

INDIA: BIHAR RURAL LIVELIHOODS DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

TRIBAL (Indigenous People's) DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Government of Bihar has initiated the Bihar Rural Livelihoods Development Project (BRLDP) with the support from the World Bank. This is being implemented through the Bihar Rural Livelihoods Promotion Society (BRLPS). BRLPS through the BRLDP aims to improve rural livelihoods and work towards social and economic empowerment of the rural poor especially women.

Objectives:

The stated objectives of the project are:

- Improving rural livelihoods and enhance social and economic empowerment of the rural poor.
- Developing organizations of the rural poor and producers to enable them to access & negotiate better services, credit and assets from public and private sector agencies and financial institutions.
- Investing in building capacity of public and private service providers and
- Playing a catalytic role in promoting development of microfinance and agribusiness sectors.

Project Components:

The different components of the BRLDP are the following:

- *Community Institution Development:* Formation and strengthening of Self Help Groups (SHGs), Producer Groups and Federations; Strengthening and forming producer and economic groups around key commodities, non-farm products and services; and, expanding membership of poor in existing commodity cooperatives and producer groups.
- *Community Investment Fund:* Group level investments for rural livelihood enhancement and for social services and social action.
- *Technical Assistance Funds:* Including Civil Society Organization Capacity Building Fund, Agribusiness Development Facility, Innovations Grant Fund and Micro Finance Technical Assistance and Innovations Fund.

Tribal Development Plan:

The Social Assessment undertaken for the project clearly brought out that rural landless and those belonging to the Scheduled Caste (SCs) and also Scheduled Tribe (STs) community form integral part of poverty-stricken and marginalized groups. Access to education and other capacity building inputs, sources of production, technology and institutions define and determine level of poverty as they are important tools to ensure access and control over opportunity and productive assets. The findings further indicated

that the poor can open up, build capacity for articulation and innovation given an enabling environment and participative frame work.

The tribal population in the state is 0.9 percent of the population and of the six project districts of Muzaffarpur, Nalanda, Gaya, Khagaria, Madhubani and Purnea, it is only Purnea that has Scheduled Tribe (ST) population of 6 percent of the total population. The socio-economic data for the STs reflect a status very similar to the SCs and marginalized sections of the Bihar rural society. However, in order to gain a better understanding of the ST population, a separate study was commissioned which involved wide ranging consultation with ST population and their representatives. The STs in Purnea possess primitive traits, distinctive culture, geographical isolation, shyness of contact and backwardness. Other key findings were:

- a) The tribal population brought from the erstwhile Santhalparagana to clean the forest and make the land cultivable, were subsequently given plots of land to cultivate in lieu of the labor they offered to the land lords.
- b) After independence a system of temporary settlement of land(called “*Sikemy*”) was worked out and given to some of the tribal families but the land rights remained illusive.
- c) The seventies saw skirmishes between the tribal communities and the landlords including court cases.
- d) The tribal communities have deficient land base and do not have access to technology and inputs to turn their land into productive asset.
- e) Tribals are not part of any social or economic institutions.
- f) As tribal population constitutes less than one percent of the state’s population, the state has no special programs nor is it a beneficiary of any central programs for tribals.

Key elements of Tribal Plan: The tribal strategy has recognized and incorporated certain key elements related to Institutional strengthening and development, endowment/asset and skill development, capacity building, enabling inputs and policy influencing inputs.

Key elements	Key considerations and suggested interventions
<i>Information</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project information will be made available in the tribal villages and to tribal families in a culturally sensitive manner at the same time keeping in view the literacy levels and other key characteristics of tribal habitations. ▪ Local artists and local art forms to be used.
<i>Inclusion</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All ST families in villages with both dispersed and concentrated populations, will be organized into SHGs. Villages with large ST population will have exclusive tribal SHGs. ▪ Strengthening of social institutions of the Tribal community along with federations will be taken up. Local tribal traditions and leadership will be involved in the process of institutions building
<i>Investments</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Investments will be supported in land, which many tribal families own, along with improvements in production practices, productivity and marketing. ▪ Economic empowerment through improved livelihoods and incomes will enable Tribal families their de jure rights on agriculture land which they

	<p>currently possess based on temporary settlement into de facto rights.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support will also be sought from the District Administration to strengthen land rights. ▪ Support for skill development of Tribal youth ▪ Potential indigenous skills to be explored for other livelihoods opportunities
<i>Implementation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff working in villages with significant tribal population to receive sensitization trainings ▪ Preference for community members who are sensitive to the needs of Tribals to be given preference for para professionals ▪ Partnerships with Technician service providers – individuals and organizations that have experience working with Tribals ▪ Convergence with government programs for tribals to enhance benefits

Institutional Arrangements:

The project’s institutional arrangements are built as support structure starting from community and village level and going further to block, District and State level; and BRLPS working as a promotional and umbrella agency for rural livelihood promotion in Bihar. The communities at the village level will be organised into Self Help Groups and their Federations, and Livelihood Institutions/Producers’ Groups and federations. Block Project Implementation Unit (BPIU) will be set-up in each of the 42 project blocks and will play a critical role in project implementation. District Project Coordination Unit (DPCU) will be set-up in the six project districts headed by a District Project Coordinator (DPC) and will be responsible for coordinating, implementing and managing project activities in the district.

State Project Management Unit (SPMU) is headed by the Project Director, supported by a team of professionals with expertise in institution building, capacity building, social development, livelihoods, microfinance, communication, monitoring and evaluation, human resources development, and finance. Considering the limited service providers that are available in the state, the SPMU will have in-house arrangements in the form of “Cells” to plan, manage and coordinate activities in key areas of Training and Capacity Building, Business Facilitation and Partnership Development. Bihar Rural Livelihoods Promotion Society (BRLPS) will provide guidance and advise to the program, facilitate and coordinate project’s functioning and periodically monitor progress.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (ME&L):

The overall project ME&L System of a) input and output monitoring, b) process monitoring, and c) impact evaluation would ensure effective implementation of Tribal Development Plan. Implementation progress will be based on disaggregated data for the ST population, their institutions and livelihoods.

Accountability and Grievance Redressal Mechanisms:

The project has set-up both external and internal mechanisms to ensure regular feedback to project management unit and the all project stakeholders. At the community level, regular books of accounts will be maintained by individual Self Help Groups, Block level Federations (BLFs), Livelihood Activity Groups and other Community Based Organizations. An elected social audit committee at the village level will be responsible for verifying use of loans. In addition, an elected community procurement committee will be trained in expenditure tracking, financial supervision and procurement to ensure transparency in transactions. Regular report cards and score cards developed to rate all service providers, including the BRLPS and Village Organization or BLF will provide regular feedback on performance and transparency of services. The findings from the cards will be disclosed, published and shared with stakeholders to identify corrective actions. The BRLPS will carry out internal and external audits on a regular basis to supplement the information from above. It will also hire an independent agency to undertake baseline and impact evaluation as well as independent media monitoring on a periodic basis.

The project will set up a grievance redressal cell at the state level. There will also be a mechanism available for reporting of irregularities through a corruption call center. Information on the use of this will be provided to community widely in order for them to access this facility and seek response.

Consultations

The TDP was developed based on consultations with tribal communities and other stakeholders including Panchayat members, local agencies, and civil society institutions. The outcome of the consultations have been used while describing the tribal situation and also in formulating the TDP. A *multiple stakeholders consultation* was held on March 30, 2007 at Damdaha in Purnea district wherein the conclusions from the Tribal Development Plan, the project objective and strategy; and implementation arrangements were presented. The participants included community members, representatives of CBOs, civil society, NGOs as well as government departments. The participants endorsed the approach and the provisions of the TDP.