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Self Reliant Initiatives through Joint
Action (SRIJAN)

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Project Implementation Processes in Soya Samriddhi Programme

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Soya Samriddhi: A Step towards Increasing Wealth through Soya Farming

Padam Jain and Ved Arya¹

1. The Organisation

Self-Reliant Initiatives through Joint Action (SRIJAN) started its work in April 1997 with support to the government and NGOs in planning and implementation of rural projects. SRIJAN began its field operations once it was legally registered as a public charitable trust in January 2009, its first field project being in Sagar district, Madhya Pradesh. Geographically, it now works in fourteen districts; eight of these are in Madhya Pradesh, three in Rajasthan, and one each in Karnataka, Odisha and Chhattisgarh.

Currently SRIJAN is working with 30,000 rural poor families. We have deliberately chosen to work with socio-economically disadvantaged, particularly women, Dalit and tribal people. Locations of work, though determined by thematic priorities, fall in resource poor as well as feudal societies where poor lack access to common property and entitlements. Regions we work in include water stress areas of south Karnataka, central Rajasthan, Tribal and Naxal affected area of Chhattisgarh, Tribal area of Odisha, and Bundelkhand and tribal areas of Madhya Pradesh.

2. Project Background

SRIJAN started work on increasing Soybean productivity and profitability at Bundi district of South East Rajasthan (India) since 2008 with support from BUNGE India Private Limited with 50 farmers. In consultation with directorate of Soybean Research, Indore, agriculture department and farmers, we customized packages of practices for region. We monitored each farmer directly, at the end they got 100 percent incremental yield.

In second year 2009 we worked with 678 soybean farmers and started forming SHGs of women to organise them, provide platform to access for credit. In that year we analysed the input and output data of 678 farmers by running a correlation exercise. We identified best seven best practices (1.Summer Ploughing, 2.Seed treatment, 3.Proper spacing and low seed rate, 4. Fertilizer application, 5.Timely weed control, and 6.Timely disease and pest control and 7.Water management and in situ moisture conservation) those contribute more towards soy productivity enhancement. Now, in the 5th year (2012), we have reached a scale of 12,188 farmers while still promoting the same best 7 practices. Adoption rates of all the 7 practices are more than the 60 percent.

In 2012, the programme covered 240 villages in 4 Blocks of Bundi and Tonk districts of South East Rajasthan, India.

¹ Padam Jain is Programme Leader, and Ved Arya is Chief Executive Officer at SRIJAN.

3. Planning

“If we plan better, we can achieve maximum output within a specific timeframe.”

In Soya farming, planning process at SRIJAN level begins in January much before the actual Soya Season (Soya Season starts in June and ends in November).

Project deliverables: Planning process starts with keeping in mind the following deliverables:

- a. Coverage or outreach in terms of no of farmers, no of SHG/user groups;
- b. How much area will be calculated, village/cluster/blocks level coverage;
- c. Details about improved package of practices
 - a. Process,
 - b. Timeline of orientation,
 - c. Timeline of implementation,
 - d. Responsibility of individual staff members to follow up, and
 - e. Risk assessment of each practice in the Package of practices
- d. Expected output (Reach the average yield level of 18 quintal/ha against district average yield of 10-12 quintal/ha),
- e. Input Management:
 - a. Estimation of input requirement, and talk with suppliers: who will supply these inputs and at what price,
 - b. Input quality,
 - c. Distribution of inputs, and
 - d. Orientation of machine owners, arrangement of machines, etc.

4. Stakeholder Mapping and Consultation

There is certain inter-dependence with other stakeholders. Hence, in the beginning of the project, we map the proposed stakeholders, especially their roles and support required from them for implementing the project. In SRIJAN’s soya project following stakeholders are involved, along with our own Extension workers and the team:

- Farmers (Primary beneficiaries of project)
- Input dealers
- Donors
- Research institutes
- Companies - those involved in marketing of produce
- Community institutions
- Banks for credit linkages
- Govt for possible collaboration of convergence

We organize meetings or hold a dialogue with concerned stakeholders on a periodic basis. We also conduct a workshop in a year in which abovementioned stakeholders participate.

5. Project Implementation Approaches

Following approaches/processes are adopted to achieve the deliverables.

- Select the geographical area based on certain assumptions/ hypothesis (Poor area, Potential/feasibility of activities, market study/feasibility, community need).
- Gather more knowledge about proposed activities (If already known, then refine it according to the need of area/community);
- Orient the team regarding proposed activities (means?);
- Orient community regarding proposed activities through various means like village meetings, group meetings, street play, movie show and training, etc.;
- Understand or study the community perspective regarding adoption or challenges in adoption, and reasons behind non-adoption;
- Seek to allay the concerns of the community (farmers) through various means
 - For example, in spacing, tractor owners did not want to adjust their seed drill for proposed spacing. So we conducted joint meetings of tractor owners and farmers and sensitized both parties; listening to them and resolving their concerns, removing the constraints.
- Devise a message dissemination strategy and / or a program promotion strategy (repeated message through various means to sensitize community at various stages of the project /crop cycle)
- Develop a plan for establishing backward and forward linkages
 - Collective input purchasing
 - Marketing of produce through producer company;
 - Credit linkages through SHG federation/ banks,
 - Convergence with government to get funds for soil and water conservation.
- Intensive and extensive coverage strategy to scale up operations on the one hand, while simultaneously to increase effectiveness.
 - We divided the activities and deliverables in both categories and defined the activities/follow up plan for each activity.
- Decide to give no direct subsidy to farmers towards enhancing sustainability of the project.
- Form community institutions, for program sustainability.
- Adopt a service provider strategy (To scale the project we trained local youth about project deliverables, how to mobilize community and how to ensure adoption etc.).

Project activities & scheduling

In the Soya program we identified the round the year project activities, then divided them in sub activities. On the basis of time line of activities, we decided the schedule of activities.

Technical Perfection: Adoption of PoP

In this project, we focus on ensuring adoption of seven best practices in Soya farming (as mentioned before)

- 1. Summer Ploughing, 2.Seed treatment, 3.Proper spacing and low seed rate, 4. Fertilizer application, 5.Timely weed control, 6.Timely disease and pest control, and 7.Water management and *in situ* moisture conservation).

Capacity Creation in the Community

Apart from these technical activities there are lots of activities scheduled for better implementation of project, for example, capacity building of community, community institution building, stakeholder consultation meetings, etc.). In each of the activities, we decide the time schedule for message dissemination, training and implementation of these activities.

- For example, in water management, we break activities down to the following parts: a. Moisture management through summer deep ploughing in month of April; b. moisture management at time of sowing through provision of dead furrow; c. moisture management at the time of weeding through intercultural operations and irrigation at flowering and pod filling stages.

Activity planning for individual team members

Assigning team members responsibility based on experience and expertise is the basic principle here. The project team is responsible for the project implementation following the Activity plan. In our project we decided to assign responsibility to each team member on the basis of his/her experience/skill/expertise.

- For example, to reach 12,000 farmers, we divided the team into four sub locations. One professional is responsible to ensuring adoption of 200 to1000 farmers and monitor 3 to 6 village level extension workers.
- We clearly define the roles and responsibilities to individual team member according to his/her skill.
- Apart from the roles, we also define the support structure for individuals for day to day activities as well as long term activities.

Allocation of Resources

Human, Financial and other resources are a pre-requisite for implementation. In the beginning of a project we allocate budget (financial resources), human resources and other resources for individual activities or sub activities. We do a monthly review of these resources. If there is some change required according to the need of the project, we adopt a flexible approach to revisit the resource allocation. For reallocation of resources we do proper consultation with in the team as well as in organization.

6. Periodic team review

We divide roles for implementation of project activities to individual team members according to his/her skill in a specified time frame. In monthly meeting we review the progress of individuals as well as the whole team. In these meetings, we also discuss and record the challenges that individual members have been facing, and develop the strategy to overcome the challenges. Now team has decided to review of individuals work on a weekly basis to speed up the work as well as strengthen the support system. Apart from the scheduled plan we monitor / review our work through field visits, meeting with farmers/stakeholders, and discuss with team members as well as village level extension workers. We collect data of our progress work so these data also help us to get the picture of our project and activities.

As per our knowledge we may be doing well, but that may not be entirely right. So to judge our effectiveness we also invite a third party, for mid-term review, and get an unbiased feedback for further improvement of programme.

7. Contingency Planning

In each project, there are certain risks associated to it. We need to identify these risks before implementation or at the time of planning for the project. For each risk we should have a risk mitigation strategy or alternative plan. For Example, soya farming is possible if good rain occurs in the period between 25th June and 15th July. If it is delayed, soya farming is not so profitable. So in contingency, we should have a plan of such crops that can grow when (a) there is a delayed rainfall; and (b) there is low rainfall. Such crops are black gram (urad), green gram (moong) and sesame (till).