

Learning Workshop on RKVY 28th Feb, 2014, Lucknow

The learning workshop was organized by CECOEDECON and PAIRVI in collaboration with Oxfam India at Jaishankar Prasad Hall Lucknow. More than 35 participants actively engaged with the discussions. The objective of the workshop was to enhance contribution of farmers in implementation of the RKVY and emphasize their right for planning, which is embedded in the RKVY.

Ajay Jha opened the discussion with brief introduction of the RKVY and guided the participants through the day's agenda. He said that RKVY was started in 2007 with the objectives of increasing investment in agriculture in states, bridging the yield gap in productivity, and introducing decentralized planning in agriculture. The overarching aim of the centrally assisted scheme was of enhance the growth rate in agriculture to 4%. He also added that the RKVY portfolio in UP has increased from little above 100 crore (2007-2008) to more than 700 crore and the cumulative investment has reached 2830 crore till now. He emphasized that in the 12th Plan the investment in RKVY has been enhanced from 25000 crore to 63000 crore, which provides an excellent opportunity to the states to utilize the amount with flexibility to reach the objectives of the RKVY. However, he also cautioned that the objective of the decentralized planning has been achieved only partly, and that is an unfinished agenda that the states must accomplish, so that the development planning is bottoms up, based on the local needs and responses and growth is more inclusive. He also explained that till now the state of Uttar Pradesh has been allocated more than Rs. 28300 core, of which majority has gone to irrigation (27.28%). However, despite this the net irrigated area in the state has increased by one million ha with the last decade. He also explained that most of the irrigation in the state is dependent on tubewells (70%) and the area of irrigation under the canals is coming down drastically (now at around 20%). The dependence on tubewells is also creating over exploitation of ground water and as a result, the number of overexploited blocks have increased from 37 to 76, and the number of critical blocks have increased from 13 to 32 in the last six years.



Ms. Nand Kishore Singh, Regional Manager Oxfam India Lucknow welcoming the participants said that post globalization the focus has been more on the services where impressive growth has been registered. However, he added, that this growth has been on the cost of growth and investment in agriculture. He underlined that with more than 60 percent population nationally and more than approximately 70% people in the state dependant on agriculture, it makes better sense to increase growth in agriculture, which will bring more equity in the society and improving lot of farmers and make the growth more inclusive. He also underlined that with RKVY

portfolio rising significantly, it needs to be seen whether the gains have also been translated in the improving the income of farmers.

Ms. Sabita Parida from Oxfam India, Delhi talked about Oxfam's work on investment in agriculture and implementation of the RKVY. She said that agriculture being the most important economic sector, Oxfam believes that growth in agriculture is the key to overall growth of the country. She emphasized that country not only needs increased investment in agriculture but also to ensure community monitoring of agricultural schemes and the RKVY being most important schemes in the agricultural sector. She also informed that investment and public support to agriculture is also being questioned by many who insist that agriculture as biggest private enterprise in the country should be self sustainable. However, she supported increased public support and investment in agriculture on the grounds that agricultural landscape dominated by small and marginal farmers, huge value chains being entwined with agriculture, and its being subject to global inequity in terms of subsidies in developed countries, and being subject of international market fluctuations. She added that post liberalization and since 2007 the policymakers have also understood that the trend of diminishing investment in agriculture should be reversed and that is why RKVY was started. She explained that RKVY has achieved limited objectives, the major bottlenecks being lack of decentralized planning, and lack of monitoring and evaluation. She shared that Oxfam along with partners have organized budget tracking studies in few states, where it has been found that there is very little awareness among farmers and also the CSOs about RKVY and its objectives, and therefore there is almost no community monitoring. She also added that budget tracking has been extremely difficult due to the fact that appropriate disaggregated data and project wise DPR not being available. Except few states, states have not prepared the CDAPs in the manner suggested by RKVY guidelines by the Planning Commission, she added. Talking about RKVY in UP, she added that 28300 crore has been invested through the scheme, maximum of which has gone to irrigation without much results. Second largest allocation has gone to the seeds/crops but still the state has one of the poorest seed replacement ratios. Important areas such as Ag research and post harvest management have received abysmal amounts, and have remained neglected.



Dr. H S Sur, former advisor agriculture for the Planning Commission delivered the key note address. Besides sharing the concept, objectives, gaps and performance of the RKVY in the 11th Plan, he also shared about the changes in the guidelines in the 12th Plan. Talking about the impact of the RKVY, he said that states have responded well to RKVY and the investment in agriculture has increased by 6-7%. It has also improved production and productivity, allocation to allied sector has increased. However, on the flip side; DDPs have been adopted only partially, CDAP have been made without peoples

involvement, emphasis upon small and marginal farmers and women has remained weak, and poor progress in PPPs and development has remained less need based and sustainable, he added. He said that 12th plan has brought some changes in the guidelines, which include introducing 4 streams in place of earlier 2 streams, implementation agencies now also include state level screening committee in addition to State level selection committee. On the decentralization agenda, he alimented that the guidelines mention CDAPs but the focus and spirit of the decentralization has been diluted to quite an extent. However, he added that CSOs can play a significant role in bringing decentralization back on the agenda as the right to planning belongs to people and not to the state.

In the second session some of the CSOs who work on agriculture and in RKVY shared their impressions and reflections.



Sanjay Rai, from AIM, talking about the overall agriculture scenario in the state said most worrisome aspect is the lack of extension services and lack of appropriate knowledge and facilities transfer to the farmers. He added that only persons whom the farmers could approach for information are the shopkeepers selling seeds and fertilizers, who push their own brand and because of this almost all pesticides which have been banned globally and being sold in the state. Despite the extension being in such a poor state, the posts of Krishi Mitra have been abolished. He also said that in the RKVY monitoring is not possible as there are no disaggregated and project wise data available and therefore, RKVY monitoring team too could not access these data. In irrigation, tubewells are being promoted despite a poor underground situation and rivers are being neglected. There are no systems for collection, documentation, and validation and popularization of traditional knowledge despite hundreds of best practices exist. He added that the biggest concern is that only big farmers issue dominate the policy landscape with little support to the issues of small farmers who have almost no voice.

Mr. N C Tripathi from AFC India shared their experience of formulating CDAPs and the project on customized Farmers training and extension through ICT. He said that the biggest problem with agriculture in the state is that there is very little technology integration. Farmers adopt only 10% of technology while the farmers reject 90% of them, as it does not conform to their circumstances. He also identified poor extension services as one of the major bottlenecks.

Mr. Yogesh Bandhu from CETGLADS said that they conducted a monitoring of RKVY in 27 districts in the eastern UP where they found that the seeds given to the farmers were not locally tested and failed to germinate



and they neither match their cropping pattern. He added that many agricultural schemes have failed to bring the desired results as they are not based on local needs and responses and are imposed on the farmers from the top. He emphasized that if decentralization in planning would have been taken care of the results could have been entirely different.



Mr. Ramji Rai from the GDS said that they did a budget tracking of the RKVY in the district of Hardoi. He added that the data was extremely difficult to find and officers did not cooperate at all in sharing the data. However, on the basis of data accessed, it was shown that the plan was being poorly implemented and while the focus was on production, it did not take care of storage facilities. He also added that in 2011-2012 only 28% of the release was spent till December 2012. He highlighted that the extension services were in extremely poor condition in the state, which was not addressed despite the support from RKVY.

Post lunch farmers shared their reflection on the crises in agriculture, their innovation and best practices.

Mr. Triyugi Prasad Sharma from Siddharth Nagar said that they never knew when the CDAPs were made and who made them. He also added that the farmers are not getting appropriate inputs at the right time. None of them receive seeds at the right time. Small and marginal farmers also do not get power, which largely goes to big farmers. Despite these problems they have been able to revive “kalanamak” paddy variety, which was on the verge of being lost. Mr. Virendra Kumar Upadhyaya from Siddarth Nagar said that the benefits of technology are also going to large farmers. Citing an example, he said that under the RKVY Rs 4000/ha is being provided for encouraging no till agriculture, but the farmer who has less than 1 ha land does not get covered in the scheme. Small farmers gets almost no information or inputs due to poor extension services.

Gauri Shankar from Lalitpur who works with sahariya farmers said that despite having in possession of the land for 50 years, they still do not have the patta (title) to the land, due to which they are always worried about their right to land. They even do not get any compensation because it is paid through the bank and many of them do not have bank accounts.

Mr. Devendra Sharma from dist. said that CDAPs were made at the district and only approved at the villages, therefore it does not reflect local needs. He added that the farmers were given jowar seeds developed by the GB pant Institute by the government in 2012-2013, which failed completely because they were not suitable for these agro climatic zones. He also cited another example of how small farmers and especially those belonging to the SC & ST are discriminated. He explained that MGNREGA encourages farming activities in the private

agricultural land, however, none of these have been extended to the farms belonging to the SCs and STs.

Dr. H S Sur and Ms. Sabita Parida co-chaired the last session on the way forward. While Dr. Sur talked about how decentralized planning can be brought back on the agenda, Ms. Sabita talked about ways to improve community monitoring of the RKVY projects. Dr. Sur said that to build pressure on the government to develop CDAPs for the 12th FYP, the CSOs and farmers should ask DPC (District Planning Committee) and their chair about whether CDAPs are being prepared. Additionally, Gram Sabhas can also discuss this issue and some of them can take lead in activating VAPU, BAPU and DAPU and pressure them for preparing CDAPs. Ms. Sabita Parida said that the CSOs can take up projects for monitoring and evaluation of RKVY projects, for which there is a provision in the RKVY. In addition, the CSOs and women farmers should also be watchful about the new guidelines which says that 33% allocation under the RKVY should be made to women farmers, and check whether that is happening.

Ms. Nirma Bora from PAIRVI delivered the vote of thanks.

