

## About I3S

This edition of I3S Newsletter will present a brief overview of the on-going development, under the Project entitled, 'Insights Into Indian States' (I3S). This is a new initiative of CUTS International, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), New Delhi. The main features of the Project are to create an interactive and user-friendly web portal, conducting action research, networking and advocacy and dissemination of the successful and not so successful practices adopted in the selected Central and State sponsored programmes and schemes of Rural Non-farm Sector (RNFS) for cross learning. The initiative commenced in October 2013 at four targeted States, i.e. Assam, Odisha, Rajasthan and Karnataka.

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*Under the Project 'Insights into Indian States' (I3S), several schemes related to the rural non-farm livelihood sector have been finalised for exploring the successful and not so successful practices in the four targeted states of India. During the previous quarter, programme management team with the support of state partner organisations visited all the four states and validated some of the selected schemes for further documentation. During the field work several places were visited and the identified practices, under the selected schemes were verified. These practices are being documented in a standardised format to be uploaded on I3S web portal. Some of the apprehended practices are briefly mentioned below:*

## Social Empowerment of Bodo Community through Livelihood Promotion

With the decline of militancy in Assam several non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and cooperative societies with the support from the Centre and State Government have taken up the huge task of bringing about a change. Bodo women weavers in the *Chatra Ghagrapar* village of Nalbari District of Assam have been happily working on silk looms that help them in contributing to their families' income. Earlier, they used to sell home-made liquor in their villages to earn money, as there were no other options of job and also they were not much educated. Moreover, there was social discrimination amongst the different communities. The transformation actually came when *Gramin Vikas Manch* (GVM), a small NGO provided them financial and technical support to set up the silk looms. They are, at present, quite confident being self-reliant and thus are able to contribute to their families' income and can afford to send their wards to schools. This new profession has changed the lives of many, who can earn their living by weaving and selling clothes.

GVM, which was established in 1999 and has been working for changing the lives of rural women in the region. It facilitates in setting up the looms initially and then provides the weavers a strong marketing base to sell their products both within and outside the state. GVM collaborates with the North-eastern Development Finance Corporation (NEDFi) through which loans are provided to foster the work of the weavers. In addition, GVM also helps the weavers in setting up stalls at various fairs.



Currently, the community women have also started their own NGO called 'Bagurumba Weaving Society'. "Their life has changed immensely and they earn their living by weaving. Their products are in great demand so there has been an increase in their income", said Prithibhusan Deka, President of GVM. There are nearly 85000 similar self-help groups that are operating in the region and engaged in different areas like agriculture, handloom, poultry, dairy, small food processing unit, bee keeping, cane and bamboo crafts and weaving involving a large number of rural people.

## Shanubhoganhalli: Innovative Means of Livelihood

**S**hanubhoganhalli is a popular name in Rural Development Department in Karnataka for its unique and innovative means of livelihood and non-farm initiatives taken up by local women of the village. The history of the SHGs of Shanubhoganhalli is of about 18 years or so. The initial SHGs were formed, under the government scheme of 'Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWACRA)', which were again reconstituted and strengthened, under SGSY (*Swanajayanti Grameen Swarojgar Yojana*) in 2006 and newly launched (2012) National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) implemented through *Zila panchayats* and 'Karnataka State Rural Livelihood Mission (KSRLM)'.

At present, the three SHGs have a membership of around 15 women each and are named as Sharada, Nandini and Chamundeshwari. Under the scheme, a federation in the name of Vandana was formed in which around 25 women work as regular staff and started producing pickle, *aggarbattis* (incense sticks), *papad* and also started awning (*shamiyana*) work. Local women also go to work in local confectionery shops for preparing sweets and other eateries during festival seasons as well. The women of this village belong to *Periyar, Vokkaliga, Gawda and Acharya* communities mainly.

The SHGs produce all the products in the name of the cluster (Vandana brand), which is very famous in nearby locality. Raw material is produced by the SHGs from Bangalore and Mysore. Most of the production is done manually and the products are sold in the nearby markets, Mysore, traditional fairs and festivals etc. A common facilitation centre was constructed by the SHGs from where they carried out their work. The average income of every member is around ₹2500 to ₹3000 per month. And their average working hours are around three to four hours a day of a woman member as in the remaining time they are engaged in the household chores, animal husbandry, child rearing etc.



## Baripada: A Unique Venture to Boost the Financial Status

**B**aripada is the headquarter of Mayurbhanj district, which comprises 26 blocks. In the recent years, Baripada town has been growing very rapidly with the expansion of government offices and marketing companies. Yet the simple lifestyle and financial limitations of the indigenous tribal community, particularly, women folks have limited scope for development. At such a juncture, the District Supply and Marketing Society (DSMS) functioning under Orissa Rural Development and Marketing Society (ORMAS) and DRDA, Baripada, took a bold step to pull out a group of women for greater involvement in catering service. Prior to this, an initial assessment was done on the basis of day to day requirement of meals/tiffins, and providing hygienic and delicious food at an affordable price within the premises of DRDA, Baripada and around.

Finally, it was started in March, 2014. DSMS, Baripada, utilising the support from ORMAS developed a well equipped kitchen attached with a modernised dining hall. In the initial phase, the women were duly trained by a professional group of trainers from Mayfair Hotel, Bhubaneswar, which is undoubtedly a premier group of hotel in the state. The women underwent training on how to cook delicious food, art of communicating with the customers and hospitality skills. The training was quite successful as was evident from their performance. After 3 months, the net financial profit had gone up from ₹2000 in the first month to more than ₹30,000 in May, 2014.



The women are procuring grocery and other related items on their own, assessing profit and maintaining the whole system, which is highly appreciated by the concerned officials and also by the outsiders. They are also expanding their endeavours to the block level where there are review and awareness generation meetings at regular intervals. In the coming days, they would be taking catering orders on occasions like marriages, public functions, birthdays and other ceremonies. There is an ambitious plan to enhance the involvement of women in catering at

different block headquarters of the district by capacitating and putting in action more such like-minded groups.

These women have explored their own way towards better life that would be free from financial dependence and a sense of insecurity. Support of ORMAS has given them a ray of hope to fulfill their dreams and inspire others. What they require is to learn financial management, acquire professionalism in catering, planning and execution of skills with team spirit.

## Kota Doriya: A Prominent Handloom

One of the most prominent handloom clusters in Rajasthan is the Kota Doria cluster, where over 3000 weaver families are reportedly engaged in producing Kota Doria fabric for sarees, dress material and home furnishing products. Out of these weavers, 80 percent are women, traditionally rooted in villages in and around Kota. It has a particular culture with about 70 percent of those involved in the chain, practicing Islam, and mostly belong to the Ansari weaver's community.

Kota Doria fabric consists of cotton and silk yarn woven in different combinations in warp and weft, so that they produce square check patterns. This check pattern is popularly known as *khat*, and is the distinct feature of the fabric, which gives it transparency. This unique characteristic of the Doria fabric produced on handloom prompted the Kota Doria Development Hadauti Foundation (KDHF) to apply for a Geographical Indication (GI) with the help of United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO). The application was successful and Kota Doria was granted a GI in July 2005, under the Geographical Registration Act 1999.



## Action Research Under I3S

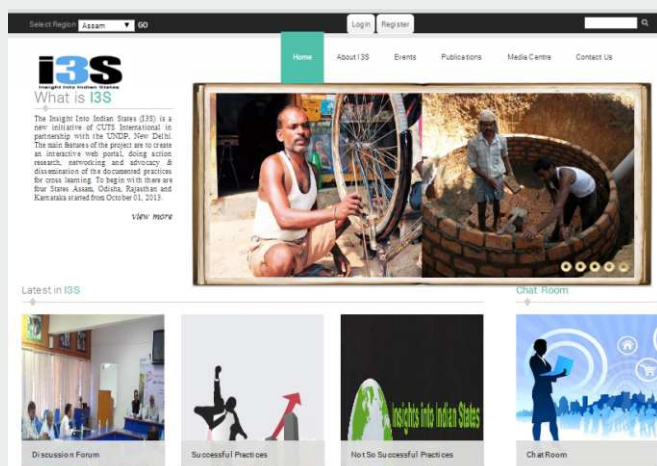
I3S team members including the state partners visited various places for collecting the cases or practices, under the identified schemes of rural non-farm sector. Several cases and practices have been identified and validated by the team by visiting the field in all the four targeted states.

Out of these 15 practices validated in rural non-farm livelihood in Rajasthan, 12 are of handicraft and three of the vocational training sector respectively. Further, eight are of handloom, weaving and embroidery sector, viz. carpet weaving of *Lawan*, *Namda* sheets of Tonk, *Kota Doria*, hand-block printing of Bagru, *Kashidakari* of Barmer, *Aari-tari* of Nayla, Terracotta pottery of Pokhran and the Blue-pottery of Jaipur and one each is specifically of hand-made leather products and brassware carving respectively.

Thus, seven districts of Rajasthan have been covered to validate the livelihood practices in the non-farm sector. Arti Pandey Tiwari and Varidhi Singh of CUTS made these visits. Madhu Sudan Sharma of CUTS visited Karnataka during May 19-23, 2014. He visited several places in Mysore and covered practices, such as terracotta, jewellery, fancy items of *dorra* and stone, *zari*, etc.

Under the Action Research, visit of Assam state was done by Amar Deep Singh of CUTS accompanied by Manjit Mahanta, Omeo Kumar Das Institute of Social Change and Development (OKDISCD) on June 02-07, 2014. Four specific cases of four different agencies and organisations were covered during the visit. Focused group discussions with beneficiaries in the field, interviews with concerned officials of implementing organisations and others were conducted during the visits.

## About I3S Web Portal



Web portal of the I3S, under the domain [i3s.net.in](http://i3s.net.in) is being updated on a regular basis with the relevant resources, materials and media coverage. A Facebook page 'Insight into Indian States – Rural Non-farm Livelihood' has been created and linked with the web portal. About 80 persons have liked this page. There are 232 members in the subscribers' list. Discussions have been initiated by the team in which members actively take part. Several media coverage related to rural non-farm are posted on the portal for reference of the visitors. In addition, a Twitter account has also been created, under I3S, which will be linked with web portal shortly. Relevant news and other updates will also be shared on the twitter account.



## In Media

### Implementation of Skill Based Programmes for Rural Youth

**V**ellore: Applications are invited from eligible training institutions to implement skill and placement programmes for the rural poor youth, under the *Aajeevika* Skills programme. Aajeevika Skills is an integrated component of the National Rural Livelihood Mission that essentially caters to the placement linked skill development of rural youth having poor economic background.

The Tamil Nadu State Rural Livelihood Mission (TNSRLM) has been recognised as a national resource organisation for skill and placement, which has ample experience in spearheading placement linked skill development. The candidate institutions or project implementing agencies (PIA) should be registered, under an Indian trust act or state society registration act/state cooperative societies or multi-state cooperative act or under the companies act, and should be approved by the government.

The educational institutions having their own or leased land with buildings, could also be considered. The PIA's willing to apply for the projects have to register at <http://aajeevikaskills.gov.in> and should get a permanent registration number (PRN).  
(*The New Indian Express*, 31.05.14)

### Built to Empower Women, *Mahila Haat* Now Lies Neglected

**S**ituated in the heart of the city, an ambitious Project that aimed to combine women empowerment with a unique shopping experience lies in shambles. The North Delhi Municipal Corporation's *Mahila Haat* was meant to provide cheap and centrally located retail space to women artisans and entrepreneurs. But a year-and-a-half after being inaugurated amidst many celebrations, the space is now in a mess.

To begin with, finding the *Mahila Haat* is a task in itself. After asking around, visitors are dissuaded by hawkers and parking attendants in the vicinity. "Why do you want to go to that '*khandhar*' (ruin)? There are only dogs roaming around there", said a parking attendant when 'The Hindu' visited them. The approach to the *Haat* (market) is unmarked and crowded by small *dhabas* (restaurants), with employees and patrons passing comments at women going by. Instead of women's empowerment, the *Mahila Haat's* have ended up causing harassment.  
(*The Hindu*, 30.05.14)

### 'Access to Funds, Big Challenge for Women Entrepreneurs'

**M**icrofinance institution, *Bandhan*, which has recently been given the go-ahead to set up a bank, has an old supporter, International Finance Corporation (IFC), keen to participate in its expansion plans for rural India. With a committed portfolio in India at \$4.5bn, IFC is keen to assist more banks to offer products tailor-made for women entrepreneurs, given the immense potential in gender finance. Karin Finkelston, Vice-President, Asia Pacific, International Finance Corporation (IFC), World Bank Group, is eager to tap the huge potential of 30 lakh micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), with full or partial female ownership in India.  
(*The Hindu BL*, 15.05.14)

### Builders Demand Separate Ministry for Construction Sector

**W**ith the demand for skilled workers set to nearly treble by 2020, the construction industry wants a separate Ministry both at the Union and the State level to address the issues affecting the sector. The construction industry, which employs about 10mn skilled workers now, would require at least 30mn such workers by 2020, said S K Basu, President of Builders' Association of India (BAI). The construction industry would require 55-60mn workers by 2020, he said.

"We have to run from pillar to post when there is a problem. There is nobody to take care of our needs. We need a separate Ministry or department", Basu said. Stating that the construction industry has the second largest workforce (35mn) after agriculture in the country and it also ranked second in contribution to GDP (gross domestic product), he said that they still have to work with various government departments and Ministries. "Steel and mining are tiny industries compared to construction in employment and gross turnover. But they still have separate Ministries", Basu, said. The share of skilled workers in the overall workforce is less than 50 percent at present and the aim is to increase it to 65 percent by 2020, he added.  
(*Times of India*, 04.05.14)