30.7</td>
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<td>309</td>
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<tr>
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<td>318</td>
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We need to protect agricultural fields in Sundarbans from saline water intrusion.
District Jalpaiguri

We expanded in the northern parts of WB with the help of Sir Dorabji Tata Trust (SDTT); this project was an effort to introduce SRI (System of Root Intensification) in District Jalpaiguri which is a bordering district of three different countries viz; Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh. We have been working in district Jalpaiguri since September 2010.

Initially we started working in three different blocks viz; Mal Bazar, Nagrakatta and Maynaguri; latter one was in collaboration with a partner organization viz; Community Development and Health Initiative (C.D.H.I.) we don’t work with anymore.

In district Jalpaiguri, the theme here is to promote SRI (System of Root Intensification) principles in different crops such as rice, wheat and mustard. The year 2010 – 2011 was our first year ever and we worked with almost 1800 cumulative farmers over these three blocks.

Local communities over here showed their great enthusiasm to learn about SRI principles and some got good success stories as well.

The year 2011 - 12 was bit difficult for us as there was no project support and we had to manage all the funds from ourselves; around 200 new farmers were registered with us during the Kharif 2012. The number seems less but looking at the financial situations they are still more.

New farmers’ groups were promoted to build their own Vermi - compost units and some of the pics can been seen on the left side of this page. A Vermi unit needs at least INR 1300 to be built and this all money is being spent by the farmers themselves.

This is really difficult situation for farmers as they have to manage this money on their own. Looking at their financial situations, we provide them all the technical supports for free of cost. Only they have to bear all the input support cost.

This is important as farmers are becoming self-aware of the situations on how these units would provide them all the necessary Vermi-compost for a very cheap cost.

Jalpaiguri is considered to be the most vulnerable to poverty among several district of WB. The Mal and Nagrakata blocks are rural in nature and interventions with agriculture livelihood programs would benefit them in long run.

Farmers are very progressive; they learn quick, adapt and then do things in their own way. There are many things to be done yet, still, there is a ray of hope that this area can flourish in agriculture sector and can give a lead to others.
Adoption of various practices

Jalpaiguri is a place where agriculture has got a lot of potential; farmers are progressive in spite of small land holdings. We started working in this region quite late compared to our Sundarbans operational area and started only in September 2010. That time we opted from winter season and first of the crops were System of Root Intensification in Wheat, Mustard and Paddy. Later we tried the principle in Maize and Jute; results were quite encouraging. Although we couldn’t do enough trials in Jute but patterns suggested that this can well be applied in Jute too. The only problem is of seed drill, we couldn’t develop the seed drill yet as the seeds are small and available seed drills in the market won’t work well for the purpose.

The SRI has now become popular with some withdrawals. Farmers now understand the importance of using Vermi compost so they are trying to do in groups. For instance, in Nagrakata block, Vermi is being promoted in 25 groups from last year’s of only 10 and each group is forming a single unit. This is important in sense that it is not only going to provide them vermi compost but a group culture is also getting promoted. Our involvement is such that we don’t invest anything but mere technical support to our farmers. Two farmers’ clubs are operational in the area and activities like annual planning and weekly farmer’s trainings happen in these farmers clubs and that is really encouraging.

Some of the farmers’ groups also made visit to block Mal and provided simple training to other farmers who wished to learn on how to do vermi composting.

The most encouraging thing is that now local Panchayets understand the importance of these farmers’ groups and farmers’ clubs; they have recommended to three local Self Help Groups to join the a farmers clubs of ours so that they can learn new things over here.

Even in Mal block, A.D.A. recommends to other farmers by providing input subsidies to our farmers; paddy, sunflower, mustard seeds have been provided by the ADA office to our farmers so as to demonstrate the best plots in the area. Among others, these farmers’ clubs have been organizing Kisan Mela for quite some time and demonstrate their capabilities of learning quick and adapting in terms of better practices. These Kisan Mela ultimately provide a good platform to other farmers to understand and let them motivate for a better cause. Local agriculture department, NGOs, and visitors from other districts make the program successful every year; this year it happened just in December month where even weeders and seed drills from agriculture department were kept for demonstration.

A new seed variety of mustard i.e. RP09 from Bihar was introduced here and it showed a very good result here.

A good farmer would never broadcast his seeds in the fields and rather raise nursery and transplant the 10 – 12 days old plants in the main field. This not only enhances the yield but also give better results compared to traditional ones.

Initially we promoted only 10 farmers but now many of them have adopted it and doing on their own.

Organically grown agricultural food products fetch more prices in the market and hence, from this year onward we would focus more on organic practices. We have been doing this already but there the approach was more on reducing chemical fertilization and not completely on the organic culture. Coming time would be of organic mustard and other organic crops; several private companies wish to come over here and get the ready made products. This is the potential area where we need donor support as getting organic certification is an expensive venture and would cost us too much. This is why we put our organic theme on the side for a while and keep looking for the potential investors in the region. Hopefully, people would soon realize the potential of this area and come forwards to make stronger bondages.
CELEBRATION OF WET LAND DAY

They deserve more...
We believe in equality and protecting environment is also our responsibility. If we can’t take a step forward, we should not promote activities that can potentially be harmful for the surroundings at least.

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