



Ensuring livelihood for poor farmers

Bose, a small farmer, lived in a small village Keelappan chavady, in Sivagangai district of Tamil Nadu. He owned 3 acres of rainfed land growing sorghum, bajra and cowpea. He had 20 sheep which supplemented his income. But, he had to sell his sheep to meet his son-in-law's demands for a motor bike. On an ill fated day, his son-in-law met with a fatal accident. Bose's wife too killed herself unable to bear the tragedy. Following the tragic incident, Bose with his widowed daughter and her young son left the village with dejection. He worked for seven years as a security guard in the nearby city and lived in a slum area. Meanwhile, he got addicted to alcohol and sold his 3 acre land in his native village to meet various needs of the family.

When he lost his job and had to leave the city, one of his friends helped him to get a job in an organic farm. He and his daughter Kaliamma agreed to work on the farm for a monthly salary of Rs. 4200. They lived in a portion of the farmhouse, where the farm owner also lived. The farm owner employed them on the condition that he should not consume alcohol and should save 25% of their wages in post office savings account.

The farm owner was living on the farm for 15 days a month. He had his family and another farm at 600 kms away from this farm. Bose with his experience on his own farm and the guidance of the new farm owner, did everything possible to plant vegetables and fruits. He also maintained 3 local varieties of cows, using the milk for consumption as well as for preparing panchagavya and fermented curd to spray on plants to control diseases. Cow dung and urine was used to produce biogas and organic manure (vermicompost and compost). After 14 months of joining the organic farm, Bose was able to sell 300 kgs of papaya, 300 – 350 kgs of banana, 100 kgs drumsticks and 600 kgs of vegetables like gourds, brinjal etc. He transported the farm products on his bicycle and sometimes on the buses and sold them in two neighbouring towns. He was getting 15% incentive on sales.

After working on the organic farm, Bose, his widowed daughter and grandson were maintaining good health. They were happy after 7 years of misery and sickness. It is just because of his firm decision to give up the consumption of alcohol. Secondly, the clean environment in which they are living and consuming farm fresh organic food everyday. The grandson joined the local primary school after discontinuing for one year. Since Bose also teaches him in the night atleast 15 days in a month, he is considered as the best student in his school. Now, Bose has plans of educating his grandson Murugesan to become at least a graduate, if not a doctor or engineer. He is determined to save money and own some land in the future with some support from his farm owner.

It is surprising that many people in this country are poor inspite of their ability and health. There is no reason why any healthy person, whether a man or woman, should remain poor if they work regularly, have good habits and save a part of their hard earned money having

a goal of secured life in future. Poor farmers do not need the inefficient programmes of the government, like providing guaranteed jobs for the rural poor, paying money for no work done. This will only spoil them and destroy the country's rural population. Now Bose and his family are leading a honourable and satisfied life with hope of good future. In future, only such good relationships can save the farms from being abandoned or sold to companies.

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Capacity Building on Knowledge Management in CSOs

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Development organizations are deeply involved in generating lot of field knowledge. Often these learnings are not adequately captured and widely shared. Building necessary understanding, systems, processes and skill sets required for managing knowledge within institutions and sharing widely in public domain therefore becomes crucial. This requires integrating practices evolving from multiple disciplines, such as Management, Information systems and Communication.

The programme of Knowledge Management in Civil Societies is a new programme being initiated by LEISA India team through short duration Learning Workshops and long duration customised programmes. This document is the proceedings of the first workshop organised for CSOs during 22-26 April 2008.

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