

Planning Preparation cum Orientation in NEI DBSS
From 30th March to 1st April 2008
Fr. Wyld's Memorial Retreat Center, Tezpur

Context: The DBSS NEI has been traveling quite actively in their development journey in past 3 years' "Let Justice Roll" phase. As a part of 10 years perspective plan on "Building Communities of Resistance and Hope", DBSS has to enter into its second 3years phase. Therefore, it was a time to map their past 3 years development journey collectively with DBSS staffs, Leaders from People's organizations & SBSS personnel in order to make required corrections and strategize their journey of second phase from October 2008-11.

Participants: All DBSS staffs and Leaders from "People's Organizations" i.e.

- CAD (Community Action For Development)
- SWORAJ Janasangathan
- PNJSS (Purbanchal Nari Jagriti Sangram Parishad)
- MAGUP (mansiri anchalik gaon unnayan parishad)
- RDIS (Rural Development Incentive Society)
- DAHAR

Methodology:

- Group work,
- Interaction and
- Facilitation to realize DBSS as where are they today on their 10 years development path.

Process: All participants, after required introduction of each other as well as of the program, were divided into three groups. Since people from communities were more in numbers; they were divided into two groups and one group was of DBSS staffs. Three participants from EHD Disha Darshan were kept as observer in each group to provide their feedback during presentation.

A. Data collection and its Use in movement building:

To initiate the discussion; the question, "*What have you done in past three years?*" was given to all three groups. The group members discussed and listed out various activities on chart papers and presented it with little explanation.

- The group No.1 gave more emphasis on awareness meetings and capacity building activities.
- The group No.2 talked about SHG saving and credit, Jansunwai, RTI, 9 Social Security Schemes.
- The (DBSS Staffs) group No.3 talked about Panchayat elections and fielding their candidates in it. It was reported that DBSS and its POs fielded 4 candidates but only 1 could win and rest 3 were defeated.

The facilitator asked basic questions to each group after their presentation, "**What was the basis** of awareness meeting, capacity building, Jansunwai, fighting for 9 Social security schemes or fielding candidates?" *How did you reach to conclusion that reference communities/ how many people need it?*

After little more interaction, the participants realized that though they have collected data it has not been referred while planning their activities. They did not take data seriously for analysis as well as to share it with the communities. They expressed that they don't know as how to build link with various existing data frames and use it for advocacy.

Another point, which was taken quite seriously by the participants, was method of data collection e.g. there has to be a difference between government people who collect data for census and our DBSS/PO leaders. For that few questions were asked to interact with the participants. Do the reference communities regard us as a part of their families? If yes, then are we able to draw picture of their suffering and its seriousness? Are we able to classify people according to their sufferings and converted their problems (how many life suffer) into issue? Are we able to share it with staff, POs and the communities before planning our activities?

It was accepted that most of the time DBSS staffs and PO leaders also collected data like census agents. They collected it and kept it in their shelves and used it only for report writing or to fulfill the demand of the resource sharing partners. They unknowingly ignored to collect data from people's perspective with *Samvedna* and *Accountability*. Therefore, in Panchayat elections their 75% candidates, in spite of assuming overwhelming victory, were not supported by masses. The election manifesto of our candidates was quite general in nature. It failed to address people's hopes and aspirations. Thus, knowing the reference communities with *Samvedna* and *Accountability* become first revisiting point for staffs and leaders of POs.

In order to check the process, few questions were asked by the facilitator, "Is it important to know communities in such manner? Does it have any relevance in our work? The responses came from the participants; knowing communities with *Samvedna* and *Accountability* helps to build up trust and relationship with suffering communities more personally. It helps in collecting true information and expression of the people. Such information helps to identify various problems, its seriousness and under currents in the communities. It helps to understand power dynamics in the area as who have & have not control over power and resources in the area. Therefore, it gives strong base to build up issue and people's organization.

The participants accepted that though they have been interacting with suffering communities quite often, it was more for organizing activities. They realized to change their method of data collection and its use for movement building. They also realized if data collection is not objectively appropriate then identifying problems and framing up of the issue will be quite vague. Objective of the POs will not be specific and coherence among POs and CBOs will be missing.

B. Issue of Livelihood:

Thus question was asked to the facilitator by the participants, "What can be the possible steps from data collection process to movement building on the issue of livelihood", In order to explain the process, the facilitator interacted with participants through question, "Do you think that in our society all people are same? Obvious answer was no. Then, how are they different? Responses were, people are poor and rich, dalits and upper caste, male and female. Therefore, the basis of knowing communities should be Caste, Class and Gender, the facilitator replied. He explained it further in order to identify problems and framing up the issue by asking few questions and putting up the response of the participants: E.g. for Santhal community

Knowing the Reference Communities And identifying their problems (village level)



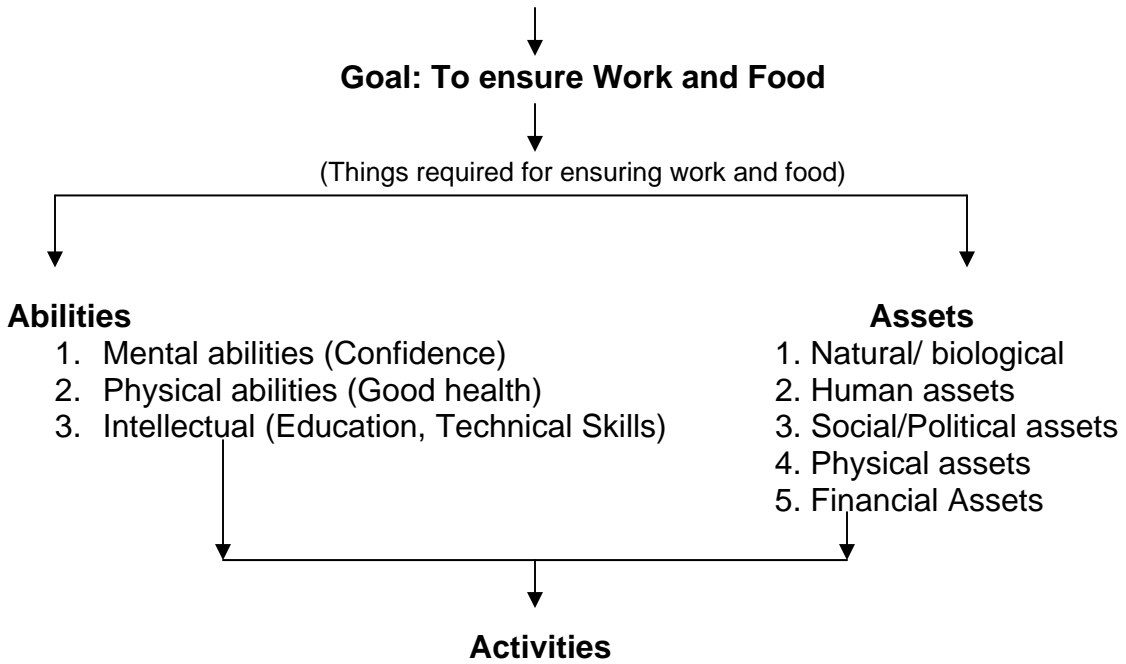
Caste/ Tribe (Identity & Problems)	Class work/problem	Gender No. of Male and Female effected by the problem
1. Santhal: (Total population in the village / Reference communities) Problems of reference communities: A: Considered outsiders (No. of People) B: Discrimination in Development facilities (No. of People) C: No ST status (No. of people) D: ----- (No. of People) E: -----(No. of People)	A. Cultivator/Problems 1. Low Production (No. of People) 2. Inadequate Price (-----" 3. Lack of Irrigation (-----" B. Daily Labourer 1. Low wage (-----" 2. Irregular work (-----" 3. Inequality in wages(-----" 	(Women – No.) (Men-No.) (W-No.) (M-no) (W-No.) (M-no) (W-No.) (M-no) (W-No.) (M-no) (W-No.) (M-no) (W-No.) (M-no)
2. Mundas (No....)		
3. Nepalis (No....)		
4. Bodos (No....)		
5. Garos (No....)		
Problems/No. of People affected: A: B C D	Problems/No. of People affected: 1. 2. 3. 4.	Total Number of women and men affected from each problem:
The problem that affects maximum people in the village will become an issue.	The problem that affects maximum people in the village will become an issue.	The problem that affects one sex more will be priority for intervention

After illustration, maximum participants were of the opinion that maximum people in their communities in the villages do not have sufficient work and food. Therefore, the issue for them is having work opportunities in their area and enough food.

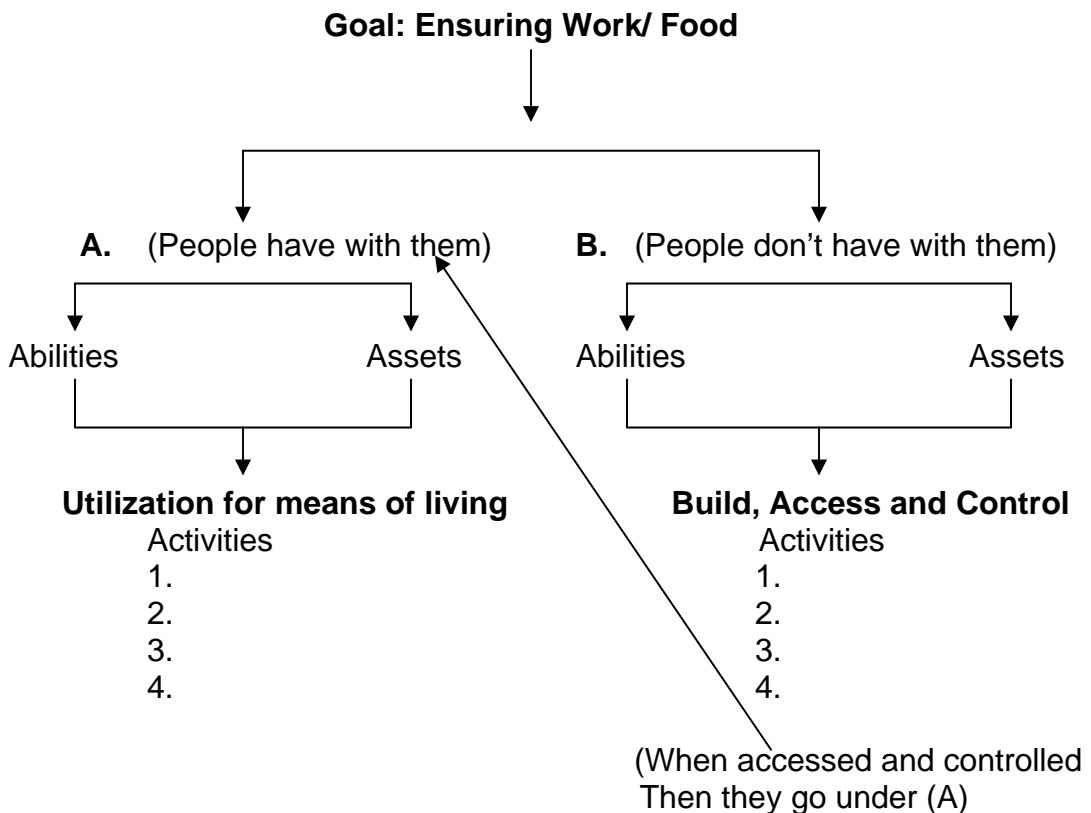
But the question was how to go about it. Therefore question was asked to the participants, "What are the things that one should possess for work and food". Participants were given group work on this question. They came up with lots of ideas and those were classified under abilities, **5 assets*** and activities.

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1. **Natural /biological:** the natural resources stocks (soil, water, air, genetic resources, flora and fauna etc.) and environmental services (hydrological cycle, pollution sinks etc.) from which resources flows and services useful for livelihoods are derived.
 2. **Social** (networks, social claims, social relations, affiliations, associations), Political (participation, empowerment-sometimes included in the 'social' category);
 3. **Human:** the skills, knowledge, ability to labour and good health and physical capability important for the successful pursuit of different livelihood strategies.(Education, labour, health, nutrition);
 4. **Physical:** (roads, clinics, market, schools bridges); and
 5. **Economic or Financial:** the capital base (cash, credit/debt, savings and other economic assets, including basic infrastructure and production equipment and technologies), which are essential for the pursuit of any livelihood strategy.

Issue: (X Number of) Reference People don't have work and therefore Food



It was found that people are more curious to possess things what they do not have but there was hardly any example where they have identified available community resources and utilized them for collective development. Therefore, a comprehensive frame of Sustainable livelihood approach and RBA was developed and explained.



It means if we have identified available potentials and resources within reference people then we should plan our activities in order to utilize those potential and resources for their socio-economic development.

If we have identified that (X number of male/female) people don't have required abilities and assets with them to ensure work and food to them, then, our activities should be geared towards building it up, access and controlled under the constitutional provisions and facilities. Since access and control requires political action, a charter of demand can be prepared; through CBOs & POs GS/Gram Panchayat and Legislative assembly can be approached. Politically representative from POs can be fielded in order to voice out the suffering of their people and bring about change. This will be process towards CBOs-PO-PM-AFP.

C. People's Organization:

The DBSS NEI have formed many "POs"

- CAD (Community Action For Development)
- SWORAJ Janasangathan
- PNJSS (Purbanchal Nari Jagriti Sangram Parishad)
- MAGUP (mansiri anchalik gaon unnayan parishad)
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Except PNJSS, which has some mass base, cadre and clarity at the grass roots, rests of the "POs" are functional either as groups or committees. They don't have any specific issue to deal with but whatever problem people bring to them they try to solve it. It was further realized through group exercise that these groups do not have any coherence and coordination on any specific issue with each other. Every one is doing every thing. For example, SWORAJ considers that it is the people's organization (umbrella body) but PNJSS does not accept it. CAD is quite active in its cluster but does not know what is happening to the people in other clusters.

It was realized by the participants that they lack common understanding on the issue. Lack of clarity on roles was visible among the existing CBO & PO. The groups have potentials to become PO and PM provided they identify people's need with Samvedna and accountability and build up collective understanding on the identified issue.

The participants realized that unless they have majority of the people/ village with them in one particular Panchayat area it is not possible to field their candidate in election and win. Few existing Panchayats have 12-16 villages but DBSS works in only 2-5 villages. The DBSS staff agreed to work on the re-organizing the area.

Gender:

The DBSS NEI has strong women cadre base but it was difficult to find as how many women have got Land Patta, Ration Card, and Job Card in their name. Though gender is considered as priority for women empowerment in the DBSS;

analysis was missing as exactly how many women and men are affected by a problem in any gram Sabha. The participant realized that when they draw their next three years plan they will specifically look into the realities of affected women and men. They will give more importance to the most affected sex and motivate and encourage its counterpart to support its development

CME:

This area was considered very critical by the DBSS staffs. When asked why? "Pastors believe in only prayer and they asked us to pray as well" one of the CE replied. Then, what is the problem in praying..... Don't you think that prayer is a powerful tool to bring the suffering of people before God and the congregation members? We like to advocate people's suffering before bureaucrats but feel uneasy to bring it before God and congregation? If pastor asks for cottage prayer meeting, then is it not an opportunity to go and share the struggle of the people to the congregation members through word of God?" If you participate in Christmas and Easter celebration; is it not an opportunity to interact with youth and encourage/organize them for solidarity and support on people's struggle?" asked the facilitator. It is not your interest but people's interest, which you need to respect in order to motivate and organize them.

The participants realized that they did not think in this way before. They forced their ideas and activities on the congregation members rather understanding their needs and activities and finding space in it for advocating people's issue. They found it quite useful and promised to exercise it in future.

Agenda for preparation in next 6 month (April-Sept 08):

Through interactions, group work and facilitation; participants were able to realize as where do they stand in their 10 years' development path. They agreed to work on the following agenda in next 6 months as preparation for next 3 years phase:

1. **Re-organizing Panchayat areas** (by having maximum village in one Panchayat) in order to have maximum impact of our interventions as well as in Panchayat elections.
2. **Going back to the communities** to understand their aspirations and needs with Samvedna and Accountability; identifying their problems, classifying them in a qualitative and quantities (understanding seriousness of problems and its effect on people's life and how many people are suffering with each problem at village, Panchayat and Block level).
3. **Identifying abilities and assets** that people have and don't have.
4. **Collectively positioning the issue** and building common understanding with all stake holders.
5. **Preparing specific (Qualitative/Quantity) charter of demand Or Political Agenda.** Evolving & assigning specific role to each CBOs and "PO" on the agenda with gender sensitivity.
6. **Rapport building with congregations** by involving in congregations' programs and its on going work.

The discussion was continued but the time factor not allowed to discuss more. "This process is very useful. Earlier we were confused and working with lack of clarity as a result database remained quite stagnant.....I feel this process should have been implemented earlier." Said Israel Sanga, Programme Organizer and other participants. Rev. Kawah thanked the facilitator and expressed, "we thought that we have reached to PM or to some extent APF but in these 3 days I have realized the reasons of our people's defeat in Panchayat Election....we need to re-position ourselves with specificity by keeping people's aspirations on top priority.....I promise with my team to do the necessary preparation in next 6 months".

Deepak Singh
Group Facilitator, Livelihood,
CNI-RCSA on Livelihood and Food Security
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