



**ASSAM AGRIBUSINESS  
AND RURAL  
TRANSFORMATION  
PROJECT (APART)**

**E-newsletter**

**8th Issue  
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**ASSAM AGRIBUSINESS AND RURAL TRANSFORMATION PROJECT (APART)**

### **2ND IMPLEMENTATION MISSION OF WORLD BANK TO APART**

The 2nd World Bank implementation review mission to Assam Agribusiness and Rural Transformation Project (APART) was held from 16th – 25th September 2019. The main objective of the mission was to review the implementation progress made by the project so far. The mission

- (i) reviewed the physical and financial progress of all project components;
- (ii) verified the compliance of project activities with the fiduciary, safeguards policies, and legal covenants of the project;
- (iii) reviewed the procurement and financial management aspects of the project; and
- (iv) conducted a comprehensive assessment of the implementation progress.

During the mission, the experts of World Bank held elaborate discussions with the different implementing departments/agencies and also the International Knowledge partners on various aspects of the Project. The team also visited the field and interacted with the beneficiaries of the Project, besides other stakeholders.

During the wrap up meeting of the Mission on 24th Sep. 2019, the team from World Bank gave a presentation to the Chief Secretary of Assam and apprised him on the progress of the Project. The meeting was attended by senior officials of the Project, implementing departments/agencies of the state and International Knowledge partners of the Project.



*Start up meeting of the 2nd World Bank Implementation Mission*



*Filed visit of World Bank Implementation Mission team*

## KRISHI RUPANTAR

### WORLD BANK COUNTRY OPERATIONS MANAGER VISITS APART SITES IN JORHAT

The World Bank Country Operations Manager, Mr Hisham Abdo Kahin visited Polyculture Fishery demonstration in Ownaborali village under North-West Development Block (commonly known as the Dhekorgorah development Block), an identified cluster in Jorhat District on 17th Sep. 2019. He was accompanied by Mr Manivannan Pathy, Task Team Leader, APART, Ms Philarisa Sarmah, Social Safeguards Consultant. Dhekorgorah Development block is having around 410 ha water spread area including individual ponds, community ponds, beels, derelict water bodies etc. In 2018-19, the Ownaborali village which is about 15 km away from the District HQ comprising of 88 families (all families from Scheduled Caste) was selected for formation of Farmers Producers Group (FPG) for demonstration of Market-led Climate Resilient Technology under APART. The main livelihood source of the families in the village is fisheries and each family has at least one fish pond. The total pond area of the village is 21.45 Ha in which the productivity of fish is around 2-3 tonne/ha/yr. Considering all the criteria mentioned in the Project Implementation Plan (PIP), a total of 13 fish farmers (30.67 % female) covering a water spread area of 4.0 Ha were selected for carp Polyculture demonstration. The water spread area ranged from 0.25 Ha - 0.50 ha. as per project norms. The Unit cost per ha for Polyculture Demonstration is Rs 2.50 Lakh in which the project share (80%) is Rs 2.00 Lakh and beneficiary share (20%) is Rs 0.50 Lakh. Accordingly, the APART share for the 13 Demonstrations to the FPG is Rs 8.00 Lakh and Beneficiary share is 2.00 Lakh. The amount was routed through the Project Director, ATMA, Jorhat and the program is implemented by District Fisheries Office, Jorhat with capacity-building support provided by College of Fisheries, AAU and technical support from WorldFish.

During the visit of Shri Abdo to District Fisheries Development Office, Jorhat, the Fishery Co-ordinator of ARIAS Society explained how the Farmer Producer Groups (FPGs) under polyculture activities are following the Package of Practices provided by College of Fisheries, Assam Agricultural University (AAU) and Best Management Practices (BMPs) provided by WorldFish wherein they are



*Country Manager-Operations, WB being explained about rice post harvest machines*



*Country Manager, Operations, World Bank with Fish polyculture beneficiaries in Jorhat*



*Country Manager- Operations, WB at fish polyculture site in Jorhat*

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practicing market-led fish production. Moreover, the beneficiaries under APART mentioned that stocking of quality fish seeds, use of 25% protein feed, maintaining optimal water quality throughout the year and fish harvesting as per the requirements of the market is taken up by the beneficiary farmers to increase the fish production, productivity and profitability. They also mentioned that the small indigenous fish culture is being practiced scientifically with the carp farming so that these fish can be dried in hygienic way as per specifications and requirements of the market. In response to a query by Country Manager, the Fishery Co-ordinator mentioned that, the production cycle is adjusted in such a way that fish can be sold in market during high demand period i.e. April to July (as ban is imposed in this season on the proclaimed fisheries due to breeding season) so that farmers get additional Rs. 30-40/kg from their fish produce. He also mentioned that as per harvesting report, the Demonstration farmers have obtained a fish production of 5200 kg/ha/yr which is almost double than their normal production. the farmers realised Rs 20,000- Rs 30,000 more profit by selling the fish in the off season. They are now using digital weighing machine to sell their fish by knowing the market price of fish. By seeing the success of this group, the potential indirect beneficiaries of the Cluster villages are coming forward to adopt the market led climate resilient technology in their ponds by adopting scientific fish farming practices through the demonstrations under APART.

The Country Manager expressed his satisfaction about the activities of the Group and advised them to continue to optimize production from their existing fish ponds following scientific Package of Practices (PoP) and Best Management Practices (BMPs) and to help the fellow farmers who are coming forward to adopt the technology.

On the same day Mr. Abdo & team also visited Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Teok, Jorhat under Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat. The KVK had organized a technology showcase of different mechanized interventions introduced and promoted through APART. Dr. Sudhanshu Singh, Team Leader APART and IRRI CSISA Coordinator, South Asia, explained about different resource-efficient and cost-effective alternate mechanized options for direct seeding and transplanting. The machineries will be put in operations by engaging young entrepreneurs and/or Farmer Producer Companies/Organizations. Mr. Abdo showed keen interest in power tiller operated seed drill for direct seeding of rice in small farms. Dr. Suryakanta Khandai updated on the importance of postharvest machineries for cost-effectiveness and timeliness of reaping, threshing, drying and storing the grains in the context of climate resilience in view of unpredictable rainfall at the time of maturity, and also the machinery for rice value addition as a business model. Mr. Abdo expressed his satisfaction that the money invested is quite fruitful and expected that the efforts of AAU in partnership with IRRI would lead to higher productivity, profitability and sustainability while reducing carbon footprint. Dr Rupam Borgohain, Nodal Officer AAU-APART, briefed the team about the roles and responsibilities of AAU-KVKs in implementation of APART activities at farmers' field. Mr Abdo also planted a Neem (*Azadirachta indica*) sapling in the KVK premises. KVK staff thanked Mr. Abdo and his team for sparing their valuable time and making the visit.



*Country Manager –Operations, WB learning about paddy reaper*

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### EXPOSURE VISIT OF APART OFFICIALS TO LEADING FARMER PRODUCER COMPANIES IN MAHARASHTRA

Aggregation of the farmers, especially small and marginal ones, into producer organizations has been identified as a solution to address many of the traditional ills of the agriculture sector. It goes without saying that access of smallholder farmers to technology, inputs and markets is a necessity for ensuring the growth of the sector.

Hence, in order to introduce the benefits of corporate professionalism in a farmer producer organization, exposure trip was organized by APART, for officials from different implementing departments associated with APART. The visiting team interacted with the farmers and representatives of leading Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) in Maharashtra.

The exposure visit was conducted in two batches, the 1st batch (2nd- 6th September 2019) visited Agasti Farmers Producer Company, Akole, Agriculture Produce Market Committee (APMC), Rahata and 'Sahyadri Farmer Producer Company', Nasik. The 2nd batch (9th – 13th September) visited Sahyadri Farms, Nasik, Agricultural Produce Market Committee, Rahata, the integrated horticulture and livestock farm of farmer entrepreneur, Shri Anil Kandware at Neemgaon, Dist: Sangamaner.

The main take aways of the exposure visit as shared by the visiting team are:

1. The Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs) have provision for risk coverage to the farmers by providing better marketing linkages to their farm products, have trained farmers for scientific cultivation that have enhanced export facilities, and have also introduced waste management activities.
2. Agriculture Produce Market Committee (APMC) has given a good platform to individual farmers to get an actual price of their farm products.
3. The AMPCs has also made provisions for the marketing of livestock thus giving opportunity to farmers to get good value of their livestock.
4. Processing of fruits and vegetables, as seen is through the Sahyadri model can be replicated by involving entrepreneurs in Assam and NER
5. The cluster & FPO formation is very effective
6. Integrated Farming is implemented effectively by the FPCs
7. FPOs are being able to sustain without Govt Financial help
8. Existence of Mandi house is a major motivator for the farmers



Visit of the team to Agricultural Produce Market Committee, Rahata



Team visit to Sahyadri Farms, Nasik

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## HANDING OVER OF CHARGE OF ARIASS SPD

Shri Vinod Seshan, IAS, State Project Director (SPD), Assam Rural Infrastructure and Agriculture Services Society (ARIASS), who is on study leave handed over the charges of SPD, ARIASS to Shri Manoj Kumar, IAS, Director, Agriculture, Govt of Assam on 13th September 2019.



*Shri Vinod Seshan, IAS, SPD ARIASS handing over the charge to Shri Manoj Kumar, Director, Agriculture*

## BOKO FARMERS INCLINE TOWARDS CLIMATE RESILIENT RICE VARIETIES

Agriculture, especially paddy, is the mainstay of people’s livelihood in Mouman, Haldipara and Alokjari villages located in Boko Block of Kamrup (Rural) district of Assam. This tribal population cultivates paddy mostly for self-consumption, and sells the surplus produce.

Most of the farmers of this region fall under small and marginal categories, and paddy is their main crop, followed by horticulture crops such as banana and arecanut, besides vegetables and oilseed crops. The high-yielding varieties (HYVs) of rice are the preferred choice of the farmers of this area, alike other parts of Assam. The farmers cultivate paddy’s traditional varieties also, but because of the low yield potential, many farmers have stopped cultivating these varieties and switched over to improved varieties.

Through the initiative of the Assam Agribusiness and Rural Transformation Project (APART), stress-tolerant rice varieties (STRVs) of paddy were introduced to the farmers of these villages, wherein selected beneficiaries were provided with seeds and required technical inputs to cultivate the BINA Dhan11 in a demonstration plot of



*Bina Dhan II paddy field of Padmadhar, Village - Alokjari*

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0.25 ha during the last early Ahu season (Feb-July, 2019).

Padmadhar Rabha, a young farmer from Alokjari village, who was much enthusiastic to try the new variety, cultivated BINADhan11 in his demo plot of 0.25 ha. He and his fellow farmers harvested around 20 maunds/ bigha and are happy with the harvest. While interacting with Padmadhar, he opined that the fellow farmers have observed that rice cultivation has become very risky and yields are not stable due to change in climate. He also shared that these initiative steps taken by APART in introducing StressTolerant Rice Varieties (STRVs) will help the farmers of the State in the long run. A good harvest and shorter harvest cycle of this new variety have prompted the farmers of Alokjari to save the seed of this variety for future use, and they are looking forward to adopt the technology and cultivate BINA Dhan11 in larger areas in the next season. Smt. Saroda Bodo, of Mouman village, Boko block of Kamrup (Rural) district, is a beneficiary for the Integrated Crop Management Demo (ICMD); she received 10 kgs of seeds to be cultivated in her demonstration plot of 0.25 ha during the Sali season (June-July to Nov/Dec). She received Swarna-Sub1, a variety, which she is cultivating for the very first time. The farmers of Mouman and nearby villages usually cultivate HYVs of rice like Ranjit, Bahadur and others. But when Saroda was briefed by the Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) and project officials on the STRV, she got interested and agreed to cultivate in a plot at her farm as a demonstration. She shared that though there has been an incessant rain in the past few months, but to her delight the paddy is now in good condition, and she and her fellow farmers are expecting good yield. Similarly, Shri Rajeswar Rabha from Haldipara village received from APART, the Minikit demonstration package, 5kg seed for 0.1ha area, and has cultivated Ranjit-Sub1, a new variety. He is happy with the growth of the paddy and is expecting a good yield.

The farmers of these villages appreciated the initiative of APART in introducing the climate-resilient varieties of rice like Bina Dhan 11, Ranjit-Sub1, Swarna-Sub1 etc. They opined that the harvest in the last Boro season was very good, so they are looking forward to adopting the new varieties.



ICMD demo plot of Saroda Bodo, Village- Mouman

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### AN APPROACH TOWARDS SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION IN PIG BY PIG BANDHU UNDER PORK VALUE CHAIN OF APART

Through the support of APART, Pig Bandhus were selected as representatives of pig rearing communities from APART Districts and were trained at National Research Centre (NRC) on Pig, Rani, Guwahati for the improvement of breeding, feeding, healthcare, management and Artificial Insemination (AI) Services. These representatives were trained in two batches consisting of 38 nos. The pig bandhus from Nalbari and Sivsagar have initiated their activities on AI using liquid boar semen at their respective places. Their role in eliminating the poor productivity of existing germplasm and lack of heterogeneity in the existing gene pool has been successful.



*Trained Pig Bandhu at NRC Pig at the end of the training programme with AI Kit.*



*Pig Bandhu inseminating sow at farmers' doorstep in APART district.*



*Successful delivery of piglets by a sow from artificial insemination (AI)*



*Artificial insemination (AI) of crossbred sow by Pig Bandhu reared under low cost housing system.*

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## FIELD VISIT OF WORLD BANK MISSION TEAM



## DEMO PLOT ON AGRI-HORTI PLOT OF APART



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