

Annual Report for the Year 2018-2019

Visionaries of Creative Action for Liberation and Progress

VICALP

VICALP (Visionaries of Creative Action for Liberation and Progress) is a voluntary organization actively working in the rural areas of Odisha since 1995. It has been promoting community-based development activities in the districts of Gajapati, Kndhamal, and Ganjam on a regular basis and occasionally implementing time bound projects in the districts of Jharsuguda, Jajput, etc. VICALP is registered at Chatrapur, Ganjam in 1995 as a society under the Societies Registration Act of 1860. It is also registered under the FCRA and exempted from taxes under 12A of the Income Tax Act. The main target communities of VICALP are the Dalits, tribals, Other backward casted and the rural poor.

VISION:

The Visionaries of Creative Action for Liberation & Progress (VICALP) seeks for the all round and sustainable development of Adivasis, Dalits and the poor people by addressing poverty, and inequality thereby promoting social justice, equality, cooperation, human rights and communal harmony. VICALP recognizes and affirms a commitment to positive and collaborative action and the possibility for social change through activation of our constitutional rights, freedoms and responsibilities.

MISSION:

Our mission is to partner with the poor, marginalized and excluded communities in Odisha to promote and facilitate collective and creative actions towards ensuring their rights and entitlements, generation of sustainable inclusive development and growth of communal harmony; and collaborate with civil society organizations for working together towards socio-economic empowerment of partner communities.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Promoting socio-cultural education, to uncover the societal structural basis of the continued marginalization of adivasi, dalit and poor communities;
- 2) Promoting the development of people's organized positive activism and collective assertion of equal rights to land, water, forest and livelihoods in the scheduled areas as per constitutional guarantees enshrined in the fifth schedule;
- 3) Promoting the development of coalitions between community organizations, other marginalized social groups, civil society, and NGOs in the interests of protecting and promoting constitutional rights and safeguards for rural marginalized communities.
- 4) Providing facilitative support for local livelihood based development activities and entrepreneurs that are consistent with the communities' conceptions of culture, economy, and progress;

5) Promoting land claim under FRA, land associated activities such as agriculture based livelihood promotion, organic and eco-friendly agriculture promotion, and promotion of horticultural activities among the excluded communities;

6) Promoting children's education in relation to child attendance, retention, completion of high school, and linking with need based vocational trainings;

7) Activating mother and child health services and promoting sanitation, health and hygiene with special attention to the adolescents' health needs;

PARTNER COMMUNITIES:

VICALP's target communities are basically the rural poor living in the scheduled districts and rural areas; and they happen to be the Adivasis, Dalits, OBCs and the general poor. These communities live as traditional neighbors and natural allies for centuries and this historical 'living together' has manifested itself in their inter-dependence in economic life, affinity in socio-cultural behavior, values and belief system, customs and traditions. Moreover they have seen each others as supporters, friends in need, collaborators in individual and community actions, and advisors to each other in times of struggle, strife and crisis. These communities are located at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder and have been subjected to centuries of economic marginalization and social exclusion. Till date these communities live a life of abject poverty with comparatively higher rates of maternal and infant mortality, and deprivations.

Major Activities Undertaken in the preceding Years

From 1995, the inception years onwards VICALP undertook several developmental activities and they are part of its historical journey people centric development approach. Some of the major activities are described below:

Food Security and Land development: VICALP in partnership with HELP, Canada, began an initiative in just 30 villages in 1998 and over more than 18 years it has spread itself into 150 village communities with wider and growing levels of collaboration and cooperation among communities and peoples. The partnership has worked to enhance Food Security of the communities by developing 150 community grain-banks, vegetable gardens by 4700 small holding families, millet cultivation in 3000 plus acres of land, and fruits orchards in 53 villeges; and ensuring food-grain supply by 8 PDS outlets owned by women's groups. This partnership has also helped the communities in collective and individual land claims by 5000 plus families and forest land entitlements of 10,000 plus acres of land by more than 3000 households in the districts of Gajapati and Kandhmal under land and forest land rights Acts. It has helped the communities to develop their land and put them into regular cultivation and use.



VICALP-Ekta Abhiyan (in collaboration with HELP Canada):

VICALP founded Ekta Abhiyan people's campaign with the help of HELP, Canada which has become the cornerstone in all our activities. Ekta Abhiyan was promoted for promoting communal harmony. Along with peace and livelihood restoration in the districts of Kandhamal and Gajapati riot during 2007 - 2008, Ekta Abhiyan is actively involved in ensuring rights, entitlements and basic services to the marginalized and socially excluded communities.



Centre for Research and Development Solidarity (CRDS):

VICALP has promoted a research institution named "Centre for Research and Development Solidarity"-CRDS, with an aim to carry out research studies concerning indigenous communities, their existential and emerging issues, with a special focus on their cultural identity, the struggles and efforts against numerous odds and obstacles in the process of preserving their societies, and in transition from one socio-political economic situation to the other, throughout their journey historically.

Vocational Skill Development for tribal-dalit youth in south Odisha-India

VICALP initiated market relevant employment oriented skills training in 2014 at Mohana in the district of Gajapati-Odisha. To begin with 75 youth (both male and female) were enrolled from excluded and marginalized tribal and dalit communities, and were facilitated to undergo placement guaranteed vocational skill training on masonry, electronics and electrician trades. After the training the trainees were assisted in placement in appropriate industries and private organizations.



Inclusive Economic Development –IED (Scottish Govt./CA:2011- 2017):



VICALP in collaboration with Christian Aid, New Delhi and Scottish Govt. International Development Fund, UK, implemented a project titled Inclusive Economic Development (IED) involving 3000 plus smallholding turmeric farmers from 29 tribal and Dalit villages of Daringibadi block in Kandhaml, Odisha. The project organized the turmeric farmers and promoted advanced agricultural practices through capacity building and input support. The beneficiary farmers were organized into Common Interest Groups (CIGs) leading towards registered farmers producers’ company named as “Jaiva Jeevan Producer

Company Ltd. (JJPCL)”, along with a small scale industry named “Jaiva Jeevan Agri-Enterprise”.

Poorest Area Civil Society Program (PACS), 2011-2017:

VICALP with the support of DFID/Christian Aid has initiated poorest area civil society program in September 2011. VICALP, through a 4 member NGO network process, and implemented this program covering 23000 rural poor household in 396 villages in 3 blocks in Kandhmal and 4 blocks in Jharsuguda district of Orissa. The basic thrust of the project was to achieve the Millennium Development Goal in its operational villages through ensuring livelihood rights (land, forest, MGNREGS and IGP including ensuring entitlement) and ensuring basic service provision to the target beneficiaries. The PACS project helped VICALP to undertake campaign on ensuring enrolment in Rastriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) in 1200 plus villages in 3 districts, implementing community forest rights in 394 villages including entitlements for other traditional forest dwellers and budget tracking under SCSP and TSP through special package programs.



Shakti Varta Programme: From May 2014 to April 2016 VICALP implemented a project titled **Shakti Varta** in collaboration with IPE Global, in Gajapati and Jharsuguda districts covering 12 blocks. It was a DFID aided Government of Odisha convergence program, where the government departments such as Women and Child development, Health and Family Welfare and Rural Development implemented their departmental development programs through Mission Shakti/ICDS and WSHGs.

Peace building and Conflict transformation:



VICALP has been working in Peace Building and Conflict Resolution as partner NGO of SWAD which started in January 2016 and is on going. The operational villages of this program are: 1. Tanglipadra 2. Kendupada 3. Keshra 4. Kerakhal 5. Putulipanka 6. Hichhagandhi 7. Kristopur 8. Badamalei 9. Koithapada 10. Belopada, under P Govindpur GP of Mohana block in the district of Gajapati. The main focus of the intervention is to reestablish communal harmony in the 2007/08 riot affected area and to ensure

historical traditional alliance among marginalized ethnic communities. The project also incorporated activities related to domestic violence, promotion of village and GP level peace and development committees with a view to activate government development programs and schemes, and ensuring maximum mobilization of government resources for the socio-economic development of the communities.

Livelihood Project supported by Karuna Trust & PHIA Foundation

The project was started in December 2018 and during this period the project has been able to organize Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and Common Interest Groups (CIGs), formed their management committee in 15 villages and initiated regular CBOs and CIG meetings on a monthly basis in Daringbadi Block in the state of Odisha. We have formed 15 new CIGs of women involved in siali leaf plate making with approximately 550 women members and 15 CIGs of turmeric growers, with 600 plus members with better female representation. The project helped in organizing 30 Self-Help Groups (SHGs), with the participation of 390 women for promoting savings and micro credit activities in 15 villages.

In the CBOs each household is represented by a single membership, and thus, there are 1050 members in the 15 CBOs put together. Each CBO has 70 members on an average. The CBO committees usually have 7 members and out of this at least 3 are women. In bigger villages the committees have 11 to 15 members with almost equal representation by women and men.

The organizing process included community visits by our facilitator on a regular basis, family visits and interaction and eventually leading the villagers to come together for meetings and group discussions. Once people were convinced and a general agreement to take up the project had happened at the village level the facilitators formally introduced the idea of CBO formation and building of CIGs and SHGs, step by step, in a phased manner.

Project Outcomes:

1. **ER1** 15 community based organizations (CBOs) and Common Interest Groups (CIGs) are actively managing village level development work on their own¹.

Project has successfully reformed/reorganized 15 community based organizations (CBOs) and Common Interest Groups (CIGs) and initiated process to make them active in managing village level development work on their own.

- CBOs have been reorganized with better female representation. Selected 7 members CBO committee at village level with 4 women and 3 men. President, secretary and treasurer have been elected and two posts have necessarily gone to women.
- Twice in a Month CBO meeting is being facilitated in 15 program villages. To facilitate meeting two CBO facilitators and a coordinator are being constantly engaged on a regular basis for CBO coordination and accompaniment work. During CBOs meeting issues of fair price on turmeric and leaf-plates, government schemes for farmers are being discussed along with village development program by Gram Panchayats, Government program and projects such as subsidized rice, gas, old age pension, housing schemes etc. People are actively engaged in CBO meeting for the development of each village.
- The Project has organized 15 CIGs of turmeric growers and 15 CIGs of siali leaf plate makers in Daringbadiblock. There is 7 to 11 members CIG committee in each village depending on the size of the CIGs. In the turmeric based CIGs there is representation from both men and women in the membership as well as in the committees. However, the leaf plate making is totally women's domain and the membership of the CIGs and their committees are comprised of women only. President, secretary and treasurer have been elected. Once in month CIG meetings are conducted in 15 villages and elected members are positively participating. The purpose of the meetings are basically to develop a sense of collectivity, understanding and cooperation among members, collective marketing in order to be effective market players in the local market and on the issues of possibilities of government departmental support etc. People collectively have come forward and shown extra interests in doing this business, since majority of families are making siali leaf plates and major farming is turmeric. As the summer has just set in, siali leaf is not available in the forest due to leaf-fall and forest fire. It has been planned to start leaf plate making from the month of June. As for turmeric related work, the CIGs will harvest turmeric in April and May, for which cultivation was taken up by them in the month of June 2018. This is their traditional spices crop and we had not provided any support to them for this. The CIGs will collectively sell their produce with proper weighing and for better price. Our intervention in this is that we would be guiding the groups in developing a collective marketing chain and mobilizing departmental support from the local agriculture department.

1. **ER2** 30 strong and vibrant women's Self-Help Groups (SHGs) are doing savings and micro-credit business with active participation by 500 women in 30 village. Usually each village will have 2 SHGs.

The Project has picked up a few inactive SHGs and initiated a few new SHGs in 15 villages. Therefore, the project is now promoting 30 women's Self-Help Groups and assisting them

¹CBO is a representative body for the entire village whereas CIG is formed to represent the interest of a specific economic group such as farmers, artisans or traders coming together for a common purpose.

to develop savings and micro-credit activities with active participation by 390 women. The ST and SC composition is around 310 ST to 80 SC women. On an average each SHG has been able to save around Rs.10,000/ within this short period.

The project is facilitating these SHGs to make them dynamic and gain membership in the state government's Mission Shakti program, which will entitle them to get government support. Eventually these SHGs will mobilize government grants and bank loans and strengthen their lending activities among members.

2. **ER3**Product specific 2 farmers' business federations are engaged in business including Turmeric and Siali leaves.

The formation of product specific 2 farmers' business federations will be initiated in the month of May 2019 as per timeline plan, in order to do business (Turmeric, Siali leaf) with 1050 participant households. However, community level talks have been initiated in this regard to generate ideas among the group on federation building and the need for it. The process evolves step by step with formation of village level occupation specific CIGs being the first step. The president and secretary of each CIG will be brought together and they will form their central level federation with participation of 30 members for turmeric growers' federation and 30 members for leaf-plate makers federation.

3. **ER4**15 villages and their federations are engaged in business with National Agricultural Bank for Rural Development (NABARD), Orissa Rural Marketing Society (ORMAS), 1 local banks and 1 Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) company.

The project concern has 15 beneficiary villages having 1050 participant households and aims to directly benefit 5500 population. As per the activity matrix the task of linking and collaboration will be initiated in April 2019. First of all CIGs linkages will be established in the months of April, May and June. Similarly, collaboration with NABARD, ORMAS and FMCG company will be taken up in the month of June and the following months. SHGs accounts have been opened by all the SHGs and application for the membership in the governments mission shakti program has been completed.

4. **ER 5** Strong and skillful women and men leaders are leading SHGs, CBOs, CIGs, and enterprises at the community level.

The project has identified 30 CBOs leaders and provided them leadership training on leading and managing community level, government scheme and government programs. As per project timeline this training was to be conducted between March to May. We had plans to conduct Federation training in this period but could not do so as the federation formation process has not yet completed. In the meantime the participating communities felt that the CBO leadership training should be taken up immediately in order to ensure support and cooperation of the villages in the project. Accordingly, this training was taken up as one day orientation training where 29 representatives from 15 CBOs participated.

Conclusion

VICALP always believes in stakeholders collaboration and cooperation to achieve development goal for the people and in the process people themselves have to be the main

movers and drivers. The village level CBOs are like the wheels, who pull the process of development forward till everyone in the community feels empowered. We do not subscribe to competition with CSOs or Government agencies. Rather we feel that together all of us can play our role and be change agents in the process of establishing a just and equitable society.

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