

RESPECTEMer

Professionalize and Prosper

Dear friend,

This issue of **STEM Reporter** focuses on a series of four research and consultancy assignments that the Society recently executed for the Government of Uttar Pradesh. These evaluative studies and their findings are significant for a variety of reasons. All of them are relevant to the vital domain of agriculture and rural development, based on extensive application of participatory methodologies, and directly or indirectly related to capacity-building and human resources development. As such, these studies also have important implications for the process of developing economic, physical & social infrastructure for rural areas.

We take this opportunity to thank the UP Bhumi Sudhar Nigam (UPBSN) and the Directorates of both UP Sodic Lands Reclamation Project (UPSLRP) & Diversified Agriculture Support Project (DASP) for having awarded the assignments to us and helped us, at every stage, towards their successful completion. We are also profoundly grateful to all the stakeholders, especially the local farming communities and farmers' groups, for their all-out participation and support.



Yours truly,

(B. Bhaskara Rao)
Executive Director

February 28, 2005

SOME NEW ASSIGNMENTS OF STEM

- Rapid Assessment for Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (RWS&S) Sector in Uttar Pradesh, Sponsor: Directorate of Panchayat Raj, Govt of UP
- Rapid Assessment of RWS&S Sector in Tripura, Sponsor: Rural Development Department, Govt of Tripura
- Consultancy Services for Rapid Assessmen of Tamil Nadu Water Supply & Drainage Board (TWAD), Sponsor: UNICEF
- Review & Evaluation of the JBIC-assisted Forestry & Environment Project for the Eastern Plains of Karnataka and 'Vanasamvardhana Yojane', Sponsor: Office of the Chief Conservator of Forests (Social Forestry), Govt of Karnataka
- Workshop on Change Management in Water & Sanitation Sector for Engineers, Sponsor: State Water & Sanitation Mission (SWSM), Panchayat Raj Department, Govt of Andhra Pradesh

UP SODIC LANDS RECLAMATION PROJECT (UPSLRP)

Assessment of Participatory Management Process

In 1993, the Govt of UP launched an innovative pilot project to address the problem of sodic lands* in the State. Called the Uttar Pradesh Sodic Lands Reclamation Project - Phase I (UPSLRP-I), this World Bank-assisted project covered 68,000 ha of sodic lands spread over 19 reclamation areas across 10 districts. UPSLRP-I demonstrated a successful approach to reclamation of sodic lands in all aspects.

In the light of the past experiences of interventions in land reclamation by both government and non-government organisations, the participatory management approach was adopted as a crucial tool for implementation of UPSLRP-I. Consequently, farmers' groups were involved in decision-making at different stages and encouraged to develop a sense of ownership. Community mobilization and active beneficiary participation were, therefore, incorporated as essential features of project design. Beneficiary institutions like the Water Users' Groups (WUGs), Site Implementation Committees (SICs), Core Teams (CTs) and Women's Self Help Groups (WSHGs) were established and strengthened. Their roles in project planning, implementation and consolidation were identified and they were enabled to perform. The formation of such village-level institutions was facilitated by the UP Bhumi Sudhar Nigam (UPBSN), the project implementing agency, in association with consultant NGOs.

ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

In order to consolidate the positive experiences of the first phase and replicate them in a wider area, the UPBSN went in for a second phase of the project in 1999. In the wake of the initiation of the six-year UPSLRP-II, both the UPBSN and the World Bank considered it appropriate to carry out a periodic

* The factors mainly contributing to sodicity are water-induced land degradation with the sustained removal of nutrients associated with intensive cropping and inappropriate use of the heavily subsidized nitrogenous fertilizers. Sodic lands constitute 10 per cent of the total cultivable area in UP.

assessment of the participatory management process adopted in the project and its impact on the project outcome. Subsequently, STEM was commissioned to conduct the proposed review and suggest corrective measures, where necessary. The exercise, carried out between October 2001 and May 2002, covered selected villages in 12 project districts.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the assessment study were to

- Evaluate the content, appropriateness, adequacy and effectiveness of the participatory approaches developed under the project in accomplishing the project objectives; and
- Identify areas requiring further improvement and attention to facilitate development of future plans based on the assessment.

SCOPE

The scope of the assessment specifically covered the following key aspects:

- Analysis of role and effectiveness of beneficiary institutions.
- Analysis of beneficiary participation level and impact of the participatory process across varying socio-economic factors of the project.
- Analysis of mechanisms developed by the beneficiaries to maintain and share the resources & assets during the project.
- Performance assessment of Self Help Groups (SHGs) – Water Users' Groups (WUGs) and Women's SHGs.
- Analysis of roles of different actors (primary and secondary stakeholders) and process to integrate their roles to improve implementation of the project.
- Evolving indicators for participatory management, women empowerment and overall success of the project, based on beneficiary perceptions.
- Assessment of adequacy and effectiveness of user centres, farmers' schools, utility of media activities, etc., specially, the role of linkages with Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs).
- Review of the mechanisms developed for monitoring participatory components.
- Assess the approaches adopted and the level of success achieved so far in ensuring women's participation in the project.
- Review of efforts made for capacity-building of different actors influencing the participatory process, including the various units of UPBSN Headquarters.

TABLE 1: KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Level	Primary Stakeholders	Secondary Stakeholders
Village	Bbeneficiary households of landless marginal and small farmers	
	Women from beneficiary families	
	WUGs	
	WSHGs and MSHGs	
	SIC	
	Core Team	
	Mitra Kisan	
	Mahila Mitra Kisan	
	Non-beneficiary households	
District & Block	Project Managers	Agriculture Department
	UPBSN staff / NGO staff	Irrigation Department
	Deputy managers	PWD
	Assistant Managers	Panchayat Raj Department
	NGOs	Lead bank / RRBs
		NABARD
State		KVK
	Zonal Officers	
	Participatory Management cell	
	Training cell	
	Media cell	
	Credit cell	

- Identification of issues, gaps and/ or areas requiring further attention to accomplish project objectives.
- Recommendation of measures to address the issues and strengthen the participatory management component.

METHODOLOGY & APPROACH

In assessing the above aspects, STEM employed a participatory methodology based on the 'Social Audit Approach'. It involved a participatory analysis of the effectiveness of the roles and

functions of key stakeholders (see **Table 1**) at different levels in the project, based on qualitative and quantitative parameters (see **Table 2**) collected from representative villages selected at random (one each) from all the 12 project districts. In addition, a desk review of documents and information collected from UPBSN, the project implementing agency, was carried out to examine the adequacy and appropriateness of the participatory approach adopted by the project.

FINDINGS

Beneficiary Participation

Majority of the beneficiaries (97 per cent) involved in the project were found to be marginal farmers having less than one hectare of sodic lands in the selected villages.

The composition of beneficiaries by socio-economic categories showed that the selection of beneficiaries was non-partisan, without any bias of caste or class.

The project had facilitated allotment of common sodic lands in the project villages to the landless families. This support was found to have brought about a change in the socio-economic status of many landless families. Many of them had become land-owners and first-time farmers in their own lands. Besides, out-migration in the project villages had reduced.

Women landowners were found to be very few. The direct participation of women in the project, in terms of participation in meetings of WUGs and Site Implementation Committee (SICs) and in decision-making process, was, therefore, substantially low.

Impact of Technology Transfer & Capacity Building

The facilitation of technology transfer and capacity building, two important project components, had brought about a

considerable change in the perspective of farmers *vis-a-vis*: (a) farming practices relating to sodic lands, (b) self-reliance in managing bore wells & pump sets and animal care, (c) framing their own micro-development plans, (d) participation of women in economic activities & decision-making process, and (e) community approach by farmers in managing the resources of the village.

Credit Management

The project had evolved a self-help approach through which farmers were encouraged to organize themselves into WUGs and SHGs to mobilize their own resources for meeting their immediate needs. Women in the project villages were motivated to form SHGs to encourage thrift and credit activities for taking up micro-entrepreneurial activities and broad-base the resource accessibility for beneficiary families. Further, project authorities at different levels had co-ordinated with bankers to involve the banking institutions effectively.

Impact on Beneficiary Farmers

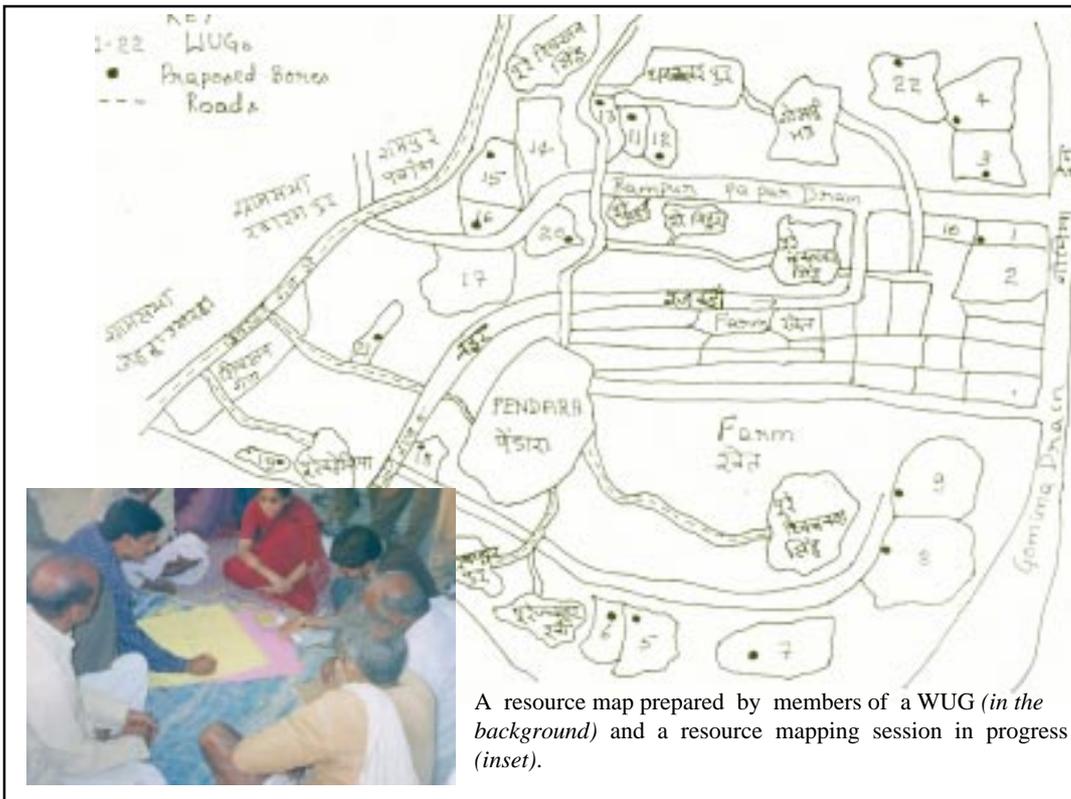
A self-assessment by beneficiaries for measuring the impact of project intervention was facilitated by the assessment team in some of the villages, where the project was in its second and third year of implementation. The analysis of this self-assessment revealed that the project interventions had an

impact not only on the socio-economic and capacity aspects, but also on participatory management processes, attitudes and levels. The spill-over benefits emerging from the project had also been experienced by the non-beneficiaries in the project villages.

Impact on Beneficiary Institutions

The strategy of adoption of participatory management had encouraged emergence of grass roots level beneficiary institutions such as WUG, SIC, etc. The study also gathered the perception of different groups & members on the functioning of these institutions.

TABLE 2: IMPORTANT PARAMETERS COVERED	
Land Reclamation	Coverage, distribution by categories of sodic lands and social groups of beneficiaries
Community Mobilisation and Organisation	Awareness generation, motivation and tools adopted
Beneficiary Participation	Beneficiary selection process, their participation in SIC, WUG and WSHG meetings and reclamation activities
Beneficiary Institutions	Functioning of SIC, WUG and WSHGs in terms of frequency of meetings, attendance of members, collective decision-makings, action initiated on decisions taken, savings and deposits, internal lending and credit accessibility from banks, maintenance of group assets and transparency level
Project Outcome	Capacity building, changes in technology adoption level, crop yields, credit sources, sources of income, out-migration, socio-economic status, empowerment of women and strategies developed for withdrawal and sustainability



skills through a series of systematic capacity-building interventions to facilitate development of local leadership.

- Social space to be created for women in public fora, build their confidence, enhance their capacity to facilitate effective participation and increase their importance in the project.
- All staff, especially field-level staff (both male and female), to be sensitised to gender and equity through capacity-building interventions.
- A formal mechanism could be evolved for encouraging innovations and creativity in participatory management.
- Local farmers should be encouraged to define their own indicators and practise concurrent participatory monitoring and

evaluation, gradually.

Effectiveness of Field-level Institutional Arrangements

All the project field functionaries of the UPBSN, at unit, sub-unit and circle levels, were found to be aware of their duties and responsibilities. The Participatory Management Cell (PMC) was found to have vertically and horizontally integrated with all the stakeholders of the project to enhance participation in the project activities. As for the Credit Cell, it had taken several measures to sensitize bank officials and remove bottlenecks in availing credit. On the training front, it was observed that the feedback from the beneficiaries was used as inputs to modify training design. The Media Cell, in consultation with different divisions in the UPBSN Headquarters, had developed, designed and produced various media material, wherever required. These communication strategies had helped in creating awareness among beneficiaries on many project aspects.

It was also observed that the Association of NGOs in the project had created a significant and visible impact on the project in general and brought credit to the participatory management approach adopted by the project.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following were among the recommendations made by the Study:

- Field-level project functionaries should be imparted new

REVIEW OF SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

The study found that the sustainability of the benefits of the project after its completion, very much depended upon continued availability of credit for crop production, linkages with line departments for technical support and development of an action plan for the post-reclamation phase. Establishment of Farmers' Clubs and Farmers' Schools would go a long way in ensuring sustainability of the project benefits.

Similarly, the study suggested that the resource persons such as Mitra Kisan (MKs), Mahila Mitra Kisan (MMKs) and animators selected by the village should be adequately trained for strengthening their capacity in field operations. This type of training should also be given to members of the Core Team and WUGs in their respective fields of activity.

It was also felt necessary that SICs should exist even after the project withdrawal and have continuing education on all aspects of agricultural development. The study went on to suggest that such training programmes could be arranged at Block or Panchayat levels, at frequent intervals. ■

Evaluation of Privatization of Agriculture Extension

A community-based extension system comprising Farmers' Schools and Farmers' Clubs is being developed, under UPSLRP, to address crucial issues relating to project sustainability. One of the key initiatives being taken by these village-level institutions is to enhance the involvement of the private sector in the extension services.*

A Pilot Project for 'Privatisation of Agriculture Extension Services' had thus been in progress in 30 villages (of one block each in three selected districts, namely Fatehpur, Pratapgarh & Hardoi) in the UPSLR Project area. The Pilot Project was initially sanctioned for a period of one year. Between October 2001 and May 2002, STEM carried out an evaluation of this privatization process. The study was a sequel to the UPBSN's decision to seek an external perspective on the efficiency and effectiveness of the pilot project before extending it for the remaining period of UPSLRP-II.

OBJECTIVES

Broadly, the study objectives were to:

- Assess the content and effectiveness of 'Privatization of Agriculture Extension Services' being piloted in the three districts in terms of envisaged outputs and actual outcomes; and
- Identify issues/ areas requiring further attention for improvement.

SCOPE

STEM assessed the impact of the novel agriculture extension approach adopted in the pilot project in terms of

- Process/ mechanism adopted for farmers' involvement and institution-building besides sustainability of impacts created under the project.
- Diversification and intensification of different farming systems that increased farm productivity and household

incomes, especially of resource-poor and disadvantaged groups.

- Adoption and diffusion of resource-conserving agricultural technologies, such as Integrated Pest Management (IPM), Integrated Nutrient Management (INM), Organic Farming, etc., that help in reducing production costs while maintaining the natural resources base.

- Responsiveness in solving farmers' livelihood problems including facilitation of access of resource-poor farmers to formal and informal credit institutions.

- Viability of Farmers' Schools & Farmers' Clubs being developed and the benefits accrued to members as compared to non-members.

- Responsibilities of members of Farmers' Schools & Farmers' Clubs, constraints faced by them in discharging those responsibilities, and their achievements.

- Effectiveness of the role of NGOs.

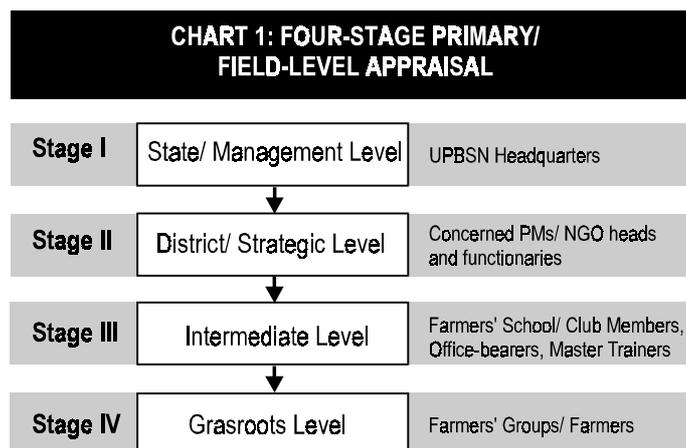


CHART 2: APPRAISAL TOOLS/ TECHNIQUES ADOPTED

Key Stakeholders	Appraisal Tools/ Techniques
State Level	Workshops using Vision Mapping, SWOT Analysis & Hierarchical Card sorting
District Level	Workshops using Johari's Window and Analysis of Variance Techniques, etc.
Intermediate Level	PRA tools and techniques like Impact Diagram, Force Field Analysis, Matrix Ranking/ Scoring, SWOT Analysis & Tree Mapping, etc.
Grassroots Level	PRA tools and techniques like Vision Mapping, Force Field Analysis, Matrix Ranking/ Scoring, Benefits Analysis, Venn Diagramming, Technology Mapping, Daily Activity Analysis, Group Mapping, Analysis of Variance and Tree Mapping, etc.

APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

Document Appraisal

An initial review of all documents pertaining to the project and its implementation was carried out to understand the project objectives, components, approaches, interventions, resources available and target groups.

* There is a growing acceptance of the stand that state monopoly of agricultural extension service delivery is neither desirable nor sustainable. It is expected that fully or partially privatised extension services, owned and operated by the farmers themselves, would be 'demand-driven' unlike the state-owned and managed extension services that tend to remain 'supply-driven'.

UP DIVERSIFIED AGRICULTURE SUPPORT PROJECT (DASP)

Evaluation of Impact of Training

The World Bank-assisted Diversified Agriculture Support Project (DASP) in UP aims to accelerate the growth of diversified agriculture in the State in relation to agro-ecological potential and market demand. Towards this, the Project lays emphasis on production systems and delivery mechanisms that benefit the farming community. The main benefits from the project would be increased opportunity for rural employment leading to poverty reduction, sustainable management of land and water resources and capacity building. Growth is expected to be enhanced by improved technology and policy environment as well as supporting investment in rural infrastructure. Poverty would be addressed mainly through raising farm family incomes and reducing risk by offering a larger menu of alternative technologies to a broad cross-section of farming community and through increased local participation and employment opportunities. Sustainability would be enhanced through the improved plant nutrient and pest management practices. Capacity to manage more diversified agriculture would be developed through training programmes at all levels as well as in institutional capacity to manage these programmes.

DASP-UP covers 157 blocks spread over 32 districts. During 1997-2002, the project authorities made various training interventions for the benefit of a large cross-section of stakeholders, comprising both project staff and farmers. These

training programmes were conducted in collaboration with a host of specialist agencies. However, the project authorities felt that there were certain areas that called for further interventions to ensure the sustainability of the project. It was against this backdrop that, during the early part of 2002, the DASP Directorate commissioned STEM to undertake an evaluation of training provided under the project.

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the exercise were to: (i) Document the training imparted until then under the project at all levels; (ii) Evaluate impact of all types of training events conducted since DASP inception; (iii) Identification of gaps in training/exposure visits conducted at various levels since project inception; (iv) Prepare a capacity-building plan for the remaining period of the project; (v) Develop computerized mechanisms for monitoring of training/exposure visits and generation of analytical information that may be useful for project management and decision-making; and (vi) Suggest realistic and implementable methods for concurrent evaluation and speedy impact evaluation of training to be imparted in the future.

METHODOLOGY & APPROACH**Appraisal of Documents**

STEM carried out an initial review of all the documents

(Continued on next page)

(Evaluation of Privatisation of Agriculture Extension continued from page 5)

Stakeholder Appraisal

A four-stage primary/ field-level appraisal was followed to assess the stakeholders' understanding of project concepts, approach, their roles & responsibilities, and outputs & outcomes (see **Chart 1** on previous page). The appraisal at the grass-roots level was carried out through a random sampling of villages in consultation with UPBSN to ensure a true representation of samples across the project area. The entire appraisal was **pivoted** on the participatory reflection and action approach in which stakeholders were enabled to analyse the impact of various interventions and decide future actions for improvement at every stage, right from village to State/UPBSN-level (see **Chart 2** on previous page).

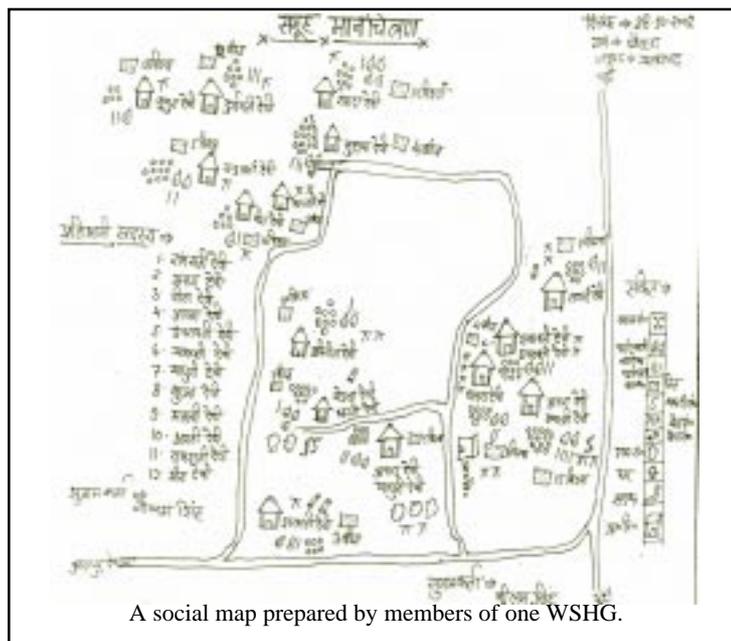
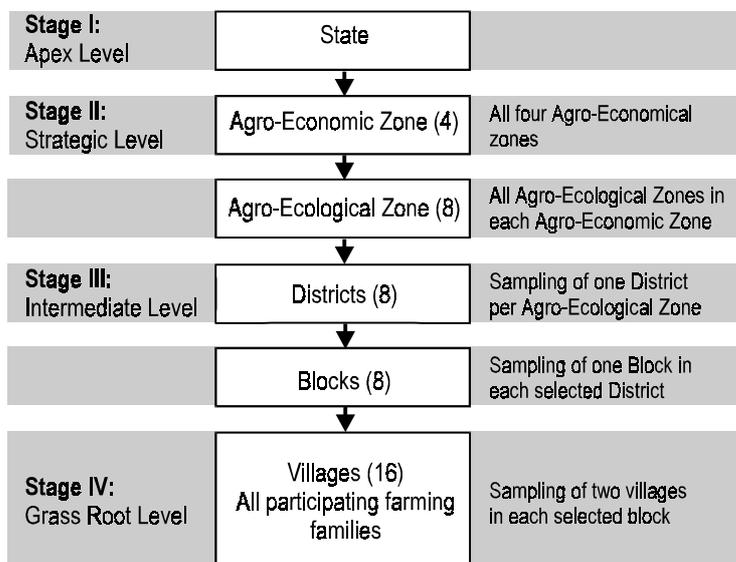
RECOMMENDATIONS

While fully supporting the proposal to stretch the pilot project, STEM came up with a set of recommendations aimed at

rendering the extension mechanism more self-reliant. It included: strengthening of farmers' organisations; putting high value on local knowledge and wisdom; increasing involvement of women; participation of farmers in technology development; establishing in-house knowledge banks; drawing lessons from experiences of other projects of similar nature; and facilitating a symbiotic convergence of the present project with other ongoing projects of similar nature.

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

CT: Core Team; **INM:** Integrated Nutrient Management; **IPM:** Integrated Pest Management; **KVK:** Krishi Vignan Kendra; **MSHG:** Men's Self Help Group; **MK:** Mitra Kisan; **MMK:** Mahila Mitra Kisan; **NABARD:** National Bank for Agriculture & Rural Development; **NGO:** Non Government Organization; **PM:** Project Manager; **PMC:** Participatory Management Cell; **PRI:** Panchayat Raj Institution; **PWD:** Public Works Department; **RRB:** Regional Rural Bank; **SIC:** Site Implementation Committee; **SWOT:** Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats; **UPBSN:** UP Bhumi Sudhar Nigam; **UPSLRP:** UP Sodic Lands Reclamation Project; **WSHG:** Women's Self Help Group; **WUG:** Water Users' Group

CHART 1: FOUR-STAGE PRIMARY/ FIELD-LEVEL APPRAISAL

pertaining to the project and its implementation to understand the project objectives, components, approaches, interventions, resources available, target groups as also their roles & responsibilities, and requirements of all types of stakeholders as per the project objectives.

All the training plans of previous years were analysed to see the gaps between learning requirements and plan. All the completed training reports were critically analyzed to compare fulfilment of learning requirements as envisaged in the plan. Similarly, documents related to curriculum, methodology and duration were analysed to identify gaps in contents, methodology, duration, etc.

Appraisal of Stakeholders

A four-stage primary/field level appraisal (see **Chart 1** above) was followed to assess the extent of fulfilment of learning requirement as perceived by various stakeholders and the gaps in respect of training interventions undertaken so far.

Sampling

One district from each Agro-Ecological Zone was selected, based on dimensions of activities undertaken, in consultation with Project Co-ordination Unit (PCU). Similarly two villages under one block - one from first year and another from second year - were again selected, based on the dimension of activities undertaken, in consultation with PCU.

Appraisal Tools & Techniques

Various participatory tools and techniques like Tree-Mapping, Technological Mapping, Pre- and Post-Impact Diagram,

Scoring, Develop a Curriculum (DACUM), Force Field Analysis, Gap Analysis and Focus Group Discussion (FGD), etc., were used to elicit the required information.

Impact Assessment

Impact of training and exposure visits on stakeholders, at three levels, was assessed. The gaps between what was expected from these activities and the actual achievements were also identified. The stakeholders included farmers at village level, field/district level functionaries and state level functionaries.

STUDY OUTCOME

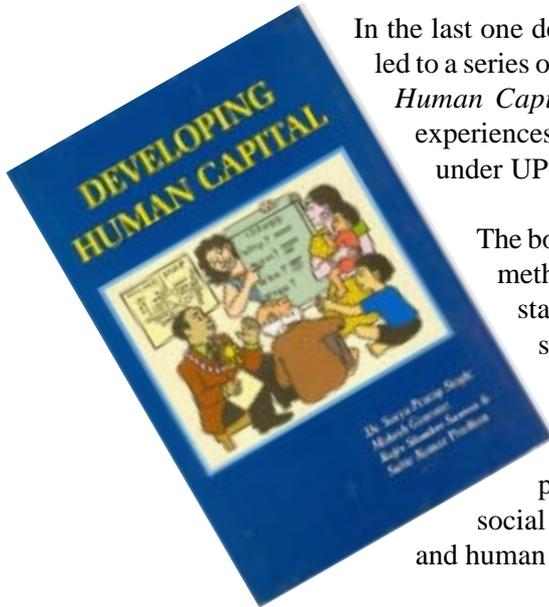
On the basis of the findings from the study, STEM came up with

- A set of recommendations for appropriate training interventions at three levels, viz. village level, block/district level and state level;
- A training plan, relevant to the final phase of training interventions (October 2002-September 2003);
- A simple computerized (MS ACCESS-based) mechanism for concurrent monitoring of the training interventions; and
- An inventory of relevant local, national and international training institutions.

Since the project was in the last stage of implementation, the evaluation study also examined issues like sustainability and expansion of project area. The study suggested a series of relevant Exit Policy Workshops to address these aspects. ■

Developing Human Capital

Experiences from a Multidimensional, Multidisciplinary and Participatory Development Project



In the last one decade, initiation of people-centred approaches in development projects have led to a series of innovative methods, practices, procedures, tools and techniques. *Developing Human Capital* discusses these in the light of the innovative approaches and varied experiences pertaining to Training, Extension and Monitoring & Evaluation accumulated under UP-DASP from different geographical and agro-ecological locations.

The book, jointly published by UP-DASP & STEM, presents a range of participatory methods and practices meant for enhancing the capabilities of different project stakeholders. Fully illustrated and citing applications in a variety of dynamic situations, it is a handy tool for development practitioners, field workers, project managers, extension agencies, policy makers, donor agencies, students of rural and urban development and others associated with development practices and challenges. The preface to *Developing Human Capital* aptly points out: "Capabilities change with change in mindsets and improvement in social and human skills. The issue is how to change our mindsets and boost social and human skills." This is precisely what the book is all about.



A DIVISION OF **STEM** - CENTRE FOR SYMBIOSIS OF TECHNOLOGY, ENVIRONMENT & MANAGEMENT

The current scenario for infrastructure development in India is very bright and different. The country is expecting huge investments to the order of Rs.9 lakh crore over the next decade. It has the capability to attract foreign investment to the tune of \$150 billion. It was none other than the Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh, who made this observation while inaugurating the India-Asian Business Summit at Delhi. Given the government's intent of achieving growth rates of 7-8 per cent over the next decade, every effort would be made to promote investment by creating a climate conducive to investors. The Prime Minister reiterated that the government would give the highest priority to infrastructure.

While no one can deny the importance of infrastructure requirements, there is a serious apprehension about the implementation of the proposed mega projects. This calls for a fresh look at infrastructure management. The immediate need of the Indian economy is the creation of a pool of quality infrastructure personnel having the ability and grit to

- convert the huge investment promises on paper into quality infrastructure facilities;

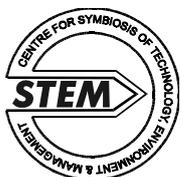
- manage and sustain high service levels of infrastructure; and
- upgrade the existing infrastructure facilities and improve the service levels through better management practices.

STEM's initiation of the School of MINDS, drawing on its own achievements in the social infrastructure domain, is a timely response to this sectoral imperative. MINDS is now ready for launching two unique academic programmes from August 2005:

- **PGDIM** - Post-Graduate Diploma in Infrastructure Management (a regular one-year programme for graduate engineers); and
- **PGCIM** - Post-Graduate Certificate in Infrastructure Management (a programme for in-service professionals).

MINDS is in the process of establishing collaboration with technical institutions and industry. MINDS was invited by the CII Southern Region Committee for a Round Table on 'Promoting Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) in Infrastructure in Karnataka', held on 4th January 2005 at Bangalore.

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