

Strengthening Decentralization for Poverty Reduction

An Analysis of Process & Progress

Project Completion Report

*Rural Decentralisation and Participatory Planning for Poverty Reduction in Phiringia Block,
Kandhamal, Orissa*

Supported By

United Nations Development Programme, India

Project Implementation

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Contents

	<i>Preface</i>	i
	<i>Abbreviations & Acronyms</i>	ii
1.0	Introduction	1
1.1	Context	1
1.2	Panchayati Raj System in Orissa	1
1.3	Overview of Project Area	3
1.4	Overall Objectives	6
1.5	Strategy, Resources & Partner Roles	6
2.0	Decentralization of Decision-making & Pro-poor Development Planning	10
2.1	Recruitment of Animators	10
2.2	Animators' Orientation	10
2.3	Capacity Building of PRI Representatives	12
2.4	Exposure Visit	12
2.5	Rejuvenation of Standing Committees	13
2.6	Participatory Planning	14
2.7	Outputs, Outcome Indicators & Outcomes	16
3.0	Improving the Fiscal Domain through Resource Convergence & Mobilisation	17
3.1	Assessment of GP level Resource Mobilization & Resource Convergence	17
3.2	GP level Strategy for RCRM	17
3.3	Activity Plan for Unties Fund	17
3.4	RCRM Plans and Workshops	18
3.5	Training on Financial Management & Record-Keeping	18
3.6	GP Level Physical and Financial Stock taking exercise	19
3.7	Self Help Groups & their Federations	19
3.8	Outputs, Outcome Indicators & Outcomes	20
4.0	Ushering in a Culture of Transparency & Accountability	21
4.1	Organizing Village Meetings	21
4.2	Cultural Shows	21
4.3	Rallies and Mass meetings	22
4.4	Wall Paintings	22
4.5	Jan Sunwais (Public Hearings)	22
4.6	Regularizing Gram Sabha & Palli Sabha	23
4.7	Issue Based Committees: Formation, Facilitation and Orientation	24
4.8	Formation of Social Audit Team (SAT)	24
4.9	Promoting Gender Equality	25
4.10	Campaign on Public Distribution System	26

	4.11	NREGA Campaign	27
	4.12	Anti-liquor: Study and Campaign	28
	4.13	Disaster Preparedness	28
	4.14	Forest Rights	29
	4.15	Communal Harmony: Peace Committees	29
	4.16	Outputs, Outcome Indicators & Outcomes	30
5.0		Facilitating Policy Making for Decentralization	31
	5.1	Multi-stakeholders' Consultation	31
	5.2	Participation in external planning and review exercises	31
	5.3	Documentation	32
	5.4	Project Closure	32
	5.5	Outputs, Outcome Indicators & Outcomes	33
6.0		Conclusions	34
	6.1	Lessons Learnt	34
	6.2	Challenges	34
	6.3	Sustainability	35

Preface

National Institute for People's Development Investigation & Training (NIPDIT) implemented the project, "Rural Decentralisation and Participatory Planning for Poverty Reduction", in Phiringia block of Kandhamal district of the state. The project started in February 2005 and came to a close in December 2008. As one of the UNDP's implementing partners, NIPDIT has executed this multi-stakeholder project quite successfully.

The overall objective of this document is to highlight the learnings and innovations during project execution to be shared with other stakeholders working in strengthening Panchayats for effective decentralization. In pursuance to the objectives, it includes documentation of different processes, outputs & outcomes. It is hoped that delineation of the challenges faced during implementation of the project and different strategies adopted for overcoming such challenges would be of particular interest to the readers.

This document is an outcome of intensive processes that includes review of all the operational reports of the project, case studies prepared by the project team, different IEC materials (print as well as audio-visual), evaluation reports, different survey and event reports, mid term project documentation, training and workshop reports, PRI representatives, government functionaries and with the partner community. In following an intensive process, it lays claim to represent one of the cases from a block in Orissa that brings out the elements of policy advocacy at the national, state and district level.

The document is divided into six sections including the "Introduction" & "Conclusions". In dividing the contents of the document into different chapters we have followed the objectives of the project. Different activities, their processes, outputs, outcomes in realization of the objectives have been placed in the corresponding chapter. It is a broad categorization since activities don't have a one-to-one correspondence with the objectives.

We take this opportunity to express our special thanks to Mr. Mainak Sarkar for providing guidance for documentation and the UNDP New Delhi for providing us the required financial support.

CENDERET, XIMB as State Resource Institute and SIRD, Bhubaneswar have provided us valuable inputs & guidance in process & progress of the project.

We appreciate the cooperation of the District Administration, Kandhamal especially the Collector, PD & APD, DRDA, District Planning Officer, District Panchayat Officer & Block Development Officer, Phiringia in execution of the project.

GP level Animators with their constant & tireless engagement with the community and the PRI representatives, Block level officials & GP level functionaries have spearheaded the process of decentralization creating visible examples of change. The partner NGOs have also shown enthusiasm and seriousness in making the project a success. This document couldn't have been conceived without such initiatives.

We consider it our opportunity to thank the partner community for their support, encouragement and feedbacks.

We hope that the reader will enjoy reading this document as much as NIPDIT enjoyed its execution. Feedbacks on the document and on different initiatives of the project are most welcome.

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Orissa

Abbreviations & Acronyms

AWC	Anganwadi Centres	PESA	Panchayatiraj Extension to Scheduled Areas
GS	Gram Sabha	PHC	Primary Health Centre
GP	Gram Panchayat	PRI	Panchayati Raj Institutions
IAY	Indira Awaas Yojana	PS	Panchayat Samiti
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Services	RCRM	Resource Convergence & Resource Mobilisation
IEC	Information Education & Communication	RD	Rural Development
IMR	Infant Mortality Rate	RSVY	Rashtriya Sam Vikas Yojna
ITDA	Integrated Tribal Development Agency	SAT	Social Audit Team
JE	Junior Engineer	SC	Standing Committees
JGSY	Jawahar Gram Swaraj Yojana	SFC	Second Finance Commission
KILA	Kerala Institute of Local Administration	SGRY	Swarnjayanti Gram Rojgar Yojana
MFP	Minor Forest Produce	SHG	Self Help Group
MIS	Management of Information System	SIRD	State Institute for Rural Development
MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly	SRI	State Resource Institute
MLP	Micro Level Planning	ST/SC	Scheduled Tribes/ Scheduled Castes
NGO	Non Governmental Organization	TFC	Twelve Finance Commission
NIPDIT	National Institute for People's Development Investigation & Training	TOT	Training of Trainers
NREGS	National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme	UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
NRM	Natural Resource Management	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
NTFP	Non Timber Forest Produce	VLW	Village Level Worker
OBC	Other Backward Castes	WCD	Women & Child Development
OGP (Act)	Orissa Gram Panchayat Act	XIMB	Xavier Institute of Management, Bhubaneswar
OSHCA	Orissa Self Help Cooperative Act	ZP	Zilla Parishad
PDS	Public Distribution System		

Introduction

1.1 Context

United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), the framework for all the coordinated action by the UN system has worked out 'strengthening decentralization' and 'promotion of gender equality' as the two priority goals. In pursuance to UNDAF, the Country Programme Review (CPR), 2002 undertaken by UNDP in collaboration with GOI has laid emphasis on strengthening the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs).

UNDP implemented the project "Rural Decentralization and Participatory Planning for Poverty Reduction"; in four states of Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Orissa in partnership with Planning Commission at the national level with the broad objective of making the project block the model for decentralization processes in the respective states. A total of eight districts (two in each state) were covered under this project. In Orissa, two blocks, Phiringia of Kandhamal and Bangiriposi of Mayurbhanj were the project areas.

NIPDIT, a voluntary organization with more than two decade of experience in tribal development executed the project in Phiringia block of Kandhamal district, Orissa.

1.2 Panchayati Raj System in Orissa

Orissa also known as 'Kalinga' since ancient times had traditional Panchayats as local government structures. Orissa assembly after independence passed Orissa Gram Panchayat Act, which mentioned the powers and functions of GPs. In 1950, Govt. of Orissa separated the local self government as an independent wing and in 1952 Panchayats were established all over the state. In 1957, Orissa Gram Panchayat Act came into force whereas in 1959 Zilla parishad & Panchayat Samiti Act were passed.

The three – tier system of PRIs was established in 1961 as per Orissa Act 24 of 1961 and as per the notification No. 8832-RB/7/62, Gen on 12.07.1962. Govt. of Orissa political & services dept was redesigned as planning & coordination department. Orissa Gram Panchayat rules were framed in 1968 under Section 150 Sub-section 1 of Orissa Act 1 of 1965. In 1975 Community development was renamed as Community development and social welfare department which was again renamed as Panchayat Raj department in 1990.

After 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992, Orissa has suitably amended the existing laws relating to Panchayats, which include the Orissa Zilla Parishad Act, 1961, the Orissa Panchayat Samiti Act, 1959 and the Orissa Grama Panchayat Act, 1964. Now the Panchayats at all three levels have been entrusted with duties and functions with regard to 21 out of 29 matters listed in the Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution.

In Orissa, there are 314 blocks and 6234 Panchayats in 30 districts. The last PRI elections were held on Feb 2007 and DPCs were formed and are functional and these are headed by a state level minister. The devolution of 3 Fs (Funds, Functions & functionaries) has been partly achieved.

With regards to **devolution of functions**, activity mapping was completed in October 2005, and orders were released to operationalise the same. However, supervisory powers have been transferred with regard to only 11 of the 21 subjects.

Panchayats at all the levels are provided with technical as well as administrative staff. As regards **devolution of functionaries** the officials of 11 departments are accountable to the Zilla Parishad, Panchayat Samiti and Grama Panchayat respectively for implementation of the subjects/schemes transferred to the Panchayats though they continue as employees of the respective Departments. However, accountability of these officials to the Panchayats is very limited. The Panchayats do not have any significant administrative control over these officials, as it is limited only to sanctioning of casual leave. The authority of Head of PRIs is limited to 'supervision' wherein they can call for information and report. In case of any discrepancy they can at most submit proposal for appropriate level about indiscipline, irregularities and other shortcomings. There is no separate Panchayat Raj Administrative and Technical service constituted.

In pursuance to **devolution of Funds** the Panchayats get fund directly in 11 subjects and the schemes are divided into four parts as non-Plan Schemes (mainly towards salary and grant components), State Plan Schemes (development of rural poor, unemployed youth and accommodation to poor people through Rural Housing Programme), Centrally Sponsored Plan Schemes (SIRD and Extension Training, Programmes for imparting trainings to Representatives of Panchayats) and Central Plan Schemes. As there is no district sector/Panchayat window in the budget, it was thought that the respective Departments may consider about 35 percent of allocation from the budget provision to the District Sectors and Planning and Coordination Department may create Panchayat Sectors in the State Budget. The Third State Finance Commission (SFC) has not yet been formed. The Second SFC had recommended to the state government to provide 10% of total revenue to the PRIs. It had also made recommendations on PRI audits, computerisation of accounts, separation of audit function and external audit. However, the only recommendation the government has accepted is that the rural local bodies would receive an average of Rs.201.00 crore per annum from 2005 to 2010. The existing system of profit from Kendu Leaf Trade will flow to the rural local bodies @ Rs.10.00 crore per annum. In the BRGF and IAY also there is no active involvement of Panchayats or very strict guidelines have been issued fixed by the state government. Neither they have any autonomy to implement nor do they have any untied grant. Rs. 110 crore for Gopabandhu Gram Yojna (GGY) has been budgeted where MLAs have all the control. For NREGS there has been a budget of Rs. 100 crore - where the position of Sarpanch is the most vulnerable amongst all.

Orissa is one of the nine States where **PESA** is applicable. A total of 120 Blocks in 13 districts of the State covering 1,941 GPs are covered under the Act. In practice, the special powers given to Gram Sabhas are hardly exercised and it is considered only as a consultative body. Although the enforcement of prohibition comes under the functions of PESA – GPs, the Excise department still decides about the licensee and location of the 'bhatti'. The section 4 of PESA stipulates that government employees/other agencies would act as subordinate to Panchayat and will not interfere or unduly influence its processes. But that is observed more in breach.

The other major issues are:

- State Council Parishad is constituted but does not have rules of procedures and guidelines thereby becoming a non-functional body
- DRDA is yet not merged with the Zilla Parisad
- The district planning committee is constituted but inactive.

- The provision of Adalati Panchayat / Nyaya Panchayat is not vested with the grass root PRIs.
- Registration of birth, marriage, death is not mandatory
- There is no provision for generating local resources
- Preparation of 5 years perspective plan & annual plans at each tier & municipalities and consolidation by DPC is not carried out.
- Social audits at Grama Shabha level and at higher levels of PRIs are not being conducted • There is a no relief fund at GP level
- No stress on quorum of Palli Sabha & Grama Sabha & manipulation in minutes book is found in several places

Thus, it is clear that the Panchayati Raj System of Orissa is yet to establish a full-fledged decentralized governance institution & needs support not only in form of acts and legislations but also capacity development and change of mind sets at all levels.

Phiringia–General Information	
Village	413
Total Households	17150
Total population	77259
Male	38458
Female	38801
SC Population	29%
ST Population	67%
Others	4%

1.3 Overview of Project Area

Phiringia is part of Kandhamal district, which was constituted in 1994. It is located in the heart of Orissa with an area of 7649 sq.km. Administratively it constitutes 2 subdivisions, 12 Blocks, 2 Urban Local Bodies, 153 GPs and 2515 villages. The entire district lies in a high altitude zone with widespread inaccessible terrain of hilly ranges and narrow valley tracts which guides the socio- economic conditions of people and development of the district. More than 50% of population constitutes ST community of aboriginal tribal races. Overall, the district is ranked as a backward district and covered by PESA. The literacy rate is only 43.15% (male: 56.91%, Female: 29.49%), decadal Growth is 18.66%, Density of Population only 81 and IMR is 64.

Phiringia is one of the most backward blocks of the district wherein 73% of the population belongs to BPL category and the tribal population is 58.66%. There are 20 GPs in the block in which 11 are reserved for STs.

1.3.1 Beneficiary profile

There are more than 11000 families who belong to the BPL category, this is a very large percentage and makes Phiringia one of the most backward blocks not only in the state but also in the country. As it is a tribal block, number of landless families is very less, i.e. only 524. The skill levels are very low among the tribals as they basically into agriculture. Consequently, the total number of the skilled artisans is only 756 and that too mostly belonging to SC and OBC category. The number of senior citizen's receiving governmental benefits is only 971 which by any standard is very low.

Table: Beneficiary Profile							
BPL	APL	Landless	Rural Artisans	Differently Abled	Widow	Senior citizen	Women headed Households
11108	5220	524	756	352	1238	971	803

Table : Rice allotment (Quintals) under different schemes		
BPL	Annapurna	Antodaya
1480	170	1802

Rice which is subsidized by the government for food security is distributed under three major schemes in which the BPL and the Antodaya are the important ones.

1.3.2 Educational Status

Table: Educational Status			
Category of school/college	EGS/Primary School		
	No.	No. of enrolled students	No. of Teachers
EGS/Primary School	151	9272	316
ME School	60	1535	66
High School	10	1591	74
College	1	662	13

Phiringia has one of the lowest literacy rates. The poor educational infrastructure can be indicator as well as the cause for this poor scenario. There is only one college in the entire block and only 662 students are enrolled in the entire block.

There are only 10 high schools which is actually close to one per two GPs. There are very interior GPs and villages where there is no educational infrastructure at all. Less than 50% of the villages have EGS or the primary school

1.3.3 Health Status

Table: Health Status			
Health Infrastructure	No.	No. of Dr.	No. of HW
CHC	0	0	0
PHC	5	11	28
Dispensary	3	7	2
ANM Centre	14	13	7
AWC	94	33	34
Homeopathic Hospital	4	3	3
Ayurvedic Hospital	1	1	0

Phiringia is also quite backward in the health indicators. This can be easily made out from the poor health infrastructure that it has.

The entire block does not have a single CHC and all the cases are treated only at the preliminary level. For all the referral purposes, the cases are dealt at the district level. This is often very difficult for the poor households. There are only 5 PHCs in the entire block and most of the interior villages have not been exposed to the modern medicinal practices. Out of 20 GPs, only 14 have ANM centres and only 94 of the 236 villages have Anganwadi centres.

1.3.4 Water and Sanitation

Table: Water related infrastructure					
Well	Pond	Chuan	Drinking water supply project	Dug well	Bond
465	45	203	3	367	37

The block has only 3 organized drinking water projects. Most of the households access drinking water from the natural water points like wells,

ponds and chuas. The three drinking water supply projects are located near the small towns and block headquarters.

As the block is rich in natural resources, there is good number of wells, ponds and chuas which are mostly used for drinking water purposes. Toilets are unheard of in the villages and only few of the rich households and government quarters and guest houses have this facility.

1.3.5 PRI Members' Profile

PRI representatives in Phiringia			
Category	Male	Female	Total
Ward members	158	85	243
Sarpanchs	13	7	20
Samiti Member	12	8	20
Zilla Parisad	1	1	2

Phiringia is governed by the PESA and most of the GPs are reserved for STs. Also, 33% of the positions are reserved for women. There are a total of 243 ward members in which approx 33% are women. There are 20 Sarpanchs in the 20 GPs. All the 7 women Sarpanch's are from the GPs where the seats have been especially reserved for women. There are 20 Samiti members (one from each GP) and in this case also around 33% seats are reserved for women. There are two representatives to

the ZP wherein one is male whereas the other one is female.

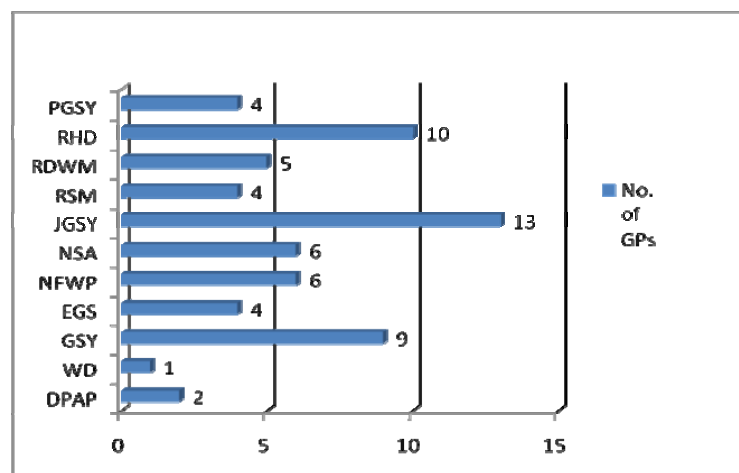
1.3.6 Revenue sources of the GPs

Status of Schemes in GPS									
No. of Schemes	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9	11
No. of GPs	3	3	2	3	3	2	1	1	1

The major types of assets from which GPs generate revenue are NTFP, Pond, Shop Rent, Kirana shop, House, Tax on Vehicle, Market Complex, Cycle Token, Water tank, Haat, Selling of Cement Bags and other taxes. The major items in which the functions have been decentralized were related to education, health and animal husbandry. The

major problems in the GPs are communication, electrification, drinking water, education, alcoholism, sanitation, village roads, and irrigation.

1.3.7 Performance of Schemes



There is not a single scheme which is operational in all the GPs. The maximum number is 13 for JGSY which is operational. There are only three schemes, which were operational in more than 6 GPs, whereas 5 schemes were operational in less than 4 GPs.

Similarly, there were 3 GPs in which there were no schemes running. It is also possible that during base line survey the government officials did not cooperate in these GPs. Most of the GPs had 1 to 4 schemes running. In one GP 11

schemes were found to be operational which was maximum for any GP. Most of the fund allocation was under two major schemes, i.e. SGRY and NREGA.

Table: Status of Fund Allocation

GP	TFC	EFC	SGRY	KL Grant	GP Fund	IAY	JGSY	NREGA	Total
Phiringia		9574	27430			113000	476217		626221
Pabingia			300000	331584			386681	1750000	2768265
Ratang				119619			2676606		2796225
Bandhgarh	1073922		1048986	140349		555000		1790000	4608257
Taladandikia	853911		1347627	451438		52000	1035375	2150000	5890351
Kelapada						100000	3994997	769000	4863997
Jajespanga	853912		3433444	413465		100000		2651500	7452321
Dimiriguda	200000	314568	219011	390639		113000	243321	1729791	3210330
Salaguda	220000	739002	2081233	310984			657275	210000	4218494
Lusing	220000	362781	1306941	81537	46538	48000		2750000	4815797
Kashinipadar	220000		5700000	191362				3060000	9171362

1.4 Overall Objectives

The project had the following specific objectives under the broad objective of “making Phiringia (the project block) the model block for decentralization processes in the state (Orissa)”

1. Strengthening decentralization of decision-making & Pro-poor development planning
2. Improving the fiscal domain of the PRIs for local level development through resource convergence and local resource mobilization.
3. Enhancing the oversight function of the PRIs (especially *Gram Sabhas*) to strengthen transparency & accountability in local governance.
4. Supporting enhanced devolution & autonomy of PRIs through facilitating Policy-making for decentralization.

1.5 Strategy, Resources & Partner Roles

1.5.1 Execution Strategy

In implementation of the project NIPDIT based on its more than two decades experience in community mobilization adopted some of the time-tested strategies and brought about some innovations as well.

Phiringia not being its operational area, NIPDIT approached the community taking on board the District Administration & other grassroots level NGOs those who had presence in the area

From the very beginning, NIPDIT organized consultation of the NGOs explaining the objectives of the project and solicited the views & opinions of the participating NGOs on strategies & programs that had to be undertaken in realization of the project goals. A participatory resource mapping exercise of the NGOs was undertaken and on the basis of the expertise of the NGOs partnership was solicited.

NIPDIT along with the District Administration organized a Block level consultation where PRI representatives, community leaders & other members of the community were apprised of the project objectives & activities.

The most important link between the implementing organization and the community were the social animators who were selected from among the community. It is worth the mention that all the Animators were recruited on the basis of recommendation of the Sarpanchs of the respective panchayats.

The most important activity that was undertaken with utmost meticulousness was the capacity building of the PRI representatives & the social animators. Organization of the village meetings in the beginning of the project accustomed the community with the broad activities of the project.

Folk media & IEC materials were used innovatively to create awareness among the community on the rules, provisions, functions & powers of the Gram Sabha & Palli Sabha. Once the community was made aware of the powers of the Palli Sabha & Gram Sabha and realized the importance of attending it, there was hardly any difficulty in regularizing it.

NIPDIT took care to undertake a study before launching a common action program or a campaign. All the action research were undertaken by the Social Animators where the community could introspect on the status, problem & prospect of the issue. For example, in the beginning of the project Baseline Survey detailing the socio-economic profile, infrastructural facilities & livelihood options was undertaken. Similarly, Study on aspects of Gender Integration as undertaken before the commencement of training on Gender Sensitization, survey on PDS was undertaken before organization of Public Hearings on PDS, Survey on implementational status of NREGA was undertaken before launching of Campaign on NREGS.

The most important strategy was development of participatory micro-plan that made all the sections within the community a stakeholder of the project. It is important to note that training was imparted to the facilitators as well as key informants from within the community before the MLP exercise was undertaken. The sense of ownership of the plan could be brought about with the participation of the community and approval of the Gram Sabha, block panchayat & zilla panchayat.

Another important strategy of the project was strengthening the existing system, procedure & institutional structures of PRI. Not only was there reorganization of the Standing Committees, there were programs of reorientation of the members. The Standing Committees were facilitated to devise Monitoring Tools to systematically go about their work.

Common action on NREGS, PDS and Liquor brought the community closer. Similarly, formation of Issue-based committees, Social Audit Team, Social Audit Committees provided the community an institutional structure to spearhead their demands for entitlements.

No less important was the Project Management System where the Project was monitored at every step of its progress & process. The performance of the animators as well as the project responsibility holders were monitored on a monthly basis.

NIPDIT has hired both individual & institutional expertise. Inputs solicited from State Resource Institute (CENDERET, XIMB), State Institute for Rural Development (SIRD) and some experienced development

professionals have provided the project responsibility holders and the implementing organization insights.

The coordination & synergy with the District Administration in supplementing & complementing the initiatives & expertise provided the strength of a unified effort in course of implementation of the project.

1.5.2 Resources

The project team comprised of one Project Coordinator, two Training Coordinators, one Data Entry Operator and 20 Animators. The thematic heads of the organization (Gender, Disaster & Institution Building) also provided the knowledge and process inputs. One of the important arrangements in the project was to specially appoint one Animator per GP (with initial screening by the Sarpanch of the respective panchayat) who functioned as the links between the PRIs, community and the other implementing stakeholders of the project.

Apart from the resources from within the organization, expertise from outside, have been engaged in the project on the occasions of capacity building, preparation of MLP, mapping technical feasibility of the plan and in evaluation of the process & progress.

It is worth the mention that stakeholders' management (Govt. & PRI) as well as convergence & collaboration had the twin objectives of raising the stake of a wide-cross section and creating a resource pool that spearheaded learning process rather than top-down blue print approach.

The financial resource of Rs. 78, 00, 000 was allocated to NIPDIT by UNDP to execute the project. UNDP also provided Rs. 90,00,000 to DRDA, Kandhamal which had the component of Untied Fund support to the GPs.

1.5.3 Partners and their roles

At the State level, UNDP partnered with Department of Panchayati Raj, Cendret, XIM Bhubaneswar was the State level Resource Institution to provide technical inputs to the district level implementing partners. At the district level, District Administration, Kandhamal and NIPDIT (as NGO implementing partner) were responsible for execution of the project.

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- Mobilisation and working with the GPs and other stakeholders for undertaking assessment of local endowment problems, identification of community needs and preferences through participatory appraisal exercises.
- Facilitation of gender differentiated consultation and participation in the planning, implementation and monitoring process.
- Systematic consultation between a multiplicity of local development actors for participation in identification, selection, prioritization and implementation of development projects/initiatives/activities and drawing up micro plans.
- Documentation/facilitating updation of record keeping at panchayat level.
- Ensuring proper utilization of the untied funds by the GPs and the implementation of the micro-plans.
- Supporting capacity building of PRIs to raise resources of their own.
- Ensuring active role of the GS in community audit of accounts, selection of beneficiaries, functioning of the grassroots functionaries and holding elected officials accountable.
- Organization of public hearings and posting of budgets at public places for public access.
- Preparation of annual work plan and submission of financial and progress reports.

District Administration, Kandhamal

- Facilitation of coordination among stakeholders in implementation of the project and setting up a district level committee.
- Ensuring synergy & convergence with district programmes and RSVY (now BRGF)
- Facilitating the process of formulation of selected projects/actions with Panchayat Standing Committees and submission to block panchayats by the NGOs.
- Supporting the planning process at block and district level for sectoral and spatial integration of plans.
- Constituting technical support groups and hiring local resource persons for vetting and sanction of identified projects/initiatives.
- Developing local development financing plan including multi-year development budgets from different sources.
- Coordinating selection of Gram Panchayats (based on certain criteria) to develop a mechanism/framework to provide untied funds to pilot panchayats with other stakeholders
- Holding discussions to set up mechanisms for PRIs to raise resources of their own.
- Provisioning of guidelines to support GPs for presenting accounts and statements to the GS.
- Review of problems in linkages, administrative problems and facilitating coordination with various stakeholders including concerned line departments.
- Preparation of annual work plan and submission of financial and progress reports to the state government.

Decentralization of decision-making and pro-poor development planning

Strengthening decentralization of decision-making and pro-poor development planning forms the crux of the project initiatives. In order to realize the goal activities like; recruitment & orientation of animators, capacity building of PRI representatives, reorganization & orientation of the members of the Standing Committees, preparation of MLP and its follow up had been undertaken.

2.1 Recruitment of Animators

NIPDIT considered the role of Social Animators selected from the partner community as the most important links between the project and the community. To start with, Sarpanchs were informed about the recruitment process and their role. NIPDIT sent two bio-data forms and the Sarpanchs did the initial screening. An interview committee comprising of BDO, Block Chairman, and Project Director DRDA was formed to finally select the candidates. This selection process had to be repeated twice due to lack of sufficient applications from all the GPs. Finally 20 Animators were appointed in which 5 were women.

2.2 Animator's Orientation

Following recruitment, a 2 days orientation program for Animators was organized to make them aware of project activities, their role/task, accountability system, and concept of program, planning and monitoring process, govt. schemes, 73rd amendment and all other aspects of project. APD, BDO Phiringia and some NGOs were used as resource persons.

The critical link: Roles of Animators in the project

Animators are the village level functionaries of the UNDP RD project. The animators work as interface between people and the PRI and carry out critical functions of rapport building, community level interactions, ensuring women's participation, awareness and IEC, identification of key persons for capacity building and facilitating village level activities such as MLP. A discussion with three animators from three different GP was organized to get a first hand account of their roles and experiences of working under the project. Chitranjan Kanhar from Talakdandikia GP, Harish Chandra Kanhar Dimriguda GP and Baijanti from Phiringia GP participated in the meeting.

Baijanti completed her Bachelor's degree from Phiringia. She was informed about the position of animator by the village Sarpanch. She applied to NIPDIT after getting her application signed by the Sarpanch. Two more persons applied for the same post but she was selected after a written and oral test conducted jointly by NIPDIT coordinator, BDO and other observers. She received training about the project and her role after her selection and has been working with the project ever since.

Harish has been very active in the MLP revisit exercise and has worked closely with the team. He observes that the revisit exercise has been very extensive. Altogether 9 teams were formed who visited 236 villages as part of the revisiting exercise. A week prior to the discussion, Harish had carried out the MLP revisit exercise along with the team in 4 villages, discussed it with ward members, community elders and GP, estimated the financial requirement for proposed works and tallied the old MLP with the revisited ones. The exercise gave an opportunity to include the marginalized sections and people with special needs. Many new beneficiaries and works were identified from very remote hamlets and habitations under schemes like IAY, pension schemes and NREGA.

The roles and functions of animators are varied and range from rapport building to organizing Jan Sunwai. They started with awareness generation on PRI and decentralisation process in their field areas. Their primary objective was to increase people's participation in Gram Sabha, Ward Sabha and Palli Sabha. Special efforts were made to motivate women to attend these meetings and to voice their opinions. They have been able to do this by supporting women SHG and by disseminating information about provisions under various government schemes.

The animators feel that formation and empowerment of the Standing Committees has been an important achievement. Earlier the SC were not functional because the GPs had no idea about the possible roles and functions of SC. NIPDIT helped in formulating specific roles, activities and monitoring tools to be used by the SC members. The SC now acts as an exclusive body for observation, monitoring and feedback on the progress of development work under the GP. It has helped in identification and inclusion of correct beneficiaries and has also increased the regularity in payments. Animators have been part of the monitoring visits by SCs and also consequent discussions.

The discussion reflected that the animators are well aware of their own roles and specific activities. They are also aware of the development works, proposed or being implemented under various schemes in their field areas along with the financial allocations. This is primarily because they regularly participate in the meetings at Ward, GP and Palli levels.

2.3 Capacity Building of PRI Representatives

A Two-Day orientation programme was designed to orient the elected representatives on the PRI system, duties and responsibilities of the elected leaders and the Gram Panchayat.

The programme representatives from 3 tier PRIs, GP level functionaries & Youth leaders participated in the training program. Lecture method, Group discussion / work, Case analysis, game & brainstorming sessions were used as tools for training delivery.

To effectively execute the Orientation program, three teams were formed and oriented through a specially conducted Training of Trainers (TOT). The training also took help of officials from different line departments as key resource persons to present the technical details and also the government perspective. This training was imparted to the PRI representatives of both the terms i.e., 2002-2007 & 2007-2012. A total of 460 participants were trained during the programme.

The orientation programme was highly successful amongst the PRI representatives, which was evident from the increased participation in the subsequent batches. After each phase, the training teams met for a sharing workshop



wherein the experiences were shared and learning's collected. For each of the batch trained, the responsible staff and partner NGO prepared a report, which was later compiled at the phase level.

2.4 Exposure Visit

NIPDIT conducted exposure visits for Panchayat Samiti Chairman, Zilla Parishad members, Sarpanchs, GP level executive officers, GP level Secretaries, Animators and partner NGO representatives to Lok Kalyan Parishad at Shanti Niketan in West Bengal and Kerala Institute for Local Administration (KILA) at Trichur in Kerala. The

exposure visits were conducted in two phases, the first phase was for the PRI representatives and government functionaries in 2005-06 (post GP level elections in 2002) and the second phase was for the newly elected ones (post GP level elections in 2007). In all, 88 persons went on exposure visit out of which 30 – 40 % were women.

At the end of each phase, a sharing workshop was organized to cull out the learnings of the exposure visits. These sharing consultations highlighted the following learnings.

- Functioning of the PRI system: A comparative analysis of Orissa with Kerala and West Bengal.
- Clarity on the need of decentralization and its processes.

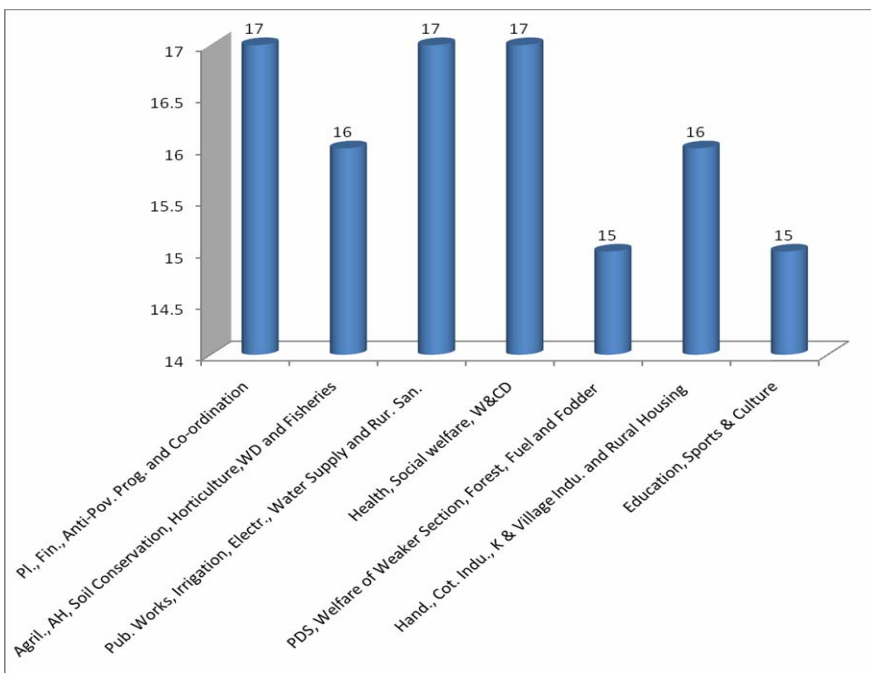
Course design of the Two Days Orientation Programme

- History and evolution of Panchayati Raj in India and Orissa 73rd constitutional Amendment & PESA
 - Role, functions and powers of Palli Sabha & Gram Sabha
 - Role & functions of Gram Panchyats
 - Role, power & functions of PRI members
- 3 tier PR system, inter-inter relation & function pattern.
- Standing committee & its functions
- Role of Micro level Plans (MLPs)
- Government schemes and their provisions
- Right to information and Social Audits
- MLP & its programmatic tie-up with Govt. schemes.
- Women empowerment and gender equity
- Resource allocation convergence & surveillance

- Role and responsibilities of different functionaries in the 3-tier system.
- GP level resource mobilization and its strategy.
- Need of role convergence for better implementation of any program.
- Record maintenance, transparency and accountability.
- Social audit and advocacy of local issues.

Building the capacities of PRI leaders: Pankaj Kanhar, Samiti Member, Krandiballi

Pankaj Kanhar has been associated with the gram Panchayat since a long time and has been Sarpanch of Krandiballi in the past. He is about 50 years old and currently works as Samiti Member (at the Panchayat Samiti level) from Krandiballi village. He is also a member of Standing Committee on Education in the Krandiballi GP. Pankaj considers that his position as Samiti Member is very important as he represents his GP at the block level. He is also responsible for proper utilization of funds disbursed to his GP through Panchayat Samiti, attending block level meeting on behalf of his Panchayat and conveying the problems being faced at the village or GP level. The UNDP RD project was initiated in Krandiballi during his tenure as Sarpanch (2002-07). As a result he has been instrumental in the implementation of the project in this village. He considers his involvement in the project as having helped him to acquire new information on specific issues such as convergence of resources, micro level planning, role of standing committees etc. He has attended trainings on these issues under the project and was part of the exposure visit to West Bengal. He also attended a workshop on Forest Rights Act 2006. He admits that being part of the project made him more aware about the PRI systems, importance of people’s participation in Gram Sabhas, government schemes and financial provisions. After completion of his tenure as Sarpanch, he has helped in disseminating information about development issues and government schemes and provisions among villagers under his Gram Panchayat.



2.5 Rejuvenating Standing Committees (SC)

Formation of Standing Committees as per Orissa Panchayati Raj Acts on core development issues is part of the decentralization efforts. Most of the SCs largely remain passive on account of lack of clarity on roles of the SCs. Realising the potential and importance of making the SCs active, efforts were made at all three levels, i.e. Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad.

2.5.1 Orientation programme for SCs

During the monthly meetings, the SC

members expressed the need of special orientation programmes, after which these programmes were organized. All the 540 members of 113 SCs were trained at GP level orientation programmes in the first half of 2006.

The training programme focused on:

- 73rd Amendment & devolution of power to PRIs
- Monitoring of various schemes and social services
- Composition & Role of SC
- Monitoring and its follow-up process
- Power and Functions of SC
- Basics of RTI and its application

2.5.2 Formation & Strengthening of Standing Committees

After Feb 07 Panchayat elections, support was provided to the GPs for SCs formation wherein a total of 140 SCs were formed in 20 GPs. In this training programme monitoring formats were also given to SC members. By the end of the 3rd quarter a total of 470 members were trained. Similarly, ZP level standing committee was reorganized as per Orissa Panhayati Raj manual and the members were oriented about their role, function and responsibilities. The project has provided funds (Rs. 6000 for next 4 bi-monthly meetings to each GP) towards organizing meetings and fieldwork by the members. NIPDIT developed formats for 4 common SCs in all the GPs and distributed to GPs along with initial support for organizing monitoring meeting.

2.6 Participatory Planning

Opposed to blue-print based central planning the participatory planning is based on diversity & learning process. MLP articulates the problems and identify their preferred solutions resulting in 'decentralisation' of development



demand. MLP was carried out in 236 villages of all 20 GPs of Phiringia block in the years 2005-06. The village level micro plans were subsequently consolidated into 20 gram panchayat level plans and approved by both GP as well as Zilla Panchayat. MLPs have helped people demand developmental interventions in the areas of agriculture, rural connectivity, health, poverty alleviation, natural resources management, education and commercial linkages.

2.6.1 Selection of local NGOs

Keeping in mind the scale and scope of the exercise, NGOs having local presence in the block were selected through a systematic process, which also ensured that the NGOs gained clarity about the project as well as the roles expected of them.

Name of the NGO	Gram Panchayats Covered	No. of MLPs
SWATI	Bandhagarh, Taladandikia, Kelapada & Pabingia	26
MOOTHA	Gochhapada, Kashinipadar, Pallabrudi & Phiringia	28
LOK YOJANA	Kelapada, Gochhapada, Krandibali, Balandapada	38
ASSART	Kelapada & Bhrungijodi	11

PRDATA	Krandibali	9
NIPDIT & GVMS	Kelapada, Dindiragaon, Dimiriguda, Sadingia, Luising, Ratanga, Pahiraju, Phiringia, Jajespanga, Nuapadar & Gochhapada	124

2.6.2 Training of facilitators for MLP

A team of key MLP facilitators was put together comprising of NGO representatives, animators and PRI representatives from all the regions of

the block. Various participatory appraisal tools were discussed together with the outputs expected from each tool and various thumb rules. This was a six day program where the final two days were spent in a village to develop a 'demo MLP', as a process of 'learning by doing'.

2.6.3 MLP exercise at the village level

The MLP exercise was carried out the village level over a two-day period where different participatory tools were employed to help the villagers articulate the problems they face and their preferred solutions. The exercise was led by the PRI representatives, NGO representative and other key informants, who had been earlier taken through a facilitators training program.

Once the data collection and planning exercise was completed at the village level, the same was then compiled into one comprehensive document by NIPDIT staff. This document was then closely scrutinized by local as well as state level experts for any gaps or mistakes. The state level resource partner for the project was Centre for Development Research and Training (CENDRET) of the Xavier Institute of Management, Bhubaneswar. Such gap filling process often resulted in additional data collection, subsequent analysis and inclusion of certain interventions in the MLP document.

2.6.4 Sharing & Approval of MLPs



Once the MLP documents of all villages of the gram panchayat were ready, a sharing 'workshop' was organised at the gram panchayat level where the MLP documents of all villages were presented. Objective of this workshop was to cross-fertilise the MLPs of the villages of the same gram panchayat.

After the sharing workshop, the individual MLPs of the villages were consolidated at the gram panchayat level. This was essentially a desk process carried out by the project staff at NIPDIT.

To bring about a sense of ownership of the plan among the members of the community and raise

their stake in its execution, the MLPs have been approved by the Gram Sabhas. Following the approval by the gram sabhas the zilla panchayat has put its seal of approval. As such, the MLPs of all 20 gram panchayats have been approved by the zilla panchayat of Kandhamal district.

2.6.5 Revisiting the MLP

Finally, each MLP has been revisited periodically to assess the extent of implementation of proposed interventions. Under this project, two such revisits have taken place. Rural connectivity through convergence with National Rural

Employment Guarantee Scheme, social welfare schemes like Indira Awas Yojana and grants for physically handicapped and infrastructure development through the Kendu Leaf grants are some of the areas where significant work has already happened. On the other hand, the revisit is also being utilised to sharpen the focus of the planning process. Support from external resource person has also been solicited to check the feasibility of the proposed interventions.

MLP at Ratanga GP

Preparation of Micro Level Plans is considered an important work by the community members. They realize that such plans help in identifying the specific issues concerning certain section of village community, especially those who are disadvantaged. Since the MLPs are prepared in consultation with ward members and community leaders, it ensures inclusion of beneficiaries from isolated parts within a village, which are otherwise overlooked in broader planning and allocation exercises.

In a meeting in Ratanga GP office, people pointed that 120 widows were listed for widow pension prior to the MLP was prepared. After the MLP this number reached 180 as many women were identified during the exercise. Other social security schemes have also been undated and become functional since the plan also works as a benchmark for progress. The MLP made people aware of the proposed works and government schemes. People are aware of the sites where work could be taken up and could give their suggestions. However, people also feel that only 10% of the planned activities have been taken up so far. On the other hand, new works have been taken up under NREGS which were not planned in the MLP.

2.7 Output, Outcome Indicators & Outcomes

Output	Outcome Indicators	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated micro-plans developed at the GP level on a participatory basis • Need-based planning reflective of developmental needs of the community especially the weaker sections • Improve quality and extent of participation in planning process • Micro plans reflect influence of the poor, women and marginalized communities in resource allocation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community gains capability to devise its development plan based on diversity & learning processes • Community understands that preparation of micro-plan is a means to an end rather than an end in itself • Micro-plan becomes the guideline for implementation of development projects • Proportion of women regularly reviewing the progress on implementation of plans • Participation level of women and poor families in expressing their issues/ needs in ward level/Gram Sabha level meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Micro-plans developed in 236 Villages, subsequent consolidation and approval by the GP & ZP • Development interventions in the areas of agriculture, rural connectivity, health, poverty alleviation, natural resource management, education & commercial linkages • Road construction from Chirraguda to Padaripada & from Mandalipadar to Lampadar under NREGA, linkage of 3 beneficiaries under PDS in Pabingia & renovation of school wall in Pabingia through KL Grant. • Evidences of people's reaction in case of plan deviation shows ownership of the plan • Women made VLL in execution of NREGS work • By the end of 2007 i.e, with the completion of MLP process, the average participation in the Gram Sabha reached 400 • Women representation & participation in Issue-based committees, Public Hearings & Campaigns

Improving the Fiscal Domain through Resource Convergence & Mobilisation

Devolution of funds to the Panchayati Raj Institutions is one of the important aspects of devolution of power to the institutions of local self-governance as envisaged in 73rd constitutional amendment. It is a contention beyond contest that devolution of funds to the PRIs is yet to be realized in the state of Orissa. Devolution of funds to the PRIs has remained within the expression of intent. For example, it was thought that the respective Departments may consider about 35 percent of allocation from the budget provision to the District Sectors and Planning and Coordination Department may create Panchayat Sectors in the State Budget which has remained unrealized.

Assessment of GP level Resource Mobilization & Resource Convergence, preparation of strategy for RCRM, Activity Plan for Untied Fund, Training on Financial Management, capacity building of SHGs and their federation building, Orientation on Co-operative Management and Physical & Financial Review at the GP level are some of the important activities undertaken to realize the objective.

3.1 Assessment of GP level Resource Mobilization & Resource Convergence

NIPDIT undertook a series of initiatives to understand the fiscal domain of the GPs, to assess the current financial management systems, to inform and educate the PRI representatives and to suggest the effective resource mobilization and convergence strategies.

NIPDIT designed a format specifically to assess the fiscal situation of the GPs, which involved collection of data from PRI members, Secretary and VLW. The designed format focused on collecting data on GP own resource base, present income, expected income, new production base, and expected income from new base. It came out with the findings of complete dependence of the panchayats on government, funds, resource crunch, lack of initiative in resource generation and non-exploration of the avenues of resource generation.

3.2 GP level Strategy for RCRM



During the assessment phase, a primary level idea sharing on enhancing the production base for own revenue was carried out with the PRI members & GP functionaries. As GP has no fund for asset generation, NIPDIT facilitated preparation of a resource mobilization and resource convergence plan at each GP level. This was submitted as a proposal to Block & District administration for funding. NIPDIT also facilitated preparation of an Activity Plan for the Untied Fund which each GP has from DRDA under the UNDP RD Project.

3.3 Activity Plan for Untied Fund

UNDP RD project had made a provision of untied fund to be given to each of 20 GPs @Rs. 500,000. This grant-in-aid to all GPs was planned to be utilized for enhancing the income generating resource base of GPs. The other key objective of this untied fund was to build the capacity of the GPs in the area of fiscal autonomy.

NIPDIT assisted each of the GPs to prepare an Activity Plan for this Untied fund. NIPDIT also hired an external consultant from CENDRET, XIMB for technical facilitation of the entire process.

Key areas of Investment

- Support for Panchayat's income generating assets like farm outlets, turmeric/oil processing units etc.
- Rural lighting and communication: Solar lighting system & solar WLL phone and television and computers for GP office
- Vaccination, health camps and sheds (with tin roofs) for domestic cattle.
- GP level library & information centre
- Support for Village Education Committees, CFC, gender training, organic farming, off farm activities etc.
- Support for vocational training & self-employment: For e.g. Masonry, Carpentry, Bamboo craft, Tailoring, Cycle marts etc.
- Support for Drinking water tanks at Panchayat Squares and Storage facilities for vegetables.
- Support for establishing Panchayat Resource Centres (PRC) to help farmer community in procuring farm equipment like iron plough, tiller, sprinkler sprayer, grain bank and seed bank.
- Support to SHGs on IGP

DRDA had released a part of the Untied Fund to the respective GPs with which the GPs had also planned to purchase computers. However, this activity did not make further progress due to operational delays and the UNDP felt that there were still gaps in this process.

3.4 RCRM Plans and Workshops

The GP level RCRM workshops were organized in 11 GPs in July 2008. In other GPs these workshops could not be organized due to communal violence. There were 281 participants [Sarpanch's (11); Line Dept. Officials (48); Samiti Members (8); GP Secretaries/GRS (7); Ward Members (227); and NGO/other representatives (86)] in these workshops in which 193 were male and 88 were female. These workshops apart from enhancing knowledge and skill of the participants to prepare future plans also focused on sharpening the Activity Plans for the untied fund.

3.5 Training on Financial Management and record keeping

During PRI trainings and village meetings, community and PRI members were oriented on the need of transparency and accountability. A need was felt to organize a special training on financial management as the PRI members required technical inputs as envisaged in the 'Gram Panchayat Manual'. This training programme was organized from 27th to 30th Dec. 05

This training was again organized for the newly elected PRI members Post 2007 elections in Nov 07. A total of 46 trainees (9 women & 37 men) were present in the training programme. There were 18 Sarpanchs, 2 Naib-sarpanchs, 8 Panchayat Secretary, 6 GRS, 4 Executive officers and 3 Line Department officials participated.

At the start of the programme, a need and expectation analysis was carried out followed by a stock taking exercise to identify gaps and operational problems due to lack of knowledge and incorrect practices. The stock taking exercise revealed the sorry state of financial management at the GP level. The programme then focused on orienting PRI members on the possible solutions. Special sessions were designed on ways of monitoring the different activities as per the budgets. Different formats and questionnaires were developed and presented to

financially monitor the activities.

3.6 GP Level Physical and Financial Stock taking exercise



Discussion during Financial Management training brought out the fact that PRI representatives did not know all documents used in the GPs. In order to demystify the entire situation, NIPDIT undertook a physical and financial stock taking exercise in all the 20 GPs from Dec 07 to Jan 08.

This exercise at each GP was undertaken in presence of Executive Officer, Secretary, Gramya Rozgar Sevak, Sarpanch, Panchayat Samiti member and ward members.

3.7 Self-Help-Groups (SHG) and their federations

SHG approach has emerged as one of the best ways of socio economic empowerment of people living below poverty line in India. Several rural self employment schemes to bring a paradigm shift in development process by focusing on mobilization of rural poor through SHGs, Capacity Building and Skill up gradation have been taken up by both government & non-government agencies.

3.7.1 Training to SHG leaders at the GP level



NIPDIT under the UNDP RD project organized Two-day SHG capacity building training programme in all the 20 GPs in collaboration with other local NGOs from Jun to Dec 06. A total of 1200 women SHG leaders were trained in these training programmes. The trainees included President, Secretary, Treasurer and one active Member from 400 SHGs of the 20 GPs of the Phiringia Block. These trainings intended to develop management capacity, promote income generation activities, enhance entrepreneurship and strengthen their internal quality.

During these training programmes, resource persons from Financial Institutions, officials of

district administration, PRI members oriented the participants on different schemes like -NREGA, SGSY, ITDA and their scope for linkage with micro-economic activities, the need of maintaining transparency and accountability and converging economic activities with activities of community development.

3.7.2 Supporting SHG in Federating

After the orientation programmes, the SHG leaders expressed interest to federate at the GP and block level. NIPDIT supported the SHGs in this process. Following is the snap shot of their efforts in this direction.



In each of the 20 GPs primary cooperative societies were formed consisting of all the SHGs formed by the government, ICDS and different NGOs and other support institutions.

NIPDIT helped these primary cooperatives in getting legally registered under OSHCA. (Orissa Self Help Cooperative Act) and undertaking credit need assessment & business development plan of all the 380 SHGs. Similarly, 5 training programmes were organized on cooperative management covering President, Vice-President & Treasurer of all SHGs in the program there were 2828 participants.

3.8 Outputs, Outcome Indicators & Outcomes

Outputs	Outcome Indicators	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gram Panchayats raise more tax without negative equity effects • Participatory plan made by each GP to create income generating assets • Better integration of planning by line departments with GP micro plans • Preparation of plan for utilization of untied funds to fund gaps in micro-plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent of system development for tax, non-tax revenue generation at panchayat and higher level • Key areas of investment in Activity Plan identified • No. of items/planned activities of MLP covered/accepted in NREGA/BRGF or similar ongoing Government initiatives • Identification of key areas of investment for capability enhancement & synergy with existing fund support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GPs have increased their income through the avenues of GP Haat/Market complex, Vegetable storage, Processing units & Farmers' Outlet • Panchayats have articulated the demand for creation of income generating assets like; farm outlets, turmeric/oil processing units, rural lighting, infrastructure for drinking water & vegetable storage as key areas of investment in Activity Plans • GPs have identified key areas of investment under untied fund like; support for establishment of Panchayat Resource (farm) Centre, establishment of GP level library & Information Centres, support for VEC, gender training, organic farming, support for IGP to SHGs, vocational training & self-employment, solar lighting system, solar WLL phone, television & computer for GP office.

Ushering in a Culture of Transparency & Accountability

Local self-governance hinges upon transparency & accountability. It is worth the mention that transparency & accountability is demand based. In order to bring about transparency & accountability it is imperative to develop capacity of the community to lay claim to transparency & accountability from the institutions of governance. In the context of the issues of governance in the rural areas strengthening oversight functions of the Palli & Gram Sabha holds the key.

With the objective to bring about transparency & accountability, the project initiatives centred upon strengthening the oversight functions of the Palli & Gram Sabhas with activities like; Organization of village meetings, Cultural shows, Organization of cycle rally, Organization of cycle rally, Organization of public hearing, Formation of issue-based committees, Formation of GP social audit committee, Formation of Disaster Management Committees, Orientation for Social Audit Team, Training on Gender Sensitization, study & rallies & campaign on NREGS, PDS, Gender integration, Liquor issue and Forest Rights.

4.1 Organizing Village Meetings

Information on village meetings			
Period	Number of V. Meetings	Total Participants	Women Participation
Sep-Oct 05	464	12037	4810
Jan-Feb 06	183	11068	4265
Apr - Jun 06	499	13500	7136
Jul - Sep 06	421	11041	3415
Apr - Jun 07	351	11657	5216
Jul - Sep 07	342	11423	5200
Oct - Dec 07	428	12911	4771
Apr - Jun 08	351	11657	5216

The village meeting, as an important tool, was used in the entire project period to maintain direct linkage with the community. The purpose of these meetings was to create general awareness amongst the community on variety of issues. The animators were trained in conducting these meetings wherein different issues were taken up in a phased manner. Each of these meetings ensured community's participation and interest (30% - 50% participation of women).

The Animators collected cases on the functioning of the PRI system, the socio-economic status of the people as well as the specific problems of the area. The activities and progress of the Animators were recorded in a specially designed format for review and assessment.

4.2 Cultural Shows



NIPDIT designed cultural shows to be organized in each village with the help of two professional cultural troupes. The objective of these shows was to introduce the project in the villages in an interesting manner.

The other important purpose of the shows was to build rapport and initiate a relationship with the community. The cultural troupes were given the project documents and were explained the objectives and purpose of the project to develop appropriate content. The shows started on 5th

June on the occasion of World Environment Day and ended on 19th June. The two troupes organized 60 programs in all the 20 GPs (3 programs in each GP) in 14 days. The troupes also organized village meetings, distributed IEC materials and collected feedback and opinions from the villagers. Each of these shows had a minimum of 200 to a maximum of 2000 people as audience depending on the population of the villages.

4.3 Rallies and Mass meetings

Rallies and mass meetings were organized extensively in the entire project period to create mass awareness on variety of issues and also motivate people to take initiatives and to participate in the village and Panchayat level decentralization processes.

4.3.1 Cycle rally on general awareness & PRI

A ten days cycle rally was organized from 9th - 18th January 06 wherein all the 20 GPs were covered. This ten days cycle rally was conducted by Animators. Animators organized mass meetings in every village, raised slogans (especially on decentralization) and also distributed IEC materials. The rally focused on informing people about the aim & objective of the decentralization processes, the RD project, the different government schemes and motivating people to participate in Palli Sabha and Gram Sabha.

4.3.2 Cycle rally and campaign for voter awareness



20 Animators along with 10 Issue base Committee members organized cycle rallies, mass meetings and street plays to motivate the villagers to participate in the voting process.. They organized events in 126 villages, conducted mass meetings in 44 locations along with seven street plays.

In the last election in Feb 2007 a pre-election voter awareness campaign by animators & selected youth was undertaken on selection of a leader, Whom to vote, How to cast vote, reservation of seats etc. A leaflet on the status of PRI was distributed among the people. The female members of the community were encouraged to participate in the election.

4.4 Wall Paintings

NIPDIT, under this project, used Wall paintings as important tool for creating mass awareness. In each GP, 10 prominent locations were carefully identified by the Animators in consultation with the GP level functionaries and youth leaders. Some of the issues covered were women's empowerment, participation in Palli Sabha & Gram Sabha, Protection of Natural Resources, bad effects of liquor, etc.

4.5 Jana Sunwai (Public Hearings)

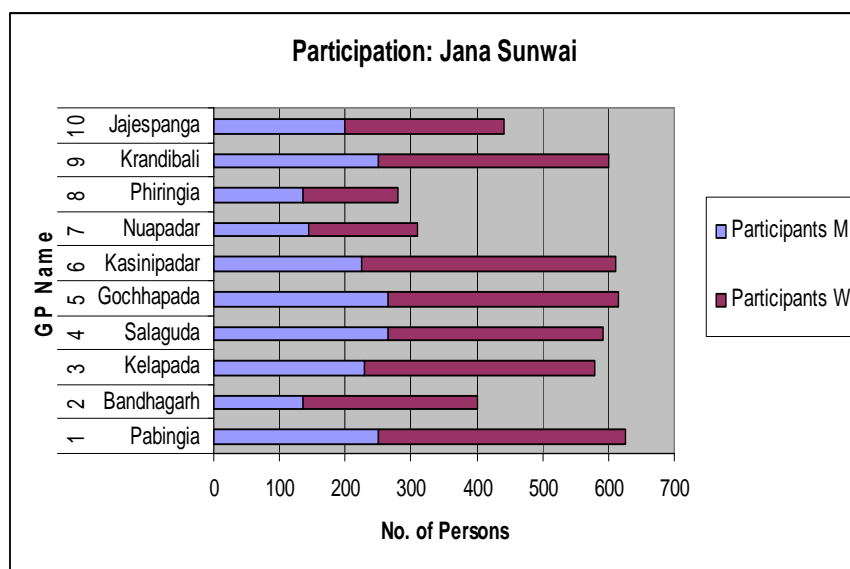
Public hearing or Jana Sunwai is one of the important tools for creating mass awareness among the people on different programs, provisions, rights and duties. NIPDIT used this tool effectively to further the objectives of the

project. This entire initiative was designed in such a way (information collection & documentation of implementation and outcomes, participation of both primary & secondary stakeholders) that it laid a strong foundation for accountability and transparency between the administration, elected representatives and the people.



As preparation, the Animators collected primary data and cases on the status of health delivery systems, education (schools), public distribution system (PDS), implementation of NREGA and NFFW. People/victims/beneficiaries were motivated to articulate their problems in the public hearings. NIPDIT lobbied with the district administration, block administration and local GPs so that the line department officials, PRI representatives and other key officials participate in these hearings to listen to people and sort most of the problems immediately. The dates for these public

hearings were decided in advance along with district and block officials and district administration's directive was passed to all the line department officials. The careful planning ensured presence of the key officials at the block, district and Panchayat level.



NIPDIT organized one Jana Sunwai in each of the 20 GPs. More than 9000 people attended these Jana Sunwai in 20 GPs of which more than 60% of participants were women. The cases highlighted during the Public Hearings were on NREGA, IA, NFFWP, Primary Health Care, Primary Education, Drinking Water and Sanitation, Old age pension, job cards, wage payment, unequal wage, liquor, electrification of GP head quarters, delay in compensation for flood victims, marketing & procurement problem of NTFP, etc. Many of the highlighted

problems were solved due to these Public Hearings.

One of the important outcomes of these Public Hearings was the formation of six Issue Based Committees on different sectoral themes to sort these issues in a systematic and sustainable manner.

4.6 Regularising Gram Sabhas and Palli Sabhas

One of the key efforts of NIPDIT during this project was to hold these Gram Sabhas as per directives in all the GPs. Apart from awareness generation campaigns and mass meetings, the Animators prepared well in advance for these Gram Sabhas. They specially encouraged women participation. They campaigned through the local youth leaders,

ward members and SHG group leaders.



- Participation in Gram Sabhas showed healthy upward trend. By the end of the 2007, the average participation in the GP reached 400.
- The increase in participation was not just limited to one specific community but is common to the entire village.

4.7 Issue Based Committees: Formation, Facilitation and Orientation

After the public hearings were conducted by each GP, the need was felt to organize Panchayat Samiti level Issue Based Committees on different important issues. The primary objective of these Issue based Committees were to highlight

the irregularities or corruption in the different GPs at Panchayat Samiti and later at the ZP level. Six Sectoral themes were chosen wherein One Committee comprised of twenty members from twenty GPs. Thus the membership size of all the six Issue based Committees was 120, 6 from each GP. From each GP, 3 men and 3 women were nominated to be part of these committees. Each GP could nominate Sarpanch, Anganwadi worker/ANM/Any other health worker, Secretary or EO, Youth or local leader, Women SHG leader, Ward member and Naib Sarpanch.

The Six Issues on which the Committees were formed are:

(1) Land & Agriculture, (2) Forest & NTFP, (3) Rural Employment & Food Security, (4) Health & Sanitation, (5) Social Issues (Liquor, Pension Schemes, Drinking Water, Housing, Education, Women & Child Development) and (6) PDS & Wage.

After the 2007 GP level elections, 20 Issue Based committees were again reorganized in the first quarter of 2008. The members were Issue Based Committees were also oriented. The Issue Based Committees met regularly and monitored the ongoing government works and schemes under the six categories of Issues. One of the direct immediate impacts was on 2007 GP elections wherein there was overwhelming voters response and genuine people were elected based on the agenda of development.

4.8 Formation of Social Audit Team (SAT)

NIPDIT under this project in partnership with the District Administration initiated the process of social audit in the district. A preliminary discussion was organized with the District Collector and the Project Director, DRDA wherein it was decided to form a Social Audit Team (SAT) at the district and block level to monitor as well as to facilitate the social audit processes in the villages. SAT comprises of PRI representatives, District and Block government officials, educational institutions representatives, and the NGOs representatives working in the district. The district level SAT comprises of 15 members while block level SAT had 11 members.

4.8.1 Orientation programme for SAT

NIPDIT along with the District Administration organized a two days district level orientation programme in August 2007 at DRDA conference hall, Phulbani. The objective of this program was to discuss and develop common

understanding on social audit, its concept and process, as well as to develop tools to initiate and conduct social audit.

NIPDIT prepared a Concept paper on Social Audit, which was shared with participants in this programme. At the end of the Orientation programme, the SATs decided to initiate the social audit process in Phiringia block with the specific focus on NREGA works. NIPDIT along with district administration has initiated community watch process and capacity building of primary stakeholders.

4.9 Promoting Gender Equality

The guidelines on the project cycle management strategies to attain the goal of 'promotion of gender equality highlights and details the Principles, Results Framework, Policy Framework, Project Management, Project Monitoring and Evaluation. NIPDIT followed these guidelines closely and undertook project management, project monitoring and evaluation accordingly. Additionally, NIPDIT took a number of special initiatives to promote gender equality.



4.9.1 Gender Study

NIPDIT conducted a gender study titled "Decentralized governance & political empowerment of women at Phiringia block of Kandhamal district" to make the approaches (plans, programs and activities) instruments for promotion of gender equality. This study was conducted in 10 sample villages of 5 GPs in the first quarter of 2006. The study was conducted through structured questionnaires and Focus Group Discussions.

One of the major findings of the study was that instead of all the provisions & 33% reservation, the

women of the area were striving hard to get into the centre of local politics & their role was mainly that of followers.

4.9.2 Gender Sensitisation Trainings

NIPDIT organized 2 days' Gender Sensitization programs for PRI representatives of all 20 GPs at 10 locations. The specific objectives of the training were; development of an understanding on gender issues, sensitization of the PRIs on their role for a gender just society, promotion of leadership among women PRI members, dissemination of information on 73rd & 74th Amendment and different schemes & provisions. The methodology followed was participatory and innovative to include Role plays, Games, Group discussions, Case studies, Story telling, Question & Answer, feedback & analysis.

Promoting Gender Equality in PRIs: Kaushalya Malik, Sarpanch, Phiringia

Kaushalya lives in Sunakadu village under Phiringia Gram Panchayat. Sunakadu is one of the intervention villages under the UNDP RD project. Like most inhabitants of the village, Kaushalya belongs to a farmer family. She is educated upto 10th grade. Kaushalya stands out as a curious, aware and active person and has participated in various development works in and around her village. She is the president of the women's Self Help Group initiated by CART, a local NGO. The group has been active since 2002 and has 22 members.

Kaushalya is one of the five persons conferred with the President's Award for commendable work under WATSAN (Water and Sanitation program) from Kandhamal district. Being a member of SHG has provided many learning opportunities for Kaushalya. She has received training on SHG's, women's participation in PRI etc. She has been in close interaction with the Animators (under the RD project) and has known the project since its inception. She was particularly influenced by the gender mainstreaming training. When the post of the Sarpanch for Sunakadu was declared reserved for Scheduled Tribe Woman, Kaushalya decided to contest for the post. The SHG members supported the idea and made collective efforts by campaigning for her.

Altogether six nominations were filed of which four contested elections. Kaushalya won by 200 votes, a remarkable margin considering that the total number of votes for the GP is only 5000 and that there were four contenders for the post. Following her election as Sarpanch, Kaushalya has attended training programs on Micro Level Planning (MLP), functioning of Standing Committees, PRI etc. She feels that the MLP has improved her understanding of problems and needs of the village and she is able to think of the whole village as a unit.

In March 2008, Kaushalya went for an exposure visit to Bolpur district of West Bengal to see the systems and functions of GP. She was a keen observer and had a very sound idea of what could be learned and applied in her own work. She felt that the indirect election of PRI (as prevalent in WB) is a good system because the Sarpanch can act as a village level official without being troubled directly by people with hidden interests. She also felt that the concept of Gram Unnayan Samiti (Village Development Committee) where all the villagers are members with a president and a secretary is not replicable in her own area. She, however, was very impressed by the extensive coverage of SHGs in Bolpur. Clearly, Kaushalya has been able to understand the different contexts of the two places and appreciates what she thinks will improve things in her own region.

Kaushalya feels that the RD interventions at the village level have helped create awareness among people about Palli Sabha and Gram Sabha and people are able to raise questions. She explained that the PRI officials in her block are more aware than their counterparts in other blocks because of the interventions under RD program.

4.10 Campaign on Public Distribution System

For a poor state like Orissa, Public Distribution System has relevance with incidence of abject poverty. Despite efforts at streamlining PDS, it is pilfered and finds its way to black market. Lack of transparency & non-accountability of the responsibility holders of PDS run on public money seems to be the primary reason for such a state of affairs.

4.10.1 Study on PDS

NIPDIT conducted a study in Phiringia block to assess its status and also to make the system more apparent. Animators, who undertook the primary data collection, also cross checked the list and amount of items distributed as mentioned in the ration cards with the Essential Commodities Distribution register maintained by GP. Based on the findings NIPDIT facilitated mass sensitization on PDS issues, regular dialogue with PRI, organization of rally at

Block/District level and information dissemination through IEC materials, village meetings and wall paintings.

Making PDS Transparent: Gochhapada

Gochhapada is a remote and backward Panchayat under Phiringia block. Over the years, a number of development programs have attempted to reduce vulnerability of people and to improve their living standards but there has been no perceivable change in the overall situation. Gochhapada is one of the villages under the UNDP RD program. The villagers and the PRI functionaries, including the Standing Committee members have been provided trainings on their roles, functions and possible contribution to the local self-governance system.

A recent incident in this village made the villagers take an unexpected step of exercising their rights as PRI functionaries and citizens. This is with respect to The Public Distribution System (PDS) which is an attempt of the government towards food security. Under the system, the PDS stores provide a quota of rice to selected families listed as Below the Poverty Line (BPL) families. The quota differs for families listed under Antyodaya and Annapurna schemes, designed to provide food security to extremely vulnerable families. In Gochhapada, the PDS store was not providing the allocated quota of rice to the beneficiary families for a long time. Several complaints were made during GP meetings and public meetings but to no avail since the Secretary of the GP were involved in the malpractice of selling the allocated rice to outsiders. However, the secretary and the storekeeper were caught red handed by two PRI members and some local youth while they were trying to transport 5 bags of rice from the store. When the PRI members and youth questioned them, the secretary used abusive language and challenged their right to interfere with the government system. Meanwhile a large crowd of villagers and beneficiaries gathered at the store. The PRI representatives contacted the district administration and demanded justice. Although some political leaders tried to interfere into the matter, the villagers remained adamant and the culprits were finally handed over to police. Following the incident, PRI members and people have become more aware and watchful of the development works in their village. Some PRI members/ issue-based committee members (formed during Public Hearing) acknowledge that training, information and constant interaction through the UNDP RD project has helped in making the local governance more transparent & accountable.

4.11 NREGA Campaign

The provision under NREGA that work/projects should be selected on demand basis and on people's choice is facing practical difficulties. It is observed that the target community is not organized and strong enough to protest all these irregularities and disparities. Hence, the project team, the Animators and GP level Issue-based committee members decided to launch a campaign to sensitize the target communities on the Act & provisions.

4.11.1 NREGA Benchmark study

Before undertaking the campaign, a benchmark survey cum study on NREGS activities was conducted to base the

campaign on facts of the block. Major findings of the study are availability of 38-42 workdays of employment,



registration of 24% of eligible families and lack of knowledge on the procedure of job demand and unemployment allowance.

4.11.2 Cycle rally on NREGA

Following the dissemination of the findings of the study, Issue-based committees with support from the project team planned for a sensitization campaign on NREGA in the block in the form of cycle-rally. During the rally the team conducted a series of group meetings, village meetings and interacted with the unskilled labourers.

The 4 days rally conducted 32 village/group meetings and interacted with labourers at work sites. A sharing meeting was organized at UP School premises. 168 participants attended this sharing meeting from 8 GPs.

After the campaign, unskilled labourers and women who were not registered came forward & enrolled in the register of Panchayat, application of C1 & C2 was being regularly used and workers collectively demanded their payment in scheduled /stipulated period.

4.12 Anti – liquor: Study and Campaign

The MLP exercise and public hearing initiative found that ‘Liquor’ was a highly negative factor in socio-economic progress of Phiringia block.

4.12.1 The Study

In order to assess the magnitude of liquor consumption, addiction and its consequences, a sample study was conducted in 120 villages of the 20 GPs. The tools of structured interviews & focus group discussions were used to collect primary data. The information collection was done on production and consumption of liquor, trading practices, causes and casualties and suggestions to reduce/eliminate the impact of liquor consumption/addiction.

Mode of Preventive step	GP	Host
Meetings & rally	Kelapada	Women SHG federation
Seizing & Rally	Balandapada	Women SHGs
Sensitisation Meeting	Pahiraju	Youth Club/AGRAGAMEE
Rally	Kashinipadar	Women SHG federation
Rally & Meeting	Gochhapada	Women SHG federation
Rally	Taladandikia	Women SHG federation
Rally	Bhrungijodi	Women SHG federation
Rally	Jajespanga	Women SHG federation
Rally & Meeting	Dimiriguda	Youth Club/SHGs
Rally	Pabingia	Women SHG federation
Rally	Sadingia	Women SHG federation
Rally	Palabrudi	Women SHG federation
Rally & Meeting	Luisingh	SHGs & AGRAGAMEE

4.12.2 The Campaign

Based on the attempts of Animators different community based institutions undertook preventive measures for liquor prohibition.

4.13 Disaster Preparedness

Phiringia block in Kandhmal district is full of forests and is continuously affected by disasters like flash floods, food contamination, viral and fungal infections, land slides, drought, etc. NIPDIT had a project with OXFAM-NOVIB on disaster preparedness and

took special initiative to get Phiringia block included in this project. It collaborated with PRI representatives in forming GP level and Block level Disaster Management Committees (DMC). The interventions in this block were from Oct 07 to Sep 08. Some of the major interventions under this initiative are highlighted below:

- In Phiringia block 260 families were provided land reclamation support. Rs. 141550 was mobilized from the

community.

- NIPDIT supported 260 flash flood victim families with paddy seedlings and vegetable seeds.
- NIPDIT supported 82 families in 4 GPs, covering 115 acres with stone patching work.

Advocacy: DMCs were supported by the NIPDIT team in conducting advocacy related activities.

- GP level rally demanding provision of essential commodities like kerosene and rice to flash flood affected people and block and district level rallies to declare the block as disaster prone area
- Campaign to generate resources in Phiringia could generate Rs. 16037.

This convergence of programme by NIPDIT helped in creating awareness amongst PRIs and community at large regarding the role of decentralized institutions under disaster situations apart from support to the disaster affected populations.



4.14 Forest Rights

Village level discussions were organized specially on Forest Rights wherein Sarpanch's, Ward members & Villagers brainstormed on JFM, CFM and Forest Right Committees. This led to preparation of memorandum for which a Signature Campaign was launched at the block level. This memorandum was then submitted to President of India, Governor of Orissa, Chief Minister - Orissa, Collector – Kandhmal and Commissioner – Kandhamal.

Leaflets on Forest Right Act 2006 were printed and distributed among the masses about role & responsibility of members of forest right committee and process of application for land. A block level discussion and stakeholder consultation was organized wherein a total of 248 persons (Male-198 & Female-50) participated. The participants included Sarpanchs, Ward Members, Forest Right Committee Members, Range Officer, NGOs, Project Staff and Journalists. A number of village level cases and studies were shared with the group in the light of Forest Rights Rule 2006 and the role of Forest Rights Committee. The findings of a survey conducted in 15 GPs on forest committees and land status was also presented in this workshop.



4.15 Communal harmony: Peace Committees

Kandhamal was badly affected by communal riots in 2007 and 2008 and Phiringia was one of the worst affected blocks. NIPDIT project and Animators played a vital role in motivating people and in peace building process. In 2008, Animators organized peace meetings in 56 worst affected villages in 11 GPs in which 917 men & 480 women were present. Also GP level peace meetings were organized in 10 GPs where 541 males & 247 females participated.

The participants included village leaders and leaders of different castes/ethnic groups. Both government and NIPDIT played an active role in peace building.

At each GP, NIPDIT formed peace committee meetings wherein the Animators facilitated this in 9 GPs. Palli Sabha and Gram Sabhas were badly affected by these communal riots.

4.16 Outputs, Outcome Indicators & Outcomes

Outputs	Outcome Indicators	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gram Sabha better informed about plan, activities, budget, coverage of Gram Panchayats • Clarity on power & functions among the PRI functionaries improves & the systems, procedures & institutional structures of Panchayati Raj get strengthened. • Increased knowledge on the functioning of PRI and its goal of community development informed with social justice • Gram Panchayat accounting, record keeping and reporting improves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Palli Sabha & Gram Sabhas are held regularly with participation of all the cross-sections to articulate developmental issues & concerns • Community establishes its monitoring & vigilance system • The system, procedure and institutional structures in Panchayati Raj function well • PRI representatives lead the community development & empowerment initiatives & processes • Type of social justice issues addressed during social audit/plans review meetings in Gram Sabha/Gram Panchayat meetings • No. of GPs adhering to the rules & regulations for Financial Management as per the "Gram Panchayat Manual" • No. of GPs prepare their Annual Activity Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 140-150 village meetings per month with average participation ranging from 22 to 35 with women participation varying between 37 to 52% • Public Hearings on health delivery services, education, PDS & implementation of NREGA • Campaign on NREGS for proper implementation • Formation of Issue-based committees & SAT • Reorganization of the GP level Standing committees • Development of Monitoring Format by the Standing Committees • Leadership of PRI representatives in community development & empowerment process. • PRI representatives & people in village meetings deliberate on the issues of liquor, pension schemes, drinking water, housing, education and Women & Child development. • 33 types of documents (including registers, receipt books, cash books etc.) are maintained by the GPs • All the GPs prepare their Annual Activity Report

Facilitating Policy Making for Decentralization

During the execution of the project NIPDIT has involved itself in facilitating policy-making for decentralization. It is worth the mention that the realization of the objective has been attempted through multi-stakeholder management, dissemination & sharing of learnings and organization of programs for building up stakehodership among wider cross-sections.

5.1 Stakeholder consultations

5.1.1. Project Launch Block level Consultation

On 21st March 2005, NIPDIT and District Administration jointly organized a one-day Consultation at Block headquarter in which around 300 participants including PRI functionaries, Govt. officials, Media persons, NGOs participated. The objective of the consultation was to launch the program and share the Aims, Objectives, Activities,



Process, and Role & Responsibilities of the stakeholders in implementing the Project.

District level Sensitisation meeting: A District Planning Committee (DPC) meeting was organized on 3rd May 2005 to sensitize the DPC members on the aims & objectives of the project and to involve them in the process. Similarly, an orientation programme at the District and Block level for Govt. functionaries was organized 8th June 2005 which had 30 participants.

5.1.2 NGO Consultation

On 23rd May 2005, NIPDIT organized a one-day consultation of NGOs working in Phiringia Block. The objectives were to share the project details, work out a collaborative framework and map the existing expertise of the NGOs. As an outcome of the consultation, 6 NGOs were identified to partner in MLP activity, 8 for Training, 7 for Documentation & MIS, 11 for social mobilization and 2 for financial management.

As an immediate follow up of the consultation, 3 teams were formed consisting of 6 NGOs to organize 10 GP level sensitization programs at 10 locations. These teams with

experience in training participated in a 2 day workshop to finalize the course content, standardize IEC materials, and training logistics.

5.2 Participation in external planning and review exercises

NIPDIT participated in the planning and review exercises conducted by UNDP and SRI and presented the status of project in Phiringia. Some of the important learning sharing meetings are highlighted below:

- New Delhi Review meeting on 14th
- Bhopal Review and April 2006 organised by UNDP Technical workshop from 31st Jul – 2nd Aug 2006 organised

by SRI Bhopal (DEBATE) supported by UNDP and Planning Commission.

- Quarterly Progress Review conducted at BBSR by UNDP Orissa
- National review at Raipur in Apr 08
- UNDP visit to project area on 7th and 8th August
- UNDP Documentation team visit in Nov 08 to prepare overall documentation of the project.

5.3 Documentation

NIPDIT paid a lot of emphasis on the documentation processes as it realized from the beginning that this was a pilot intervention of Government of India and UNDP and its experiences would be used for wider learning. The issues and themes discussed described in the previous chapters were covered in this process. The documentation was done keeping the target audience in mind and accordingly, most of the documents were in Oriya whereas for external usage they were prepared/ translated in English. Some of the major categories of documentation accomplished are presented below:



IEC Materials: Booklets, leaflets, folders, posters and pamphlets were developed by the internal documentation team and also procured from different sources.

- Training material and reports: Handbooks for trainers, reading materials for participants and training reports.
 - Micro-level plans: 20 GP level plans compiled from 236 village level plans.
 - Success stories (cases) to disseminate good practices, "Empowering the 3rd Tier: A compilation of Case Studies & Analysis" (English), "Dura Nuhein Aau Gram Swarajya" (Oriya)
- Process documentation of the project "Strengthening Rural Decentralization: Experiences from Phiringia Block of Kandhamal District in Orissa"
 - "Process Document of Micro-Planning"
 - A periodical named *Swayat Sashan* published in local language
 - Audio visual on pre-election campaign, NREGA and Anti-liquor
 - Audio CD of motivational songs titled 'Nua Sakala'
 - Video documentation on project intervention titled "The missing link."
 - E-photo album and video clips from different phases of the project
 - Block level Human development Report

5.4 Project Closure

The project ended on 31st December 2008. NIPDIT organized 20 project-closing workshops, one in each GP, wherein the focus was to orient the PRI functionaries to consolidate and capitalize on the learning of the RD project. Each of these workshops was attended by approximately 200 persons including Sarpanch, ward members, Samiti Members, government officials, media and other village leaders. NIPDIT facilitated GPs to draw up a strategy to take forward the activities initiated in the project.



One project-closing workshop was organized at the Block level to consolidate and share learning's of the project. This workshop was attended by Block Administration, Sarpanchs, Samiti Members, ZP members, Dist. Administration, Line Dept., NGOs and Media.

NIPDIT also organized Press meetings to share the learning and achievements of the project with the larger audience. Additionally, NIPDIT has compiled all the processes by documenting it in audio-visual and print format. These documents would be available for wider circulation.

5.5 Outputs, Outcome Indicators & Outcomes

Outputs	Outcome Indicators	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GP improves core governance functions and delivery of civic services • Improved delivery of assigned functions, through oversight, converged resources, better targeting and community mobilization • GPs have functional and institutional autonomy as provided by CAA and state Act and policy • Project lessons shared with state government to improve policy environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GPs hold regular monthly meetings and PRI representatives monitor service delivery • Types of service delivery that is monitored by the PRI Representatives • PRIs are engaged in people's education on rights-based approach to development & take up the concerns of entitlements • Types of service delivery that has improved • Development projects are implemented as per the plans prepared in the panchayat • Community holds the official accountable for omissions & commissions • Panchayat performs its compulsory & optional works without let or hindrance • Framework/guidelines of block/Gram Panchayat planning developed and shared with planning board/ concerned authorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All the GPs hold regular monthly meetings & all the Standing Committees (7 types) hold regular meetings • Standing Committee monitors service delivery with the help of a monitoring format • PRI representatives in all the GPs monitor works under NREGS, worksite facilities & distribution of commodities under PDS • Regularization of PDS in Kasinipadar GP following the Public Hearing • Linkage of poor households with Antodaya scheme in Pabingia GP • Timely wage payment under NREGS in Balandapada GP • Construction of roads to inaccessible villages, renovation of school building, regularization of health services & PDS undertaken as per the plan finalized in the Panchayat • In a public hearing held in Kasinipadar, administration acceded to panchayat's demand of stringent action against the errant official responsible for irregularity in distribution of PDS • Sharing of project lessons at National Review & State Review • Sharing of consolidated micro plans • Sharing of Block Human Development report

Conclusions

6.1 Lessons Learnt

The experience of development of micro plan based on local diversity and learning process shows the way for participatory development where articulation of people's need and its incorporation in the plan creates ownership among the people. This is evident in adequate factorization of the needs of the weaker section especially that of the women. Preparation of micro plan helps in creation of a sense of ownership among the people and leads to demand generation.

Preparation of micro plan makes the community aware of their entitlement relation with the institutions of governance. Development demand generated within the community gets the expression & vigour of demand for entitlements when people are involved in the planning process.

Most often the stereotypes like gender stereotypes lie buried in the collective psyche. Collective analysis leads to its extirpation where the community willingly does away with the practice as has been observed during project implementation where women have been made VLLs.

Common action to articulate development needs is more often a successor to participatory planning. A community can't be goaded into common action unless & until there is a collective thinking on community development.

Instruments of transparency & accountability can be prudently used by the community to demand entitlements. We have observed that some of the community members have used Right To Information demanding their entitlements.

In making the PRI the institutions of community development and community empowerment it is important that capacity building initiatives are undertaken for different stakeholders. Equally important is the strengthening the systems, procedures & institutional structures. There are evidences where the trained PRI representatives have become the rallying point of community initiative to demand its entitlements.

Conflicting situation emerged between EO and Sarpanch regarding maintaining T & A. In few cases, it emerged that PRI was interested to share the information but the EO seemed reluctant and projected him/herself as the head of the institution.

At the same time it was observed that the PRI representatives are ignorant of most of the circulars and orders of the government bearing directives on devolution of power (fund, functions & functionaries). Such ignorance makes the PRI representatives play second fiddle to the GP functionaries.

6.2 Challenges

- Drawing people's faith and ownership at initial stage is difficult as it demands environment building initiative at community level
- Sometimes, key informants dominated the process where others were sidelined and ensuring everyone's participation became a problem
- Formation of a core-planning group raised expectations of the members wherein they started thinking of financial gains.
- The budget was planned on people's knowledge without appropriate technical analysis which may not have had

actual fund requirements.

- Plans raised people's expectation to a greater degree and they repetitively asked Animators and project staff about the execution of plans and progress status.
- Certain social welfare schemes are for individuals in which individual interests are dominant over the community and collective interest. Trained community groups play a crucial role in this regard
- Lack of representation of people from each hamlet sometimes sidelined the process in favour of members representing the other hamlets. In interior GPs where a numbers of hamlets are scattered, the plan can be skewed to any particular hamlet within GP.
- Participation of PRI members and government officials sometimes sway or distract the process. Their non-participation can also bring in the issue of future ownership of plan execution.
- Difficulties in perspective building as people fail to visualize the situation unless it is highlighted and put forth through a special learning exercise.
- When completion of any work takes longer time, people normally loose interest to discuss the work and the money spent on it.
- Ward members are normally ignorant of different development activities and their active participation remains a distant possibility.
- Normally much more discussion takes place on type of work to be done and where to be done but after the work is completed; quality of work or on funds utilization is not discussed.

6.3 Sustainability

Aspects of sustainability have been built into the design, execution and strategies of the project "Rural Decentralisation and Participatory Planning for Poverty Reduction in Phiringia Block, Kandhamal, Orissa". To start with the project initiative has created & nurtured a stakeholdership among a wider cross-section involving the community, PRI representatives, government officials, civil society organizations and citizen forums. Apart from the sharing & dissemination of best practices, various interventions have been undertaken to capacitate the GPs, its functionaries, standing committees, Pallisabha, local NGOs, women PRI members and the community at large. In its effort to bring about a change in the dynamics of relationship between the community and the institutions of local self-governance structures & systems have been reorganized & strengthened (For example, reorganization, orientation of the Standing Committees & development on monitoring formats for the Standing Committees).

Devolution of power to the PRIs with respect to Funds has not been realized and has remained within the confines of some of the pronouncements by the state government. In this context, it was felt that the PRI representatives as well as the community at large need to be trained on resource generation and convergence. During the project period, development of Activity Plan by each of the GPs with prioritization of creation of income generating assets has provided a broad guideline to the GPs to improve the fiscal domain.

It is understood that initiatives of the civil society organizations can't match the initiatives of the government in scale & outreach. Yet the intensity of engagement of the CSOs is comparatively better. Therefore, it is important that government administration is made a partner in the initiatives of the CSOs. In the context of the project, the

district administration has been made a partner in designing, execution & strategic planning.

Last but not the least, the project initiative has raised the stake among the community in effective functioning of the Panchayati Raj Institutions. Selection of Animators from among the community, awareness generation, formation of issue-based committees, formation of Social Audit Team and common action on different issues like; PDS, NREGS & Anti-liquor along with making the community acquainted with the terms of engagement through rally, mass meeting, public hearing, social audit, use of Right To Information (RTI) have imparted strength to sustainability. The potentialities & possibilities are mentioned below:

Structural & Operational	Financial
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PRIs & its functionaries are well equipped to play their changed role 2. Standing committees are capable of taking up their monitoring & support role. 3. Pallasabha & Gram Sabha are able to take decision by taking the help of micro plans developed. Particularly women are able to take up decision making and leadership role. 4. Trained volunteers/Animators will provide hand holding support to the PRIs at the time of need. 5. Renewed relationship between 3 tires (GP-PS-ZP) will help strengthening one another organically and resolute different conflict of interest. 6. Issue based advocacy committees are there to take up right based activities on a regular basis. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PRIs have developed separate fund raising plan by using their own resources and untied funds made available to them through dist administration under this project. 2. Micro plans attract convergence of funds from Govt. sources to meet ongoing developmental & social security activities.

Besides the opportunities inherited from this project, NIPDIT considers the need of further efforts to build upon the firm base on which sustainability of the programme will depend.

1. Repeat of CB events for different functionaries and committees of PRIs based on changing need.
2. Follow up of implementation of micro plans and bridging the gap.
3. Emphasis on total devolution of power at the grassroots level.
4. Annual support of untied funds to improve the fund base of PRIs.
5. Continuation of the process of social audit to ensure transparency & accountability.
6. Formulation of MLPs on term by term basis.
7. Replication of similar programmes in other blocks of the districts to create an environment of mutual learning & support.