

Assessment of Livelihoods Resource Centres in Andhra Pradesh

Draft Report

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AKF	Aga Khan Foundation
AP	Andhra Pradesh
APMAS	Andhra Pradesh Mahila Abhivruddhi Society
APRLP	Andhra Pradesh Rural Livelihoods Project
CB	Capacity Building
CD	Course Director
CLRC	Cluster Livelihoods Resource Centre
CMS	Catalyst Management Services
CRD	Commissioner, Rural Development
CRP	Community Resource Persons
DCBC	District Capacity Building Centres
DFID	Department For International Development
DLG	District Livelihoods Learning Group
DLRC	District Livelihoods Resource Centre
DRDA	District Rural Development Agency
DWMA	District Water Management Agency
EC	European Commission
EP	Enterprise Promotion
LRC	Livelihoods Resource Centre
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSSRF	M S Swaminathan Research Foundation
NGO	Non Government Organizations
NLRC	National Livelihoods Resource Centre
NREGA	National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
NRM	Natural Resource Management

PE	Productivity Enhancement
PIA	Project Implementing Agency
PRP	Pool of Resource Persons
SERP	Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty
SM	Social Mobilization
SWOT	Strength Weakness Opportunity Threat
ToT	Training of Trainers
USP	Unique Selling Proposition
WDT	Watershed Development Team

Assessment of Livelihoods Resource Centres in Andhra Pradesh

By Vrutti Livelihoods Resource Centre¹

1 Executive Summary

In rural India, livelihoods for poor and marginalized families directly relates to their access and control over productive natural resources like land, water and forest. Watershed development focuses on comprehensive treatment of natural resources in a geographical area. This results in availability of productive natural resources to support natural resource based livelihoods. Capacity building is critical component in watershed development, more so in livelihood focused watershed development.

Through the Department for International Development (DFID) assisted Andhra Pradesh Rural Livelihoods Projects (APRLP) project, there was a renewed thrust on capacity building focusing on livelihood promotion in context of watershed development. The project facilitated formation of 22 District Livelihoods Resource Centres (DLRCs) to cater to capacity building need of secondary stakeholders and 55 Cluster Livelihoods Resource Centres (CLRCs) for the primary stakeholders. These LRCs are envisaged as sustainable institutions with focus on livelihood promotion. Thrust of these institutions is to serve as Resource Centres i.e. to move beyond training and capacity building. At district level, LRCs have been facilitated by District Water Management Agencies (DWMAs). Non Government Organizations (NGOs) have been associated in anchoring some of the LRCs (mainly CLRCs; 2 DLRCs in case of APMAS). Resource NGOs like CARE and APMAS have also been associated to provide professional support to LRCs in different districts.

Andhra Pradesh Mahila Abhivruddhi Society (APMAS) is working as a National level support organization contributing towards sustainable self help movement in India. Core strength of APMAS relates to “Institutional Development” as a theme. APMAS with financial support of Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) under European Commission (EC) assisted SCALE project has been making efforts to develop two

¹ Is part of Catalysts Group of Institutions, working in the social development sector in India, South East and South Asian Countries. The Group has presence of over 13 years; works in India and South Asian Countries. The Group houses CMS, a management consulting organisation, Vrutti – a livelihoods resource centre and Swasti – a health resource centre. More details on at <http://www.catalysts.org>

Model DLRCs, so that best practices and learning generated can be replicated across the State.

APMAS and AKF in consultation with Commissionerate of Rural Development (CRD) commissioned Catalyst Management Services (CMS), part of Catalyst group to undertake independent assessment of LRCs in AP. CMS in association with Vrutti Livelihoods Resource Centre, part of Catalyst group has undertaken this study. Overall purpose of the study was to make an independent assessment of LRCs in Andhra Pradesh; the focus being on assessing DLRCs anchored by APMAS and comparing with those not supported by APMAS. The objectives of the study were to:

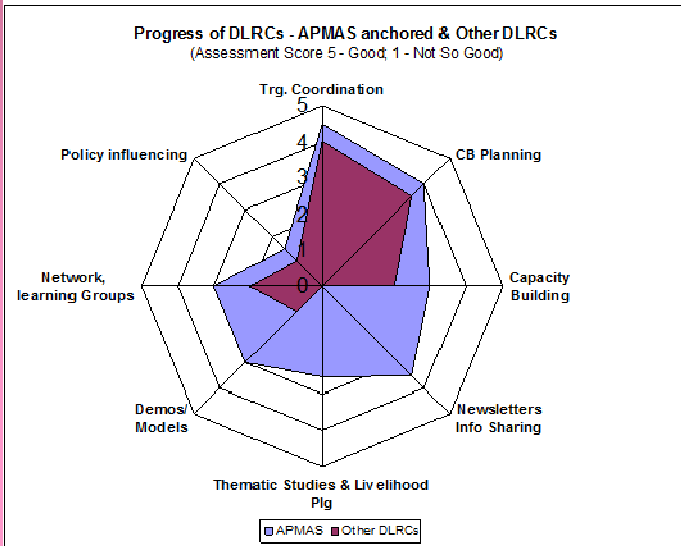
- To **independently assess the progress and impact** of the DLRCs and CLRCs anchored by APMAS, with a view to:
 - Benchmark achievements against DLRCs and CLRCs managed by DWMA and NGOs
 - Understand contextual factors at grassroots and policy level which have contributed or impeded the process of achieving the impact
- To **review institutional strength and weaknesses** of DLRCs, bringing in experience of other similar livelihoods resource centres across India
- To **assess sustainability of institutions** (DLRCs and CLRCs) and **benefits** drawn from them (directly or indirectly) by the communities
- To **document learning, best practices** related to overall functionality of DLRCs and CLRCs in Andhra Pradesh
- To **participatively develop recommendations** for improving the contribution of livelihoods resource centres at district and cluster level for poverty reduction

The study was largely qualitative and reflective in nature. The study involved desk review of secondary literatures, interaction with stakeholders at State level and also field study in 4 districts covering 4 DLRCs (2 APMAS anchored) and 6 CLRCs.

Summary Findings

Livelihoods Resource Centres in AP are visualized as long term resource centres to address the critical need for capacity building and other services relating to livelihood promotion at district/community level. During the last 3 years of operations, the LRC initiative has taken shape in the State. There have been efforts to provide basic infrastructure, equipments and human resources to execute training programs. About 3,035 Resource Persons have been developed and associated with LRCs in the State. There has been significant progress with respect to number of trainings (till Nov'08, all the LRCs together have conducted 2,959 training programs), and utilization of CB funds. Given the capacities, systems and

infrastructure, these LRCs are able to deliver training related to large government programs in an effective way (such as NREGA). In the past, focus of LRCs has been on effective delivery of livelihood programs. Besides capacity building of primary and secondary stakeholders, efforts by LRCs have resulted in increased awareness and effective delivery of DWMA programs at community level. In this initiative, NGOs have been associated in anchoring, providing professional support and contributing through Consortium of Resource Organizations. LRCs have already emerged as effective organizations for coordination of training programs. This can be considered as first major step towards formation of Resource Centres.

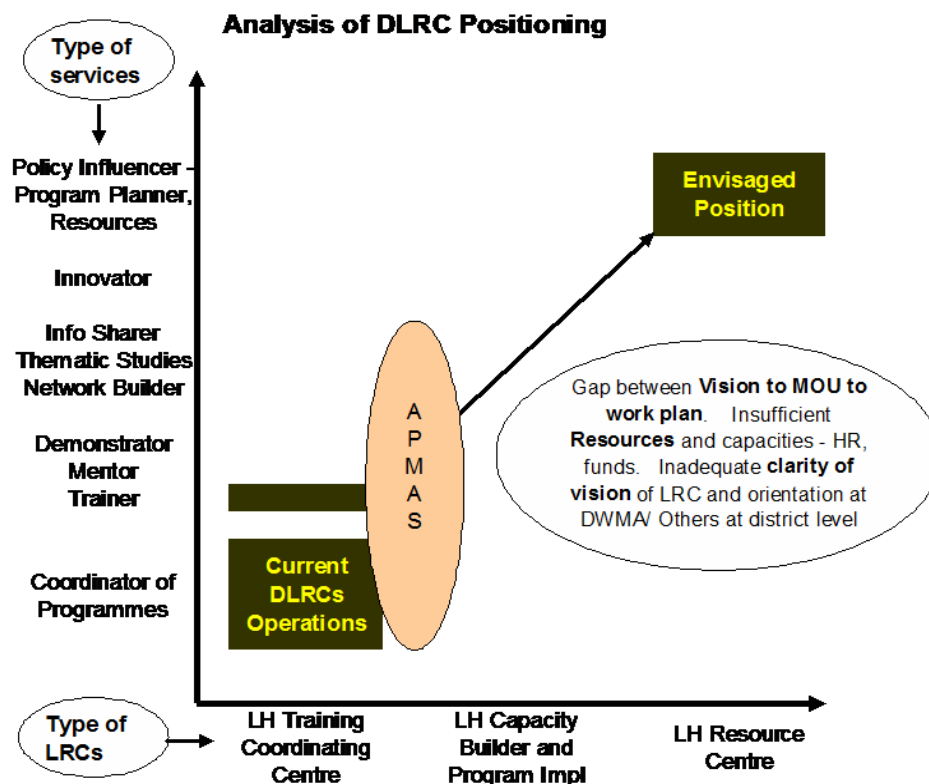


With support of AKF, APMAS has been associated in anchoring 2 DLRCs, providing professional support to 10 CLRCs (in the operational area of 2 DLRCs) and playing an active role in Consortium of Resource Organizations. Overall effort has been towards developing 2 Model DLRCs. With limited time and resources, APMAS has been able to work towards developing model DLRCs. The focus has been to get involved in activities

beyond training. As can be seen from the spider diagram, the efforts of APMAS-led LRCs have been able to address and achieve in more areas that are beyond just training.

Most of the Anchoring Agencies are happy with the concept of LRC as an institution. However, they have experienced that, their role is limited to training coordination. The current MoU also visualize that the role of anchoring agencies is mainly training coordination. Currently, the role of Resource Organizations (as Anchoring Agencies) to work towards developing a Resource Centre is very limited.

The following diagram captures the Vision of LRC as an institution in the long-run, and how far it has been able to achieve towards its Vision. It also provides a positioning of the APMAS LRC (based on their activities) and that of other LRCs. The key factors that have limited the movement of LRCs to move towards the Vision is also highlighted.



(The Y axis in the graph above provides the kind of services that a LRC could potentially provide – moving from the first level of coordinating training to higher levels of policy influencing. The X-axis provides the type of LRC based on the kind of activities that it takes, i.e. the first level is a ‘training coordination centre’ to ‘Livelihood resource centre’ at the highest level. Against X and Y axes, the positioning of APMAS and other DLRCs, and the envisioned positioning are plotted.)

Currently, DLRCs are focusing as Livelihoods Training Coordination Centres, role being coordinator of training inputs of different programs. There seems to be gap between vision of DLRC and the operational strategy depicted in MOU and the Work Plan. Nevertheless, contribution to “training coordination” can be the first logical step to take the role of Resource Centre. Slowly there can be movement towards taking the role of trainer, mentor, demonstrator, network builder, contributor through thematic studies, being an innovator, program planner and finally as policy influencer. As new roles get added, the present form of Livelihoods Training Coordination Centre can move towards becoming full fledged Livelihood Resource Centre. The effort of APMAS has been “Pushing Focus” from training coordination to becoming a Resource Centre. The support provided from AKF towards this is found very useful. This has generated some positive influence on the focus of LRC initiative in AP. The envisaged vision can be achieved with renewed focus and broad-basing the activities of the LRCs. There is a need to enhance clarity of DWMA on vision of LRCs and add on role for anchoring agencies related to resource centre activities (reframing the MoU). The shift in focus towards Resource Centre would also require additional funds and human resources.

Overall LRC initiative in Andhra Pradesh and effort of APMAS for developing model DLRCs has provided several best practices and learning. It has also generated several areas for reflection.

Some of the best practices observed in LRC initiatives in AP include institutionalization of CB Planning process, focus on participatory & residential training, formal MoU for anchoring by NGOs, infrastructure support to LRCs, working with network of local resource persons, and appropriate selection of Course Director (linking to envisaged role). District focus Newsletter (in case of APMAS anchored DLRCs) can also be considered as a best practice.

Some of the emerging best practices were observed in case of APMAS anchored DLRCs. These include DLRC working closely with CLRCs and facilitating sharing of experience on livelihood promotion through District livelihood Learning Group (DLLG).

Review of literature revealed that most of the LRCs have been promoted based on program experience. Successful implementation of livelihood programs by Professional Organizations has given confidence to promote LRCs. It is observed that thrust of LRCs at international level is on information sharing. The thrust of National/State level LRCs is on training and exposure visit (training plus). Decentralized effort towards capacity building and resource centre services in livelihood promotion is observed to be unique in context of Andhra Pradesh.

Way Forward

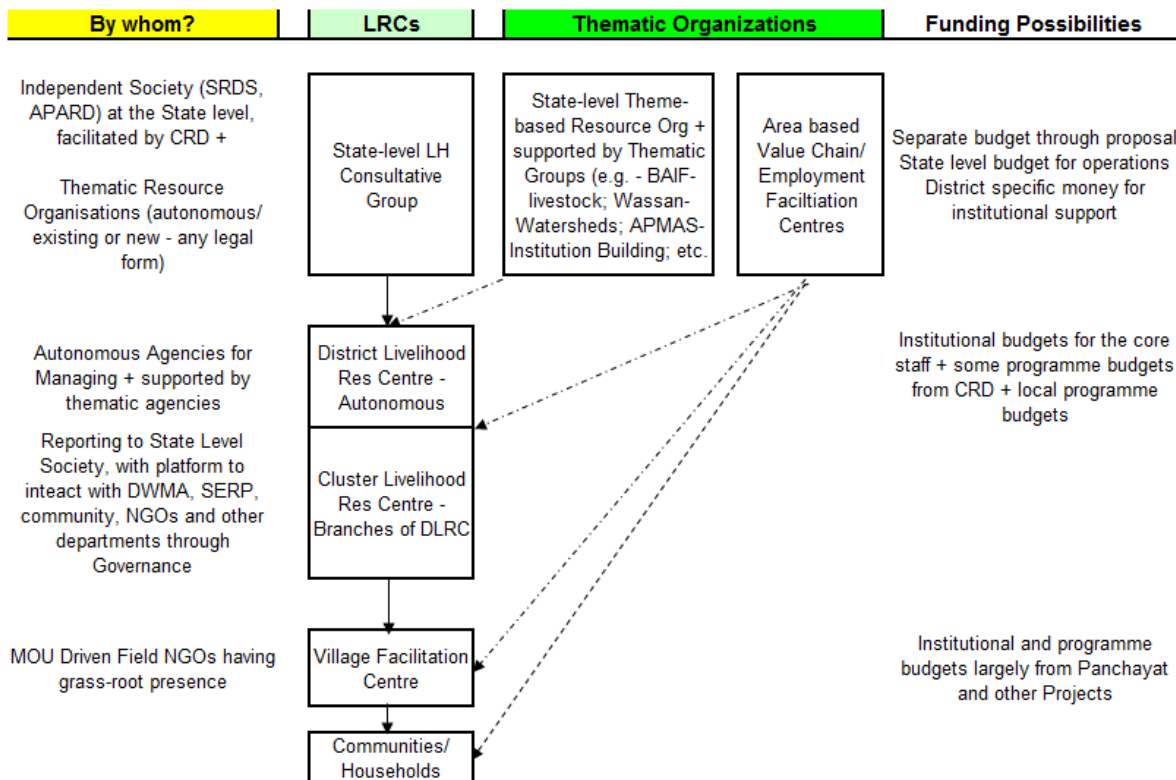
The study team analyzed the findings, learning and best practices generated through this study with the original vision of LRC initiative. The following are some key points that were considered to generate ideas for way forward:

- What should be the **focus** of resource centres: Should these be focusing on delivery of training programs or going beyond to facilitate promotion of livelihoods in the district?
- What should be the **thematic scope** of resource centres - Should they be limiting on only NRM or broad base towards supporting themes such as micro enterprises, market based livelihood promotion, etc. ?
- What should be the **client base** for the centres - Should they be limited only to the Government departments and programs or go beyond in supporting other livelihood

- What **range of services** that these centres should be providing to enable achievement of Vision – Should these be limited only to training or include service delivery and knowledge creation
- **Who all need to be involved** in delivering these services – Should these be only DLRC/ CLRC or go beyond to include other thematic organizations that may bring in specific expertise in sub-sectors, such as livestock, poultry, market facilitation, etc.?
- What **level of operations** that LRCs should be addressing and **whose needs** – Should LRCs be working only at District and Cluster Levels or have engagement at the village level through certain facilitation processes? In terms of the need, can these LRCs go beyond in addressing the needs of the communities apart from the needs of the programs?
- What will be **sources of funds** for LRCs – Should these be limited only to DWMA or State funded or can go beyond in generating their own funds through service provision at district level?
- What should be the **ideal duration of engagement** of these LRCs – Should these be one-off engagements based on programs or should these be run on a long-term basis?

In line with envisaged vision of LRCs, and based on the best practices and learning generated, the Vrutti Livelihoods Resource Centre proposes that LRCs need to function on long term continuous basis with effort towards livelihood promotion (both NRM and Non NRM based), which would include both livelihood program delivery and livelihood facilitation. There is need for LRCs to move from service delivery to knowledge creation. In due course, the client base of LRCs can expand to go beyond DWMA covering other line departments, NGOs and private companies.

The following diagram details the “Proposed Institutional Framework for LRC Initiative in AP”:



In this framework, broadly 4 types of LRCs are envisaged at different levels i.e.

- **Village Level:** Village Livelihoods Facilitation teams
- **Area Level:** Enterprise (Value Chain) and Employment specific Livelihood Resource Centres; The operational area would vary with type of value chains and employment
- **Dist Level:** District Livelihoods Resource Centre
- **State Level:** Theme based Livelihoods Resource Centres

Short Term Recommendations

In line with the proposed framework, the following details the short term recommendations of the study:

- Consider CLRCs as branches of DLRCs and have only one anchoring agency per district
- Contract for anchoring DLRCs could be long-term i.e. at least three years. The contract could be renewed based on a review at the end of 2 years. This would maintain continuity of activities of Resource Centres

- Anchoring agencies may be provided financial support for institutional involvement, cash flow management and to take up resource centre activities like initiated by APMAS anchored DLRCs.
- LRCs may facilitate demonstration of livelihood promotion models or development of model villages with support of implementing agencies, but not get directly involved in it.
- There could be indication/detailing of activities relating to Resource Centre Activities (beyond CB) in the MoU for anchoring.
- Corpus fund may be used as working capital of LRCs. A specific guideline could be developed for the purpose.
- DLRCs may be supported with infrastructure for residential training facility for secondary stakeholders
- CRD may focus on mobilization of special funding support from GoI and Bilateral/Multilateral donors to operationalize the proposed institutional framework
- There is need for close and continuous monitoring and review by CRD
- INGOs like AKF may further focus on developing Model Resource Centres - in line with the proposed framework
 - There is also need for innovative efforts by INGOs to promote Area based Enterprise/Employment Facilitation Centres

Further, study team recommends APMAS:

- To further pursue its efforts towards promoting 2 Model DLRCs
- Be long term Management/Anchoring Agency for at least 4 DLRCs (including current 2 DLRCs)
 - To become a State/National level Thematic Resource Centre focusing on Institution Building relating to livelihood promotion
 - Work towards refining institutional framework and developing operational guideline for autonomous DLRC (based on experience of anchoring DLRCs)
 - Develop operational guideline for Village Livelihoods Facilitation Centres.

Overall, this study has been a quick qualitative reflective study, attempting to make an Assessment of LRCs in AP. Vrutti Livelihoods Resource Centres feels that the “Proposed Institutional Framework for LRC initiative in AP” and implementation of recommendations of the study would help in strengthening on going livelihood promotion efforts in the State.

2 About the Study

2.1 Background

In rural India, livelihoods for poor and marginalized families directly relates to their access and control over productive natural resources like land, water and forest. Watershed development focuses on comprehensive treatment of natural resources in a geographical area. This results in availability of productive natural resources to support natural resource based livelihoods.

In due course, it was realized that stand alone watershed development would not ensure sustainable livelihoods. Local inhabitants need to be at the centre of watershed development. In 1995, there was initiation of participatory watershed development across the country. Meanwhile, there was a growing realization, that participatory watershed development is generally benefiting the better off households already having access to land, not the poorest families. In villages, most of the poorest families are land less wage earners.

At this juncture, during 1997, Government of Andhra Pradesh with support of Department for International Development (DFID) launched the Andhra Pradesh Rural Livelihoods Project (APRLP). APRLP project provided critical support to on going watershed projects, to strategically position livelihood concerns. This led to initiation of watershed plus approach. In 2001, pilot phase of APRLP was initiated.

Capacity building is critical component in watershed development, more so in livelihood focused watershed development. However, there has always been inadequate focus on capacity building efforts. Through APRLP project there was a renewed thrust on capacity building by setting up exclusive District Capacity Building Centres (DCBCs) in its project districts. Based on experience, in 2004-05, a network Livelihoods Resource Centres (LRCs) were formed to scale up APRLP experience. This included 22 District Livelihoods Resource Centres (DLRCs) to cater to capacity building need of secondary stakeholders and 55 Cluster Livelihoods Resource Centres (CLRCs) for the primary stakeholders. Course Director with support of support staff coordinates the activities of LRCs. Pool of Resource Persons (PRPs) drawn from line departments and NGOs serve as Resource Persons in the LRCs. Similarly, panel of Community Resource Persons (CRPs) support activities of CLRCs. DLRCs function from TTDC premises. CLRCs function from premises of anchoring agency. Now some of the CLRCs are housed in their own premises.

Overall, LRCs are envisaged as sustainable institutions with focus on livelihood promotion. Thrust of these institutions is to serve as Resource Centres i.e. to move

beyond training and capacity building. DLRC and CLRCs are managed by District Water Management Agencies (DWMAs). Andhra Pradesh Academy of Rural Development (APARD) serves as the nodal agency. APARD also coordinates with Consortium of Resource NGOs at State level. Commissioner Rural Development (CRD), Government of AP provides policy direction to the LRC initiative. Non Government Organizations (NGOs) are associated in anchoring some of the LRCs (mainly CLRCs; 2 DLRCs in case of APMAS). Some of the Consortium Organizations like CARE and APMAS have also been associated to provide professional support to LRCs in different districts.

2.2 APMAS and LRCs

Andhra Pradesh Mahila Abhivruddhi Society (APMAS) is working as a National level support organization contributing towards sustainable self help movement in India. In the year 2001, it was registered as an autonomous Non Government Public Society. With proven experience and expertise in capacity building of Self Help Groups (SHGs) and SHG federations, APMAS has entered into livelihood promotion. Core strength of APMAS relates to “Institutional Development” as a theme.

APMAS has been at the forefront of supporting LRC initiative in Andhra Pradesh. Since Nov’2005, it has been anchoring two DLRCs i.e. Adilabad and Kadapa. APMAS is the only agency other than DWMAs anchoring DLRCs in the State. The anchoring of LRCs is guided by formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Anchoring Agency/APMAS, CRD, DWMA and APARD. The role of the Anchoring Agency as envisaged in the MoU is given at **Annexure 1**.

Since April’2007, APMAS has also started providing professional support to 10 CLRCs (5 each in Adilabad and Kadapa district). Besides anchoring and professional support, as a member of consortium of resource organizations, it has worked closely with CRD and APRARD. It has supported in development training modules and in conducting Training of Trainers (ToT) like on theme financial management.

This initiative of APMAS has been financially supported by Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) under European Commission (EC) assisted SCALE project. AKF support to APMAS relates to developing two Model DLRCs, so that best practices and learning generated can be replicated across the State. Some of the efforts for developing model DLRC goes beyond training and capacity building; and includes potential resource centre activities like dissemination of information through newsletter, formation of District Livelihood Learning Group (DLLG), sub sector studies and direct demonstration in villages. Model DLRCs also have access to

services of a full time Livelihood Manager, who oversees all the activities of DLRCs. Each of the DLRCs has provision of four wheeler vehicle.

2.3 Purpose of the Study

Decentralization of capacity building through LRCs is a need based unique initiative. This was originally conceptualized under DFID assisted APRLP project and later mainstreamed by CRD, Government of AP. Over the last three years, LRC framework has already taken a shape. At the same time, there has been systematic effort by APMAS with support of AKF to develop model DLRCs. It would also be important to reflect on the experience of APMAS, by comparing APMAS anchored DLRC with other DLRCs. It is appropriate time to capture the best practices and learning, which could strengthen the LRC framework in the State and also contribute towards similar initiatives in other States of India.

Overall purpose of the study was to make an independent assessment of LRCs in Andhra Pradesh; the focus being on assessing DLRCs anchored by APMAS and comparing with those not supported by APMAS.

APMAS and AKF in consultation CRD commissioned Catalyst Management Services (CMS), part of Catalyst group to undertake independent assessment of LRCs in AP. CMS in association with Vrutti Livelihoods Resource Centre, part of Catalyst group has undertaken this study.

2.4 Vrutti Livelihoods Resource Centre

Vrutti Livelihoods Resource Centre is part of Catalyst group of institutions. Catalyst is a leading development support group in India. The group has more than 10 years of experience of supporting organizations working on livelihood promotion in India and South/Southeast Asia. In the past, Vrutti has worked with International Non Government Organizations (INGOs), bilateral and multi lateral organization, Govt., private companies and also Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). In the past, it had supported efforts of several DFID assisted Rural Livelihood Projects like KAWAD, APRLP, WORLP, MPRLP and OTELP. In Oct'2007, it had facilitated Rural Livelihoods Experience Sharing Workshop organized by DFID and APRLP.

2.5 Study Objectives

The following are the objectives of the study:

- To **independently assess the progress and impact** of the DLRCs and CLRCs anchored by APMAS, with a view to:
 - Benchmark achievements against DLRCs and CLRCs managed by DWMA and NGOs
 - Understand contextual factors at grassroots and policy level which have contributed or impeded the process of achieving the impact
- To **review institutional strength and weaknesses** of DLRCs, bringing in experience of other similar livelihoods resource centres across India
- To **assess sustainability of institutions** (DLRCs and CLRCs) and **benefits** drawn from them (directly or indirectly) by the communities
- To **document learning, best practices** related to overall functionality of DLRCs and CLRCs in Andhra Pradesh
- To **participatively develop recommendations** for improving the contribution of livelihoods resource centres at district and cluster level for poverty reduction

2.6 Scope & Methodology

The study was largely qualitative and reflective in nature. The study involved desk review of secondary literatures, interaction with stakeholders at State level and also field study in 4 districts. Desk review of literatures included review of documents related to LRC initiatives in AP, AKF & APMAS efforts to develop model LRCs and also experience of other LRCs in India and elsewhere.

There was in depth interaction with functionaries of CRD, APARD and Resource Organizations already part of State level consortium (BAIF, WASSON, CSA, CARE & AKSHARA). In depth interactions were guided by a checklist. The checklist was developed in line with the objectives of the study.

Field study covered 4 districts viz. Adilabad, Kadapa, Rangareddy and Kurnool. It covered 2 Districts i.e. Adilabad and Kadapa, where APMAS has been anchoring the DLRCs. In each of the districts (except Kurnool), two sample CLRCs were identified. In total, 4 DLRCs and 6 CLRCs were covered in the field study. APMAS in consultation with CRD identified the two non APMAS anchored DLRCs and 6 CLRCs on purposive sampling basis, with focus to maintain diversity (profile of

anchoring agency & geographical representation) in sample. The following table lists the samples of the field study:

DLRCs	Anchored By	CLRCs	Anchored By
Kadapa	APMAS	Pulivendula	CDS
		Rajanpeta	DWMA
Adilabad	APMAS	Utnoor	DWMA
		Kaghaznagar	DWMA
Ranga Reddy	DWMA	Vikarabad	DWMA
		Parigi	WASSON
Kurnool	DWMA		

Each of the field study districts was visited for about 4 days by one of the Senior Consultants associated with the study. Besides visit to the LRCs & study of documents at LRCs; there was interaction with different stakeholders including functionaries of LRCs, DWMA, line departments & NGOs; PRPs & CRPs; and trainees of LRCs (primary and secondary stakeholders). The interaction with different stakeholders associated with LRCs was guided by a check list. The study team also had opportunity to observe the on going training programs and visit some of the demonstration villages adopted by LRCs. APMAS team members provided coordination and logistic support. Study team also received independent inputs from senior functionaries of APMAS.

Responses obtained from the study have been entered in an MS Excel database. The responses were classified as perception, facts, assessment and suggestions. The inputs obtained from field study, interaction with state level stakeholders and literature review has been analyzed through a reflection process; in line with the objectives of the study. Overall focus in the analysis has been to capture the best practices and learning, so as to move forward on LRC initiatives in AP.

3 Findings of the Study

3.1 Progress of LRCs

During the last three years, the idea of LRCs has taken shape. There have been efforts to provide basic infrastructure, equipments and human resources to execute training programs. At the time of field study, 42 CLRCs had their own buildings. They have been provided with audio visual equipments. This has enabled the

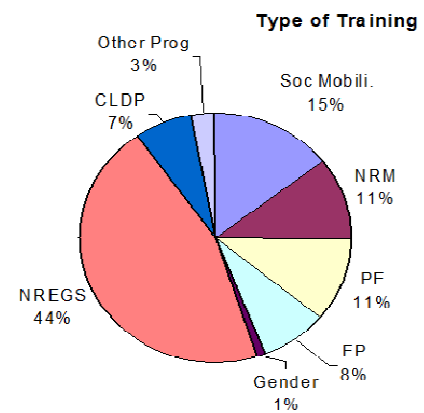
CLRCs to take up residential training programs. This has further contributed to visibility and recognition for CLRCs. However, the DLRCs continue to function from the premises of TTDCs. They do not have adequate infrastructure and facilities to take up residential training programs for secondary stakeholders. Activities of LRCs are currently coordinated by Course Directors with support of support staff. Most of the Course Directors have necessary experience and expertise to take up role of “training coordination”. Absence of Course Directors in some of the LRCs (like in Kadapa DLRC) has affected smooth functioning of LRCs. Additional staff support of Livelihood Manager, in APMAS anchored DLRCs and also facility of vehicle, has enabled DLRCs to take up resource centre activities i.e. beyond training.

Financial Progress

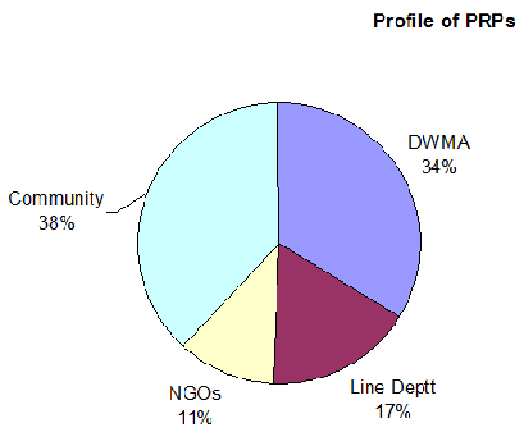
During the year 2008-09, the combined budget of all the LRCs has been estimated to be Rs.11.35 Crores. By end of Nov’08, 31 % of the budget had been utilized. Currently funds available to LRCs in a district range from Rs.30 to Rs.50 lakhs. LRC initiative has contributed to utilization of capacity building funds available with DWMA. Most of the stakeholders perceive that there is sufficient fund available for activities of LRCs. However, on interaction with different stakeholders, the study team felt that, considering the need and demand for livelihood related training and other resource centre activities, sufficient funds is not available at district level. Current capacity of LRCs is also not optimally utilized. Nevertheless, there has been progress with regards conduct of training programs.

Physical Progress

Till Nov’08, all the LRCs together have conducted 2,959 training programs. Of this, large proportion of training programs relate to NREGS, followed by Social Mobilization, Natural Resource Management (NRM) and Productivity Enhancement (PE). Less than 10% of the training programmes focussed on Enterprise Promotion (EP). It is widely recognized and appreciated that LRCs have played a key role in initiation/delivery of programs like NREGA. The government functionaries appreciate the abilities of the LRCs to deliver capacity building support for large programmes from the Government in a short span of time. However, there has been a limited focus of LRCs with regards to PE and EP, which was the original intent of the LRCs. There is no major variation in profile of physical and financial progress in APMAS anchored DLRC compared to other DLRCs.



Network of Resource Persons



LRCs have been able to execute the training programs, through a network of PRPs and CRPs. At present, there are 3,035 Resource Persons associated with LRCs in AP. Of this more than a third are from Community, and a similar proportion from DWMA. About a fifth are from the Line Departments of the Government and few from NGOs. Of the total, services of about one third of the resource persons are regularly utilized by the LRCs. This has been mainly because of focus of LRCs towards effective delivery of

DWMA programs, in which there is limited scope to involve external resource persons (mainly those outside the Government). Field observations and study of records revealed effective utilization of services of CRPs. Through LRC initiative, a cadre of key Resource Persons have emerged (based on performance) at cluster/district level.

Towards developing Model DLRCs

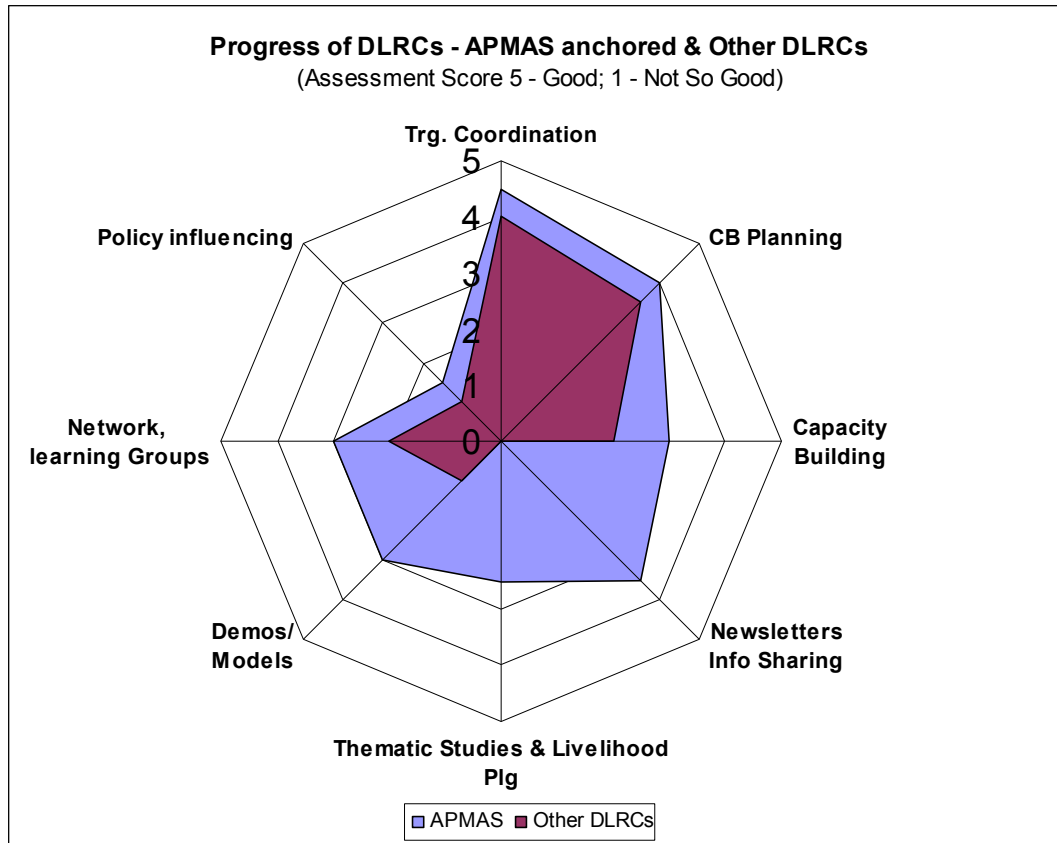
During interaction with State level functionaries, the study team realized that LRCs were visualized as Resource Centres i.e. to focus on activities beyond training and capacity building. Initial thrust has been on institutionalizing training programs at district level. After interaction with different stakeholders at district and State level, there was a feeling that operational detailing of LRCs (as a Resource Centre) is yet to emerge. Meanwhile APMAS with support of AKF has initiated some of the add-on activities (training plus) in the DLRCs anchored by it. This includes taking up thematic studies, formation of District Livelihoods Learning Group (DLLG) and dissemination of information through newsletters.

Based on understanding of the study team and observation of activities in APMAS anchored DLRC, study team came to a consensus that there can be eight broad activities of DLRCs:

- (a) **Training Coordination** - ability to deliver the training programme effectively in terms of understanding needs, developing course materials, methodologies, training of the resource persons and managing the delivery of the training to the satisfaction of the stakeholders

- (b) **Planning for Capacity Building** - Assessing the capacity building needs of the personnel at the district level on various areas of livelihood promotion, identifying opportunities, developing capacity building strategies, resource persons, calendars and resource planning
- (c) **Capacity Building** - Being involved in building capacities of the livelihood facilitators from various agencies, not just limited to one-off training, but providing field level hand-holding support and be a resource agency to clarify thoughts, methods, etc.
- (d) **Information Sharing** - Periodical and systematic sharing of relevant information to various stakeholders, with district specific ideas and methods, through newsletters and other forums
- (e) **Thematic studies/livelihood planning** - To undertake periodical studies and planning for livelihoods that are specific to the issues and challenges to livelihood promotion in the district.
- (f) **Demonstration/model development** - To develop field models and demonstration plots involving primary stakeholders to try out new ideas, train the participants during the process and demonstrate processes and results for easy adoption.
- (g) **Networking/learning group** - To form networks of the agencies and individuals involved in livelihood promotion in the district to create a platform for discussing issues, learn together and develop solutions
- (h) **Policy influencing** - To develop evidences from the field, studies and learning forums and periodically engage with policy makers at the district and local levels for making policies and practices in favour of effective livelihood promotion.

Against these potential areas of work of LRCs, progress of both APMAS and other DLRCs covered in field study were assessed on a scale of 0 to 5 (0 - Not Observed, 1 - Not So Good, 5 - Good). The following spider diagram provides an assessment of progress of APMAS anchored DLRC compared to other DLRCs.



DLRCs (both APMAS and DWMA anchored) have significantly contributed to development of CB plan and training coordination. There has been thrust on developing CB plan (as it was envisaged as integral part of functioning of LRCs) and also participatory process in execution of training programs. Input of senior functionaries of APMAS has further improved it. There has been focus on step by step approach in developing CB plan. In case of APMAS anchored DLRC, there is relatively more focus on capacity building as a process. These include careful selection of exposure visit sites and follow up linkages with trainees.

Information sharing through newsletter (in case of APMAS anchored DLRCs) has been well recognized by different stakeholders. This has provided opportunity for district level stakeholders to share their knowledge and experience. Study of newsletter reveals that, there has been some attempt to generate district focus content, which can be improved further. Each of the APMAS anchored DLRCs have also conducted district focused sub sector studies. The study findings have been disseminated. In future, there is need to establish linkage between sub sector studies and overall district livelihood plan, which could be initiated by the DLRCs. District Livelihood Learning Groups initiated by APMAS have provided opportunity to different livelihood promoters to share their experience. This has served as a forum to know each other and establish linkages. Consistent effort to

promote DLLGs can potentially contribute towards, development of livelihood think tank in the district. This can also contribute towards livelihood planning.

DLRC through CLRCs has emphasized on creation of demonstration sites on specific themes like on post watershed management and institution building. This initiative has been mainstreamed across LRCs in the State. It was observed that, efforts towards creation of demonstration sites or model village is consuming substantial time on part of Course Directors. They are finding it difficult to focus on both implementation (in demonstration sites) and training. LRCs may focus on facilitating demonstration than doing it themselves. Nevertheless progress with regards to demonstration is quite visible like with efforts of APMAS anchored DLRCs, people have been able to harness benefit of watershed development through effective functioning of watershed association. There has been limited focus of DLRC to influence the policies. However, with inputs received from trainees in different training programs, some of the operational guidelines of different schemes have been improved.

All the DLRCs primarily focused on training and capacity building through development of CB Plans. In some cases, there has been delay in approval of plan. There has also been deviation in execution of plan. The focus on CB plan has started yielding result. Efforts of APMAS relating to resource centre activities i.e. CB plus can be seen as pilot interventions. Efforts of APMAS have also started yielding result. However, there is need to establish organic linkages between different interventions like DLLG contributing to planning, plan leading to sector studies and further dissemination through newsletter. This may require reorientation of strategy towards district livelihood plan (beyond CB Plan) and consistent effort. Overall, there has been some progress towards developing model DLRCs.

Services and Management LRCs

Most of the LRCs have institutionalized CB planning as a process. CB Plans developed by LRCs relate to demand from the community and also availability of funds. However, the plan is generally implemented to an extent of fifty percent. This has been due to delay in flow of funds and also shift in priorities (like from PE/EP to NREGA) at DWMA level. It was also observed that access to own funds of anchoring agencies (like in case of APMAS) has been critical factor for continuation of activities of LRCs in line with the CB plan.

There is demand for hand holding/facilitation support from LRCs, which they are able to provide in a very limited manner. Anchoring NGOs working on specific themes like BAIF on livestock development and WASSON on watershed development are able to provide some facilitation services. Currently,

demonstration through LRCs is distorting the focus of LRC as an institution, which may best be done through Project Implementing Agencies.

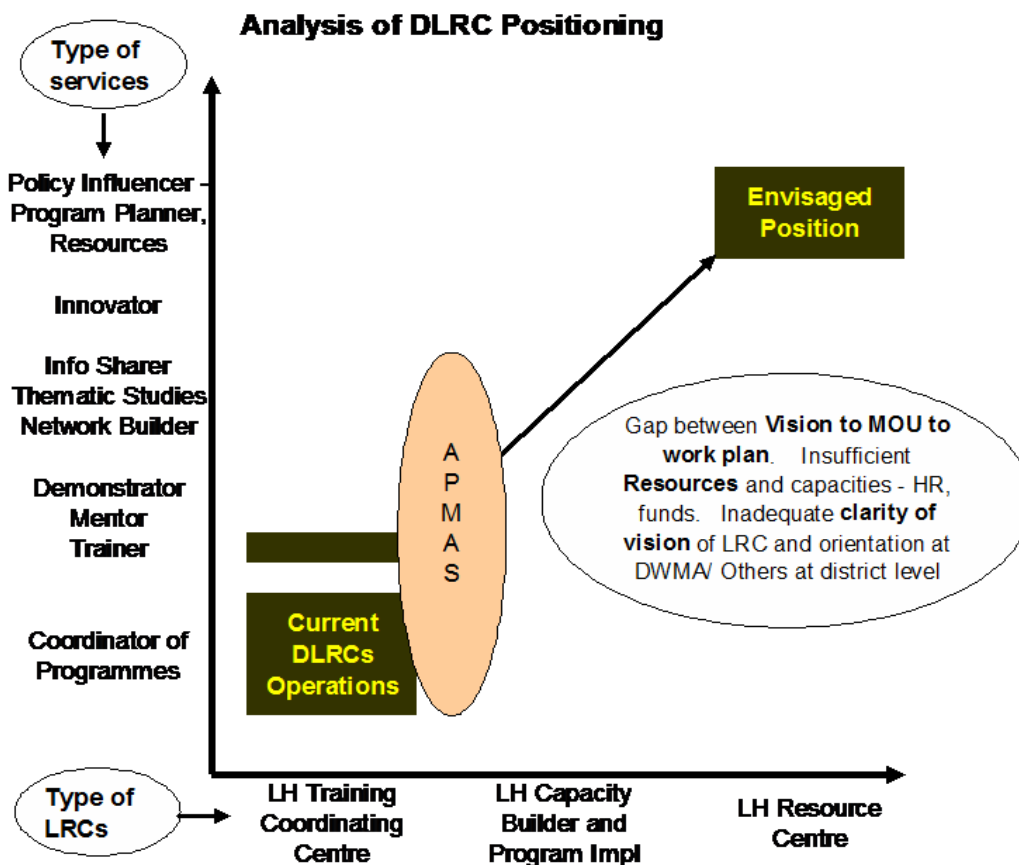
Currently, there is very limited linkage between DLRC and CLRCs. Role of DLRCs is limited to consolidation of CB Plans of CLRCs. However, most of the CLRCs are looking for day to day support of DLRCs. In case of APMAS anchored DLRCs, there has been some efforts to link up the DLRC with CLRCs in the district. This includes CD - DLRC serving as Resource Person in CLRC, supporting in developing training methodology and sharing of information.

Towards envisaged Vision of LRCs

Across LRCs there has been progress towards institutionalization of training programs through CB plan (largely focusing on trainings). This has been mainly because of focus of DWMA and CRD on training and capacity building. Linkage of the Course Director with ongoing livelihood promotion efforts has facilitated different exposure visits. In case of LRCs anchored by Resource NGOs, the quality of trainings has improved. Irrespective of anchoring agencies, support of PD - DWMA has been critical in achievement of progress. Most of the training inputs have been largely input driven, with some orientation towards outcome. At this stage, it is difficult to establish linkage between training inputs and outcome at community level. In case of Resource NGO anchored LRCs (like APMAS and WASSON), the focus/efforts towards resource centre is quite visible.

Most of the Anchoring Agencies are happy with the concept of LRC as an institution. However, they have experienced that, their role is limited to training coordination. The current MoU also visualize that the role of anchoring agencies is mainly training coordination. Currently, the role of Resource Organizations (as Anchoring Agencies) to work towards developing a Resource Centre is very limited.

The following diagram captures the Vision of LRC as an institution in the long-run, and how far it has been able to achieve towards its Vision. It also provides a positioning of the APMAS LRC (based on their activities) and that of other LRCs. The key factors that have limited the movement of LRCs to move towards the Vision is also highlighted.



The Y axis in the graph above provides the kind of services that a LRC could potentially provide - moving from the first level of coordinating training to higher levels of policy influencing. The X-axis provides the type of LRC based on the kind of activities that it takes, i.e. the first level is a 'training coordination centre' to 'Livelihood resource centre' at the highest level. Against X and Y axes, the positioning of APMAS and other DLRCs, and the envisioned positioning are plotted.

Currently, DLRCs are focusing as Livelihoods Training Coordination Centres, role being coordinator of training inputs of different programs. There seems to be gap between vision of DLRC and the operational strategy depicted in MOU and the Work Plan. Nevertheless, contribution to "training coordination" can be the first logical step to take the role of Resource Centre. Slowly there can be movement towards taking the role of trainer, mentor, demonstrator, network builder, contributor through thematic studies, being an innovator, program planner and finally as policy influencer. As new roles get added, the present form of Livelihoods Training Coordination Centre can move towards becoming full

fledged Livelihood Resource Centre. The effort of APMAS has been “Pushing Focus” from training coordination to becoming a Resource Centre. The support provided from AKF towards this is found very useful. This has generated some positive influence on the focus of LRC initiative in AP. The envisaged vision can be achieved with renewed focus and broad-basing the activities of the LRCs. There is a need to enhance clarity of DWMA on vision of LRCs and add on role for anchoring agencies related to resource centre activities (reframing the MoU). The shift in focus towards Resource Centre would also require additional funds and human resources.

3.2 Impact of LRCs

Most of the LRCs have contributed to improved delivery of DWMA programs. There has been substantial improvement in utilization of capacity building funds. LRCs have been able to facilitate coordination between DWMA schemes. There has been increase in awareness of different Government schemes and guidelines. To some extent, there is also awareness on some of the livelihood promotion efforts by NGOs. LRCs have significantly contributed to quick implementation of new schemes like NREGA. Compared to other DLRCs, in case of APMAS anchored DLRCs, there is more linkages with line departments. In case of APMAS anchored DLRCs, there is also improved sharing of livelihood experiences. This was also observed in case of other CLRCs anchored by Resource NGOs like WASSON. It is evident from these experiences that organisations having thematic experiences (like WASSON on watersheds, APMAS on institutional development, etc.) can bring in their expertise in addressing different components in livelihood promotion.

DLRCs have been able to enhance capacity of secondary stakeholders (like WDTs, and TAs) with regards to increase in understanding of Government schemes and skill/expertise related to NRM and livelihoods. In case of APMAS anchored DLRCs there has also been skill enhancement of secondary stakeholders as trainers. CLRCs have been able to enhance capacity of primary stakeholders (like Field Assistants and CBO Leaders) on understanding of different guidelines related to Government schemes and capacity to manage CBOs. Some of them have been able to enhance capacity to implement scheme related activities. In some instances, understanding to facilitate livelihood promotion has also improved. Professional support of APMAS has contributed to overall strengthening of CLRCs. At community level, LRC initiative has resulted in improved access to DWMA programs. At this stage, it is difficult to establish relationship between services of LRCs with impact at household level (like income and asset).

Interaction with different stakeholders at State and district level revealed that there is demand for employment and enterprise facilitation services from the LRCs.

However, currently LRCs is more focusing on capacity building related to effective program delivery, particularly of DWMA programs. Services of LRCs have been largely supply driven.

LRCs have been envisaged as institutions to be playing prime role in knowledge management at district level. This includes sourcing, dissemination and also creation of knowledge. Currently there is inadequate focus on sourcing and creation of new knowledge. This is because, in the current framework of LRCs, there is limited linkage with theme based resource organizations. There is also inadequate linkage with key implementing units like Project Implementation Agencies (PIAs).

Similarly, knowledge transfer between secondary and primary stakeholders is not adequately linked. It is observed that DLRC and CLRCs in a district are functioning independent of each other. With focus on linking DLRC and CLRCs in a district, in due course DLRCs can slowly grow as district focused Livelihoods Knowledge Institutions. There has been some efforts by APMAS anchored DLRCs to be active in the knowledge arena. However, most of these are pilot initiatives which may be pursued further, to develop replicable models. At this stage, some of the learning and best practices generated can be disseminated across DLRCs.

Contextual Factors influencing Impact of LRCs

Initially CRD organized series of meetings involving APRLP project personnel and representatives of resource organizations. This led to clarity in vision at State level. Formal MoU for anchoring provided role clarity and built in ownership of NGOs to anchor the LRCs. The profile of Course Directors matches with their envisaged role of training coordination. Infrastructure support like own buildings and audio visual materials has also strengthened the LRCs. This has brought in visibility and recognition to functioning of LRCs. Similarly thematic understanding of resource organizations anchoring LRCs has contributed in module development and enhancing quality of content of training. In case of anchoring NGOs implementing other livelihood projects, there has been cross learning and sharing of experiences. Availability of own funds with anchoring NGOs like APMAS have enabled in smooth implementation of approved CB plans. The review of LRC activities by CRD and support of Project Implementing Agencies (PIAs) has been inadequate. Similarly, there was very limited ToT support to LRCs.

Impact of LRCs on quick implementation of NREGA is widely acknowledged. Thrust on NREGA has provided working space and identity to LRCs. However, the thrust on NREGA has also diluted the original mandate of LRCs to function on livelihoods mainly non land based activities including enterprise promotion. Although formal MoU promoted willingness and confidence to anchor LRCs, most

of the anchoring agencies have feel that MoU has not been adhered to in letter and spirit. In case of CLRCs, where there was involvement of anchoring NGOs, Course Directors had to report to both Senior Functionaries of anchoring NGO and also to DWMA functionaries. At times, they were involved activities not directly related to services of LRCs. This created confusion and diluted the focus of LRCs. Funds flow to LRCs has also not been smooth. Flow of funds is limited to organizing training programs. There has been no funding support to take up resource centre related activities like planning, studies, newsletter and networking. Core funding support would enable LRCs to think beyond training as an activity.

The issues are similar in case of APMAS anchored DLRCs. However, in case of APMAS anchored DLRCs, timely funds flow support (for smooth flow of funds to DLRCs) and add on focus beyond training (resource centre activities supported by funds) from APMAS has been quite critical to overcome some of the challenges.

3.3 SWOT of LRCs

Analysis of responses obtained from different stakeholders revealed unanimous view on vision and overall purpose of LRCs in Andhra Pradesh. The Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) of LRCs in AP relates to envisaged vision and purpose of LRCs.

Strengths:

- Clarity on Vision for LRC at State level, to be a resource centre contributing through various mechanisms
- Thrust on Capacity Building at all levels
- Decentralized CB mechanism at district level for livelihood promotion
- Network of Pool of Resource Persons (PRPs) and Community Resource Persons (CRPs)
- Expertise of Course Directors as Training Facilitators and Coordinators
- Committed and motivated Staff
- Infrastructure provided for CLRCs
- Corpus funds

Weaknesses:

- Inadequate communication between State and Districts on vision of LRCs
- LRCs being perceived as delivery unit of DWMA
- Dependence on single client (DWMA) affecting sustainability
- Limited HR (both numbers and profile) in LRCs to take up Resource Centre activities

- Delays in flow of funds
- No guidelines for use of Corpus
- Deviations from the CB plan
- Focus on NREGS negatively influencing functioning of LRCs
- Limited clarity on linkages between DLRC and CLRCs
- Inadequate clarity on role of Resource Organizations associated with Consortium
- Limited focus on review of activities of LRCs

Opportunities:

- Need for knowledge creation and sharing
- Need for livelihood plan for the district, and facilitating convergence of organizations and programs at the district level
- Thrust on capacity building in the new watershed guideline
- LRC as new program launching organization – as contributed in case of NREGS
- Engagement of other stakeholders like SERP/DRDA in Governance and advisory support to LRCs
- Creation of alliance among NGOs working on Livelihood Promotion
- Linkage with private companies
- Linkage with livelihood theme based organizations

Threats:

- Inadequate focus and commitment on long-term vision and institutionalization of LRCs
- Limited numbers of thematically focused organizations

3.4 Sustainability of LRCs

Sustainability of LRCs may be understood with regards five Fs – its focus, form, functions, functionaries and funds. Original focus of LRCs has been on livelihood promotion, watershed plus and capacity building of DWMA schemes; of which capacity building of DWMA schemes has been largely achieved. There has been decline in focus on watershed plus initiatives. There is need for further orientation on livelihood promotion at different levels.

LRCs were envisaged as a unit of DWMA coordinated by Course Director. There was linkage with CRD, APARD and Anchoring Agency. DWMA has significant level of ownership on functioning of LRCs. Policy support of CRD relating to MoU

for anchoring has created momentum for functioning of LRCs. However, role of CRD with regards to review has been limited. There has been very minimal linkage of LRCs with APARD. As APARD does not have direct focus on livelihoods (which is the focus of LRCs), it is difficult to visualize APARD as a nodal resource organization for LRCs.

Experience shows that anchoring of LRCs is suitable for large NGOs. This is because of their institutional strength i. e. ability to manage cash flow and thematic expertise. However, currently their role is limited to training coordination. Most of the Resource Organizations have expressed that they are not comfortable with limited role of training coordination. With greater involvement of large Resource NGOs, LRCs can significantly contribute in knowledge management. In the current framework, Course Director reports to PD - DWMA. At present, he has limited access to new knowledge related to livelihood promotion. There is also need to link him/her to thematically focused organizations that are active in knowledge management.

Key functions of LRCs are training, capacity building and resource centre services. At present, the focus is on delivery of training programs related to DWMA programs. In this context, non adherence to CB plan has also affected smooth execution of training programs. In future, some of the LRCs would graduate to focus on capacity building and resource centre activities. However, limited HR and inadequate support to Course Director would affect LRCs in providing capacity building services. Similarly, linkages with livelihood related line departments of Government, livelihood promoting organizations and private companies would be critical for both demand and supply of resource centre services.

At present, Course Director and support staff of LRCs with support of PRPs and CRPs are mainly involved in coordinating training programs. Currently, most of the teams in LRCs are reasonably performing their roles. As LRCs start performing their role as Resource Centres (beyond training), the current staff structure and working through network of Resource Persons may be inadequate. There would be need to upgrade the profile of Course Director and have small team of full time resource persons (mainly in disciplines related to livelihood promotion).

As of now, major source of funds to LRCs is DWMA. DWMA is also the major client. It would be good for LRCs to diversify their client base and funding sources. This would also promote convergence between different efforts and contribute towards long term sustainability. Government orders would help other Government departments like agriculture, horticulture and fisheries to utilize services if LRCs. There have been efforts to generate corpus funds. However, there is need for clarity on its use. One possibility is to use corpus fund as working

capital. In the past, flow of funds has not been smooth. This scenario is likely to continue, which can be overcome by use of corpus fund as working capital.

The following table further summarises the key issues and related query to move forward:

Particulars	Key Issue	Related Query
Governance	Conflict between DWMA's role in governance and being a major Client	Is there need to move towards a new institutional arrangement?
Management	Limited clarity on role of anchoring agency - Training Coordination or beyond	Should thematic focused NGOs get into role of anchoring, if role is limited to training coordination?
Institutional Form	Limited linkage between DLRC and CLRCs in the district; Primary stakeholders trained by CLRCs are perceived to be Secondary Stakeholders by the community; Limited linkage between activities of CLRCs and DLRC	Is there a need for separate CLRCs and DLRC; or just one LRC in a district?
Services	Need for livelihood facilitation; More focus on program delivery	Should LRC focus on livelihood facilitation; if not, who should offer long term livelihood facilitation services?
Capacity	Difficult to develop full fledged cycle of Knowledge Management at district level	How to fill the gaps related to cycle of Knowledge Management?

3.5 Community Perspective on LRCs

LRC initiative has focused on capacity building of primary stakeholders. Earlier trainings were more of awareness meetings. Now through LRCs, there is focus on structured trainings including residential trainings. This has significantly enhanced awareness of community on DWMA programs. Now community members are able to take informed decisions in their CBOs. In the process, a cadre of key informants have evolved at community level. Overall, this has led to increased transparency and effective implementation of DWMA programs. Further through demonstration sites, now people have access to new technologies and practices.

During this study, there was also an attempt to understand the actual needs of community. This was done through direct interactions with community and also while seeking response from primary and secondary stakeholders. There was a unanimous view that households need handholding services to sustain and strengthen their livelihoods activities. This includes enterprise facilitation support

and also skill training leading to employment placement support. It is desirable that such services are provided at village level.

There is a general demand for development of natural resources like through NREGA and watershed development. However, poorest families are keen on access and control over the natural resources. There is also demand to facilitate access to Govt programs and also to facilitate formation/strengthening of need based community organizations. LRCs have been able contribute towards facilitation of Govt programs, development of natural resources and formation/strengthening of community based organizations.

Enterprise and employment facilitation services are the most the critical gap in LRC initiative. The LRCs may have to reorient itself to address the key community needs either directly or in partnership with organizations. Study team felt that the Unique Selling Proposition (USP) of LRCs has been on contributing towards effective program delivery; which is also a community need. It may be appropriate to build on the strength of capacity building related to program delivery and move towards “Livelihood Programming in District” as a theme than getting into “Direct Livelihood Facilitation” at household/community level.

4 Experience of other LRC Initiatives

Experience of other LRCs or LRC type initiatives has been captured mainly through review of literature. Further clarity was also obtained while interacting with functionaries of different Resource Organizations i.e. part of APARD/CRD led Consortium of Resource Organizations. The LRCs reviewed included DFID LRC, ODI, IDRC, CGAP, Asia Resource Centre for mF, The Livelihood School, Indian School of mF for Women, Tata Dhan Academy, XIDAS, NLRC - GVT, Outreach, CAPART Nodal NGOs, IFFDC LRC, WOTR, BAIF WASSON, TERI, Akshara, Access Dev Services, APMAS, MYRADA and MSSRF. The focus was to get an overview of experience with regard to LRCs at different levels.

International level LRCs are focusing mainly on knowledge management, research (mainly Action Research), innovation and scaling up successful initiatives (like different mF models). Such efforts are led by bilateral, multilateral or consortium of donor organizations and managed by Universities, Research Institutions or Consulting Firms. These initiatives are generally grant driven.

Emphasis of National/State level LRCs is on capacity building with primary focus on training. There is also focus on creating a cadre of development professionals related to promotion of livelihoods. Such LRCs are led/managed by large NGOs.

In some cases, they are led by bilateral/multilateral projects and managed by Government. These LRCs are generally managed by grant support. There have been efforts to generate income through consultancy, but with limited success.

LRC initiative at district/division level is very limited. Such initiatives have come up through bilateral livelihood projects like APRLP and WORLP. In these LRCs, focus is on training and exposure visit. These LRCs are managed by either by Government or NGOs; and funded by grant or regular schemes of Govt.

There is hardly any LRC efforts at community level i.e. village or panchayat level. Some of the ICT/e Governance initiatives include “Livelihood Information Services”.

Summary

Most of the LRCs have been promoted based on program experience. Successful implementation of livelihood programs by Professional Organizations has given confidence to promote LRCs. The idea has been to share the experiences and build capacity of other organizations associated with livelihoods promotion. It is observed that thrust of LRCs at international level is on information sharing. The thrust of National/State level LRCs is on training and exposure visit (training plus). Currently, LRCs have limited focus to work on specific sector, commodity or theme. Overall focus has been to work on “Livelihood Programs” than “Livelihood Services”. The limited focus on direct livelihood promotion needs has also been observed in respect of LRCs in AP.

5 Best Practices and Learning

5.1 What went on well?

The following details the key points, with regard “what went on well?” in context of LRC initiative in AP:

- Legitimacy through MoU motivated NGOs to anchor LRCs
- Infrastructure support promoted visibility of LRCs
- Concept of anchoring led to creation of identity for LRCs in different locations
- Continuity of personnel at CRD level has contributed in clarity on vision of LRC; There has been no dilution of vision with regard to LRCs
- Utilization of CB Funds
- Increase in number of training, including residential trainings

5.2 What did not go well?

The following details the key points, with regard “what did not go well?” in context of LRC initiative in AP:

- Implementation of MoU in letter and spirit
- No operational plan for DLRC (except CB plan)
- Flow of Funds
- Linkage between DLRC and CLRCs; Distinction between CLRC and DLRC
- Gap between planning and implementation (like CB Plan)
- Inadequate momentum in facilitation/ coordination of professional/CB support to LRCs by APARD
- Involvement of Resource Organizations at State level, mainly clarity in their role
- Gap between vision at State level and Dist Level

5.3 Best Practices

Some of the best practices observed in LRC initiatives in AP include institutionalization of CB Planning process, focus on participatory & residential training, formal MoU for anchoring by NGOs, infrastructure support to LRCs, working with network of local resource persons and appropriate selection of

Course Director (linking to envisaged role). District focus Newsletter (in case of APMAS anchored DLRCs) can also be considered as a best practice.

Some of the emerging best practices were observed in case of APMAS anchored DLRCs. These include DLRC working closely with CLRCs and facilitating sharing of experience in livelihood promotion through District livelihood Learning Group (DLLG).

5.4 Learning

Some of the learning relating to LRC initiative in AP is given below:

- **Initiation of an idea** (like LRC) gets accepted when it is led by a project (like APRLP) than by Government
- **Clarity in Vision** evolves when stakeholders are involved from the beginning
- **Institutional Framework** gets accepted when there is clarity of roles; and becomes strong only when key person (like PD - DWMA) is proactive
- **Anchoring by NGOs** becomes possible only through formal mechanism (MoU); Resource organizations gets motivated in long term anchoring only if there is scope for contribution in knowledge management
- **Policy Direction** can best be provided through collective thinking of Resource NGOs (like Consortium of Resource Organizations)
- **Professional support** in thematic areas can be best accessed through one to one linkage with Resource Organizations
- **Broad based Governance** (of DLRCs) is critical in seeking involvement/participation of stakeholders and be active in knowledge management

6 Summary Findings and Way Forward

6.1 Summary Findings

Livelihoods Resource Centres in AP are visualized as long term resource centres to address need for capacity building and other resource centre services relating to livelihood promotion at district/community level. During the last 3 years, LRC initiative has taken shape. There has been significant progress with respect to number of trainings and utilization of CB funds. In the past, focus of LRCs has been on effective delivery of livelihood programs. Besides capacity building of primary and secondary stakeholders, efforts by LRCs have resulted in increased awareness and effective delivery of DWMA programs at community level. LRCs have already emerged as effective organizations for coordination of training programs. This can be considered as first major step towards formation of Resource Centres. In this initiative, NGOs have been associated in anchoring, providing professional support and contributing through Consortium of Resource Organizations.

With support of AKF, APMAS has been associated in anchoring 2 DLRCs, providing professional support to 10 CLRCs (in the operational area of 2 DLRCs) and playing an active role in Consortium of Resource Organizations. Overall effort has been towards developing 2 Model DLRCs. With limited time and resources, APMAS has been able to work towards developing model DLRCs. The focus has been to get involved in activities beyond training.

Overall LRC initiative in Andhra Pradesh and effort of APMAS for developing model DLRCs has provided several best practices and learning. It has also generated several areas for reflection.

6.2 Areas of Reflection

The study team further analyzed/reflected the findings, learning and best practices generated through this study with the original vision of LRC initiative. The following are some key points for reflection to generate ideas for way forward:

- What should be the **focus** of resource centres: Should these be focusing on delivery of training programs or going beyond to facilitate promotion of livelihoods in the district?

- What should be the **thematic scope** of resource centres – Should they be limiting on only NRM or broad base towards supporting themes such as micro enterprises, market based livelihood promotion, etc. ?
- What should be the **client base** for the centres – Should they be limited only to the Government departments and programs or go beyond in supporting other livelihood
- What **range of services** that these centres should be providing to enable achievement of Vision – Should these be limited only to training or include service delivery and knowledge creation
- **Who all need to be involved** in delivering these services – Should these be only DLRC/ CLRC or go beyond to include other thematic organizations that may bring in specific expertise in sub-sectors, such as livestock, poultry, market facilitation, etc.?
- What **level of operations** that LRCs should be addressing and **whose needs** – Should LRCs be working only at District and Cluster Levels or have engagement at the village level through certain facilitation processes? In terms of the need, can these LRCs go beyond in addressing the needs of the communities apart from the needs of the programs?
- What will be **sources of funds** for LRCs – Should these be limited only to DWMA or State funded or can go beyond in generating their own funds through service provision at district level?
- What should be the **ideal duration of engagement** of these LRCs – Should these be one-off engagements based on programs or should these be run on a long-term basis?

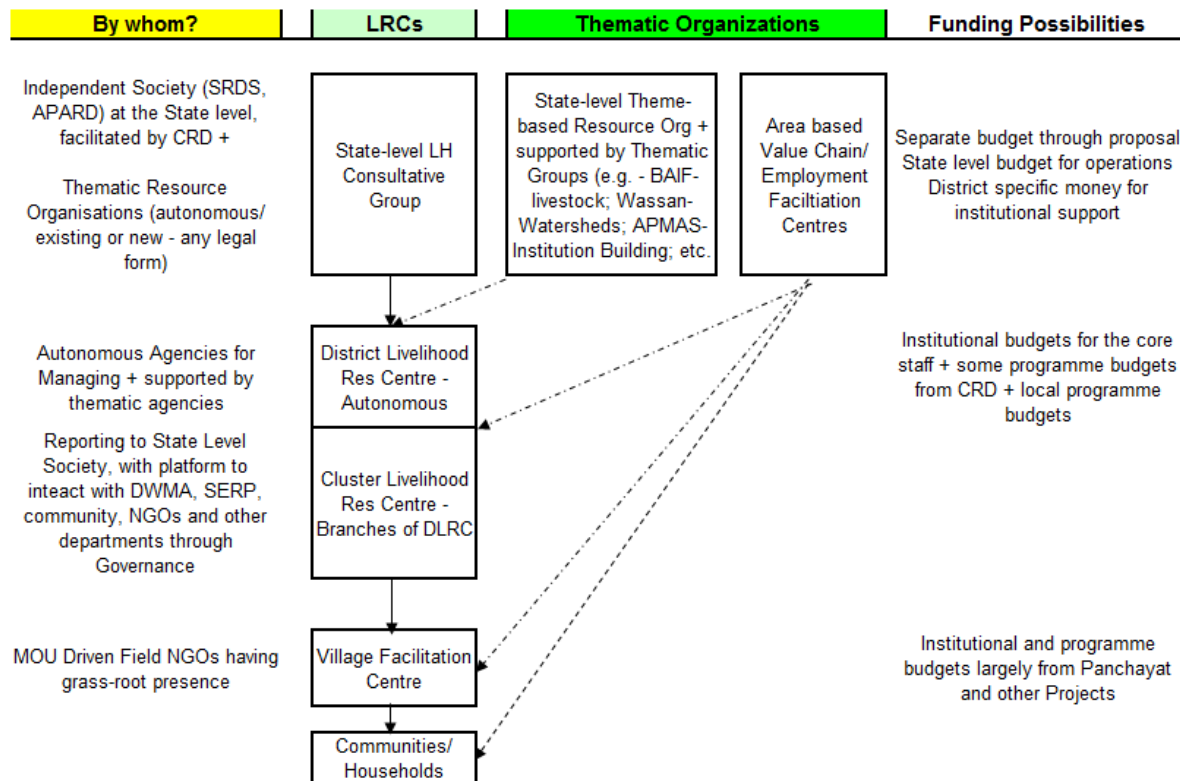
6.3 Way Forward

Based on the reflections, the study team suggests that LRC initiative in AP need to function on long term continuous basis with effort towards livelihood promotion (both NRM and Non NRM based), which would include both livelihood program delivery and livelihood facilitation. There is need for LRCs to move from service delivery to knowledge creation. In due course, the client base of LRCs can expand to go beyond DWMA covering other line departments, NGOs and private companies.

6.3.1 Proposed Institutional Mechanism to Operationalise the Vision

Based on the areas of reflection, supported by summary findings, learning and best practices, this assessment study has proposed “Institutional Framework for LRC Initiative in AP”.

The following diagram details the proposed institutional framework for LRC initiative in AP:



The LRC initiative could be further strengthened by working towards operationalizing this framework. In this framework, broadly 4 types of LRCs are envisaged at different levels i.e.

- **Village Level:** Village Livelihoods Facilitation Teams
- **Area Level:** Enterprise (Value Chain) and Employment specific Livelihood Resource Centres; The operational area would vary with type of value chains and employment
- **Dist Level:** District Livelihoods Resource Centre
- **State Level:** Theme based Livelihoods Resource Centres

Village Livelihoods Facilitation Teams

Community and also primary/secondary stakeholders have expressed the need for continuous facilitation services to support/strengthen different livelihoods. Poorest families expect such services at household or at least at village level. It would be difficult either for CLRCs (mandate being capacity building) or the Project Implementing Agencies (mandate being time bound project implementation) to

provide long term facilitation services relating to livelihood promotion. Hence, there is need to promote Village Livelihoods Facilitation Teams at village level.

These Facilitation Teams can be promoted, managed and governed by active village based organizations preferably Village organizations (VOs). Progressive Farmers and Entrepreneurs in the village/nearby area can serve as Resource Persons. An advisory body of progressive Farmers and Entrepreneurs in the Village can provide guide the activities of facilitation centres. Such facilitation centres can best be facilitated by local field based NGOs, with at least 3 years experience in livelihood promotion in the village.

VO Governing Body in consultation with Advisory Body of the facilitation centre can select the facilitating NGO. Village Organization/ Facilitation Teams could be financially supported by Gram Panchayat. DWMA could support facilitating NGO to manage a cluster of Village Livelihoods Facilitation Teams. Further, this effort at village level can be linked to on going ICT/e Governance initiatives. Village Livelihoods Facilitation Teams would access livelihood programme related support from District Livelihoods Resource Centre (DLRC) and Enterprise/Employment facilitation support from Area based Enterprise/Employment Facilitation Centres.

District Livelihoods Resource Centres

District Livelihoods Resource Centres (current CLRCs being branch of DLRCs) can focus on strengthening livelihood programs, developing/operationalizing District Livelihoods Plan and facilitating knowledge management at district level. This may be promoted as an Autonomous Public Society through Public Private Community Partnership (PPCP - Government represented by DWMA, DRDA & SERP, Resource NGOs, Private Companies and Community Leaders). Long term involvement of Professional Resource NGOs would be critical in strengthening the DLRCs. The Professional Resource NGOs could be involvement in governance and in day to day management of DLRC.

Organizations having expertise in at least one livelihood thematic area and 2 years experience in promotion of livelihoods in the district can be involved as Management Agency of the DLRC. The Representative of Management Agency may serve as Convener of Governing Body of DLRC. Management Agency needs to be involved at least for 5 years, with scope for renewal. Based on an independent impact study at end of 4 years, the contract for Management Agency can be renewed. DWMA would continue to play critical role of facilitation of District Livelihoods Resource Centre. Further, DWMA would utilize services of DLRC as a major client. There would also be need for continuous monitoring and review by CRD.

Government may have to provide core funding support to DLRCs, core funding support to Management Agency of DLRCs. Further funding support to DLRC Management Agency linking to District Livelihood Plan would go a long way in operationalizing Livelihoods Resource Centres (beyond training and capacity building) at district level.

Area based Enterprise /Employment Facilitation Centres

Although it is desirable that one Resource Centre provides both livelihood program support and facilitation support; experience shows that it is practically difficult to provide both the support services. Experience and expertise required for facilitating specific enterprise/employment and the livelihood programme is quite different. There is need to promote/strengthen Area based Enterprise/Employment Facilitation Centres. These centres would work closely with Village Livelihood Facilitation Centres. They would focus on providing end to end support relating to specific enterprise/employment in facilitation mode.

Such centres can be housed with in Private Companies or Resource NGOs focusing on specific enterprise/employment. The area of operation would relate to type of enterprise/employment and the capacity of organization to provide required facilitation services. Such Facilitation Centres may be supported with performance (employment generated or enterprises strengthened/promoted) linked grant. Further project based grant support would be required to meet infrastructure & recurring costs.

At present, there are very few Enterprise/Employment focused Organizations. Hence, despite best efforts in livelihood promotion, sustainability of livelihoods (in absence of hand holding facilitation) remains an issue. In certain employment and enterprises, there would be need to promote new organization to serve as Area based Enterprise/Employment Facilitation Centres.

Such facilitation centres could be supported under Government of India schemes like SETI scheme (part of SGSY), special SGSY and different Mission mode initiatives like Horticulture Mission. This would also require special effort through Special Schemes of State Government. Meanwhile, such Facilitation Centres can be promoted on pilot basis, with support of Bilateral/Multilateral Agencies and INGO.

Theme based Livelihoods Resource Centres

Institutions working on specific themes like agriculture, livestock, horticulture, market linkage, enterprise promotion, institution building and livestock can function as State level Theme Based Livelihood Resource Centres. These Resource Centres can offer services like knowledge management, Training of Trainers (ToT), module development to DLRCs. They can also support DLRCs to conduct livelihood studies and develop District livelihood Plan (beyond CB Plan). Some of the Resource Organizations, already part of State Level Consortium may take lead in becoming Theme based Resource Centres.

Theme based Resource Centres may be provided project based funding support linked to project proposal(s). These centres can offer fee based capacity building services to district level secondary stakeholders. They can also offer assignment specific services. Theme based Resource Centres could be supported by accessing special fund under recent Common Guidelines for watershed development of MORD, GoI.

Operationalizing the Proposed Institutional Framework

Past initiative linked to CLRCs and DLRCs has been quite positive. There is need to consider CLRCs as branches of DLRC. This would promote organic linkage between current DLRC and CLRCs. This would further contribute towards focus on livelihoods promotion at district level. In due course, DLRCs can become autonomous institution.

Currently, field based NGOs are involved in anchoring of CLRCs. It would be important to seek active involvement of field based NGOs to promote as many Village Livelihood Facilitation Centres as possible.

Role of Resource Organizations (having strong thematic expertise) need be broadened than just anchoring or providing generic professional support. Some of them can become Theme based Livelihoods Resource Centre and also to take up responsibility of managing DLRCs.

However, there is need for renewed thrust to promote/strengthen organizations working on specific Value Chain/Skill Based Employment to enable emergence of Area based Enterprise/Employment Facilitation Centres.

The proposed Institutional Framework for LRC initiative in AP has been visualized from a long term perspective. This would require involvement and support of different stakeholders both with in and outside the Government.

6.4 Short Term Recommendations

In line with the proposed framework, the following details the short term recommendations of the study:

- Contract for anchoring DLRCs could be long-term i.e. at least three years. The contract could be renewed based on a review at the end of 2 years. This would maintain continuity of activities of Resource Centres
- Consider CLRCs as branches of DLRCs and have only one anchoring agency per district
- Anchoring agencies may be provided financial support for institutional involvement, cash flow management and to take up resource centre activities (based on experience of APMAS anchored DLRCs)
- LRCs may facilitate with support of implementing agencies (but not get directly involved in) demonstration of livelihood promotion models or development of model villages.
- There could be indication/detailing of activities relating to Resource Centre Activities (beyond CB) in the MoU for anchoring.
- Corpus fund may be used as working capital of LRCs. A specific guideline could be developed for the purpose.
- DLRCs may be supported with infrastructure for residential training facility for secondary stakeholders
- CRD may focus on mobilization of special funding support from GoI and Bilateral/Multilateral donors to operationalize the proposed institutional framework
- There is need for close and continuous monitoring and review by CRD
- INGOs like AKF may further focus on developing Model Resource Centres - in line with the proposed framework
- There is also need for innovative efforts by INGOs to promote Area based Enterprise/Employment Facilitation Centres

7 Recommendation to APMAS

With proven experience and expertise in capacity building of Self Help Groups (SHGs) and SHG federations, APMAS has entered into livelihood promotion. Core strength of APMAS relates to “Institutional Development” as a theme. APMAS has been at the forefront of supporting LRC initiative in Andhra Pradesh. It has been an active member of consortium of resource organizations, anchored 2 DLRCs and provided professional support to 10 CLRCs associated with the 2 DLRCs. With support to AKF, the effort of APMAS has been directed towards developing model DLRCs.

The study team observed that effort towards developing Model DLRCs is in line with envisaged vision of LRCs in the State. Such an effort has gone through several challenges. On the one hand, APMAS was entering into the field of livelihood promotion, while on the other hand the LRC initiative was just taking shape. Despite different challenges, APMAS initiative has generated some of the learning and best practices, which can be replicated by other DLRCs. This includes dissemination of information through district focused monthly newsletters and sharing of experiences through District Livelihood Learning Group.

However, it is too early to assess impact of most of the resource centre focused activities (other than training and capacity building). The APMAS team may have to continue to pursue different activities, which are already initiated. The team may periodically reflect on the on going initiatives with focus on district livelihood plan and knowledge management. This would also relate to overall strategy of APMAS on livelihood promotion and its focus with respect to the proposed Institutional Framework for LRC initiative in AP (in case it gets accepted by stakeholders).

The study team recommends APMAS:

- To further pursue its efforts towards promoting 2 Model DLRCs
- Be long term Management/Anchoring Agency for at least 4 DLRCs (including current 2 DLRCs)
 - To become a State/National level Thematic Resource Centre focusing on Institution Building relating to livelihood promotion
 - Work towards refining institutional framework and developing operational guideline for autonomous DLRC (based on experience of anchoring DLRCs)
 - Develop operational guideline for Village Livelihoods Facilitation Centres.

8 Limitations of the Study

This study is largely qualitative in nature. The findings, analysis and interpretations relates to responses received from different stakeholders associated with LRC initiatives in Andhra Pradesh. The time spent in field study (about 4 days in a district) may not have been adequate to capture all the dimensions of functioning of LRCs. In the interest of optimum utilization of time, the field study (interaction with stakeholders) was facilitated by APMAS Livelihood Team. This may have generated some bias while getting response from stakeholders. The study team of Vrutti Livelihood Resource Centre has been conscious of these limitations and maintained objectivity in analysis and interpretation of data.

Annexure 1: Role of LRC Anchoring Agency

- Nominate a representative from Anchor Agency, who would be liaising and coordinating with the First party and attend the meetings/reviews held by DWMA along with the Course Director
- Anchor the District/Cluster Level Livelihoods Resource Centre with the support of Course Director and Computer Operator cum Assistant treating them as part of the NGO team.
- Ensure the availability of necessary training facilities and conduct of quality trainings at the LRC in coordination with the First Party
- Support to local MDTs/PIAs/WDTs in assessing capacity building needs in their respective watershed program area.
- Assess the CB needs of the D/CLRC team and provide such inputs to them
- Consolidate the action plans of associated watersheds, other RD programmes with the active support of PFAs and develop a calendar of capacity building events at CLRC level.
- Identify "resource persons" from among NGOs/ CBO/ Successful Practitioners who are capable of imparting necessary Capacity building / Training to the stakeholders.
- Follow the cost norms developed at state level for different capacity building inputs, facilities and services at D/CLRC.
- Implementation, review and monitoring of the capacity building activities against the action plan, against the payment made by Village Organization/ Grama Panchayat/ PFA.
- Maintain all necessary records as mentioned in the Annexure 3 of MoU
- Develop business development plans & systems at D/CLRC for the enabling the center grow into sustainable institutions.
- Report the progress to the First Party on monthly basis.

