



JANUARY 2020

IMPACT EVALUATION

The Promise of Participatory Livelihood Programs: AN IMPACT EVALUATION OF TRIPTI IN ODISHA

8

This note is based on the paper *Impact Evaluation Framework and Results: Odisha Rural Livelihoods Project* authored by S. Joshi, N. Palaniswamy and V. Rao.¹

CONTEXT

In India, the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) and several State Rural Livelihood Missions (SRLMs), together with other donor funded programs, aim to empower the most vulnerable and marginalized citizens through sustainable livelihood enhancement. These initiatives involve credit and savings via the vehicle of Self-Help Groups (SHGs), improved access to financial and public services, institution building and participation in local assemblies. While the multi-faceted causes of poverty are widely acknowledged, there is little empirical evidence to substantiate the success of these multi-dimensional approaches to tackle them.

Since the core intervention of creating networks of SHGs has a long implementation history, it is challenging to design rigorous impact evaluations. The TRIPTI program, implemented by the state government of Odisha with support from the World Bank, launched in 2009, provided the opportunity to design such an evaluation. Odisha is a coastal state with more than 80 percent of its 46 million population living in rural areas. It ranks amongst the most impoverished areas in the region with low levels of women's welfare and one of the highest populations of Scheduled Tribes (STs)

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Social Observatory Team at the World Bank conducted an impact evaluation of TRIPTI (Targeted Rural Initiatives for Poverty Termination and Infrastructure) in order to measure the effect of the project on the socio-economic welfare of participating households.
- The project was successful in increasing membership to Self Help Groups (SHGs) that form the core of the participatory livelihoods approach.
- There were significant improvements in share of household consumption spent on women and children's goods, as well as on healthcare.
- There was a noticeable increase in women's empowerment. Women participants experienced greater mobility and decision-making authority within the household, and reported an increased likelihood of pursuing institutional responses to domestic and public problems (such as domestic violence or alcoholism).

1. The original paper is available at <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/462521477331602676/ResearchPaper6-Odisha-Core-RDD.pdf>

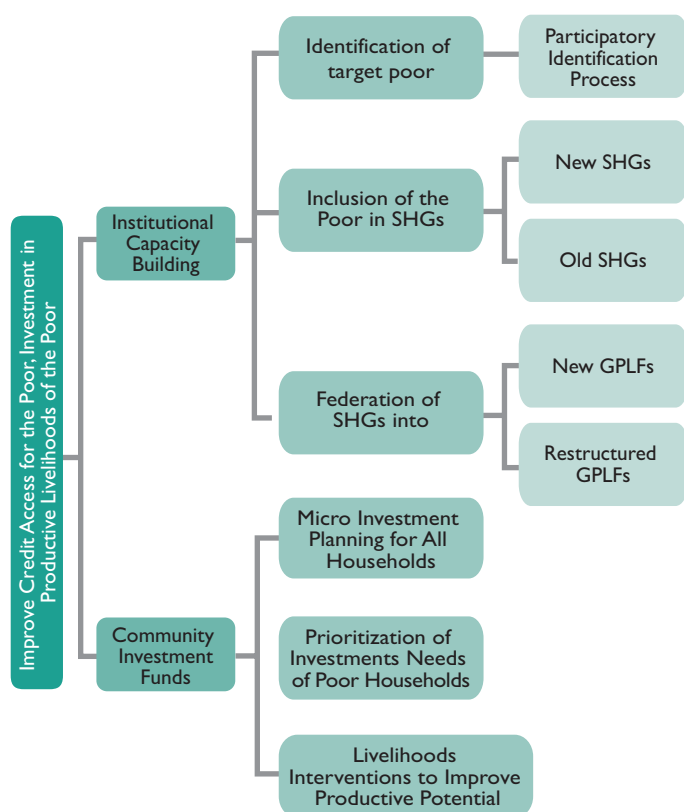
in the country.² As of 2017, the Human Development Index (HDI) of Odisha is 0.599, well below the national average of 0.639 but an improvement over the 2004 value of 0.482.

Since the selection of TRIPTI project areas was based on objective and verifiable selection criterion, the following study - designed jointly by TRIPTI and the World Bank's Social Observatory team - identified a valid control group in order to study the impact of such a participatory livelihoods approach on development outcomes.

INTERVENTION

TRIPTI was launched in 2009 with assistance from the World Bank, and implemented by the Odisha Rural Livelihoods Program (ORLP) to address the lacunae of inclusion, and limited productive potential.³ TRIPTI aimed to address the high rates of rural poverty in Odisha, with a particular focus on increasing diversification of livelihoods and the reduction of debt, using SHGs as nodes of credit, and with a special focus on women's empowerment, strengthening community ties and increasing community action.

Figure 1: Implementation of the OLM



BOX 1: TRIPTI FOLLOWED THE PROGRAM OUTLINED BELOW

Build institutional capacity of Community Based Organizations, where SHGs at the village level were aggregated into federations at the Gram Panchayat (GPLF) and Block level. The main thrust at this stage was the management of group-based lending and a need-based prioritization of resource allocation within the federation and linkages with services provided by the public and private sectors in order to improve productive potential.

Improve access to credit through the provision of SHG grants called the Community Investment Funds (CIFs), with the intention that these would be used to meet the investment needs of the target poor, and that these needs would be identified through a facilitated process of micro-investment planning.

Link CIFs with livelihoods interventions that focused on improving productivity.

Harness the collective bargaining potential of these institutional platforms and enabling beneficiaries to negotiate with market actors for better economic gains, and with service providers (government, private sector, and civil society) for better service delivery.

The project was rolled out in a staggered manner amongst village councils, and by 2015 TRIPTI had been implemented in 38 sub districts in 10 coastal districts of Odisha. The four least developed blocks in each of the 10 districts were identified to receive the intervention, through a participatory identification process based on a situational analysis whereby an objective assignment score was calculated as a weighted average of the total number of households, number of households belonging to lowest castes, number of SHGs deemed credit worthy and a Composite Development Index.⁴

In 2016, at a project cost of US\$ 90.5 million, the Odisha Rural Livelihoods Project had 7,50,000 members (over twice the original target) who gained access to credit of about INR 10,000 and were organized into 79,000 SHGs and over 1,000 federations, with a high level of membership among the poor and disadvantaged in the community based organizations.

2. Scheduled Tribes account for 22.1 percent of the total population of the state and 9.7 percent of the tribal population of India.

3. The Government of Odisha (GoO) had initiated an SHG program called Mission Sakthi in 2001 and formed the *Odisha Poverty Reduction Mission* (OPRM; reconstituted as *Odisha Livelihoods Mission – OLM*) in 2006. Odisha was the first state in the country to launch the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) in 2011, in its bid to bring down rural poverty by promoting diversified and gainful self-employment to the rural poor. (<http://olm.nic.in/>)

4. Computed from census data, this index was based on the following variables: density of population per sq. km of area, percent of agriculture workers to total male workers, net area sown per agriculture worker, percent of net irrigated area to net area sown, percent of cropping intensity, percent literate, number of primary schools per one lakh population, percent of villages electrified, percent of problem villages provided with safe drinking water, number of medical institutions per lakh of population.

EVALUATION DESIGN

A Regression Discontinuity Design was developed in 2011, after the TRIPTI project areas were identified (Box 2). Using a difference in difference approach to measure the change in outcomes between project (treatment) and comparable non-project (control) researchers sought to evaluate the impact the project.

The data collected focused on four modules, comprising a survey of household consumption expenditure, a survey of women’s empowerment, two focus group discussions at the village level and a survey of the Gram Panchayat Level Federations. Data was collected during the three year window in 80 Gram Panchayats - from a sample of 3000 households selected at random from 160 villages - once before the launch of project interventions at baseline (2011), and once at the end of the project in 2014. Accounting for missing data, the baseline survey included a total of 2,875 households and the end line survey included 2,874 households. In each round of the survey, each household was linked to village level data from that round.

KEY FINDINGS

Households in TRIPTI areas reported a 22 per cent increase in SHG membership compared to non-TRIPTI areas.⁵ They were 7.7% more likely to report borrowing from formal or institutional sources of credit – such as SHG or bank loans and exclude high interest loans from moneylenders or relatives.⁶

These households report greater spending on healthcare and women’s and children’s goods - INR 839 per capita on



Selection of TRIPTI Blocks	Selection of Evaluation Blocks	Selection of GPs, Villages and Households
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In each TRIPTI district, 4 blocks were to be chosen for project "treatment" using a "backwardness" selection rule • All blocks were given a score that gave weightage to block level development indices (Ghadei Committee Index) SHC coverage, total population and SC/ST populations • Program blocks then ranked in descending order of scores, and the 4 blocks with highest backwardness score were chosen for the program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In each district, the non-program or "control" block was chosen as the block that had the closest score to the last of the 4 program blocks • A pair of blocks- one program or "treatment" block, and non-program or "control" blocks were chosen to be part of the evaluation sample in every district 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treatment is universal at the level of the block, which implies that at sub-block units, or Gram Panchayats (GPs) receive TRIPTI interventions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ 4 GPs randomly chosen in each block ➢ 2 villages randomly chosen in each GP • All targeted households in a TRIPTI GP are eligible for the TRIPTI intervention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ 15 households randomly chosen in each village ➢ Over sampling of SC/ST households to proxy for target households

5. This increase was additional to an already high baseline value of 67.9% SHG membership in project areas and 74.2% membership in control areas.

6. About one quarter of households in treatment and control areas reported access to these formal credit sources at baseline.



healthcare, as opposed to INR 536 in non-TRIPTI areas. The share of expenditure towards women and children goods was about 2 per cent higher than in non-TRIPTI areas, accounting for 3 per cent of the overall household expenditure.

Households in TRIPTI areas reported working 2 more days in the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, while women⁷ reported working 1.8 days more under the same scheme.

Women in TRIPTI areas also reported better mobility, which may be driven by their visits to SHGs meetings (17.8 percent) and to the bank (5.3 percent) alone. They also seem to be more likely to tackle local problems with 5.6 percent more women reporting that they will tackle domestic problems such as alcoholism and 4.9 percent more stating they would tackle problems with the Public Distribution System in Gram Panchayat meetings. We also note a 12.8 percent greater increase in an index of willingness of women to pursue institutional responses to these community problems in TRIPTI areas.

7. These results are statistically significant and the baseline value for participation was very low at less than 2 days, for both households and women within these households.

8. This impact evaluation is one of a set of five evaluations in the World Bank's portfolio of livelihoods focused CDD projects in India.

ABOUT THE IMPACT NOTE SERIES

This note is part of the South Asia Agriculture and Rural Growth Impact Note Series, that seeks to disseminate research and analysis focused on World Bank financed rural, agriculture and food systems programs in South Asia. Series editors: Abhishek Gupta and Gayatri Acharya. Photographer: Rohit Jain.

We are grateful for the generous support from the South Asia Food and Nutrition Security Initiative (SAFANSI), the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Ministry of Rural Development, various state rural development departments and the Department for International Development (DFID).

This note was prepared by Deepti Kakkar (Consultant, World Bank) and published by the Food & Agriculture Global Practice at The World Bank, 1818 H Street, NW Washington, DC 20433 USA. Website: www.worldbank.org. For further information or copies please email: galex2@worldbank.org.

Disclaimer: The findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed in this note are entirely those of the author(s) and should not be attributed in any manner to the World Bank, to its affiliated organizations or to members of its Board of Executive Directors or the countries they represent.

REFERENCES

G. Mansuri and V. Rao. Localizing Development: Does Participation Work? Policy Research Report, Washington, DC: World Bank, 2013

Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) IN: Odisha Rural Livelihoods Project (P093478), Implementation Completion Report (ICR) Review, 2016

P. Christian, E. Kandpal, N. Palaniswamy, V. Rao, Safety Nets and Natural Disaster Mitigation: Evidence from Cyclone Phailin in Odisha. Policy Research Working Paper No. 8375, World Bank, 2018

POLICY LESSONS

While, empowering women was not an explicit goal for TRIPTI, this study when seen in relation with several others shows that the program has a significant impact on women's empowerment⁸ - not just in the domestic sphere but the public sphere as well. More women are more confidently speaking out against social problems, are stepping out of their homes, and command a greater share of household resources.

We also note an increased membership in SHGs, a greater inclination to save and a concurrent decreased dependence on informal sources of credit and the cycle of usurious debt.

It is noted that while women are more vocal in the public and private sphere, their input into actual decision-making within the household remains marginal. Although significant lacunae remain, participatory livelihood interventions have affected meaningful and quantifiable change. In addition, more focused and better-tailored interventions, studied over a longer horizon, promise to deliver better outcomes.

CONCLUSION

While the gains made by TRIPTI may seem piecemeal, a more nuanced examination reveals a steady move towards women's empowerment and independence in the public sphere. TRIPTI shows positive, quantifiable indicators of change when evaluated on the criteria of women's mobility, their intra-household decision-making capacity and political participation, indicating the significant contribution of participatory livelihoods interventions in women's empowerment.

S. Majumdar, V. Rao, P. Sanyal, on the frontlines of scaling-up: a qualitative analysis of implementation challenges in a CDD project in rural India. Policy Research Working Paper no. WPS 8039. Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2017

Ed. South Asia Agriculture and Rural Growth Discussion Note Series, World Bank Publication, 2020

World Bank, A targeted rural livelihoods program in Odisha. The South Asia Food and Nutrition Security Initiative (SAFANSI). Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group, 2017