

KABIL – Annual Report for the Financial Year 2017-2018

We have successfully completed two projects this financial year, progressed with a unique initiative achieving fair outcome, continued supporting the North East Rural Livelihood Project, and negotiated with a major donor for a new upcoming project, which is now in an advanced stage of their consideration.

“Promotion of livelihoods for the disadvantaged of Eastern and North-Eastern India”, our first major project supported by the Tata Trusts that began in October 2014, got completed in September 2017. In Jharkhand we completed orientation training of nearly 500 Block Development Officers (BDOs) and Block Programme Officers - MGNREGA (BPOs) from all the 263 blocks in Integrated Natural Resource Management (INRM). The project with North East Rural Livelihood Project (NERLP) continues and we are now supporting them preparing community development plans in the State of Nagaland. Our new and ongoing initiative for individual livelihood asset creation using MGNREGS in Assam has had fair success. A new project, to promote livelihoods of 15,000 rural families in Udalguri district of Assam, is now in an advanced stage of processing by Axis Bank Foundation.

Promotion of livelihoods for the disadvantaged of Eastern and North-eastern India (supported by the Tata Trusts)

There were three broad activities (deliverables) of the project viz. establishing Kabil’s direct action team in Kamrup (Rural), demonstration of different irrigation models, and engagement with 10 selected NGOs for enhancement of their livelihood promotion capabilities.

As a result, a team of Kabil with members having long experience of direct implementation is now functioning with its base at Guwahati. The team steers various livelihood promotion initiatives of Kabil, provides know-how and do-how support (guided practice in the field) to partner NGOs and link them with government bodies and PRIs to draw support for livelihood promotion.

In the direct action project, a total of 349 individual irrigation systems using micro-lift devices have been piloted in farmers’ fields. One of the villages has been transformed to an almost irrigated village. In addition, irrigation systems have also been installed with the help of our partner NGOs in Karbi Anglong and Sonitpur districts.

Farmers have been provided exposure, followed by in-house training and on-field support on individual basis to enhance production. Several advanced irrigated farming activities have been demonstrated. These include off-season tomato cultivation, rain-shelter, vegetable nursery in thermocol containers and used plastic tea-cups, black pepper cultivation in arecanut plantation, betel leaf vine cultivation in arecanut plantation, improved arecanut plantation, and cultivation of Japanese *Koi* fish in homestead pond.

A group of farmers in Nahira village have been linked with Central Plantation Crop Research Institute (CPCRI), Kahikuchi Centre. The centre is providing them technical support for up-gradation of arecanut and black pepper plantation under irrigated condition.

To achieve the third deliverable of the project, we have worked with six newly established NGOs and four established ones. The new NGOs had initiated their livelihood activities when we started our interventions. They have intensified and expanded their livelihood portfolio

during the course of the project period. We have also learned the local context from them. In the course of our engagement with the established NGOs, they have strengthened their livelihood portfolio in terms of quality and quantity. Almost all of them are now engaged with our new initiative of individual livelihood asset creation using MGNREGS, across districts.

The Tata Trusts having adopted a new approach that emphasizes on direct action by them, a follow-up project could not be negotiated. However, they have informally communicated to us about their intention of associating us as a technical resource agency in their upcoming “Assam Initiative”.

Orientation training of BDOs and BPOs of Jharkhand

At the request of the Government of Jharkhand and with resources provided by them, Kabil conducted orientation training of nearly 500 BDOs and BPOs from all the 263 blocks of Jharkhand. Each orientation-training, of three days’ duration, consisted of principles and practices of integrated natural resources management in the context of MGNREGS. One full day was devoted to field visit. Altogether 15 training events were completed, the last one being in June 2017. Feedback collected from the participants on an anonymous basis spoke very high about the trainings. 91% of the participants rated the benefits from the training as either “very high” or “high”.

Jharkhand Government has now sought a proposal from Kabil to build capacity of project implementing organizations for creating INRM Pilot Villages Across Jharkhand and the proposal has been submitted. 105 villages will be transformed into “INRM pilot villages” in which different kinds of INRM interventions will result in harvesting of maximum rain-water and an agro-ecological transformation.

Project with North East Rural Livelihood Project (NERLP) for preparing community development plans (CDPs)

We have been working with NERLP, a World Bank financed programme of Government of India, since Kabil’s inception. Our first work was in Sikkim where we helped local communities prepare their community development plans. We also built the capacity of NERLP staff as well as functionaries of the project facilitating teams. Our current engagement with NERLP is on similar lines, in Tuensang district of Nagaland.

We have been negotiating with NERLP for extending our scope of work to “implementation support”. This is because planning alone is unlikely to result in proper implementation of the projects. Even though our outputs have been highly appreciated by NERLP, the negotiation process is being very tardy.

The new Initiative in MGNREGS Implementation in Assam

The group of NGOs, through the learning forum created under the project supported by the Tata Trusts, have remained engaged for the last two years to improve the quality of MGNREGS implementation and strengthen the natural resource management component of the scheme, particularly with reference to creation of water bodies as individual assets in the homesteads of small and marginal farmers.

There have been several breakthroughs and achievements by the end of December 2017:

Trainings were conducted for all junior engineers and assistant engineers (also chairpersons of Village Development Councils from Kokrajhar) from all blocks of 6 districts (viz. Kamrup Rural, Goalpara, Bongaigaon, Nalbari, Barpeta and Kokrajhar) on the process of inclusion of NRM based schemes in GPDP, preparation of estimates and labour budget. Following the request from Principal Secretary, Bodoland territorial autonomous districts (BTAD); trainings of block and GP level staff of all 4 BTADs on development of five-year perspective plan were conducted. Utilising the guidelines circulated by Govt. of Assam for the development of GPDP (*AAMAAR GAO AAMAAR ACHONI*), the NGOs have facilitated development of such plans in 30 villages under 10 development blocks of 7 districts (Kamrup-rural, Goalpara, Bongaigaon, Sonitpur, Kokrajhar, Chirang and West Karbi Anglong).

Aligning with the prescribed norms of ensuring 65% of NRM schemes in a GPDP, the NGOs facilitated to develop 610 NRM based schemes in 30 villages. The NGOs Supported block administration in estimating the budget as per the prescribed ratio of 60:40 of labour and material cost.

Out of 610 schemes submitted, 346 NRM related schemes have received technical sanction from the concerned authorities. Out of those 346 schemes, Geo-tagging for 51 NRM based schemes have been completed. 22 of the 51 schemes are under implementation. Some of these have been completed up to 50%.

It may be mentioned that this is a unique initiative not only in Assam but in the whole of North East.; worthy also to mention that we are greatly encouraged by the successes. On the other hand, there is no funding support for this initiative after the end of the Tata Trusts supported project. We have approached Azim Premji Foundation and thankfully, they have registered our request. Negotiations will follow.

New project expected in Assam

Axis Bank Foundation is in advanced stage of processing of our proposal for livelihood promotion of 15,000 rural families in the undivided Udalguri block of Udalguri district of Assam. The project is also expected to result in a tripartite collaboration between Assam State Rural Livelihoods Mission Society (ASRLMS), Axis Bank Foundation and Kabil, which is unique in the North East. ASRLMS has almost saturated Udalguri block with women's SHGs, village organizations, and cluster federations. Kabil is supposed to promote livelihoods of families that belong to SHGs.

The district of Udalguri was formed in 2004 as one of the four new districts (Kokrajhar, Baksa, Udalguri and Chirang) of Assam under the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC). The territory of the present district was earlier Udalguri sub-division of the undivided district of Darrang. BTC was created responding to the agitation for a separate state because the original inhabitants of the area, the Bodo tribe in particular, thought that they had been socially and economically marginalized.

Udalguri block had 44,856 households and population of 2.2 lakh as per Census 2011. 0.93 lakh among them belonged to scheduled tribe (ST). However, considering the fact that Santhals and other "tea tribes" (tribal people from Chhotanagpur who work in tea gardens) constitute a significant share of the population but are not counted among the scheduled tribe in Assam, the

actual number of tribal population would be significantly higher. Majority of the ST population in the block constitute of Bodo, Rabha and Garo tribes.

As per data compiled from the Socio-economic and Caste Census (SECC) 2011, Udalguri ranks 11th (out of 27 districts) in Assam in terms of percentage of households suffering from one or more deprivations and requiring interventions under government poverty alleviation programmes, indicating a measure of poverty. 56% of the households in Udalguri district require help for coming out of one or more deprivations. By that measure, Udalguri block is the poorest in Udalguri district (ranks first).

The proposed project envisages raising income of individual families to at least Rs. 75,000 per annum and heavily focuses on entrepreneurship development of families as well as service entrepreneurs, to be chosen from the local households.

The total outlay of the four-year project is Rs. 61.71 Crore, out of which Axis Bank Foundation is expected to bear Rs.8.9 Crore, essentially for Kabil's costs and livelihood capacity building of target households. The rest will be sourced from the target households, government programmes (notable MGNREGS) as well as financial institutions.

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