

## INTERNSHIP REPORT

**Name:** Adarsh Kumar

**Duration of internship:** One Month (Dec 7<sup>th</sup> 2016 to Jan 7<sup>th</sup> 2017)

**Submitted on:** 11<sup>th</sup> Jan 2016

### WORK UNDERTAKEN

- Gram Panchayat Level Data collection and its consolidation for Bajiagaon Block
- Coordinated exposure visit of TSRLM at NizGerua GP Lahorighat
- Documentation of success stories and case studies at Lahorighat and Bajiagaon Block Assam

### REFLECTIONS

Write your responses to the following questions based on your field experiences during this internship. Each of your responses must not exceed 300 words.

#### **What is your understanding of the PRI-CBO Convergence project?**

- This project is a catalyst for the community-based solidarity which further strengthens democracy. This project is vital for the vertical and horizontal accountability. On one hand, this convergence made vulnerable and neglected aware about their rights and on another this has pulled poor out of the poverty trap. Convergence Project is a kind of special tree which does not need any kind of investment. All you need is willpower to intervene. Self-Reliance and community-based development practice are the basic foundation of this project, which aligns with the idea of Gram Swaraj of Mahatma Gandhi. This project has significantly changed the lives of poor people. Many have come out of chronic poverty, malnutrition, and caste & religion based discriminations. Although Indian federal structure provides plenty of scope for the convergence but due

to lack of consciousness said is not happening at various places. There remains the need of awareness among both the stakeholders (PRIs and CBOs).

**What is the impact and limitations of participatory tools/exercises?**

- During a month of my involvement with community-level organizations, I can strongly claim that participatory exercises are one of the most important tasks for the development of a community. This provides a sense of freedom to the beneficiaries to decide on their urgent public needs. Women who have always been threatened by patriarchy are breaking the monotony. Participatory tools have made people conscious of their rights and responsibility.

Participatory exercises were the important reason for community-based solidarity. Due to these practices, people have overcome caste and religion based discriminations, poverty, debt burden, and other social ills.

**What are your observations on how gender impacts the role played by women in public, political and private spheres?**

In this patriarchal society women always suffer until there is consciousness among them. An aware woman can benefit generations. At Bajiagaon and Lahorighat, the women have broken the gender stereotypes. Women who were never allowed to visit neighbor's house are solving the issues related to sanitation and water. Women who lost the hope to get mere recognition in the family are representing their village at the national level. Women's active participation in GP level politics has become a reason for local development. This project has promoted the equality between men and women.

**What are your observations on the significance of community organizations?**

- In the villages, Community-based organizations (CBOs) provides a sense of power among participants. CBOs have played a vital role in collective bargaining of women who molded the rigid local governance system according to their need. These organizations curtail corruption by constantly monitoring the work of institutions. During the early phases of development these organization can face threat by undemocratic people but as long as they have community-based solidarity they will definitely succeed. At Lahorighat and Bajiagaon Block of Morigaon and Nagaon district respectively same can be speculated.

**What is the relevance of conducting learning/exposure visits for other individuals/organizations?**

- By virtue of human being we have immense reasoning capabilities but if we'll not be updated with new development, we'll become rigid in our thinking. This rigidity blocks the way of creativity and development. So to avoid rigidity and to break the conventionality of the system/person there is need of exposure visit/excursion tour. These kinds of visit promote hands-on learning which has always been favored by the father of the nation.

**What are the challenges and opportunities associated with participatory governance at the Gram Panchayat level?**

- Participatory governance is important for democratic form of governance
- This reduces monopoly of individuals hence chances of corruption.
- The common problem is addressed swiftly and properly because of participatory governance.
- This reduces the monitoring cost of the project. But in small groups there remain chances of skewness due to dominant individuals. In past, some political parties have utilized the community for their political gains.

**How should one approach writing about local communities?**

- As a researcher/development practitioners there should not be any kind of alienation with the population. One should know that they are our image but with different privileges and powers. As an individual I have always interacted with the people in very general way as I do with my family members. This kind of interaction gave a sense of affinity with the people and responses by them were reliable. In the interaction we should not leave our moderator self who takes the conversation in fruitful direction because respondent can have several things in their mind. One should be ready with the questionnaire/interview guide while interacting with the people.

**What is your feedback to KS-NRO on its PRI-CBO Convergence project in Assam and its conduct of the learning visit for Tripura SRLM?**

- KS-NRO is catalyst for the development of poor and vulnerable. NRO's bottom-up approach of development is really working on ground which is commendable because many developing countries are struggling because there is no convergence between local institutions and people. PRI-CBO convergence in Assam has delivered best which can be speculated through the available data. This project has helped in economic,

social and political empowerment of women. This project has mobilised the group for the common good. The women who were limited to cooking and child caring are representing village in district and state level meeting with officials. This has happened due to this convergence. The project brought all women together and increased group based solidarity and affinity. During Tripura SRLM visit, presenters delivered their best; they were precise and crisp with their presentation on GP2RP, GPDP, VOCC, GPCC and other community level activities. While the exposure visit of TSRLM, there was minor issues/questions which I have observed are as following. These questions might have aroused due to logistics.

- The Tripura Team was exposed only to a majority GP, why not some other GPs who were not at par with the NizGerua.
- The Team had no written questionnaire/interview guide with them and only one or two team members asked the questions.