

## Background note on

### Andhra Pradesh Livelihood Learning Group - Natural Resources Management

Over the last decade, Andhra Pradesh (AP) has witnessed many livelihood promotion programmes – both large and small by different institutions - NGOs as well as Government. In spite of all these initiatives about 53 % of the poorest of the poor in the state do not earn adequately to meet their total consumption needs according to the AP Livelihoods status study by Indian School of livelihood Promotion and Mahila Abhivrrudhi Society Andhra Pradesh. It is predicted that approximately 15 million persons (1 million per annum on an average) would enter the workforce in the state from 2005 to 2020. This requires pro-poor growth of the economy, which in turn requires investments in different sectors, particularly those in which the poor work. For the rural masses “employed” in traditional livelihoods, enhanced investments need to be made in natural resources, human development and rural and small infrastructure. Hence one of the foremost challenges of the livelihood promotion institutions is to ensure productive employment for these persons along with the existing 40 million workers. In this connection, sustenance/augmentation of livelihood promotion efforts and enrichment of its impact on large scale are of paramount importance.

It was in this context that APMAS and ISLP – BASIX organized a workshop on ‘Sustainable Livelihoods: Emerging Practices’ during 1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2005. Over the 2 days deliberation, it was discussed that for addressing the livelihood challenge in AP, a multi pronged strategy focusing on the following aspects would have to be taken up by the Government, NGOs and the support institutions:

- Capacity building at multiple levels
- Strengthen appropriate institutions
- Enhance productivity of natural resources
- Focus on livelihood finances
- Manage risk
- Create enabling policy environment

#### Enhance Productivity of Natural Resources

There has been some fascination among livelihood promotion agencies to promote off/non-farm activities. However, the data indicates, a large number of livelihoods are in the primary sector. Also most non-farm activities are directly or indirectly dependent on inputs from the primary sector. Therefore, the most significant area for livelihoods promotion is investment in enhancing the productivity of natural resources including land, water, energy, forests and livestock. This will lead to highest employment generation with high GSDP growth and least income disparity.

Different agencies involved in livelihood promotion have demonstrated innovative ways of productivity enhancement and effective management of natural resources. Several organizations have been working on promotion of water based, land based and livestock based livelihoods apart from the non-farm activities.

| The land-based activities being introduced include improved nursery/grafting, tree based

farming system, composting, cultivation of vegetables and medicinal plants, and sericulture. Livestock based livelihoods options such as dairy, breeding of bullocks as draught animals, goat/sheep rearing and backyard poultry are being developed depending on the availability of resources. Activities such as sericulture and poultry are seen as low investment and low risk options. Some of the organization like FES is working through management of commons including the revenue wastelands and the reserve forests. These areas have been restored through community protection and investment in afforestation and soil and moisture conservation measures. The impact on these interventions can be clearly seen in the form of incomes from various resources which are managed like watersheds, forestlands, commons etc

Still we have a many challenges and a long way to go a head which include:

- How to facilitate institutional mechanisms and systems for natural resource management and extraction
- Up scaling the various best practices in NRM
- Mitigation of issues of inequity in access and usage of natural resources
- Improving the productivity of natural resources of marginal and small farmers, land less and many more.....

The above very well fits into the agenda of livelihoods learning group (LLG) – a group of people drawn from practitioners, academicians, and researchers, interested in a particular theme - that will meet at regular intervals to share and learn from each other. Looking at the existing level of efforts in natural resource management, there are many. Some of them are evolving appropriate strategies, effective networking/linkages between institutions, quality of programmes, bridging gap between theory and practice etc

There seems to be several issues for the impact the natural resource management initiatives intends to create. Addressing these issues requires concerted efforts by all the partners / stakeholders and needs long-term vision and strategic plan. Andhra Pradesh Livelihood Learning Group – Natural Resource Management thematic group plans to identify the emerging needs of the sector in the challenging environment for livelihoods promotion and find a step ahead to move in this direction.