

Asset Building for Wage Dependent – Single Women / Women Headed Families

Problem Statement:

Women headed families / single women household families are different from poorest of the poor in terms of their needs and constraints. Absence of male support and having to live with other families or alone imposes special constraints and make them particularly vulnerable, as they get older for lack of assets. Asset creation becomes a problem, as they have to earn and support themselves by wage incomes, and no other support is available for supplementary income generating activities like livestock rearing.



It has evolved over several rounds of discussion with the single women households that developing individual livestock assets based on a commonly pooled/ managed land resource with assured water would be a best bet option. Innovative ways of accessing land & water and appropriate support services need to be established for asset building process.

Villages:	Muktipad in Kosgi Mandal and Bomraspet
Women involved:	11 women initially and some have dropped out in Muktipad and 9 women in Bomraspet
Target Group:	Single women / women headed families dependent on wage incomes

Muktipad Initiative:

Leasing in land with assured irrigation over a longer period (10 years) to provide a land base for developing individual assets of the women organised into a Common Interest Group.

Helping the women to own and develop livestock that have quick income/ asset regeneration cycles while the primary needs are met by wage incomes.

Processes Involved:

The incidence of single women/ women headed families is more in Muktipad village. These wage dependent single women or women headed families are identified by the VO. They are categorized into two groups with age <35 yrs and old aged. Data was collected of women who can go for labor, present asset holdings, skill mapping, dependents, with

whom they are staying, etc. During the interactions it was observed that these identified households do not have assets of their own and have experience of rearing livestock.

The group also felt that rearing livestock is a quick income generating activity. Lack of fodder base and land to support livestock was observed to be a major constraint. On behalf of the CIG, the VO pursued getting rights to the temple land but they could not succeed.

Two farmers of the same village came forward to give their lands (3 ac of irrigated land and 6 ac of adjacent dry land) on long-term lease. On behalf of CIG, VO negotiated with farmers and entered into an agreement (leased in for 10 years). In turn VO has assigned the land to CIG on specific terms and conditions:

Terms of Agreement between VO and the CIG:

- Should not spoil the soil
- Land should not be sub-leased
- Use sustainable methods of cultivation
- If land is not used for the purpose of the objective, VO will take the land back
- Members should pay Rs.150/- per month to CIG after 2yrs
- If a member withdraws her membership from CIG, she has to pay back her loan amount to CIG
- VO has to do assessment on CIG functioning twice in a year and make a presentation in the VO general body meeting
- In case VO has taken decisions to stop activity, a team consists of MMS representative, WASSAN representative, VO representative and CIG representative will assess and submits a report to the MMS

Finances:

Money is in three forms

- **Grant:** Grant to CIG, loan to member with the interest of 6%. After two years members should start repaying the Rs.150/-per month including principle and interest up to 10th year. (Amount depends on the number of members)
- **Loan:** working capital will be treated as loan and be handled as per the usual procedures
- **Risk fund:** Risk fund can be kept at Samakhya

The lease amount for 3 acres of irrigated land for 10 years is one lakh rupees and another 3 acres of dry land was leased in for Rs.35,000/- this cost was entirely borne by the project as a subsidy and paid upfront.

Activities Taken up:

CIG formed out of the identified women and several meetings were organised to ground the initiative.

Kharif – 2006:

Paddy cultivation was taken up in SRI method in 2.5 acres and vegetables in <0.5 acres in the irrigated land while there was red-gram standing crop on the dryland.

Rabi -2006

- Accessed sprinklers from AP MIP
- Castor parental seed production (VP-1) was taken up in 0.75 ac of dryland as seed multiplication of castor parental line. This is envisaged to be a high value added crop.
- A tree-nursery was also taken up as a part of AP DAI (25000 plants).
- Paddy was taken up as share cropping from the adjoining farmers as the women has water.



Kharif – 2007

- Nursery continued
- Castor – continued – still to be harvested
- Red gram in 2 acres sown
- Fodder plots raised
- Loan being accessed for calf-rearing (for bullocks)

Initial Constraints / Lessons

- Though initially it was envisaged that the women could access some employment through EGS, it did not happen. As the women started depending on the farm, a conflict has arisen between daily wages and income from activities (seasonal). The daily wage incomes are also crucial for their living and the enterprise skills and mind-set will take time to set in. It is hoped that it may take few cycles and realising some substantial returns for the women to settle in their enterprises.
- With in the group conflicts are also strong arising out of work division, normal behavioral aspects and collective action problems etc., are proving to be conspicuous that must be dealt with, but not an impossible impediment.
- With every conflict in the group, there is some breakdown in the work rhythm having substantive negative impact on the activities.

- Since this is the first initiative, there are considerable facilitation gaps at the MMS / VO level and even at the level of WASSAN.
- Though the project provided capital in the form of long-term lease rent, the working capital and capital to for securing livestock still need to be mobilized. The investment requirements are higher and accessing credit is proving to be difficult. Though the local bank has approved sanctioning of loan for purchase of livestock, there is an undue delay in processing.

It is expected that the group dynamics would set in after they realize the incomes from castor seed and nursery and also, once the individual livestock assets are secured.

The initial experience clearly indicates the need for a) wage incomes for the first year to be dovetailed into the project design b) planning for complete investments – depending on convergence may delay the processes c) stronger hand-holding during the first year for the farm to develop and group dynamics to settle down.

Next Steps:

Accessing loan for livestock (calf-rearing), institution building inputs to CIGs/ VOs that may include reorganizing the CIG membership. Building the individual asset base.

BOMRASPET VILLAGE:

9 women headed / single women families formed in to CIG from identified POP households. Total livestock based farm as a support system for 9 single women / women headed households (Bomraspet) is being established.

On behalf of CIG, VO negotiated with famers and entered in to an agreement (leased in for 5 years). The VO handed over the land to CIG on the following tems and conditions:

1. The group will take up livestock enterprises and use the farm as a supplementary source for feed/ fodder.
2. Goats, sheep and diary enterprises planned
3. Ram-lamb rearing as a part of the sheep breeding program.
4. The leased in land providing supplementary nutrition (fodder) to the livestock for quick growth



- 4 acres (2.5 ac irrigated and 1.5 ac dry land) with one good yielding borewell taken on lease for 5 years for 9 single women.
- Lease amount – Rs. 60,000
 - Member contribution- Rs.1000 per head
 - VO contribution – Rs. 10,000
 - MMS contribution – Rs.35,000
- Project support

MMS, VO & SHGs have also invested their own funds into the exercise. The lessons from Muktipad village helped in improving the processes.

A planning workshop has been organised with all the women and the VO. The detailed plan of action, budget sources and income streams are evolved in the planning exercise.

The group has purchased goats and have started off the activity. Fodder trees were planted in the leased in land and some fodder plots were also raised.

FUTURE ACTION PLAN:

- Taking some common land from the Gram Panchayat is being negotiated.
- Implementing the action plans.
- Accessing EGS for development of biomass in the farm.

Up-scalability

It is expected that the results of these two initiatives specially focusing on the wage dependent single women / women headed households start emerging from end of this year. The strategies can be evaluated for upscalability by March, 2008. The initiative would provide necessary resource base for individual households with low natural resource endowments to take off on their livelihoods.

The preliminary experience indicates a combination of leased irrigated land (or purchased under land purchase scheme) + wage endowments for one year (including provision of wages for one male person) + linkage with banks for working capital and purchase of livestock can be evolved into a packaged program specially targeting wage dependent single women or women headed households.

A **special program** could be conceptualized. **Wage endowments** for poorest single/ women headed households tied to such farm on a long-term basis would significantly build their income & asset base. A combination of VO based work with EGS endowment can be central to this. Land purchase scheme is another option that could be explored.