



The Livelihood School

Workshop on HR issues in Social and Economic Development Sector

July 3, 2009

Venue: Centre for Distributed Computing, Jadavpur University, Kolkata

As the development sector has grown substantially in the last three decades, it has also expanded its human resources (HR). With the increasing scale, it has transformed from a set of voluntary interventions to professional organizations. However, the sector still grapples with several issues ranging from the dilemma of volunteerism vs professionalism, moderate pay, and distinct cultural practices. Such complex features of HR calls for further deliberation. In this backdrop, a workshop was jointly organized on July 3, 2003 by The Livelihood School and The SHG Promotional Forum of West Bengal in association with the Center for Distributed Computing, Jadavpur University.

The objective of the workshop was to draw directions for building HR base in development sector particularly in the Eastern India. Total 70 participants including representatives from NGOs, donor agencies, banks, government departments, and academics attended the workshop. Shri Deep Joshi, recipient of Magsaysay Award delivered the keynote address.

Prof. Dilip Bhattacharya, Jadavpur University welcomed the participants and presented a historical profile of development interventions. He emphasized the increasing importance of civil society organizations in the changing policy environment. He called for reconfiguring the organizational roles according to the changing scenario.

This was followed by six presentations by various scholars and practitioners. Further there was a panel discussion including experts from development sector. The summary of the presentations and discussion were as follows:

- There is a demand-supply gap in HR and quality of human resource is way beyond the desired level in the context of West Bengal,
- Commitment is an important factor in job satisfaction in NGOs
- Need of appropriate policies, motivation, competence building for project formulation for overall development of the HR
- Scarcity of quality HR, lack of growth of HR, price fixation, movement from voluntarism to adhocism in MFIs
- Lack of fund in HR development in large scale government programmes
- Need for transparency in HR policy in development organizations

Delivering the keynote address Shri Deep Joshi appreciated the presentations made by the speakers and told that all the findings and arguments are valid however there is a need to think out of the box. Emphasizing the need of an inclusive approach he suggested that we must think of HR in the context of community managed systems. *'Development is not just about incremental changes or business as usual, rather it is about transformation'*. Answering a question on whether it is possible to provide the modern amenities in village, he told that we must think of a different paradigm where local problems could be addressed in the local premises. Taking an example he added that large natural resource base, like forests, could be an asset that community can manage itself while fulfilling their own needs. He categorically stated that by 2025 the sector will experience an inverse trend in migration, where people will move from urban areas to villages.

Shri Dilip Ghosh, Secretary of Health and Family Welfare, Govt of West Bengal in his concluding remarks summed up the discussions and highlighted that there is lack of standard mechanisms in assessing and evaluating the HR situation in the NGOs. He also suggested the need of a capacity building cell, and an accreditation body which would be useful in addressing the problems of HR in development sector.