CHAPTER-I

GENESIS OF NIPDIT

In the sylvan setting of Kutiguda, a village in Paburla GP of Tikabali block in Kandhamal district of Orissa, National Institute for People’s Development Investigation and Training shortly known as NIPDIT, which literally means THE OPPRESSED, took birth 25 years ago by the Spearhead/ Research Team of PIDT (People’s Institute for Development & Training), a Delhi-based NGO.

The members of the Spearhead/ Research Team-Mr. R.C. Dash, Mr. Rabi Ray, Mr. Raghunath, Mr. Rabi Narayan Das and Mr. Sankarshan Hota, the Pancha Sakha (Five Friends)-are the founder members of NIPDIT. It took birth on March 16, 1983, primarily constituted by the “Pancha Sakha” and a few other eminent persons like Prof. Radhamohan, Dr. Bhagabanprakash and tribal leader Mr. Gadadhari Nayak. Since then, the wheel of NIPDIT has rolled ahead for setting milestones in bringing about socio-economic changes in its operational areas of four tribal districts (Kandhamal, Bolangir, Kalahandi & Keonjhar) of the state.

The society inhabited by the innocent, hardworking, brave but ignorant people, a society embellished with rich culture, spiritual beliefs and self-contented life-style, but ridden with taboos, rampant exploitations, lack of education and economic backwardness provided the initial challenge for the organization to experiment developmental as well as entitlement aspects of social development.

Situational Analysis: Understanding the Phenomenon of Deprivation & Exploitation

The constituency of the area comprised of agricultural labourers mostly dalits, tribal and backward classes. Rugged & mountainous topography of the area put constraint on productive employment and the scope for fulfillment of the livelihoods needs. The inhabitants lacked the knowledge and skill of natural resource management to overcome the constraints and the scope for RRM based livelihood opportunities were hardly explored. In the absence of practices for rational use of natural resources population pressure resulted in unsustainable use of natural resources leading to impoverization of the people.

Women used to bear the double burden of poverty and gender discrimination. Stereotyped gender based division of labour excluded participation of women in the life of the community. Their productive role hardly got acknowledged and they suffered the most from mass ignorance & illiteracy. The correlation between gender discrimination and socio-economic backwardness of a community came into sharp focus during the situational analysis. In such a society, opportunities for economic empowerment of women were few and highly stereotyped. Besides, there was absence of basic minimum services and facilities in the area-roads, school, drinking water, health facilities, electricity etc. Access to govt. programs and provisions was minimal and offices were beyond the reach of the poor. Credit institutions, similarly, were not available. Instead of providing opportunity for the economic development of the poor, the markets dispossessed the inhabitants of their traditional occupations. It operated on the logic of exploitation of the primary producers. Deprivation of the individual, indebtedness of the household and dispossession of the community were widely evident in the society.

Abject poverty, hunger, migration, alcoholism, alienation from & unsustainable use of natural resources, absence of appropriate health specific knowledge, attitude & Practice (KAP), socio-economic process of marginalization, exploitations & corruptions by outsiders-traders, money lenders & contractors etc-together formed a vicious circle.
Social cohesion witnessed on occasions of ceremonies & festivals was conspicuous by its absence in community development. In sum, the situational analysis delineated a picture of deprivation coupled with exploitation.

Following the "Situational Analysis" & "Participatory Rural Appraisal", NIPDIT began its intensive efforts and various initiatives for people’s education and grassroots advocacy. Systematic effort to identify the real causes opposed to myths of distress & deprivation paved the way for a new chapter of people’s action, transformation of social cohesion into community development & local movements on control & management rights over natural resources.

**Conceptualization of a Holistic Perspective on Tribal Development**

The "Situational Analysis", it was realized, was apt for the tribal community throughout the state. Poverty witnessed in all the tribal areas of the state was a manifestation of deprivation & exploitation. NIPDIT began its exercise on "Strategic Interventions”. Once again, the "Situational Analysis" through PRA provided the guidelines while the vision & mission laid down the approach. Vision & mission of the organization emphasized the “approach of empowerment” not to the exclusion of “developmental approach” and “Strategic Intervention” was built upon need assessment. Since the key word was “Empowerment”, the following need identifications informed the "Strategic Interventions":

- Massive awareness generation and conscientization
- Replication & transformation of social cohesion in development interventions
- People’s education based grassroots advocacy
- Formation of community based organizations/ people’s initiatives
- Creation of alternative community based leadership
- Creation of community assets
- Capacity Building on livelihoods skills
- Mobilization of local resources for assured economic well-being

**Broadening & Deepening the Tryst with Social Development**

With a modest beginning of covering 965 people of 2GPs, NIPDIT has grown in stature to be reckoned as one of the prominent civil society organizations in the state spreading its coverage to 42,413 families of 853 villages in 55 GPs of 4 tribal districts (Kandhamal, Bolangir, Kalahandi & Keonjhar) within a span of 25 years. For NIPDIT, it has never been merely an extension of the coverage, more appropriately, it is broadening & deepening its tryst with social development to realize its vision. The criteria of extension to area predominantly inhabited by tribal and scheduled caste population, remoteness with deprivation from basic facilities, absence of services of government and civil society organizations was adopted for geographical extension of the programs.

**The Area & the People**

The operational area of NIPDIT spread across Kandhamal, Bolangir, Kalahandi & Keonjhar in 55 GPs is primarily inhabited by tribals. Densely forested areas traversed by streams, interspersed with evergreen woodlands is the lap of Kondhas, Biljhalas, Bhuyans & Bhulis.

The historical background of the area is associated with princely states, the tribals claim themselves to be the autochthons of the area; their lives & livelihood would have been in harmony with the nature had the process of development desisted from dispossessing them.

They inhabit a land of treasure trove, the favourite hunting ground for the consumerist civilization. No
other community has borne the brunt of development more than the tribals. For ages, they have been at the forefront of conservation of natural resources. The gods & goddesses they worship, the festivals they celebrate as well as the taboos & mores they obey establish their symbiotic relation with the surroundings.

The inhabitants collect fruits, roots, tubers & leaves for food & medicine from the forest, cultivate coarse cereals in the uplands, practice shifting cultivation, prepare goods for household requirement without disturbing the environment. "Need not the greed" determines the requirements of their lives & livelihoods. They believed that Tana Penu (the earth god), Bura Penu (the sun god), Saru Penu (the god of mountains), Mala Penu (the god of creepers), Gasa Penu (the god of forest), the Dharani Deota (the earth god), the Grama Devati (the goddess of the village) and Bima (the goddess of the household) will always be kind to their children and animal sacrifice was in vogue to propitiate the gods and goddessess.

The whole process of development has denied them rights over natural resources, endangered their livelihoods and dispossessed them from their homes & hearths under the euphemism of bringing them to the mainstream of development.

Illiteracy, ignorance, morbidity, superstitions and detrimental socio-cultural practices exist in the tribal society but coupled with deprivation & exploitation, the people are pushed to impoverization & marginalization.

The people displayed placidity, to the extent of a fault, with the life of deprivation & exploitation. Regressive policies have been formulated to set in motion a process of alienation in spite of the avowed tribal development being in the development agenda. Illiteracy & ignorance of the tribal society and the policy induced deprivation & exploitation make the lives miserable for the inhabitants but the spirit of life always sings with the babbling brooks and merrily dance with nature.

Underneath the seeming joy of the inhabitants and the splendour of the nature the reality that tells a story of deprivation & exploitation came to light when NIPDIT undertook Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) in the area. Since the late 80s, NIPDIT is engaged in the area with renewed commitment synergizing both the developmental & entitlement approaches.

**Districts of Orissa**

![Map of Orissa showing operational districts and regional resource centres](image-url)
“Development with social change” defies a beginning as well as an end since there is beginning in the end & end in the beginning. However, in the life of a civil society organization, one can use the metaphor of a journey that sets milestones after milestones or a boat on troubled waters. Neither the road is same nor the experience of the journey. There are moments of retrospection and introspection when one reaches a milestone to identify the direction, equip with new skills and expertise. The experience is much like a sail on troubled water; an experience full of changes-anxieties, apprehensions, hopes & aspirations.

A similar journey with success and disheartening failure has been undertaken by NIPDIT during the last two-and-half decades. The first decade was full of “Struggle for Transformation” when NIPDIT worked for & with the partner community and emphasized massive awareness generation and conscientization, formed community based organizations and prepared the community for rights based collective action through people’s education. During the second decade, aptly called the period of its journey “From Dusk to Dawn”, Institution Building with clear identity both at organization and community level had been the prime focus. This is the period when the organization sought to understand the micro-macro dynamics and synergy with regard to the issues, initiated measures at both the micro and macro levels adopted developmental and entitlement approaches that were intensified in the next half-decade. During “Discovering New Horizon”, the two decades old organization has sought a changed role; mainly from an implementing role to supportive role, from an organization to network building, from plans & program orientation to issues & policy orientation. The focus has been laid on independization of people’s initiatives, networking & mass action, strengthening support service & institutionalization of policy advocacy at the state level.


The first decade was a period of massive awareness generation and conscientization, striving for replication & transformation of social cohesion into development interventions, people’s education, formation of community based organizations/ people’s initiatives, creation of alternative & creative community based leadership, creation of community assets, capacity Building on livelihoods skills and efforts at mobilization of local resources for assured economic well-being.

Project Coverage

During the period, NIPDIT extended its coverage from 13 villages in 2 GPs of Kandhamal district to 409 villages of 35 GPs in 6 blocks of 4 tribal districts of Kandhamal, Bolangir, Kalahandi & Keonjhar.
### Issues & Approaches

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISSUES</th>
<th>APPROACHES</th>
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<tr>
<td>Forest &amp; Environment/ MFP</td>
<td>Awareness Generation &amp; Capacity Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty &amp; Exploitation</td>
<td>Formation of community based organizations (Yuvak Sangha, Nari Sangha,</td>
</tr>
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<td>Education</td>
<td>Village Level Organization (VLO), Cluster Level Organization (CLO), issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women Issues</td>
<td>based (Village Forest Protection Committee; VFPC, Area Level Women’s</td>
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<tr>
<td>Land Alienation</td>
<td>Organizations) and developmental committees (Agricultural Committees &amp;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consumer Issues</td>
<td>Agricultural Cooperatives, Village Education Committee; VEC, Village</td>
</tr>
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<td>Organizational Issue</td>
<td>Health Committees)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Organization of collective Action on PDS, MFP, Wage issues</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Network Building among POs/NGOs (District Level Consumer Forum, CREA) on</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>common issues (Consumer Rights, PDS, MFP, Women Rights)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Promotion of Income generation activities and establishment of structure</td>
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<td></td>
<td>for community marketing, cooperative farming</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identification &amp; Utilization of village resources</td>
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### Outcomes

A decade old engagement with the people is a time long enough to assess the achievements and the failures. Initially, the approach was reformative and then focused at building up constructive and creative attitude among the focal group. If broad outcome is taken into account, the very internal changes refer to the attitudinal changes while the changes in the environment relates to creating suitable condition through formation of community based organization and promotion of rights based activities.

- Emphasis on social action across all the sectors of programs & activities
- Economic activities brought about increase in the standard of living along with realization of the objectives of checking economic exploitations at different levels and capacity building of the community on livelihoods skill
- Realization of the goal of people/community-led efforts for social change and economic well-being
- Shift of focus from women development to women empowerment
- Emphasis on the approach of empowerment along with development led to emergence of community organizations and alternative leadership.

### The Second Decade: Dusk to Dawn (1993 - 2002)

During the period, with the experience gathered during the first decade, NIPDIT sought to bring about changes both within the organization as well as in the partner community for the community to work for itself. Anchalika Maha Sanhga (AMS), block level federation of issue-based people’s organizations, Anchalika Swayang Sahayak Samabaya Sadhan Kendra (ASSK), federation of SHGs, District Forest Forum (DFF), District Resource Centre (DRC), a network of issue-based NGOs, POs, Movements at the district level & District Women Forum (DWF), a network of women action groups at the district level were formed during the period. The organization developed policy, system & procedures.
**Project Coverage**

During the period, NIPDIT extended its coverage from 409 villages of 35 GPs in 6 blocks of 4 tribal districts of Kandhamal, Bolangir, Kalahandi & Keonjhar to 455 villages of 8 blocks of 5 districts of Kendrapara, Kandhamal, Bolangir, Kalahandi & Keonjhar. Project coverage included Rehabilitation Project undertaken in Kendrapara & Garadapur blocks of Kendrapara district in the aftermath of super-cyclone in 1999.

**Issues & Approaches**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISSUES</th>
<th>APPROACHES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Forest &amp; Environment</td>
<td>• Strengthening &amp; independization of community based organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Land &amp; Agriculture</td>
<td>• Broad basing collective Action</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Education</td>
<td>• Emphasis on Micro-macro dynamics and synergy with regard to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Community Health</td>
<td>the livelihood issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sanitation &amp; habitat issues</td>
<td>• Making gender a vector theme across programs &amp; sectors/ Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Women &amp; Gender Issues</td>
<td>Mainstreaming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Developmental Issues</td>
<td>• Development of a holistic perspective in Micro Finance program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Policy Issues (NRM, Health, PRI, Displacement etc.)</td>
<td>to include Entrepreneurship development along with credit plus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Strengthening Support Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Development of Policy, System &amp; Procedures</td>
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</table>

**Outcomes**

The period marks the beginning of dealing with the issues in a comprehensive manner rather than choosing to work with simple emphasis on sectoral approaches. Micro-macro synergization and District
level Network Building among POs/NGOs for consolidation of micro issues link it with the next phase in which state level Policy Advocacy would become the defining feature of the organization.

- Self-confidence to lead the community to a point of self-growth
- Collective action on entitlement issues began to yield results (for example, regularization of PDS, payment to Kendu Leaf workers, remunerative prices to leaf workers, land entitlement to the landless, increased access to govt. schemes & provisions etc.) leading to acknowledgement of POs as issue based organizations
- State Level Network Building for Policy Advocacy on NRM & Health laid the foundation for institutionalization of policy advocacy at the state level.
- Creation of a cross-functional group and genderization of the policy helped make Gender a crosscutting theme across the sectors of the project.
- Graduation of micro-credit to micro enterprise development and credit plus activities helped in development of a holistic perspective in Micro Finance with the emphasis on women empowerment.

In sum, the outcomes during the period could be summarized in creation of a condition for the organization to envisage a changed role from an implementing role to a supportive role, from an organization to network building, from plans & program orientation to issue & policy orientation.


Discovering New Horizon began with the overall perspective of a changed role of the organization with measurable outcomes on achieving 100% food security in the operational areas, independization of people's initiative in the context of withdrawal & phase out, gender mainstreaming & institutionalization of policy advocacy at the state level. The approach has undergone a change on the basis of the realization of the importance of micro models to enrich and ignite macro efforts/events meant for policy changes and the significance of the effect of policy changes at the macro level in improving the quality of life of the poor at the micro level.

**Project Coverage**

During the period, NIPDIT extended its coverage to 42413 families in 853 villages of 55 GPs in 7 Blocks of 4 tribal districts of the state.

**Area & Population**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>Block</th>
<th>No. of</th>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Target Population</th>
<th>No. of</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>GPs</td>
<td>Covered</td>
<td>SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolangir</td>
<td>Khaparakhol</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>3346</td>
<td>10631</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kandhamal</td>
<td>Phulbani</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>5021</td>
<td>8035</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>K. Nuagaon</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>8083</td>
<td>20965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&amp; Tikabali</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Phiringia</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M. Rampur</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>4962</td>
<td>9503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keonjhar</td>
<td>Banspal</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>4565</td>
<td>8293</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Districts</td>
<td>7 Blocks</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>853</td>
<td>48133</td>
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## Issues & Approaches

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<td>Emphasis on Micro-macro dynamics and Institutionalization of Policy</td>
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<td>Participation</td>
<td>Advocacy at the state level</td>
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<td>Right to Identity</td>
<td>Ensuring sustainability of people’s initiatives</td>
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<td>Structural Issues</td>
<td>Acknowledgement of the organization’s gender integration process by NGO</td>
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<td></td>
<td>and network/ forum members</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mainstreaming HIV/AIDS</td>
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<td>Acknowledgement of the organization’s Support Service Unit (SSU) among</td>
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<td></td>
<td>the CSOs of the state</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strengthening the Research base of the organization</td>
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</table>

### Outcomes

NIPDIT has adopted both development as well as entitlement approach covering NRM (forest, land, agriculture) and Livelihoods (Micro Enterprise Development, Community Health, Disaster Management, Gender Mainstreaming) ensuring sustainability of people’s initiative.

- Establishment & propagation of the models (SAP, Mf, Disaster, People’s Organization)
- Ensuring sustainability of the interventions for promotion of food security
- Gender mainstreaming-leadership, equal participation of women in decision making, access & control over resources
- Self-sufficiency of people’s initiatives (both rights-based & economic initiatives)
- Acknowledgement of the organization support service unit in the state
- Institutionalization of policy advocacy at the state level
CHAPTER-III

HIGHLIGHTS OF ACTIVITIES

NIPDIT is engaged since the last 25 years in the state of Orissa for development of weaker sections, mainly Tribals & Dalits. Presently, it works in 4 tribal districts covering 853 villages and strategically covers the whole state on issue & rights based activities. It has adopted both development as well as entitlement approach covering NRM (forest, land, agriculture) and Livelihoods (Micro Enterprise Development, Community Health, Education, Disaster Management, Gender Mainstreaming) portfolios with creation of enabling structures to promote inclusive growth. Moreover, it has always been a priority with NIPDIT to effect program & project convergence so that the initial organizational initiatives transform into people’s initiative and the project outcomes gets rooted in the community’s knowledge attitude & practice (KAP).

3.1 FOREST & ENVIRONMENT

There is no denying the fact that the tribal communities’ entire way of life is woven around harmony with and preservation of nature, especially forest. The fact that the tribals have been at the forefront of the conservation regime is denied under the prevailing policy dispensation. Lack of recognition of such a fact has resulted in alienation of tribals from the forests-denial of rights over forestland, deprivation from the benefits of welfare schemes, state monopolization of the collection and trade of MFP making the tribals no more than wage labourers. Alienation of the tribals from the forests explains for degradation of forests. Since NIPDIT sought sustainable societal development through capacitating the weaker sections, forest & environment became the focus of its activities.

People’s Education & Awareness Generation

In the beginning, village level camps and meetings were organized to make people aware of the hazards of deforestation. People’s education was undertaken through development of literature & IEC materials on the need of conservation of forests and hazards of deforestation-pamphlets, walling, leaflets, charts, posters, maps & photo slides were developed along with use of folk media like, puppet show, palla, dance & drama, songs and slogans in the local language. Environment Awareness Programs were organized to create awareness among pupils to sustain the benefit of people’s education. Village level community organizations were formed for protection & conservation of forests that have been federated to undertake rights based activities for secured entitlement.

Formation of Community Organizations

NIPDIT has promoted 403 Village Forest Protection Committees (VFPCs) in 440 operational villages (the remaining villages are either hamlets and covered by the VFPC of the main village), 5 federations and 4
District Forest Forums (DFFs). Non-paid membership based people's platforms are actively involved in promoting community forest management (CFM). At the project level, the VFPC federation is integrated with Anchalika Maha Sangha (AMS). Similarly, the DFFs are integrated at the state level with DFF networks, NRMFs (Natural Resource Management Forums), DRC (District Resource Centre) & RRC (Regional Resource Centre).

**Protection, Conservation & Regeneration**

"Seed Bank" has established to procure, distribute and sell seeds for carrying out gradual afforestations. Several Forest Nurseries/ Seedling Banks have also been established to serve similar purpose. A total of 15,297 hectares of forests have been covered by the VFPCs and shifting cultivation has been checked in 382 villages including complete arrest of the practice in all the villages of 3 operational areas.

**Collective Action for Entitlement over Forest & Forest Produces**

Rights based collective actions have been organized by NIPDIT in the context of the felt need to create a departure from tribal alienation from their surroundings. Collective actions (local movements) undertaken on MFP (remunerative price to leaf plate makers, kendu leaf workers, primary collectors & gatherers of Mohua Flower etc.), at the local level have been subsequently broad based to organization of district level rally & campaign. Post card campaign was also undertaken to apprise the policy makers of the exploitations of the forest dependent tribals and to raise the procurement price. Issues for collective action has attained larger dimension with the growth of the people's organization to take up policy issues related to tribal rights like; lobby & advocacy for adoption of Community Forest Management, tribal rights over forest land & implementation of PESA Act, 1996.

**Other Activities at the Organization Level**

Diploma course on CEEEM (Continuing Education on Ecology and Environment Management) was framed to train and develop skill among the educated trainees to promote ecological and environmental activities among the forest dwelling community and to create a critical mass to take up policy advocacy on forest issues at the macro level.

Workshops, seminars, trainings and advocacy campaigns have been organized by NIPDIT to bring the CSOs working on the forest issues to a common platform.
Outcomes

- 15,297 hectares of forest protection by the community and shifting cultivation checked in 382 villages including complete arrest of the practice in all the villages of 3 operational areas.
- Establishment of people's organizations at the micro level, their federations & linkage among NRMSs at the macro level to undertake rights based activities on secured community entitlement to forest & forest produce
- Promotion of food security among the forest dependent community effecting policy-practice changes.
- Promotion of protection, conservation & regeneration of forest and ensuring sustainability of the community initiative through institutionalization of changed knowledge, attitude & practice

3.2 LAND & AGRICULTURE

Land is the most important source of tribal livelihood. A majority of the tribals is dependent on agriculture. Even though a majority of the tribals depend on agriculture, it fails to help them earn secured livelihood since cultivation is carried out on uplands where soils are generally poor with erratic rainfall. The reach of the Agriculture Extension Service in tribal areas is very poor, and more often, it has endangered food security by introducing unsustainable agricultural practices.

NIPDIT understands that forest, land & agriculture practices constitute the most important complex out of which the tribal livelihood is constructed. Therefore, NIPDIT has laid its program focus on "Land & Agriculture". In dealing with land and agriculture in a synchronic manner, NIPDIT seeks to emphasize its focus on ensuring secured livelihoods.

People's Education & Promotion of Best Practices

To promote best practices, village level agricultural committees have been formed & Agricultural Cooperatives established to disseminate the knowledge & skills of best practices among the community and to help them access the benefits of the govt. schemes. In order to bring about a change in the socio-economic profile of the community with emphasis on promotion of agriculture-based livelihoods, micro planning has been undertaken in the program villages by applying PRA techniques.

Seed Bank to procure, sell and supply good quality of seeds to the villagers, establishment of central nurseries, village nurseries & kitchen gardening have been undertaken for promotion of horticulture and vegetable cultivation. The knowledge and the benefits of use of green manuring and bio-fertilizer have been widely disseminated among the farmers. The cultivators have been imparted the necessary knowledge & skill for promotion of compost pits. Promotion of best practices have resulted in adoption of the practice of double cropping, mixed cropping & kitchen gardening. According to the information collected at the project level, 5864 farmers are engaged in double cropping. Community managed cattle control in the rabi season has made possible cultivation of winter crops supplementing to the food needs.
Adoption of Comprehensive Approach

The comprehensive approach comprising of four components i.e., Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry & Forestry have been adopted by the people to improve productivity and promote sustainability of farm based livelihoods.

Development in agriculture is impossible to attain without improvement of two of its most basic natural resource base i.e., land and water. Community assets for irrigation (water harvesting structures, irrigation wells & ponds) have been created and traditional water harvesting structures have been renovated for provision for protected irrigation, reduction of crop failure, increase in productivity leading to improved status of food security. Land development has been undertaken in 2387 acres to convert the wastelands into arable land.

Watershed development has been taken up in 14 villages of Tikabali block in Kandhamal district and 4 villages of M.Rampur block of Kalahandi district covering land area of 3502.977 & 528.08 hectares respectively. In association with the watershed associations check dams, diversion weirs, masonry canals, soil conservation structures and percolation tanks have been built to promote conjunctive use of land & water. NIPDIT’s intervention in watershed development has resulted in conservation and improvement of local resources and establishment of institutions relevant to the needs of the community for sustained growth of productivity and income in agriculture.

Promotion of SAP through Establishment & Replication of Model

Sustainable Agriculture Practice (SAP) has the specific objectives of i) promotion of organic farming, ii) effecting input convergence (financial, knowledge & physical) and iii) promotion of agricultural development through crop diversification. The broad objective links SAP to food security, reduced vulnerability to livelihood risks and sustainable development.

Four villages of Paburia project covered by watershed program have been selected for creation of SAP model. The farmers have been sent for exposure to enrich their knowledge on rain-fed farming. Practice of vermi compost, use of bio-fertilizers & indigenous seeds and establishment of low cost irrigation systems have been encouraged in the project areas. Following mass awareness programs & people’s education (walling, leaflet preparation on SAP), input convergence has been effected through promotion of indigenous seed & agricultural practices, bio-manuring, promotion of horticulture and cattle vaccination.

Outcomes

- Promotion of double cropping among 5864 families, soil conservation measures taken up in 2441 acres, 2275 acres of land developed, 8710 acres of land irrigated through construction of 388 water harvesting structures and establishment of 38 grain banks.
- A positive change in the rural agrarian economy as a result of crop diversification, change in cropping pattern, cropping intensity & increase in productivity.
- Improvement in the household level food security status primarily as a result of agriculture based livelihood opportunity
- Adoption of integrated approach of Natural Resource Management (Land, Water & Forest) has sustained the community initiative
3.3 MICRO FINANCE

Tribals live a land with abundance of natural endowments, yet they suffer from endemic poverty. Alienation of the natural resource base & lack of institutional support to harness the innate skills of the tribals to transform the endowments into resources along with their vulnerability to exploitations are three broad factors of their backwardness and deprivation. During the last 25 years, NIPDIT’S MF program has adopted need based approaches beginning with promotion of income generation activities to adoption of a holistic perspective to inclusion of entrepreneurship development and credit plus activities to emphasize women empowerment. Mf is an important sector in NIPDIT’S overall strategy of promotion of food security & women empowerment.

The Institutions: Structure & Function

NIPDIT facilitates formation & nurturing of thrift & credit groups (SHGs) in its project areas. The SHGs have been federated in each project area. The federation of SHGs is called Anchalika Swayang Sahayak Samabaya Sadhan Kendra (ASSK), registered under Self Help Cooperative Act, 2001. Biannual election is held for representation in the Governing Body. The Samabaya provides guidance, leadership and linkage support with financial institutions as well as support from its sponsored fund. Samabaya has three kinds of fund portfolio i) Own Fund ii) Revolving Support iii) Linkage with financial institutions. Own fund comprises of proceeds from membership fees, compulsory savings and share capital whereas, the revolving support is provided by NIPDIT. Samabaya in each project area undertakes central Income Generation Programs (IGP) and has devised savings instruments like Fixed Deposit & Recurring Deposit with interest on savings. Capacity building trainings are provided to the members of newly formed SHGs, Managers & Animators. Revisit of Viability and role transformation plan has ensured sustainability of ASSSK and attainment of financial & operational self-sufficiency. Furthermore, District level market outlets (BANANI) have been established in each of the project area to provide marketing facility to the SHG products.
Graduation from Micro Credit to Micro Enterprise

NIPDIT has imparted vocational trainings to take up Micro enterprises and many possibilities have been extended through different trades and activities mainly on; (1) Agriculture (Kitchen Gardening/ Vegetable Cultivation, Community Farming, Grain Bank, Sericulture, Seed Bank, Mushroom Cultivation, Turmeric Cultivation & Nursery Raising) & (2) Non-agriculture (Tailoring, Wool Knitting, Food Processing, Dry Fish, Bamboo Work, Weaving, Dye & Tie, Appliqué, Spice, Candle making, Slate making, Tile making, Pulse Processing, Poultry, Dairy, Goater, Pisciculture, Community Shop, Leaf Plate & Cup making, Agarvati, Mat making etc.). Development of a holistic perspective in Mf with the emphasis on women empowerment has strived to break the gender stereotype in enterprise development.

Beyond Credit Activities

Illiteracy among women has always been a hindrance for women empowerment. Group based learning has been promoted by NIPDIT through SHGs. Similarly, NIPDIT has facilitated capacity building of the SHG members for enhancing their ability for individual & group based bargain over productive assets and community resources. Members of SHGs are at the forefront of collective action and with their participation in the life of the community they have facilitated enrolment, regularization of health, education & PDS. There are examples galore in all the operational areas that narrate women’s proactive role in protection of natural resources & anti-liquor movements to name a few.

Propagation of Best Practices & Effecting Convergence

The best practices of the MF model created in Bolangir is being replicated in other operational areas. SHPIs from both within and outside the state come on Exposure visit to Bolangir to replicate the model in their operational areas. NIPDIT organizes Mf Conventions with the support of the district CSO network attended by representatives of SHGs, representatives of SHPIs, Cooperatives, govt. departments and rural entrepreneurs to facilitate exchange of cross-sectional views on policy, schemes & operational modalities including the problems affecting the Micro Finance program.

Future Plan

To fulfill the credit need of SHGs, SHPI, Federation and cooperatives and broad base the client base for ease of credit servicing as well to promote micro enterprises, NIPDIT has planned to establish “SWABALAMBAN Trust” as a separate wing of the organization. ICICI & HDFC have pledged to provide financial support to the Trust and negotiation with other support agencies is on the anvil.
Discovering New Horizon

Changing Scenario of ASSK Fund Flow Status

From Poverty to Prosperity

Belgaon is a small village of Barabandha Gram panchayat in M. Rampur Block of Kalahandi District where NIPDIT is working for the last 15 years. Almost 25 families live in the Harijanpada of this village. All the inhabitants of the hamlet are scheduled castes. Most of the inhabitants are landless labourers or farmers with small or marginal landholdings dependent on rainfed agriculture. After interaction with the project staffs of NIPDIT, 15 women formed “Laxmi Priyo Sanchaya Samiti” which functions as a model SHG in this area.

“Laxmi Priyo Sanchaya Samiti” after its formation received Rs. 5000 from NIPDIT for undertaking IG activities. The members, apart from savings and credit activities engaged themselves in forest protection, remained vigilant regarding illegal woodcutting and stopped collection of bamboo shoot. The members led the movement against liquor, monitored attendance of school going children and paid attention to regularization of PDS. As the group fulfilled all the norms for bank linkage with regular savings, internal lending and record maintenance it became eligible for loan from the bank. With the loan money (Rs. 15000) the members started IG activities (Potato trading-2, Dry fish-1, Rice-5, Sweet Vending-1 & Vegetable-6). The loan money from the bank was paid within the stipulated period out of the profit made from the business.

Under the SGSY scheme, the group has become eligible to receive loan. “Laxmi Priyo Sanchaya Samiti” has taken on lease the village pond for pisciculture. Out of the loan money received under SGSY scheme, they have spent 35,000 for seedlings. Furthermore, the group owns 50 ducks. The group members have got the knowledge of pisciculture, maintain the pond well and their expertise has been recognized in the vicinity. Now-a-days the Fishery Deptt. hires their service to train the groups that take up pisciculture.

Outcomes

- Access of thrift and credit to 8732 HHs through formation of 774 SHGs and involvement of 6374 HHs in IG activities.
- MF program has enabled the community to overcome escapable vulnerabilities
- Enterprise development among the community members, especially among women, has led to recognition of women as bread earners.
- Women involvement in IG activities has broken the stereotyped gender based enterprise development initiatives.
- With enhanced scope for group based IG Activities based on natural resource base, community initiatives for protection, conservation & regeneration of natural resources has been strengthened.
- Elevation of household level food security status & furtherance of well-being with increased expenditure in health & education.
3.4 EDUCATION

The strategy for promotion of education among a particular community needs to be worked out in the context of its socio-cultural specificities, more so among the tribals on account of their distinct languages and dialects, customs, cultural practices and their socio-economic conditions.

It didn’t take long for NIPDIT to realize that lack of education & ignorance are the predominant factors behind much of the ills that afflict the tribals—poverty, exploitation & backwardness. Furthermore, it was found that illiteracy and ignorance prevalent among the tribals couldn’t be done away within the framework of formal education. Therefore, NIPDIT concentrated on three types of education-literacy, social & vocational education and appropriately named the program “Innovative Primary Education” that sought to integrate education with social & developmental processes and make education an instrument to deal with social maladies.

Creation of a Sense of Stake in the Community

In the beginning, village level “Education Committee” NIPDIT formed in each village to supervise the functioning of the centres like “Village Education Centres”, “Mass Education Centres”, “Night Schools” and “Sunday Schools” established for the drop-outs, non-goers, adolescent girls, adults and children/school goers disinterested in formal education. “Teachers Meetings” as well as consultations & counseling were regularly organized for better management and functioning of the education centres. Various training camps for the teachers engaged in VEC were organized to train them in innovative primary education. Since promotion of education aimed both at literacy and its integration with social & developmental processes, women education was emphasized. Women Education Centres were established for promotion of women literacy as well as to use education as a means to do away with various social maladies.

Making Education Innovative

Primers based on “Keyword approach” was developed for participatory learning that underlined the importance of education for social analysis.

Teaching aids like charts, posters, game materials and primers were developed to make the process of learning joyful and to make the lessons comprehensible. An “Education Resource Centre” was established to provide vocational education. It had poultry, dairy, slate making units, tailoring and food processing for demonstrational purpose and had residential training facilities. It played the role of a centre to develop skill, teaching aids and study materials.
Sisu-Melas (Children’s Fairs) were organized where children from different schools & villages congregated to get to know each other and share their experiences and activities among themselves. Competitions were held and Prizes distributed to bring out the children’s innate talent. Arrangement was made for a Mobile Library to circulate books on various topics. Mobile library and its diversified collections facilitated dissemination of knowledge among the community on a wider scale where the inquisitive reader found the scope to gain knowledge and could orally disseminate it among his/her less privileged cousins.

Outcomes

- Through 457 VEC, 63% of all the children of school going age attended school and 9739 drop outs and non-goers were enrolled in VEC.
- Functional literacy among the people has helped them overcome exploitation at the hands of the traders
- Ease of communication for both the govt. & non-governmental agencies with the community and the opportunity created for Awareness generation to deal with social maladies. As a result, a changed perspective and change in KAP is visible among the community on different issues.
- The outcome of the initiative under the program has sustained evident in Mass Education Program becoming a program one of the community.

3.5 COMMUNITY HEALTH

Poverty and lack of food security has often been, wrongly, identified as the factors responsible for poor health profile of the tribals. On the other hand, poor health condition of the tribals engenders poverty. Fruits, tubers, roots, leaves available in the forests and indigenous medicinal system contribute to tribal health, but they have increasingly come under stress owing to forest degradation. The prevalent KAP among the tribals & socio-cultural practices of the community rather than the poor socio-economic conditions is important to bring about a change in the health profile. Since socio-cultural rather that socio-economic factors were found to be of utmost importance, community based health care approach or “Community Health” was adopted by NIPDIT.

Health Education & Creation of Community Cadres

Community Heath Program of NIPDIT has three components- health education, community participation in health care and provision of low cost & accessible health service. Health camps & Immunization camps have been organized to help the community overcome its inhibition to take the benefit of health care facilities. Village level health committees have been formed to monitor village sanitations and community health activities. To help establish health-hygiene interlinkage in the community, Chuans, wells and ponds have been renovated and disinfected, compost pits have been dug and roads cleaned in every village as part of sanitary measures. Kitchen Gardening has been promoted in order to improve the status of nutrition. Low cost latrines have been constructed in program villages. Integrated community development &
INHP program were implemented so as to impart health education to women and girl children, improve the sanitary condition and increase the nutrition status of the community.

NIPDIT has trained a number of TBAs (258), health volunteers and adolescent girls on RCH to be primary health workers over the last few years. As a result, people's knowledge of graded referrals, health-environment and health-sanitation interlinkages have improved. The community health cadres play a catalytic role in immunization, reduction of IMR & MMR as well as in promoting health-seeking behaviour of the people.

Barefoot doctors of the community

Bhama Deep, a 65-year-old woman belongs to Sanuden village of Podibahal Gram Panchayat in Bolangir district. Bhama is committed to people’s development and dedicated in community service that makes her a selfless village TBA. Anchalika Vikash Parishad, an area level People’s Organization promoted by NIPDIT works in Sanuden. From the early years of its involvement, NIPDIT identified the dismal health condition as one of the basic reasons of underdevelopment. Under the sectoral program of “Community Health” focus was laid on safe delivery and mother and child health. Activities on women issue, women rights and women development were integrated with creation of women cadres for provision of health service and generation of health awareness in the community.

The village TBA plays an important role in serving the women in time of need. Due to absence of facility in the vicinity and absence of trained hands to conduct childbirth most of the cases of childbirths were earlier left unattended or at best were handled by untrained elderly women. The TBAs have become the hope and assurance for safe delivery in the areas of poor infrastructural facilities.

In 1999, NIPDIT conducted TBA training, where Bhama was one of the participants. Earlier she used to attend delivery cases but didn’t have the required knowledge. The training helped her learn the rudimentary skills of safe delivery. She was provided with a kit with the essentials to attend delivery cases. “Now I don’t have any problem attending the cases”, says Bhama showing the TBA kit. The barefoot doctors of the mission to conduct safe delivery have contributed immensely to the maternal care. Bhama by virtue of her dedication and commitment stands tall among all the birth attendants.

Bhama remains active inspite of her old age. She understands the importance of bringing in change in the knowledge, attitude and practice (KAP) of the people as necessary condition for better health standard of the community. Community health workers have responsibilities for preventive, promotive and rehabilitative health care beyond their primary activity of providing curative services. Bhama commands love and respect of the community by dint of her selfless dedicated work that speaks volume of her commitment to community development, the ultimate test of a community worker that assigns a position on the pedestal of community services.
Program Convergence & Establishment of Model
NIPDIT implemented Community Empowerment for Health Care (CEHC) project in 60 villages spread over three Gram Panchayats i.e., Jamjhar, Katringia & Duduki of Kandhamal district. The project started with stimulating community interest in health-promotive, disease-preventive and curative activities. Keeping in mind the pivotal role of community participation, NIPDIT has established community structures (Village Health Committees, Gramsakhis & VhiFs) to undertake apart from the routine job of curative services, health education, campaigns & programs. Considering the community participation in health care & health status of the community, the project area (Dadaki) has established itself as a model of community health.

Provision of Low cost & Accessible Health Care
Keeping in mind, the unmet demand of health care service of the community and the need for providing low-cost locally available treatment, Indian System of Medicine (ISM) has been emphasized at all the project areas. 159 herbal practitioners (67 men & 92 women) have been trained to equip them with necessary skills. Trained practitioners treat common diseases like Malaria, Asthma, Gout, diarrhoea, skin diseases etc. Access to treatment by the trained herbal practitioners has resulted in reduction of household expenditure on curative health care.

Meeting the Challenge: Know AIDS for No AIDS
In order to create mass awareness among the people on HIV/AIDS, NIPDIT seeks to make best use of the traditional methods of information dissemination. Awareness generation and Information dissemination on HIV/AIDS have been done through cultural programs, walling & distribution of IEC materials. The taboos & inhibition regarding discussion on HIV/AIDS has worn away among the people. Not only has there been an increase in awareness but also the gap between awareness level among men and women has been bridged. NIPDIT has organized workshops on "Mainstreaming HIV/AIDS" for its staff to help them gain a holistic perspective on the issue with understanding of its linkage with the importance to preserve natural resource base and secured livelihoods.

Ensuring Health Entitlements: Rights-based Activities for Health Rights
Rights-based activities on health rights ensure health entitlements. Rights-based activities are undertaken with a convergence of efforts where people's organizations, PRI, Youth Clubs, professionals join together to organize rallies & demonstration to ensure health entitlements. Broad coalition has been formed among NGOs, POs and activists on the issue of community health rights.

Outcomes
- Formation of Health Committees (440) in all the programme villages, establishment of 3 herbal gardens and creation of 477 health animators
- Decrease in IMR & MMR in the operational areas, the rates are lower than in the contiguous non-operational areas with similar socio-economic conditions
- The initial organizational effort has transformed into sustainable community initiative witnessed in the changed KAP and the health profile of the community
3.6 GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Tribal women though are better placed than their counterparts in the general population (as reflected in their higher sex-ratio compared to the general population) are a disadvantaged and vulnerable group within the tribal society. With the socio-cultural practices to their disadvantage, the tribal women bear the brunt of illiteracy, ignorance, poverty, deprivation & marginalization.

The need for women development was realized by NIPDIT from the very beginning with the adoption of the option of process building to finesse a strategy of awareness building, mass conscientization & sensitization. From formation of community based organizations (Nari Sangha) to making gender a vector theme across programs & sectors, women empowerment has been integrated with NIPDIT’s broad objective of sustainable societal development.

The Enabling Structure

Trained Gender Promoters at the community level, Gender Key Persons at the project level and Gender Coordinator at the organization level hold the gender mandate. Gender Resource Centre is engaged in documentation, development of IEC materials, organizing workshops & seminars on women rights & dissemination of information and establishment of network. District Women Forum (DWF), a network of women action groups at the district level, is engaged in network building, identifies & addresses gender issues. Redressal cell at the community level has the mandate to ensure women-friendly atmosphere, create legal awareness, provide legal support and resolve conflict. Similarly, Committee Against Sexual Harassment at the organizational level ensures women-friendly atmosphere.

Effecting a Changed Perspective

24hrs job analysis, study on access and control of women over income and productive assets and women’s participation in decision-making are regularly undertaken involving the community. Gender Sensitization Trainings are conducted for cross functional groups like gender promoters, representatives of people’s organizations. Studies on “Tradition, Culture & Religion”, impact studies to understand gender integration & gender mainstreaming and studies on issues related to women (for example, “Women Trafficking”) have been conducted. To anchor the interventions, programs & activities on the prevalent practices, the findings of the study have been worked out into action points and integrated into the sectoral plan.

Addressing the Practical & Strategic Gender Needs

Promotion of Income Generating programs, establishment of Women Education Centres, formation of women’s organizations and organization of training programs on women health and legal aids as well as development of literatures, leaflets, pamphlets depicting the position and rights of women were undertaken by the organization when the decade old organization laid focus on women development.

The 90s were the time when the organization emphasized women empowerment & gender integration ensuring equal participation of men & women in all social & developmental action and strive for promotion of women as key functionaries/leaders in different institutions. The foundation for gender mainstreaming was laid during the period.
Since the last half decade, gender mainstreaming indicators have been developed and gender has been integrated in the structure, policy and program of the organization. To facilitate mapping of the progress in terms of gender mainstreaming “Gender Path” has also been worked out for self-assessment of the outcomes.

Politico-Legal Literacy

Acts and policies related with women rights are studied at resource team level and the same are shared with the project staff for gender mainstreaming across programs and activities. Furthermore, leaflets on women specific Govt. schemes & provisions have been developed and distributed among the people. Legal aid camps are organized in all the project locations to deal with cases of violation of women rights.

Engaging the Community in Dynamic Gender Discourse

Conventional Days like Human Rights’ Week & International Women’s Day are celebrated in all the project areas. Peace rally, mass meeting/GO-NGO Interface are organized on Intl’ Women’s Day and Women’s Rights Week.

Thematic & Process Support

NIPDIT has engaged Gender Consultants at various levels of the evolution of its program & strategy. Consultants facilitate capacity building trainings, interact with the cross-sectional responsibility holders (organization as well as community) to assess the progress, develop progress indicators, recommend structural changes and work out the “Gender Path” to strengthen women empowerment. Exposure visits for the Gender Promoters and responsibility holders are also organized by NIPDIT to facilitate the process of gender mainstreaming and women empowerment.

Outcomes

- Creation of Women Leadership in different institutions (49% in EC of VFPC, 45% in AMS EC, 65% in ASSK EC and 37% in PRI)
- Change in the stereotyped gender roles with increase in women’s community role with the consequent decrease in domestic role
- Sustainability of the organizational effort through its transformation into community led initiative

3.7 INSTITUTION BUILDING

The placidity of the tribal society has increasingly been endangered with alienation of its resource base and exploitation by the outsiders. Since entitlement failure rather than lack of productive resources explained for poverty, underdevelopment and marginalization of the tribals; NIPDIT adopted rights based approach with formation of people’s organization.

Formation of people’s organization dates back to the early phase of NIPDIT’s engagement with the community. Institution Building program of NIPDIT has evolved from formation of committees for awareness generation to area level issue based organizations for waging local movements to self-managed POs to sustain community’s initiative to secure rights and entitlements. During the years, project level
federations of the POs have been able to transform the organizational initiative into sustainable community initiative.

**Ensuring Sustainability: Systems & Procedures**

People's Organizations have a three-tier structure. It is rooted at the village level (VLO) where every male & female belonging to small and marginal farmers and landless labourer comprise the general body on a membership basis. Cluster Level Organization (CLO) is the federation of VLOs at the GP level. Anchalika Maha Sangha (AMS) is a federation of the CLOs in the project. Election is held biannually for representation in the Working/Executive Committees.

NIPDIT has conducted capacity building trainings of AMS EC & LRT members in order to enable the POs identify local issues, work on livelihood related and rights based issues and establish forums & networks for policy advocacy.

NIPDIT has developed Local Resource Team from among the community for internal monitoring of the program. LRT is well versed in the tools of planning, monitoring and evaluation. They act as resource persons in training programs organized at the community level. All the common actions undertaken by the POs are based on primary study conducted by LRT.

**Convergence**

People's organizations complement the effort of the institutions of self-governance. NIPDIT has organized capacity building training of the PRI representatives for effective functioning of the institutions of grassroots democracy. Convergence of effort among the POs and the PRI is witnessed in common actions and the capacity building training has further strengthened the partnership among the two grassroots level organizations, especially in securing entitlement for the community.

**Rights-based Activities for Securing Entitlements**

In the beginning, people's organizations took up the issue of the locality and the sphere of activity was also confined. Movement for Prohibition of Liquor, minimum wages, regularization of health & education services, PDS, payment to Kendu Leaf workers, raising the procurement price of Mohua flower, leaf plates etc. and land to landless were undertaken by the people's organizations. Retaining the focus on the livelihood issues of the poor and the marginalized, people's organizations with the network and forums have organized collective action on issues with wider implications like dispossession & denial of rights (on adoption of CFM, right to work, health rights, tribal rights on forestland & forest produces, displacement etc.).
Ensuring Entitlement

"Rights based community-led collective action is the most appropriate approach to secure entitlements" has gone deep into the psyche of the partner community. PDS is a scheme run by the government to provide food security to the people. The scheme has a well laid out institutional arrangement but despite the institutional arrangement the scheme fails to cater to the need of the people due to lack of community's vigilance. People of the Paburia project area in Kandhamal district of Orissa have ensured community’s vigilance over the implementation of the scheme.

A Public Hearing on the “Role of Food Assistance Program in Ensuring Food Security” was organized on 27th September 2005 by Anchalika Jonashakti Mahasangha, Paburia in association with NIPDIT. 411 persons (306 women 7 105 men) participated in the public hearing including govt. officials, elected people’s representatives, responsibility holders of NGOs and the people of the area. The objectives of the public hearing were to examine the effectiveness of the scheme in ensuring food security and to analyzed the problems so as to bring about a convergence of effort among the govt. departments, elected representatives, people’s organizations and the informed citizenry.

As a preparatory step, a decision was taken in the meetings of the cluster level organizations and mahasangha that a public hearing would be organized to bring to notice the irregularities of PDS. A detailed plan was prepared for collection of data and responsibility for data collection was assigned to the animators and representatives of the people’s organization. Following the data collection, data was compiled and analyzed for presentation in the public hearing. A report was prepared and the District Magistrate, Additional District Magistrate and Block Development Officer were apprised of the findings and were invited to attend the program.

On the day of the public hearing, different problems related to the scheme like wrong selection of the beneficiaries (landless, widows & destitute categorized as APL), overruling of the decision of the Polli Sabha, irregularities in distribution and non-observance of the mandatory provisions of information dissemination were highlighted. Following the problems sharing, discussion was held with cross-sectional exchange of ideas. Discussants highlighted lack of people’s participation in Polli Sabha & Gram Sabha and inadequate attention of the PRI representatives for regularization of the meetings as the reasons for ineffective implementation of the welfare schemes. During the public hearing, people were apprised of the Govt. schemes, especially, about the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS). The participants were unanimous in their opinion that to streamline the welfare program and to enhance the outreach, a convergence of effort among the govt. departments, elected representatives, people’s organizations and the informed citizenry is necessary.

Coming together of the stakeholders on the occasion of the public hearing has not only led to regularization of the public distribution system but also a sense of partnership in streamlining the developmental program.

Outcomes

- Food security among 96.4% of all the households of the 440 villages (25,263 HHs) in Kalahandi, Bolangir, Keonjhar and Kandhamal (operational areas)
- Sustainability of the POs as a result of their acknowledgement as issue based community initiatives
- Ability of the leaders of the community (functionaries of the people’s organizations) to understand the macro-micro implications of policy issues.
- Independent program management, network building, decision making & resource mobilization by the POs to sustain & strengthen the changing trends enabling the withdrawal of NIPDIT
3.8 RURAL DECENTRALIZATION FOR POVERTY REDUCTION

Panchayati Raj Institution is the constitutionally mandated grassroots body for community development through decentralization of governance. NIPDIT has strived to strengthen the PRIs and create convergence among the PRIs & people’s organizations. NIPDIT is one of the prominent CSOs to advocate for PESA Act, a progressive Act for empowerment of the scheduled tribes living in scheduled areas. NIPDIT has intensified its activities in local self-governance during the past few years. It is implementing UNDP sponsored “Rural Decentralisation and Participatory Planning for Poverty Reduction” project in Phiringia block of Kandhamal district in partnership with District Administration, Kandhamal.

Raising Community’s Stake in PRI

NIPDIT has been able to lay the foundation of convergence among the secondary stakeholders (PRI functionaries, GO & NGOs) through organization of consultations, workshops and meetings. Animators, one for each GP, are the primary responsibility holders to raise community’s stake in the functioning of the PRI. Similarly, two cultural teams, supported by NIPDIT have organized awareness generation program on PRI. To create mass awareness among the community, 10 days’ cycle rally was organized by the Animators covering all the GPs.

Preparation of Micro Level Plan

Training of Facilitators for conducting MLP has been organized for PRI representatives, local NGO leaders, animators, Sarpanch, Ward Members and members of the Standing Committee. Following the training, teams were formed to prepare MLPs. In order to do away with the process gap, MLP was prepared on pilot basis and the document was shared in the group and feedbacks were provided for further improvement of the MLPs. MLP has been prepared for 236 villages and the village level plans have been consolidated in GP plans. The village & GP level plans have been approved in the palli sabha & gram sabha. The micro plans provide the road map for developmental works, resource mobilization and linkage with govt. schemes. Activity plan & budget have been prepared at the GP level to provide a guideline for utilization of the untied fund. Developmental works proposed to be undertaken in the Activity Plan seeks to supplement the activities under different govt. schemes.

Capacity Building of PRI Functionaries

GP level orientation of the PRI functionaries (both elected and appointed responsibility holders) have been conducted in different places by NIPDIT & the partner NGOs. The PRI functionaries have been oriented on: i) Role & functions of Gram Panchayats ii) Devolution of powers to the PRI iii) Women empowerment and gender equity, iv) Resource allocation, management, transparency, sustainability of PRIs v) Social audit & right to information. Similarly, capacity building program on Financial Management and Process Documentation have been organized for the GP level functionaries.

A team of seven potential animators was selected to conduct orientation programme for Standing Committee members. The selected animators were provided with guidelines and IEC materials relating to the role, functions as well as the importance of Standing Committee in the PRI System.
Elected PRI representatives-Block Chairman, Zilla Parishad members, Sarpanches-and appointed responsibility holders like GP Secretaries, Executive Officers as well as secondary stakeholders like NGO representatives went on exposure visit to LOK Kalyan Parishad, Shantiniketan, West Bengal and to KILA, Kerala to gain knowledge on decentralization process and effective functioning of PRI.

**Capacity Building of the Primary Stakeholders**

Training on Gender Sensitization for elected PRI members has been conducted to develop their understanding on gender disparity & develop strategy to address the same. Training programs have been organized for SHG members to capacitate the SHGs and prepare them for Block level Federation Building, developing women leadership & group management.

Six-member GP level issue based committee comprising of 2 + 2 + 2 from PRI, Non-political & Local youth has been formed in 20 GPs with equal ratio of men and women. The members of the issue-based committees have been oriented in identification of local issues, campaign & advocacy to strengthen grassroots advocacy.

Similarly, Disaster Management Committee (DMC) has been formed in all the 20 GPs of Phiringia block. Capacity Building Training has been organized for the members of DMC including field orientation and demonstration.

**Formation of Panchayat Resource Center (PRC)**

Panchayat Resource Centre has been formed in each GP (20 GPs) to provide necessary information on developmental activities undertaken in the panchayat, facilities of govt. schemes and the provisions of decentralized governance to help the people build a sense of stake in the functioning of PRI.

**Public Hearing**

Public hearings have been organized in each GP on the issues of PDS, Health, Education, Liquor, distribution of Job cards under OREGS, Wage payment, and Electricity etc.

**Outcomes**

- 37% women representation in PRIs in the project areas. Increase of attendance in Palli Sabha and Gram Sabha by 36% and the increase in women attendance by 42%
- Improved status of demand generation & adoption of entitlement based approach to community development among the community
- Convergence between the PO & PRI evident in joint organization of common action and election of PO leaders to the PRIs (387 leaders of POs elected to PRIs).
- Culture of joint venture approach among GO-NGO & PRI.
3.9 DISASTER PREPAREDNESS & MANAGEMENT

In asserting the community/people’s rights over the resource base and promoting sustainable livelihood practices, NIPDIT has emphasized on disaster preparedness & management even before it emerged as a separate sector in 2004. NIPDIT has acted with alacrity whenever disaster has struck the people of the state, even beyond its operational area. Intensive work on Relief & Livelihood Restoration was undertaken by NIPDIT after super cyclone in 15 villages of Kendrapara & Garadapur blocks of Kendrapara district.

Following emergence of Disaster as a separate sector, the emphasis has been on formation of community-based disaster committees, participatory planning & making disaster mitigation a common theme across the sectoral interventions.

Livelihood Restoration Post-Super Cyclone

NIPDIT responded to large-scale destruction of lives & livelihoods of the people in the affected districts by coordinating the relief initiatives undertaken by the District Administration, NGOs of Kendhamal. In the aftermath of the super cyclone, NIPDIT was engaged in livelihood restoration in 15 villages of Kendrapara & Garadapur blocks of Kendrapara district. Under the planned interventions support was provided for land development, agriculture (agricultural inputs) & traditional occupations.

Collective Action for Drought Mitigation

Collective Action for Drought Mitigation (CADMB) is being implemented in 26 drought prone villages of Khaprahol block. Central Drought Action Committee (CDAC) and Cluster Level Committee (CLC) are built upon the grassroots organizations like Village Drought Action Committee (VDAC). Besides these, institutional mechanisms like Yojana Kendras have been established for information dissemination and integration of beneficiaries with welfare provisions and block level Circle Information Resource Centres (CIRC).

Training on agriculture development, land rights, formation & nurturing of SHGs management of Gram Kosh, Grain Bank are held for capacity building of the community. Regular meetings and training programs are organized among the focal group members for running the REFLECT circle, an innovative process that contextualize learning in the socio-economic condition of the people.

Collective actions have been taken up on minimum & equal wage, health rights, education, MFP, liquor prohibition community rights over resources etc. Identification of migrant families, awareness creation, and provision of support for income generation (land & non-land based) are ongoing program/activities of the project.
DISCOVERING NEW HORIZON

DPDM & Ensuring Secured Livelihoods

Disaster Preparedness & Management Plans have been prepared in all the 48 GPs of the operational areas. In the GP level plans demographic details, socio-economic profile, frequency of disaster, resource mapping, physical and social infrastructures including their effectiveness in contributing to disaster preparedness have been taken into account. A model of community based initiative for disaster mitigation has been established in Khapraghol block of Bolangir. In the block, GP level disaster preparedness & management plans have been prepared in all the GPs. A model disaster proof & low cost house has been constructed in the premises of the project office, Bolangir.

GP level disaster management committees have been formed involving both men & women and they have been given orientation on disaster preparedness and management. Members of the PRI and village level & GO level govt. officials have also been involved in the GPDMC. Similarly, Block level DMC has also been formed.

Land development support and support for construction of houses have been provided to the affected households in flash flood. With the formation of community disaster preparedness & management committees plans, activities & supervision have been undertaken by the community.

Outcomes

- Rehabilitation of 550 super cyclone affected households, 3300 families supported for land development, resource mobilized for housing support to 348 HHs
- Distress migration reduced by 42% in the operational areas
- Establishment of linkage between sustainable livelihood approaches & disaster mitigation
- Creation of community organizations for long-term & short-term response to disaster mitigation & management

3.10 POLICY ADVOCACY

Policy Advocacy on NRM & Health has become the defining feature of the organization with the pronounced manifestation of the macro-micro dynamics on the lives & livelihoods of the poor. In a globalized world, competing demands with unequal playing field requires civil society organisations to be on the side of the marginalized in the struggle for establishment of an egalitarian social order.

NIPDIT in association with the civil society organizations of the state has established Regional Resource Centre (RRC), a state unit of policy research & advocacy in 2004. It is a state level support institution to help the members and partners on policy analysis, policy studies & policy advocacy. The District Resource Centre (DRC), a network of issue-based NGOs, POs, Movements at the district level and Zonal Resource Centre, a zonal network of DRCs take up local issues and form a critical mass for rights-based activities through establishment of linkage with like-minded groups, forums, people's organizations and advocacy movements.