



## Improving Livelihoods of Small and Marginal Farmers in Korba District of Chhattisgarh

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### ABSTRACT

The project is mainly designed for improving the livelihoods of marginalized farming households with the objective of holistic livelihood development of small and marginal producers thus contributing towards sustained quality of life. The focus of this exercise was to layout means of livelihood based on the results obtained from project (outcomes), impacts and performance against the indicators set for the project. Both primary and secondary research methodologies have been adopted. Data collection instruments were designed to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. The study provides an understanding of the cluster in terms of demography, livelihood situation, extent of agriculture, livestock, gender, etc. and the description of the focal problems, challenges faced by the local people of the cluster. Based on all the findings, a new model has been proposed with the help of this survey which tells about overall framework for approach and strategies that shall be adopted. The final section deals with the proposed project interventions.

The project in particular deals with a survey carried out with over 2500 households in two blocks of Korba district of Chhattisgarh. In addition to this, Focus Group Discussions (FGD), In-depth Interviews (IDIs), market assessment, etc were also conducted in the locations identified for the project. Project also emphasize on convergence of various ongoing schemes of the government with the needs which have emerged from the targeted villages. It is true that farmers with better knowledge of improved and latest technologies of cultivation can have better adoption of the recommended practices. It is therefore necessary that a benchmark survey of the adoption level should ascertain the association between the knowledge and adoption. Regular and continuous training of field personals are therefore of utmost importance. The development of women SHGs has also been emphasized in order to strengthen the efforts of enhancing overall livelihoods for women development.

**KEYWORDS :** Livelihood, Households, Cultivation, Agriculture.

### INTRODUCTION:

In the present-day context of a changing economic scenario, increasing population pressure on resources and hence, the livelihoods of the people, especially the poor, has emerged as an important challenge for us. Over the years, many institutions, government and non-government have made several attempts to address this issue. Some of these efforts have been in terms of actions or interventions, while others have tried to change the context within which the livelihoods are embedded. Recognizing that the state of livelihoods is a complex reality, this report has emerged as a collective effort.

Small & marginal farmers constitute about 75.66% of the total farmer families in Chhattisgarh. Majority of them live in rural areas and are still practicing the traditional methods of cultivation, resulting in low income, low growth rates and low productivity.

In Chhattisgarh state 76.76 percent of the total population constitutes the rural population and 83 percent depend heavily on agriculture and allied sector for their livelihood. Census 2001 reveals that agriculture occupies the central stage in the state economy. Out of 32.55 lakh farmers' families, Small & Marginal farmers (S&M-F) constitute nearly 75.66 percent and among them 71.65 percent belong to Schedule Caste (SC) & Schedule Tribe (ST) with an average land holding size for the marginal farmer is 0.44 hectares. The proportion of rural population is higher in northern and southern parts of the state.

Most of the poor rural households are resource-poor. A vast majority of them belong to the socially marginalized groups of the SCs, the STs, the minorities and those engaged in low productivity occupations. A predominant proportion of these households are engaged in agricultural labor.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

This project emphasizes on the formation and development of community based institutions such as "Farmers Producers Organizations (FPOs) like Laghu Kisan Utpadak Sangathan (LKUS) and Farmers Interest Groups (FIGs). The main objectives of the survey were:

- Socio-economic status of the small and marginal farmers of Korba district.
- Identifying areas of improvement in livelihood pattern of small and marginal households of the district.
- To layout strategy for livelihood based on location specific needs and available resources.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Ministry of Agriculture stated that it is necessary to train the farmers to adopt better water management practices under adverse situations and to adopt other parallel means to boost their source of income. It is observed that majority of the farmers are still practicing the traditional methods of cultivation resulting in low growth rates and productivity. The farmers have to be made aware for adoption of modern technologies suitable to their holdings.

Zila Panchayat, Korba stated that most of the Agriculture is rain-fed and so mono-cropped. This is mainly because of poor irrigation facilities in all the blocks. Only 13.50 % of the total area under Agriculture is under Irrigation. There is no major dam to meet the irrigation need of the district. About 74.60 per cent farmers in the district are categorized as small and marginal. About 54% of the farmers have less than 2 hectares of land-holding. Vegetables and spices are cultivated in very small measures. The rural economy in Korba is mainly confined to agriculture and NTFP.

Ministry of Panchayati Raj, GOI found that human resource capacities are at the heart of enhancing human development. In the case of training institutions and planning agencies in Chhattisgarh, there is an evident weakness in the quality and quantity of technical support staff even among training institutions which are expected to provide the knowledge and expertise for PRLs to perform their functions.

### METHODOLOGY:

In this study, both primary and secondary research methodologies have been adopted. Data collection instruments were designed to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. The methodology used for various study phases are discussed below.

Blocks	Sample Size
Katghora	1500
Pali	1000
Total Sample Size	2500

The initial approach for the survey was the identification of the blocks in allocated districts. As there are 5 blocks in Korba district and project interventions will be implemented in 2 blocks as per scope of the project. Discussions with stakeholders; head of the departments

for their inputs in identifying the 2 blocks were initiated. For the collection of primary information, the team visited both the blocks and proper interviews of respondents (small and marginal farmers) were conducted. FGDs were also conducted to know more about the actual socio-economic conditions. Commission agents were also interviewed to obtain data regarding market practices in the district.

**SOURCES OF DATA:**

Both primary and secondary data were collected for the study.

Primary data: Primary data were collected through pre – structured questionnaire by personal interview with small and marginal farmers of two blocks of Korba district viz. Katghora and Pali.

Secondary data: Secondary data were collected from web-portals and District Agriculture Plan (DAP) of Korba district.

**SAMPLING PROCEDURE:**

Judgemental and Snowball sampling methods were used for the survey. Small and marginal farmer households were selected on the basis of judgmental sampling. Farmers with landholding 0.5 to 2 ha were selected to find out their socio-economic status and livelihood opportunities available with them, awareness about government schemes available to them on the basis of which gaps were identified. Judgmental sampling was then followed by snowball sampling to select target respondents. Snowball sampling is a restrictive multistage sampling in which initially certain numbers of sampling units are randomly selected. Later, additional sampling units are selected based on referral process. This means that the initially selected respondents provide addresses of additional respondents for the interviewers.

**FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS:**

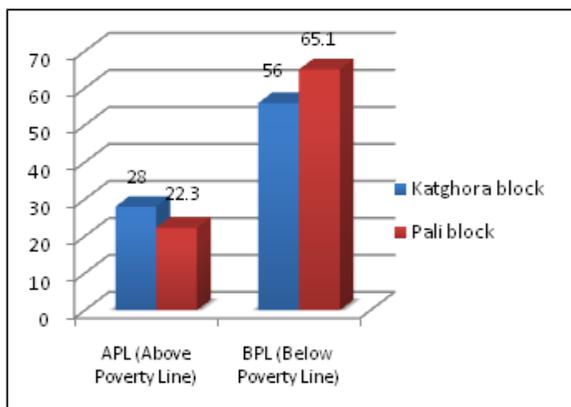
The present study was undertaken under following three objectives:-

- Socio-economic status of the small and marginal farmers of Korba district.
- Identifying areas of improvement in livelihood pattern of small and marginal households of the district
- To layout strategy for livelihood based on location specific needs and available resources.

**Following section presents the results objective wise:-**

Socio-economic status of the small and marginal farmers of Korba district

**I) Household status**



**Figure 1: Household status in Katghora and Pali**

In the survey, different socio-economic attributes were covered. It was found during the survey that 19 percent of the households were headed by females while the remaining 81 percent of the households were headed by males in Katghora & Pali block of Korba. The population of BPL families was found quite high in both the blocks which stood at 56 percent and 65 percent in Katghora and Pali block respectively.

**II) Age group**

Table 2: Age group of sample population

Age group	Korba District	Katghora	Pali
14-20	12	7	5
21-30	293	176	117
31-40	629	357	272
41-50	709	418	291
51-60	501	326	175
Above 60	356	216	140
Grand Total	2500	1500	1000

**III) Caste & Religion**

Table 3: Social classes in the sample blocks

	Count	Proportion (%)
SC	375	15
ST	1300	52
OBC	775	31
General	50	2
Total	2500	100

**(IV) Occupation**

The total work force involved in agriculture comprises different farm activities such as land preparation, growing nursery, sowing seeds, irrigation, manuring and pest control, harvesting, sorting, grading, marketing, value addition etc. the involvement of male workers was seen maximum in harvesting (23 percent) and inter-culture (22 percent), followed by other activities such as land preparation (14 percent), seed sowing (12 percent) storage, grading, marketing etc. On the other hand participation of females was seen in farm activities viz. land preparation, inter-cultivation, harvesting, seeds sowing etc.

Table 4: Sources of livelihood of small and marginal farmers in Korba

	Count	Percent
Agriculture	395	15.8
Agriculture, Unskilled works	702	28.08
Agriculture, Agriculture labour	634	25.36
Agriculture, NTFP collection	204	8.16
Agriculture, NTFP collection, Unskilled works	94	3.76
Agriculture, NTFP collection, Agriculture labour	87	3.48
Agriculture, Private job	43	1.72
Agriculture, Dairy	213	8.52
Agriculture, Dairy, Fishery	37	1.48
Others	91	3.64
Total	2500	100

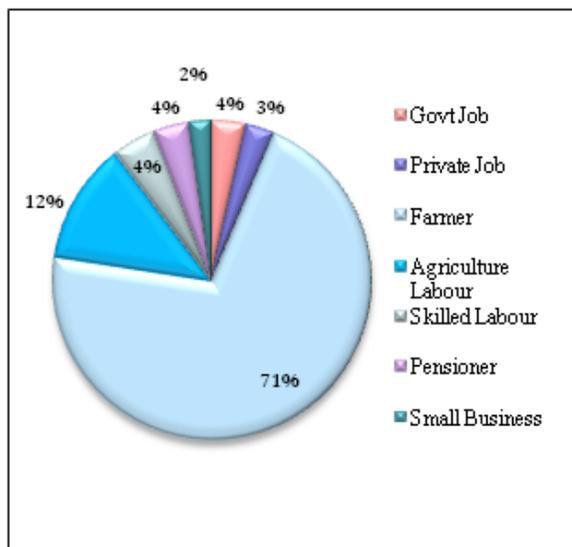


Figure 2: Occupational pattern in the district

V) Land holding

Table 5: Distribution of farmers on the basis of land holding

	Katghora block		Pali block	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Marginal (<1 ha)	972	64.8	481	48.1
Small (1-2 ha)	315	21	358	35.8
Medium (2-4 ha)	189	12.6	127	12.7
Large (>4 ha)	24	1.6	34	3.4
Total	1500	100	1000	100

In Katghora block 64.8 percent of the farmers were marginal followed by 21 percent small farmers, 12.6 percent medium farmers and only 1.7 percent of the farmers were large farmers. In Pali block 48 percent of the farmers were marginal followed by 36 percent small farmers, 12.7 percent medium farmers and 3.4 percent of the farmers were large farmers.

VII) Assets

Possession of livestock assets:

From the study we observed that out of the total of households, almost every household had livestock's such as bullocks, cows, calves, goats and hens etc. 89 percent of the total households possessed bullocks followed by desi cow which were owned by 67 percent of small and marginal farm households, 61 percent of the respondents were having chicken, goats were owned by 49 percent of the target respondents. Hybrid cow and buffalo were possessed by a very small proportion of respondent population (12 percent and 7 percent respectively).

Almost every household was found to have livestock but only 9.3 percent of the respondents were selling the animal produce in market. It was mainly because of less production of milk, egg etc. Unavailability of quality feed and good breed of animals was one of the major reasons behind this problem. As a result they were not left with sufficient marketable surplus.

PROPOSED REFORMS:

The survey in Korba District of Chattisgarh has been undertaken in this study, based on which the findings about socio-economic conditions of marginalized households in the district and the existing developmental gaps, a model has been proposed for the execution of the project interventions. The overall goal of the proposed project is to improve livelihoods of marginalized households especially farmers to contribute towards sustained quality of life.

Proposed model for development of targeted population in collaboration with Agri Allied NGOs/Societies functional in the area, is mentioned below:

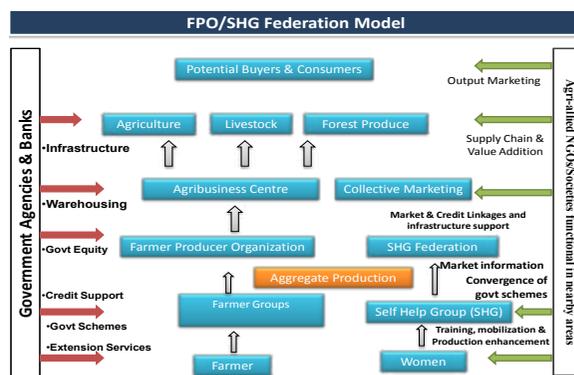


Figure 3: FPO/Federation Working Model

PROJECT OUTCOMES:

- Increase in cropping area as well as in productivity.
- Awareness about ongoing schemes available in the district for land, water and agriculture development.
- Formation and promotion of cluster level FPOs, SHG Federation to work effectively for addressing the local community needs in the long term.
- Increase in water table due to soil-water conservation measures and resulted into improved agriculture productivity.
- Area under seasonal irrigation increased from existing 9% to 20%.
- Promotion of integrated crop management and organic farming practices.
- Significant increase in area under horticulture as second and third crops.
- Farmers started using warehouses for storage of agriculture commodities.

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