

CREW Project

Bihar Stakeholder Visit: Aug 18 – 19, 2015

Tuesday, Aug 18

1. Kunal Ranjan, Consultant for the CREW study in Bihar

- The CREW pilot study in Muzaffarpur was discussed in detail. Kunal informed that out of four blocks, surveys in three blocks had been conducted
- It was decided that to increase the weightage of the study an additional PACS FGD would be carried out in each of the blocks
- Kunal mentioned that he would be requiring additional funds for the same
- Note was prepared highlighting the key preliminary findings

2. Mithilesh Singh, Deputy Managing Director, NABARD

- Mithilesh Singh affirmed the idea of highlighting good practices among the Primary Agriculture Credit Societies (PACS) for cross learning. A study could be done to assess PACS across Bihar and document good practices
- Mithilesh mentioned that there are funds with the NABARD for development (INR 54 Cr), from which he could release funds for this study
- On the idea of having a brainstorming meeting the findings of the Muzaffarpur study, he agreed to promote the same from the point of view of NABARD

3. Anil Kumar Jha, Officer on Special Duty to Agriculture Produce Commissioner (ACP), Department of Agriculture

- Anil Jha agreed that there is lack of technical, financial and managerial skills amongst the PACS. On the issue of having 17% moisture benchmark for procurement, he mentioned that the same has been kept as the government entities generally do not have drying facilities
- He said it will be important to validate if the market price of wheat has in fact been higher than the Minimum Support Price (MSP) offered by the government
- He asked if such a system can be put in place where procurement and public distribution happened simultaneously at the same point (to cut the long value chain). Hence, if the PACS could procure and sell at their Panchayat level instead of forwarding the same in the government chain which would bring it back to the Panchayat level ration shops.
- He agreed on having a brainstorming meeting post the study to discuss the ground evidence. CUTS should connect with the Principal Secretary, Agriculture and the ACP for the meeting

Wednesday, Aug 19

4. Chaitanya Prasad, Principal Secretary, Department of Cooperatives and Ram Singh, Joint Registrar, Department of Cooperatives

- Chaitanya Prasad explained that Department was in the process of initiating e-governance in the PACS. The system would be extend to connect to PAC members through mobile phones
- He added that it would be important to have such a system which identifies the nature of farmers selling to PACS (ie if he/she is small/medium/large farmer)
- He also mentioned that the Department was looking at ways to identify the good PACS across Bihar and accordingly develop 'Model PACS'
- On pointing out the issue of PACS biting produce (as opposed to using a moisture meter) to measure produce moisture, he ordered that a notification be published to ensure that procurement will only be done by PACS which have moisture meters and use it

5. Sudhir Kumar. Principal Secretary, Department of Agriculture

- Sudhir Kumar said it would be important to evaluate the impact the APMC abolishment has had on the stakeholders. Who has/ has not benefitted from the removal and how.
- The activities taking place at the mandis which once belonged to the APMC must be captured
- Money/ produce leakage through the value chain should also be assessed

6. Vijay Prakash, Agriculture Produce Commissioner, Department of Agriculture

- On the discussion of having a closed meeting post our study, he said it would be better to discuss once the study was complete

7. B Kartikeya, Director, Department of Agriculture

- The CREW project and Muzaffarpur study was explained to him. He asked us to share the country report with him
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