

Inputs to the hearing of the AWZ- 21 January 2009

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The **GOAL**..primarily to restore **ECONOMIC VIABILITY** and **PRESTIGE** to rural professions and the rural way of life.
NSSO survey. If the youth wants to migrate..development for whom?

The **CHALLENGES** are manifold and **microfinance, land tenure** and **farmers organizations** are certainly relevant issues but

1. What is important is having an **INTEGRATED APPROACH** to rural development. **Just increasing agriculture productivity is not enough.**

You need to pay attention to nutrition, health care, education and infrastructure.

Those of us who work in the field see that income generation programs become useless when **ill health** prevents people from taking advantage of it. In addition to his own sickness, The head of the family loses working days taking family members to the city to a hospital.

When there is no **sanitation and clean drinking water**, illness is frequent and fields cannot be ploughed and planted.

. **Tackling malnutrition.** We know that the MDG goals far from being met, the situation with hunger is becoming worse. According to new **FAO** and **IFPRI** reports Malnutrition is becoming severe and the incidence of low birth weight children is unacceptably high. **This needs to be tackled on a war footing.**

GC is promoting the planting of **golden sweet potato** in some of the worst affected areas..the tribal area of Jharkhand... to provide a calorie and vitamin A rich food to rural poor .

Golden rice may or may not ever arrive..its safety and relevance questionable..but high value , locally adapted foods are available and must be used.

Lack of **educational facilities** in the village means those who can , send their children outside to study, incurring avoidable costs... sometimes mortgaging land when a son is to be educated.

The **multi agency IAASTD report** has provided a well balanced and comprehensive approach to rural development, focusing on more than just science & technology. The report is a consensus document showing a **very broad acceptance** of its recommendations by a **diverse range of experts** from developing and developed nations representing a **diversity of interests**.

2. Planning a rural development program makes sense only when it is developed after **consultations with the rural community**. Not only grows more naturally from bottom up but we find that that this approach results in more relevant solutions at a fraction of the cost and the community develops a stake.

For instance in some villages in Rajasthan... .. Link road constructed by a contractor and one constructed after consulting the community. ..which will get flooded... which connects the most vegetable growing regions ..so needs the quicker link to the market

Technology and scientific know-how is certainly valuable in rural development but equally valuable is the **local wisdom and the practical knowledge** of local communities. Ignoring this is unwise because the local community is most knowledgeable about its environment and the source of its problems and has developed

Climate change- Water conservation –Tribals know the terrain..the topography, the water sources..and most important, the history of the water and will tell you where to make the water body or develop the watershed.
Idukki dam—someone had the sense...

When documenting traditional practices about agriculture, one encounters several solutions which are known to the community.
We found dipping hands in milk..planting tobacco seedlings..to control disease... **NIF**

3. Feminisation of agriculture. Because rural professions, spp agriculture, do not provide adequate incomes , there is large scale migration to the cities. The women are left behind to grow the food. Yet, little effort is made to help them cope with this new challenge.

I have seen... **fodder cutting machines** made for the height of a man which a woman has to use. **Machines to thresh the grain** which require so much manual strength... **agriculture implements** made for men

If women will engage in agriculture, equipment and machinery will have to be designed for their use.

4. To make agriculture viable, the farming community must have preferred access to the **productive assets like land and water**

Common lands must not be diverted to biofuel plantations but ...

Water resources can not be diverted to Coca Cola bottling plants... Plachimada in Kerala.

5. All rural development programs must recognize... **indigent**

Too poor, too old..disabled

For them a welfare program is necessary..old age pensions, **traditional grain banks** can be revived, health care etc

TO THE ISSUE OF MICROFINANCE:

Microcredit is limiting..expensive..high interest because of mediation..upto 15%

Banks must provide rural credit at low interest rates... 4%

Quantum available for rural credit is declining..this must be reversed

FARMER CREDIT CARDS for agri inputs or

Rashtriya Mahila Kosh... over 95% repayment

LAND TENURE

Land ownership papers must be made jointly for men and women... for loans, security of livelihood

Public awareness & education necessary for social acceptance, not just laws

FARMERS ORGANISATIONS are important but represent the bigger farmers.

most peasants are not organized so talking and dealing with rural communities through village organisations or in India through the elected

local bodies..the local self government the panchayat is less likely to be partisan.