1. **Action Research on Lac in Jharkhand**

**Vulnerable segments whose livelihoods are inadequate and/or are risky:** Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFP) Collectors in market-linked NTFP cluster

**National/state program/agencies addressing it:** National Watershed Development Program; Forest Department

**Thematic Area for the action research:** Value Chain Development - enhancing livelihoods through participation in full value chain

**Specific Commodity/ Livelihood Activity:** Lac - productivity enhancement and primary processing

**Problem Statement:** In spite of good potential of income generation through lac cultivation, the farmers engaged are not able to get optimum returns. Moreover, market system which is characterized by fluctuating prices is a strong de-motivating factor for the farmers to invest time and money for lac production.

**Working hypothesis:** "The availability of proper extension services to Lac growers will improve productivity at the same time well organized business development support services for upcoming entrepreneurs’ led community based enterprise will help them to have better access to market for realizing optimum return."

**Partner Agencies:** Jharkhand State Livelihood Promotion Society, Jharkhand Coop, NABARD.

**Potential policy outcomes:**

- The region where this project will work get better and sustainable extension services through KVKs and KVKs should include Lac as one of their research topics.
- The Government bodies (Forest Department, IFP, JHASCOLAMP, JSLPS) may be motivated to formulate schemes to train lac growers on scientific cultivation practices.
- Forest Department and other supporting agencies viz. JHASCOLAMP may work to establish mechanism to offer market price for the Lac growers.
- Government may be motivated enough to, in consultation and jointly with insurance companies, come forward with appropriate insurance and credit products conducive to lac rearing.

**Status Update As on 31st Aug 2014:** MoU with partner agency (IGS) containing Action Research Plan & Budget, prepared in consultation with partners, signed on 01st April 2014. It covers:

- b) 100 Households identified and 700 host trees pruned. Inoculation is done in all the pruned trees
- d) Videography completed.
2. Action Research on Fisheries in Bihar

Vulnerable segments whose livelihoods are inadequate and/or are risky: Fishers using ponds leased from Cooperative or Fisheries Department

National/state program/agencies addressing it: National Rural Livelihoods Mission/ Bihar Rural Livelihoods Society/Fisheries Department

Thematic Area for the action research: Tenurial Arrangements and Pond Productivity- enhancing livelihoods of fishers

Specific Commodity/ Livelihood Activity: Fish -pond productivity enhancement

Problem Statement: In spite of abundant water bodies in Bihar, the socio-economic condition of fisher communities is not up to the mark. Among other reasons, short-term (one-year) tenure of water bodies lease renewal deters investments by the communities that not only leads to low productivity but also leads to fisheries and aquaculture being treated as a secondary source of livelihood in many cases.

Working hypotheses: Security of tenure of user rights, on fair and transparent terms, provides necessary incentives to fisher collectives to invest in productivity enhancement measures and thus enhances livelihoods.

Partner Agencies: Sakhi NGO, Bihar, Central Institute for Fisheries Research and Education (CIFRE).

Potential policy outcomes:
- A pond leasing policy that recognizes the relationship between property rights, investment incentives and productivity.
- Policies that prevent monopolistic tendencies among cooperatives that promotes rent seeking and stifles healthy competition. Sufficient provision in the Fisheries Act for convergence of different schemes with fisheries activities.
- Easy access to credit for fishers on individual and on group basis.

Status Update As on 31st Aug 2014:

MoU with partner agency (SAKHI) containing Action Research Plan & Budget, prepared in consultation with partner, signed on 01st April 2014. Baseline profiling of ponds initiated.
3a. Action Research on the Forest Rights Act in Jharkhand

**Vulnerable segments whose livelihoods are inadequate and/or are risky:** Forest Dwellers (Tribal) with traditional rights on natural resources situated in Forest Areas

**National/state program/agencies addressing it:** Forest Rights Act, Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Forest Department, Tribal Welfare Department

**Thematic Area for the action research:** Land claims generation and settlement under FRA and Convergence of government programs for enhancing livelihoods of forest dwellers.

**Specific Commodity/ Livelihood Activity:** Forest produce and Agriculture activity in forest areas

**Problem Statement:** The number of claims generated and the number of claims settled on FRA is very less. There is no convergence mechanism as spelt out in FRA act for ownership, management and conservation of forest land and resources which limits the scope of transferring the legitimate rights on forest land and rights over forest resources to individuals and community. In the present arrangement the role of block level officials are not pronounced clearly viz. role of Block Welfare Officer, Circle Officer, PRI representatives which has its bearings on claim generations and claim settlement process. Moreover, post claim settlement the land is not utilized optimally for sustainable livelihood activities.

**Working Hypothesis:** The increased awareness of communities and officials (Department of Welfare and Forest Department) about the existing land right acts and FRA would increase the claims generation and speed up the process of recognition and vesting of rights. Proper orientation of claimants/cultivators and officials of line departments would bring more accountability for the officials of line departments and additional resource mobilization through convergence would lead to the use of vested land for enhancing livelihoods.

**Partner Agencies:** Manthan Yuva Sansthan NGO Jharkhand

**Potential Policy Outcomes:**
- Revised implementation process that provides for capacity building of PRIs.
- Creation of institutional mechanisms to enable integrated operations across multiple agencies.
- Introduction of various govt schemes for land development and management of land title deed holders.

**Status Update As on 31st Aug 2014:**

MoU with partner agency (Manthan Yuva Sansthan) containing Action Research Plan & Budget, prepared in consultation with partners, signed on 01st April 2014. Action on Stock Taking of status of FRCs, Claims Generated and Claims Settled initiated and likely to be completed by 15th September.
3b. Action Research on the Forest Rights Act in Orissa

**Vulnerable segments whose livelihoods are inadequate and/or are risky:** Forest Dwellers (Tribal) with traditional rights on natural resources situated in Forest Areas

**National/state program/agencies addressing it:** Forest Rights Act, Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Forest Department, Tribal Welfare Department, NREGS

**Thematic Area for the action research:** Convergence of government programs for strengthening livelihoods of forest dwellers.

**Specific Commodity/ Livelihood Activity:** Agriculture and allied activity in forest areas

**Problem Statement:** Absence of a proper convergence mechanism limit the scope for converting the rights recognized under FRA into sustainable livelihoods. While the state Government of Odisha has taken certain initiatives but the implementation of convergence program would require structured and planned interventions to ensure Post Claim Support and Holding to Holder of Forest Rights through its departments and developmental schemes as envisaged in the Rule 16 of the FRA Amended Rules 2012.

**Working Hypothesis:** Improved mechanism for implementation of convergence programs with improved understanding and capacity of government agencies/local community is likely to achieve sustainable livelihoods for the right holders.

**Partner Agency:** Vasundhara NGO, Orissa

**Potential Policy Outcomes:**

- Dedicated allocation of resources/budgets for the convergence programs from relevant programs/schemes of the government like from the MGNREGA budget, Tribal Sub Plan etc.
- Convergence of schemes/programs for enhancing productivity of tribal land so that they enjoy true benefits of the land ownership for their sustainable livelihood.

**Status Update As on 31st Aug 2014:**

MoU with partner agency (Vasundhara) containing Action Research Plan & Budget, prepared in consultation with partners, to be signed by 20th September 2014. Identification of Gram Panchayat Kramdidli for the AR intervention has been done.
4. Action Research on Agriculture Value Chains in Meghalaya

Vulnerable segments whose livelihoods are inadequate and/or are risky: Small and Marginal Farmers in remote areas with poor accessibility to markets

National/state program/agencies addressing it: National Horticulture Mission, Meghalaya Basin Development Authority and Small Farmers Agri-business Consortium

Thematic Area for the action research: Farmer owned Value Chain Development for enhancing livelihoods of farmers in remote areas

Specific Commodity/ Livelihood Activity: Oranges

Problem Statement: Majority of the farmers are deviating from agriculture as they found it is giving double burden to their already existing problems. The main reason was the productivity is comparatively less than the input cost they have put in. Another reason is their products are being exploited in the market. Value addition and value chain are hardly introduced to the farmers, many of them are not even aware that their produce can be processed, added value, etc. Preservation is another problem which the farmers face. There agricultural goods are mostly perishables. If they cannot market at the right time it will be wasted.

Working Hypothesis: In regions well-endowed with land and water, agricultural livelihoods get enhanced when farmers (as against traders) led collectives start providing input and output linkages. Subsequently, some of these local collectives lead the formation of local agri-value chains.

Partner Agencies: Meghalaya Basin Development Authority and Meghalaya Institute for Entrepreneurship

Potential Policy Outcomes:
- A policy that provides preferential access to credit, capacity building inputs and infrastructure support to farmer collectives.
- Identification and promotion through increased public investments of value chains that are amenable to engaging farmers collective.

Status Update As on 31st Aug 2014:

There is an informal arrangement with Meghalaya Institute of Entrepreneurship. Action initiated includes preparation of a baseline format (questionnaire) and finalization of 20 villages for the Action Research. Baseline assessment will start now.
5. Action Research on Agriculture Value Chains in MP

Vulnerable segments whose livelihoods are inadequate and/or are risky: Small & Marginal Farmers in agriculturally developed areas.

National/state program/agencies addressing it: Small Farmers Agri-Business Consortium and its promoted Farmers Producer Companies

Thematic Area for the action research: Making farmer producer companies effective for enhancing livelihoods of member farmers.

Specific Commodity/ Livelihood Activity: Business through Farmer Producer Companies

Problem Statement: farmer producer companies (FPCs) are ill equipped to develop farmer owned and managed governance system that is effective and transparent. As a result, large numbers of farmer members were excluded from availing the services, making the FPC’s operations very inequitable. Also, despite having a mandate for promoting business, the FPCs have not been able to develop adequate market oriented business strategies and access to mainstream finance for agri-business

Working Hypothesis: The new generation FPOs registered as producer company will have greater positive effect on their member’s livelihoods if it is able to ensure - i) active participation of member farmers in governance system and processes, ii) superior alignment of incentives including addressing issues of farmers, iii) access to mainstream finance and iv) adoption of market oriented business strategies.

Partner Agencies: Samarth Kisan Producer Company Pvt Ltd, in Agar and Zimmedar Kisan Producer Company Pvt Ltd, in Dewas

Potential Policy Outcomes:

- Strategic alignment among various stakeholders such as government, research institutions, input suppliers, financial institutions, NGOs, market and industry
- Arrangements for financial support to the FPC
- Tax exemption for FPCs
- Patronization of FPCs by government for using their produces.
- Adaptation of FPC design to other agri and non-agri sectors

Status Update As on 31st Aug 2014:

MoU with partner agency (Samarth Kisan Producer Company Pvt Ltd, in Agar and Zimmedar Kisan Producer Company Pvt Ltd, in Dewas) containing Action Research Plan & Budget to be prepared now.
6. Action Research with Chenchu Tribes in AP/Telangana

**Vulnerable segments whose livelihoods are inadequate and/or are risky:** Chronically impoverished communities from resource rich areas

**National/state program/agencies addressing it:** Ministry of Tribal Welfare PVTG Division and Society for Eliminating Rural Poverty Telangana

**Thematic Area for the action research:** Moving from hand-outs to sustainable livelihoods-enabling flow of public funds for PVTG livelihoods through capacitated Panchayati Raj institutions

**Specific Commodity/ Livelihood Activity:** Livelihoods of Chenchus- a particularly vulnerable tribal group

**Problem Statement:** Limited awareness on availability of public funds and lack of understanding on methodologies for promotion of livelihoods hasn't been able to transform PRIs into effective livelihood promoting institutions. Despite having better opportunities in hand to tap public funds, PRIs were not able to impact on the livelihoods of rural poor and PVTGs remain most disadvantaged due to this condition.

**Working Hypothesis:** Sensitizing and building capacities of PRI members, to tap public funds as per specific livelihood needs of PVTGs results in improved flow of public resources for livelihood enhancement of PVTG communities thereby benefitting local communities

**Partner Agency:** Village Renewal Organization, NGO.

**Potential Policy Outcomes:** The research will be able to recommend, important factors to be considered to make the PRIs proactive towards livelihood promotion with specific reference to PVTG communities.

- The research will advocate a model to make the PRIs responsible and effective to work for livelihoods of local communities.
- The research will be able to explain about various mismatches between the design of public fund policies and the livelihood needs of poorest of poor sections.

**Status Update As on 31st Aug 2014:**
Action Plan to be prepared though MoU has been prepared for Village Renewal Organization (VRO). Orientation of VRO to be done on 16th September thereafter the detailed Action Plan will be prepared.