Facilitating Community Led WASH and Livelihoods Interventions in the Floodplains of Eastern U.P.

The project, being implemented with support from Oxfam-India, intends to facilitate community led action to solve the issues related water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). The project is being implemented in 20 flood prone villages in the middle-Rapti basin in the North-Eastern Uttar Pradesh, spread over five development blocks in four districts-Siddharthnagar, Maharajganj, Gorakhpur and Sant Kabir Nagar. Initiated in June 2012, it achieved a breakthrough by effectively utilizing the ‘Community Led Total Sanitation’ (CLTS) approach towards sensitizing and motivating the communities to undertake measures, using mainly their own resources to construct toilets at household level and make their villages/hamlets open defecation free. So far, it covered 3528 families, 72% of them belonging to SC and OBC. 20 WASH Committees with membership 100 are functional in these villages and induction of community based early warning system (CBEWS) happened at 6 flood prone local points through effective community mobilization processes. It is worthy to put on record that out of 20 villages, 7 villages were declared as Open Defecation Free (ODF) and the efforts continue for the remaining.

Besides WASH, the project is also focusing on strengthening the agriculture and livestock based livelihoods in the project villages. For agriculture based livelihood promotion, appropriate technological percolation was preferred involving selected farming families to comply with the PoPs. Demonstrations on summer crops were also organized.

Improved Rice Based Rain-fed Agriculture Systems

Increasing crop productivity and reducing the risk of rain-fed rice based cropping system was at the crux of project objectives as envisaged for CRS supported 4 year IRRAS Project starting from January, 2012 in selected villages of Sitamarhi. IRRAS is termed as 'Improved Rice Based Rain-fed Agriculture Systems. The project strategy is to link existing actors in adaptive research and knowledge exchange network and support them through: i) linkage platforms; ii) technical inputs; iii) mobilization and execution of demonstration plots; iv) forums to develop packages of tested and adapted best bet agronomic technologies; v) collaboratively created, trialed, and refined training materials; and vi) information and communication mechanisms for collection and sharing of information.

GDS, during the rainy season organized demonstration of Swarna Sub-1 in 12 villages and Sambha Mansoori Sub-1 in 8 villages through using DSR by ZT in 2-3 full submergence hit area. Varietal change was made by introducing PL-8 variety of lentil and HD 2967/K9351 in 15 villages through using zero-tillage for line sowing over 20 plots. Use of super bag was demonstrated with 100 farmers for safe storage of grains and seeds.
School WASH and WASH in Health Set Ups

It was due to its previous experiences of accomplishing WASH related tasks in GDS operational area that prompted to accept the offer extended by WaterAid India to promote WASH practices in Baghauli block of S. K. Nagar district. The project covers 11499 households including 2951 SC households (25.7%) and 6867 OBC (59.7%) spread over 81 villages of 30 village panchayats of the block. Under its school interventions, 80 schools and colleges were covered with strengthening of 11318 scholars 53.5% of them being girls. During the year 2014-15, PRI trainings were conducted for 311 panchayat representatives orienting them about new guideline of SBM (Grameen). 15 ASHAs and 25 AWWs underwent the training on promoting menstrual hygiene.139 members from 40 SMCs were trained in 3 batches to identify issues and initiate action for school sanitation and hygiene in collaboration with the mainstream. For ensuring sustainable and functional drinking water source, 32 Water Users’ Groups (WUGs) were organized and capacitated. The construction of 200 toilets was completed during on-site technical training to 12 masons. WASH sessions were conducted in 40 schools while sanitation block were developed as model in 5 schools.

Indo-Nepal Trans-boundary Flood Resilience Project

The project was implemented by GDS in five villages located in Bagaha-II block of West Champaran district of Bihar with the support of Lutheran World Relief. The project aimed to increase the resilience of the communities to cope with annual floods through improved accessibility to real time flood warning information and development of strong risk mitigation plans. Task forces for EWS, Search & rescue, First aid, evacuation, relief operations and Sphere Standards were formed and trained in all 5 villages. Mock drills were organized at regular intervals for their practice and hand holding. DMCs of 5 villages have developed their DRR micro plan and validated it in village level meetings. The establishment of a trans-border, community-based ‘Early Warning System’ comprising of mobile telephone and manual information communication system has been the key outcome of the project. The EWS building process also involved joint simulation exercises by Nepal and India communities. The communities have also been equipped with necessaries tools, equipments and other materials for carrying out the EWS and also for facing up to flood disasters.

Promotion of Profitable & Sustainable Agriculture

Aimed at bringing about improvement in agricultural productivity, GDS started above project at Sursa block of Hardoi district in 2011-12 with the support of ITC Ltd. The overall objective of the project was to develop a context specific agriculture development model for small and marginal farmers to be widely up-scaled through replication with specific focus on technology transfer. During the year 2014-15, 210 compost pits were prepared under the technical guidance of experts. 168 FF sessions were organized while the lead farmers were trained as master trainer providing guidance to student farmers and members of community groups under FFS model. SRI method was used by the farmers for paddy cultivation and DSR method was also used for the first time by the selected farmers with zero-till. During Rabi season, zero-till and line sowing with seed drill was used for wheat cultivation in an area of 321 hectares. Availability of agriculture implements was facilitated by providing 14 conoweeders, 12 paddy drum seeders, 7 zero-till machines and 10 winnowing fans to farmer clubs. Plantation of 17473 eucalyptus and 1930 poplar plants was done in the project villages.
Promoting Safe & beneficial Migration in Uttar Pradesh

GDS has entered into an agreement with Jamshetjee Tata Trust to execute 3 year project titled, “Safe & Beneficial Migration in Uttar Pradesh” from June 2013. The project broadly aims at reducing the risks and vulnerabilities of migrant workers at the destination end and their families at the source end in Uttar Pradesh. This project is the Second phase of the project concluded with extension in December, 2012.

Project currently, covers 84 villages spread over 27 village panchayats of Baghauli and Khalilabad blocks of the district. At source end in Khalilabad, 1063 labours were registered with BoCW while 3802 initially registered with GDS and 8 legal awareness meetings & 15 legal literacy events were organized to take up migrants’ issues. 116 persons underwent vocational training in 6 batches and 55 of them completed the course of training successfully. 219 workers could be brought under insurance coverage. 81 financial literacy sessions were also organized. The selected project functionaries participated in capacity building programmes organized by Aajevika Bureau and GDS itself. At destination end in Lucknow, registration of 3172 migrants done whereas 292 workers were registered with CLWB. Aadhar card was issued to 3117 migrants and 455 workers got ID cards. 116 migrants having registration with CLWB were provided bi-cycles and 189 given solar light system free of cost under state labour welfare schemes. Bank accounts were opened by 1034 migrants. Two research studies on; (1) Socio-economic status of migrant brick Klin workers in and around Lucknow, UP and (2) Health hazards to migrants engaged in construction sector- health services & facilities, were conducted and documented.

Improving Livelihoods through Water and Agricultural Resource at Lalitpur, UP

GDS entered into an agreement with Jamshetji Tata Trust Mumbai for the implementation of the three and half year duration project starting from September 2011 to February, 2015, further extended up to September, 2015. The project design has the commitment to raise resources from community as well as other stakeholders to meet the objectives of the project.

During the year 2015, field bunding was started to improve the declining soil health in this rocky and sloping land. 206.59 hectares could be covered for field bunding by 204 farmers. Digging of one such well was done to provide irrigation to 26 acres cultivable land of 13 farmers. Drip and sprinkling irrigation was initiated to promote water saving by providing 40 sets of sprinklers on 30% cost contribution by the beneficiaries. All the above activities were carried out with the active support of watershed committees organized in the project villages. Suitable crop varieties were demonstrated under Dry Land Farming practices promotion and are being adopted by farmers.
Empowering women farmers through agriculture based livelihoods in Jawaja, Ajmer Rajasthan under Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojna

Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojna (MKSP), a collaborative project of Govt of India, Rajasthan, SRTT & CmF was started in May 2013 for 3 years in Jawaja block of Ajmer district in Rajasthan. The project aims at organizing the women farmers into producers’ collectives, build their knowledge and skills along with creation of accessible support systems to enable a greater and more strategic role of women in agriculture and allied activities, impacting and strengthening the livelihood base of the poor. So far, 1308 households have been covered with the project interventions. 53 farmer groups were functional with membership 1318 in 49 project villages. Trainings were organized as refresher course to women farmers focusing towards technical enrichment for adoption of PoPs. Induction of local volunteers (Krishi Sakhi) having basic technical knowledge and engaging them to utilize their knowledge in the fields was testified through field sessions. The PoPs, designed with the involvement of local farmers and agriculture experts, helped the women farmers to achieve significantly enhanced crop yield. For reducing women drudgery in agricultural work, agriculture implements like maize sailors, improved suckles, weeder & spray machines, urea broadcaster, hazara sets and dibblers were distributed among farming families for their collective use.

Promoting CBDRR and school safety program in multi hazard Prone area of Sitamarhi- Bihar

Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction (CBDRR) Program was a continuation of the programme earlier supported by UNICEF in 30 villages of Runni Saidpur and Belsand blocks within Sitamarhi District in Bihar. So far, the Project interventions covered 7704 households living in these villages. The programme also included 15 schools operating within the program villages. The project has main objective to identify multiple risks faced by children and women and incorporated in DRR plans; to mainstream appropriate measures creating safer and resilient conditions for children and women and identified risks and coping mechanism incorporated in school development plan. Strengthening of 30 VDMCs and 15 SDMCs was done in all the project villages and 180 VDMC members deputed from all the 30 VDMCs were trained in risk management, preparing DRR, tracking implementation, review & updating of DRR plan. 258 hand pumps (139 new & 119 old) were either installed or repaired by PHED under safe drinking water mission. Repairing and construction of 25 toilets and 10 hand pumps was completed by PHED. Construction of new school building at 11 sites was done by Basic Education Department under the observation of VDMCs & SDMCs to maintain quality parameters. With the induction 12 new, total 15 catalysts were active and their capacity building on CBDRR issues was done by the project.

Empowerment through Literacy for Women in Eastern Uttar Pradesh

Aiming at enabling women for their empowerment through literacy, the project was started in April, 2015 in support with SDTT covering selected villages in Shravasti, Balrampur & Mahrajganj where GDS has, already, been implementing agriculture based interventions. The women attending literacy sessions at literacy centres participate in awareness generation for realization of their rights & entitlement and entering into decision making process in individual capacity and at common platform. Efforts are made to seek coordination with local mainstreams (line departments) for linkage with various schemes.
Focusing towards income enhancement of household through agriculture interventions was thought out as the direct impact of Project business engaged in floodplains of eastern Uttar Pradesh as far as GDS network is concerned to implement Sujalam Sufalam Initiative being supported by SDTT for a period of 3 years starting from May, 2015. The field penetration was made with some specific agriculture products wearing potentials to yield high income as compared with others and also agriculture technologies & practices in the allotted operational area of 9 clusters; 6 sub-partners and remaining 3 clusters directly being covered by GDS itself. It is proposed to cover 12000 small and marginal farmers from 305 villages spread over 21 blocks in 8 districts of the state. During first year of its implementation, almost 6000 farming families could be covered mainly during Rabi season of 2015.