

About I3S

Welcome to first edition of I3S Newsletter, which 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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Positive Criticism to Enhance the Quality of Programmes

I3S Project is going to carry out critical analysis of the some of the schemes, under the RNFS, is a unique initiative and positive criticism always helps to improve the quality of programme, said Subir Kumar (IAS), Mission Director, State Rural Livelihoods Mission (SRLM). He was delivering the inaugural address as the chief guest of Rajasthan State Inception Meeting of I3S Project organised by CUTS at Jaipur on December 12, 2013. He mentioned that there is a need to focus on skill development other than education to



promote the livelihood sector. Suggestions and comments emerged out of such studies should be very specific, so that corrective measures can be taken accordingly.

Ritu Mathur, Programme Analyst, UNDP mentioned that with the economic growth, inequality is also escalating. Capacity building of the people in livelihood sector is required and monitoring of public schemes is important. People are not aware of their rights and entitlements, which is also a reason for poor implementation. This project will take cases from four states of Rajasthan, which will be a good learning experience. George Cheriyan, Director CUTS said that the idea behind I3S is to map RNFS and set an interactive web portal in place.

M. L. Mehta, Former Chief Secretary of Rajasthan opined that employment is a great challenge for any government and not being able to provide jobs to the people, that is why emphasising on livelihood is need of the hour. Agriculture is not a profitable sector and people are relocating to other sectors. T. S. Raji Gain of National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development (NABARD); Jyotsana Bhardawaj of State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD) and K. L. Paliwal of Rural Non-Farm Development Agency (RUDA) shared their views.

Scope of Intervention Areas

After the formation of project management team, scoping visits were made in October 2013 in all the four states, i.e. Karnataka (October 16-18), Odisha (October 21-22) Assam (October 28-30) and Rajasthan (October 09-31). The team visited various key stakeholders, including government departments, agencies and organisations working on rural livelihood sector. Signing of MoA with state partners was also done during the scoping mission.

Future Course of Action

After the finalisation of state partner organisations, partners meet was one of the key activities, to bring all Project partners on one platform to discuss and decide the future course of action and to enhance research and programmatic knowledge and skills. Monjit Borthakur, Omeo Kumar Das Institute for Social Change and Development (OKDISCD), Guwahati; Seema Gupta, Centre for Youth and Social Development (CYSO), Bhubaneswar; Sreedharan, Public Affairs Centre (PAC), Bangalore; and Arti Pandey Tiwari, CUTS CART, Jaipur represented the partner organisations from selected states.



George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS International welcomed the participants and spoke about the scenario of RNFS in India. Madhu Sudan Sharma of CUTS presented an overview of the project. Narendra S Sisodia (Ret. IAS), Chairman, Centre for Micro Finance narrated the success story of Antyodaya Yojana, which was purely a non-farm sector programme launched in 1974 for upliftment of rural households of Rajasthan by providing them sustainable livelihood options.

Rajesh Jain, Vice President, ACCESS Development Services spoke about RUDA, which was formed in 1997, under the State Industry Department for promoting RNFS livelihoods in Rajasthan. Neetu Purohit, Associate Professor, Indian Institute of Health Management Research, Jaipur facilitated a session on qualitative research tools and techniques. Representatives of all states also delivered presentation about their organisation, State and RNFS, Project scoping, relevant departments and their schemes.

State Inception Meetings

Exclusivity of the North-East

There is a need to emphasise upon understanding the North-east and its uniqueness before embarking upon any study or project that has been implemented elsewhere in the country, said Manjula Saikia Bhuyan, Additional Director, Department of Industry and Commerce, Assam while delivering the inaugural session of Assam State inception workshop of IIS Project. She also mentioned that understanding the tribal culture and their traditional means of livelihood, especially non-farm livelihood activities are very significant.

OKDISCD in collaboration with CUTS organised the inception workshop at Guwahati, Assam on December 03, 2013. Monjit Borthakur, Assistant Professor, OKDISCD imparted the welcome address and presented RNFS scenario of Assam. Madhu Sudan Sharma of CUTS International gave a presentation on the rationale of the study to be launched. Bhupen Sarmah, Director, OKDISCD provided insightful comments in the capacity of the Chair.

Joydeep Baruah chaired the session in which presentations were made by the representatives of NABARD, Assam Centre for Rural Development, Centre for Microfinance and Livelihood, Centre for Environment and Social Research and Action Aid made their presentations on their organisational activities and the prevailing practices of governance in Assam and North-east India.



Dissemination of Innovative Technologies

For promoting RNFS in the State there is need to focus on assessment and use of locally available raw material, consider the local consumption patterns, promotion of local skills and develop effective market strategies. Innovative technologies are required to disseminate through the web portal and other means, said Prakash, Joint Director, KSRLP. He delivered inaugural address in Karnataka state inception meeting organised by Public Affairs Centre jointly with CUTS at Bangalore on December 05, 2013 and described the non-farm sector as 4Ms (Men, Machines, Materials and Markets).



Public Affairs Centre jointly with CUTS organised Karnataka state inception workshop at Bangalore, on December 05, 2013. The workshop saw the presence of various state agencies like the Karnataka SRLM, Abdul Nazir Sab, SIRD, NABARD, non-governmental organisations, individuals working in the field of non-farm livelihoods and representatives from enterprises like Mother Earth that promotes and market rural crafts. The workshop focused on the discussions related to Non-farm Livelihoods in Karnataka

Raghavan Suresh, Director, PAC welcomed the participants and George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS International spoke about the rural non-farm livelihood issue in the country. Amit Anand, UNDP Programme Officer spoke about knowledge gaps at various levels in the country and importance of the intervention, such as I3S to filling this gap.

P. Shiva Shankar, Director, SIRD shared his experience as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Dakshina Kannada district and how the water supply system of the region was documented as the best practice by the World Bank and is now being followed all over the country.

Prof. Sriram of Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore stated that diversification of livelihoods is the major cause for moving out of poverty as it reduces the vulnerability of the people, which would lead to reduction of poverty in the longer run. Representatives from NABARD, Institute for Social and Economic Change, SRLM, Grassroots Research and Advocacy Movement, Mysore and Industries Foundation were the panellists in the discussion.

Promoting Non-Farm Livelihood Sector

User-friendly interface would display the success stories as well as the critical gaps of the intervention programmes in the RNFS, said Prof. Anup Kumar Dash, Professor in Sociology, Utkal University Odisha and Board Member, Centre for Youth and Social Development (CYSD). He formally inaugurated the Odisha State Inception Meeting of I3S project. He mentioned that with such a mechanism, success stories could be shared and also replicated in other areas. CYSD in partnership with CUTS organised Odisha state inception at Bhubaneswar on December 10, 2013.

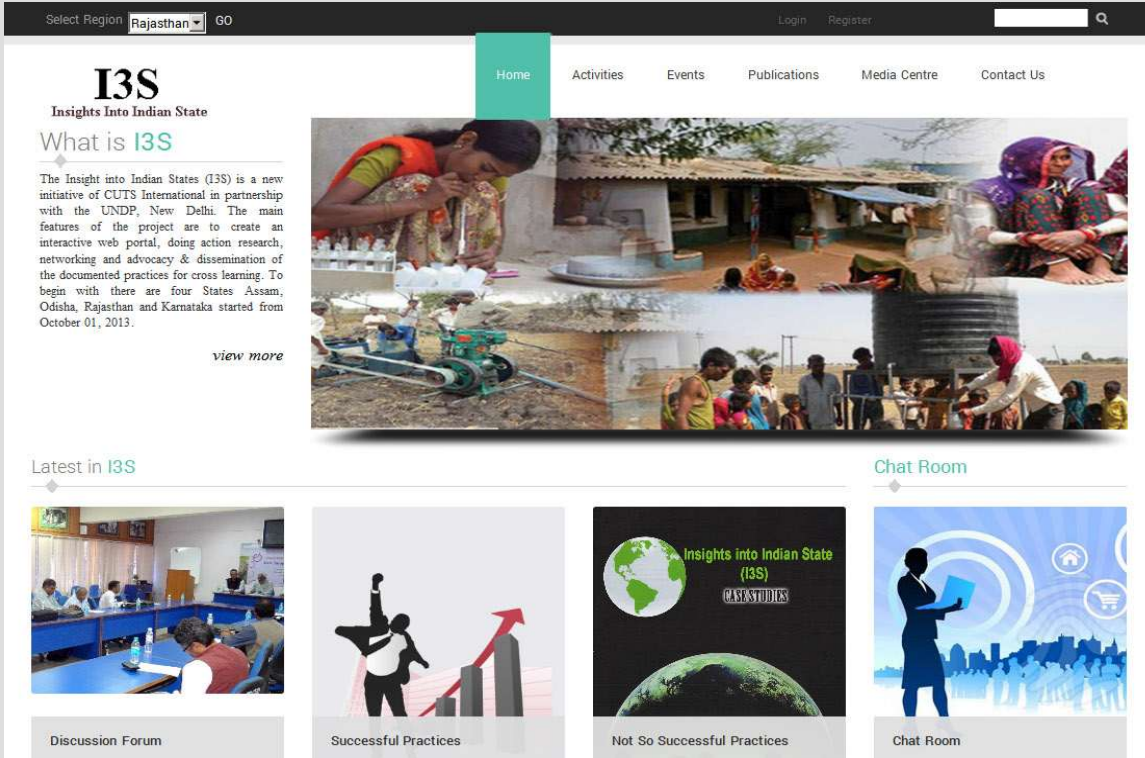
Sri Jagadananda, Former State Information Commissioner figured out the crucial disconnects between the schemes and the target group for whom such schemes aim at. Ambika Prasad Nanda, State Programme Officer, UNDP addressed the meeting and mentioned that there is a paradigmatic shift from the welfare-based employment schemes to the capacity building programmes in the RNFS.

Seema Gupta, CYSD commenced the panel discussion by providing an overview of the RNFS scenario in Odisha. M. C. Sahu, AGM, NABARD; K. K. Jha, Deputy Chief Executive, Orissa Rural Development and Marketing Society; D. Nandy, Deputy Director, Directorate of Textiles and Handloom; and Abdul Hai, Odisha Bamboo Development Agency shared their experiences and briefed about various ongoing programmes and schemes undertaken by their respective agencies in Odisha.



I3S Web Portal

Under I3S project, an interactive web portal is now on air with the domain name www.I3S.net.in. This is a platform for knowledge and experience sharing. There will be an interactive discussion forum, chat online along with many resources. Members and subscribers will get regular alerts for latest updates. Facebook and LinkedIn links will also be available. Website can be visited for more details.



In Media

