

# INSIGHT INTO INDIAN STATES (I3S)

## Action Research Methodology

### 1. 'Insight Into Indian States (I3S)' Project Overview and Objectives

'Insight Into Indian States (I3S)' is an innovative initiative of CUTS in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), New Delhi under implementation in the selected four States (Assam, Odisha, Rajasthan and Karnataka) starting from October 1, 2013.

The main feature of this Project is to develop a user friendly, sustainable and interactive web portal where State specific validated successful and not so successful practices of Rural Non-farm Livelihood Sector (RNFLS) will be ideated, debated and shared.

### 2. Significance of I3S initiative

The project proposes to depict successful and not so successful practices on Rural Non-Farm Livelihood (RNFL) in selected States of India using standardised metadata, controlled vocabularies and qualified sources. The aim of the portal would be to present an *independent and dispassionate* view of policies and practices and conduct action research in RNFL sector which can help other States to imbibe and improve their own policies and practices and learn from each other.

The learning will be facilitated by online exchanges, dialogues, webinars and exposure visits with an expected outcome of knowledge enhancement of the selected States' actors and project beneficiaries, through dissemination of action research results on the portal. It will be different than other portals (mostly operated by government agencies), because of the very nature of the portal which will be operated by a non-government organization on a dynamic basis.

The project beneficiaries will include policymakers, legislators, media persons, academicians, researchers, inter-governmental organisations and governments. The activities during the project will broadly include action research, dissemination and networking.

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1 Target Group

There are various key stakeholders and the target groups of the Project. First target group will comprise all the policy makers and Government Officials who are directly in charge of implementing the selected livelihood programmes at state in four states and central government level so this group can be called as Government practitioners. Second group of targeted practitioners are belonging to Civil Society Organisations (CSOs/NGOs) working on RNFL and facilitating the implementation process at grassroots level.

Third set of target group will be academic and research institutes which are researching on livelihood programmes and issues at state and national level in the country. Fourth and important target group is all the potential beneficiaries who may be an individual or in a group under any of the selected central and state run programmes/schemes of

RNFLS. Fifth and final target group is national, state and local media persons who are reporting and writing on the livelihood issues.

### **3.2 Targeted Schemes and Programmes**

In all the selected states, action research will be focused on three types of programmes and initiatives related to Rural Non-Farm Livelihood Sector (RNFLS).

- 1) Centrally sponsored programmes/schemes.
- 2) State sponsored programmes/schemes.
- 3) Projects/activities of CSOs/NGOs/Research and Academic Institutes.

### **3.3 Sources of Information**

To carry out the research, information will be collected from various secondary and primary sources. The main source of secondary information would be concerned Departments and Ministries of Central and State Governments respectively while primary source will be beneficiaries of the targeted projects and Government and Non-government programmes implementers. So information from all the key informants will be captured.

### **3.4 Review of the Programme/Scheme**

There will be thorough review of the selected programmes, schemes or practices and related literature, so that the researcher is aware about its context, background and current status. Relevant data of past and current indicators related to practice, financial overview, social- economic, occupational details, beneficiaries' number, average income, geographical spread and results achieved has to be necessarily captured.

Review of the already published research reports and evaluations will be done and findings and inferences will be used. Review of the structure of implementing organisational will be done. Review of the formal and informal powers at various levels which are influencing and affecting the results and initiative will be done. Review of institutional linkages will be done throughout the value chain. Community need assessment of the intervention and practices.

### **3.5 Tools Used**

Semi-structured questionnaires will be used for capturing the data of various types of stakeholders and respondents and mainly qualitative research methods would be used. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Personal Interviews will be the main qualitative tools.

### **3.6 Techniques**

Selection of the schemes of RNFLS based on specified criteria



Primary data collection of the budget, activities, entitlements, beneficiaries, outcome and impact of the scheme for last five years using structured format through visiting concerned Departments/NGOs



**Review of** the already published research reports and evaluations, structure of implementing organisation, formal and informal powers at various levels, institutional linkages, Community need assessment of the intervention and practices etc. will be done.



Meeting Government Officials/Grassroot NGOs at district level to gather in-depth information on the practises through facilitating FGDs/ In-depth Interviews (IDIs) using defined guidelines and check list



Identifying practices responsible for high and low performance in the selected schemes



Meeting direct beneficiaries and facilitating FGDs/IDIs using the guidelines and check list



Preliminary data analysis and validating the successful and not so successful practises using *GREESS Model* and sharing it with the concerned departments/institutes



Preparing case stories of successful and not so successful practises with consolidating facts



Discussion and dissemination of the successful and not so successful practises

**3.7 Guidelines and check list** will cover the following major categories:

- Historical aspect of the programme/schemes particularly districts/areas where things will be covered, according to the required acceptance/ownership
- Context Analysis where enabling and disabling factors will be focused
- Management of Departments/Institutes/NGOs etc.
- Management/implementation of programmes/schemes
- *5 W & 2 H*
- *GREESS Model*

#### **4. Why and How**

- **Why:** Why such programmes/schemes are there, need of such programmes, reason behind selection of beneficiary etc.
- **Where:** The place of implementation of programme, from where raw material will come, etc.

- **When:** When the programme started, when any modification/innovation took place, etc.
- **What:** What local resources are available and what not, what facility the beneficiaries are getting, what is the final product, what is the turn over, what problems/challenges in the programme/schemes, etc.
- **Who and Whom:** who all are funding, who are facilitating, who is the decision maker for selection of beneficiary, for whom the programme is made, who is raw material provider etc.
- **How:** The whole process of making final product, how it is transferred to other areas/clusters, etc.
- **How many:** Magnitude, quantity, human resources, beneficiaries (earlier and current) etc.

## 5. GREESS Model

- **Gender Equity:** Any specific policy/provision for women
- **Relevance:** How the practise is relevant to the programme/schemes, local resources etc.
- **Effectiveness:** Cost effectiveness will also be considered.
- **Efficiency and Impact:** Considering time taken to uplift the social and economic status of rural vulnerable people.
- **Sustainability:** How many beneficiaries are still connected with the programmes, how much increase in the number of beneficiaries etc.?
- **Scalability:** Whether seen practises has been used to uplift the livelihood of rural population within the district/state. To check the possibility of replicating the practices.

### 5.1 Guideline for each indicator of GREESS

- **Gender Equity:** Any specific policy/provision for women
  - In built provisions for gender equity in the policy, programme or scheme.
  - Participation of the women in the planning and decision making process.
  - Number of beneficiaries of the scheme or programme.
  - Income generation, Economic emancipation and impact on their life
  - Strategies adopted for women participation in decision making and other processes.
  - Challenges faced in gender mainstreaming if any.
- **Relevance:** How the practise is relevant to the programme/schemes.
  - The extent up to which the objectives of the practice are valid for the beneficiaries.
  - The extent up which the activities and outputs are consistent with the overall goal and the attainment of its objectives for the beneficiaries.
  - The extent up which the activities and outputs of the practice are consistent with the intended impacts and effects for the beneficiaries.

- Contribution or value addition for the beneficiaries
- **Effectiveness:** Cost effectiveness will also be considered.
  - The extent to which the objectives are achieved or likely to be achieved.
  - What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?
  - Usage of the locally available resources and skills at optimum level
- **Efficiency and Impact:** Considering the quality and time taken to uplift the socio-economic status.
  - The extent to which results are delivered in a cost effective manner for beneficiaries and management both.
  - The extent to which results are achieved on time in a most efficient way compared to alternative ways.
  - Impact on quality of life and overall family background
  - Impact on social status, economic viability and education
  - How many people have been affected?
- **Sustainability:** How many beneficiaries are still connected with the programmes and since how long?
  - Overall viability and significance of the practice
  - To what extent did the benefits of a programme or project continue after donor funding ceased? Number of years from the practice is in use.
  - Strategies adopted for sustainability of all the key backward and forward linkages or processes and skill up gradation
  - Challenges faced in sustainability of any of the processes forward and backward, if any.
- **Scalability:** To check the possibility of replicating the practices.
  - Potential of expanding the intervention geographically and numerically and enabling factors
  - Number of beneficiaries and geographical spread is on the rise or fall
  - Serious challenges if any in the process of scalability

## **6. Innovations in the processes of the value chain and others**

All the new and innovative practices adopted in the case will be reviewed, listed and documented. These innovative practices must be unique or new in itself with the proven results and impact created upon the target groups. Every innovative practice will be documented with its methodology and implementation process as well.

## **7. Dissemination Plan**

The researched cases will be disseminated among the community of practices of Rural Non-farm Livelihood sector through face to face meetings and interactions and through web portal based activities, discussions and interfaces etc.