

Role of NGOs in Commercialization of Agriculture: A Case Study of Boipariguda Block in Koraput District, Odisha

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ABSTRACT

The voluntary organisations or non- governmental organizations (NGOs) have a significant role to play in socio-economic upliftment of tribal farmers through implementation of the government schemes. The present study focuses upon the role of NGOs in development of agriculture in tribal areas in Boipariguda block of Koraput district. The study is confined to an NGO, called Harsha Trust, which has been working extensively in agricultural sector with the local tribal people by implementing various agricultural models and government schemes. It was observed that the traditional tribal agriculture was transforming to commercial form of agriculture due to interference of NGOs in this region. Application of unique models in agricultural practices has provided sustainable livelihood to the tribal population of this region as well as given them a chance of economic upliftment.

Key Words : Tribes, NGOs, Agricultural models, Commercial agriculture

INTRODUCTION

In a highly populated country like India, any development activity initiated by the government, progresses at a moderate pace due to several geographical, economic and administrative constraints. The notions of progress such as sustainable agriculture, financial upliftment and empowerment cannot be incorporated in the process of development by government departments or non-governmental organisations alone. It needs to undertake an inclusive approach, incorporating local people in collaboration with NGOs. The role of NGOs in a developing country like India can be seen in various fields like agricultural improvement, food security, social forestry, education to the needy, provision of basic facilities to the poor and marginalized, especially tribes, etc. India has witnessed an exponential growth of NGOs over past several decades. This study is confined to an NGO called Harsha Trust Foundation which is supported by Tata Trust and Axis Bank Foundation. It has undertaken the task of agricultural transformation and implementation of government schemes in Boipariguda block of Koraput district.

The study area:

The Boipariguda block of Koraput district is located between the co-ordinates of 18°75' North

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latitude and 82° 43' East longitudes. It comes under south Eastern Ghats agricultural zone which includes high elevation and medium rainfall. The scheduled tribe population of this block is 59.45% of the total population, while the sex ratio among the tribes stands at 1068. The tribal population of this block includes tribes like Gadaba, Bhumia, Paraja, Darua and Bhotra. The interdependency amongst the tribes is generally seen here due to their heterogeneous settlement distribution. 'Gadaba' tribes belong to Munda group of tribes and derive their names from Godavari river from where they migrated to nearby areas. They speak 'Gutob' language of Austro-Asiatic family, as well as local version of Odia and Telugu languages. They are fond of their *Dhems*a dance and music, which is performed by women wearing Kareng saree. They practice both settled and shifting agriculture. 'Bhumia' people are well-known for agricultural skills. Being mostly agriculturists, they synchronise their rituals with annual agricultural practices. The supreme deities of Bhumia are *singbonga* and *dharav*. Women of this tribe use ornaments like bead necklace, bangles, armlets and nose rings. The 'Paraja' tribes, derive their name from 'praja', which means common man. Their mother tongue is *porji*, a form of Gondi that belongs to Dravidian group of languages. The language got further modified due their contact with Odia and Telugu-speaking outsiders. The *dungduma* dance and *laga* songs are a symbol of the Paraja tribe. The 'Darua' is a small group of tribe whose physical features are very similar to African Negrito. They are of medium stature with well-developed chest and broad nose. It is believed that traditionally they were the quasi-military servicemen to native kings. The 'Bhotra' are considered to be the original settlers of Barthagada from where they migrated to various places. They speak '*Bhatri*' a non-literary dialect with an established tribal identity, which is linguistically grouped under southern branch of the Indo-Aryan family of languages. Against this background, the present study attempts to focus on the role of NGOs in implementing agricultural models and government schemes.

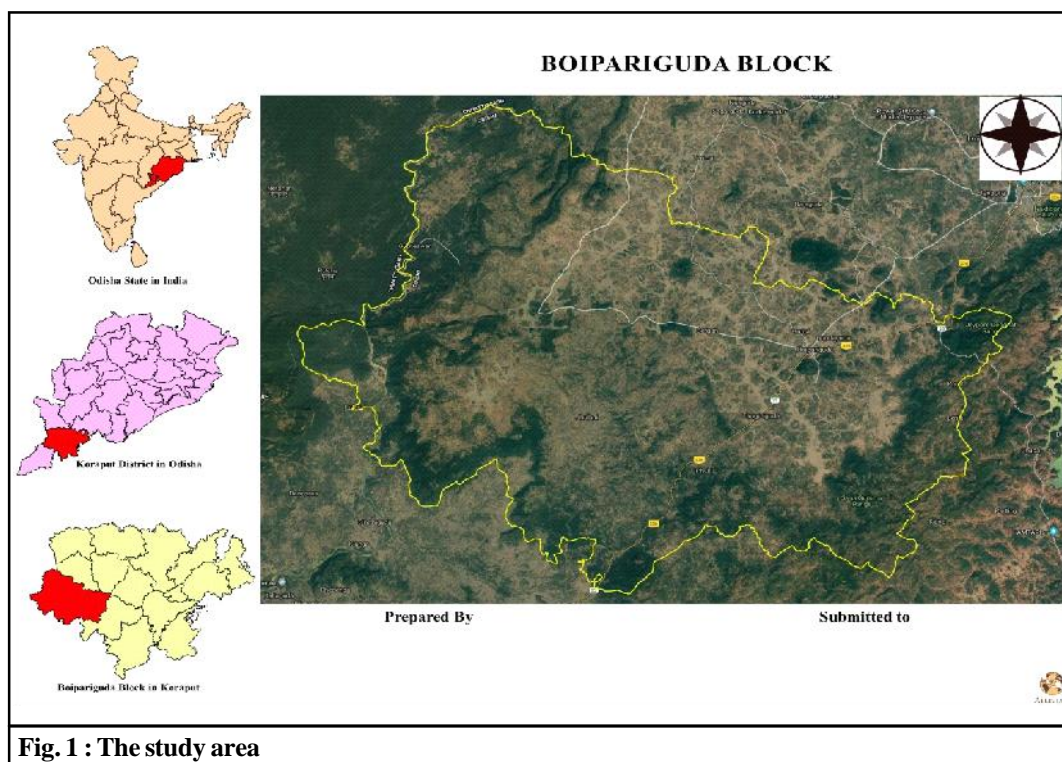


Fig. 1 : The study area

Literature review:

Siddaraju (2011) analysed the role of NGOs for the sustainable development through organic farming in Karnataka. He highlighted the role of NGOs in promoting organic farming as it is a part of government’s decision to promote organic villages for high nutritive value with organic nutrients. He observed that the farmers of Karnataka were shifting to organic commercial cultivation from modern inorganic agriculture with the help of NGOs. Gomes and Manna (2012) in their study explained the responsibility of NGOs towards rural development in two districts of West Bengal *i.e.* South 24 Parganas and Nadia. By making a purposive survey, they found the role of national and regional NGOs to be satisfactory, while local NGOs could not perform the task perfectly due to lack of infrastructure, funds and human resources. The study explained the role of NGOs in rural development which includes implementation of government projects, programmes relating to economic development and environmental management through social forestry and social sector schemes like charitable dispensary, low-cost housing, anti-trafficking drive, etc. The study reflects that cooperation among NGOs at grass root level, proper coordination among their members, availability of funds and human resource would ensure better the functioning of Panchayats and strengthen the rural development work at village level. Meena, and others (2013) broadly described about origin, objectives and various functions of NGOs in India during various periods of rural development. They cited top ten NGOs of country during 2012-2013 and their enormous efforts efforts in promoting sustainable agriculture through organic methods and rural development through provision of basic services in India. The study cited the formation of NGOs during five-year plans and the role of NGOs in participating with, poor tribal and marginalised communities to envisage effective and active self-reliant communities.

Objectives of the Study:

The present study has following objectives:

- 1- To assess the various agricultural models being pursued by the NGO, Harsha Trust.
- 2- To know about the crops being produced by tribal farmers with the help of NGO for their economic upliftment.
- 3- To study the perception of NGOs towards the tribal farmers.

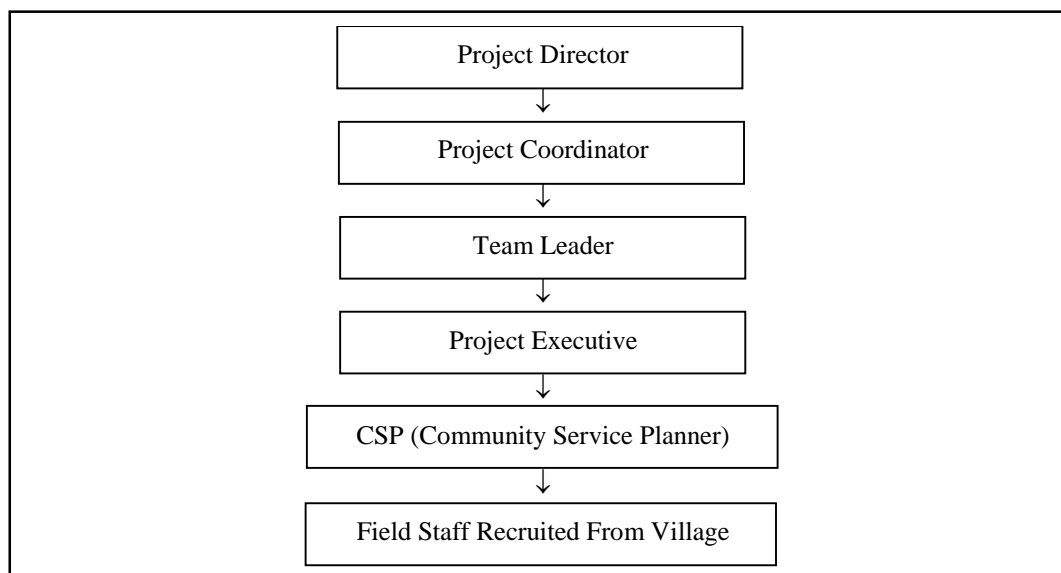
METHODOLOGY

The study is primarily based on participant observation of the tribal farmers and employees associated with the concerned NGO at agricultural fields. Group discussions were held to enquire about the constraints faced by NGO members and to know about their perception on agricultural practices. In addition to the qualitative information, secondary data were obtained from the NGO office (Harsha Trust Foundation) situated at Boipariguda and Ramgiri blocks of Koraput district.

Table 1: Panchayats covered by the Harsha Trust

Name of G.P.	Villages covered	Total households	Total area in hectares
Doraguda	18	574	573
Kathapada	13	545	532
Chipakur	17	640	458
Ramgiri	14	486	498
Dandabadi	13	414	423
Boipariguda	17	589	613

Source: Harsha Trust Foundation (NGO), 2018

Organisational Chart of NGO (Harsha Trust) for Project:**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Following are the unique agricultural models followed by the Harsha Trust for agricultural development at Boipariguda block:

1. Dhanastayee model, which included vegetable production of 15 dcml during *Kharif* and *Rabi* season; and drumstick cultivation in 50 dcml. Expected return from this model was calculated at Rs. 89,000 per annum.

2. Agro-horticulture plantation model included cashew production in 50 dcml along with millets and pulses. Expected return from this model was estimated at Rs. 35,430 per annum.

3. Ultra poor model comprised of kitchen garden farming for nutritional diversity; livestock maintenance included two goats and ten poultry birds; and provision of 25 days of MGNREGS work. Expected return from this model was calculated at Rs. 30,000 per annum.

4. Commercial crop model included production of banana on 1 acre, onion on 1.5 acre, lemon grass on 1 acre and vegetables on 0.3 acre. Expected return from this model was calculated at Rs. 52,100 per annum.

5. Paddy plus model included production of paddy on 2 acres and millets on 5 acres of land; pulses cultivation on 0.5 acres; provision of MGNREGS work for 25 days. This model had an expected income of Rs. 37,720 per annum.

6. Vegetable plus model comprised of cultivation of *Kharif* vegetables on 0.15 acre and paddy on 1 acre along with livestock rearing that included two goats and five poultry birds. The expected return per annum was calculated at Rs. 54,160.

Crops produced by the tribal farmers with the help of Harsha Trust:

Table 2 reveals that the production of variety of crops by tribal farmers with the help of NGOs have provided a great opportunity of nutritional diversity to their diet and a scope of selling surplus product at the daily markets. All varieties were being produced from the high yielding variety seeds, except the local version of millets. The cultivation of crops like broccoli, cauliflower, brinjal, bitter

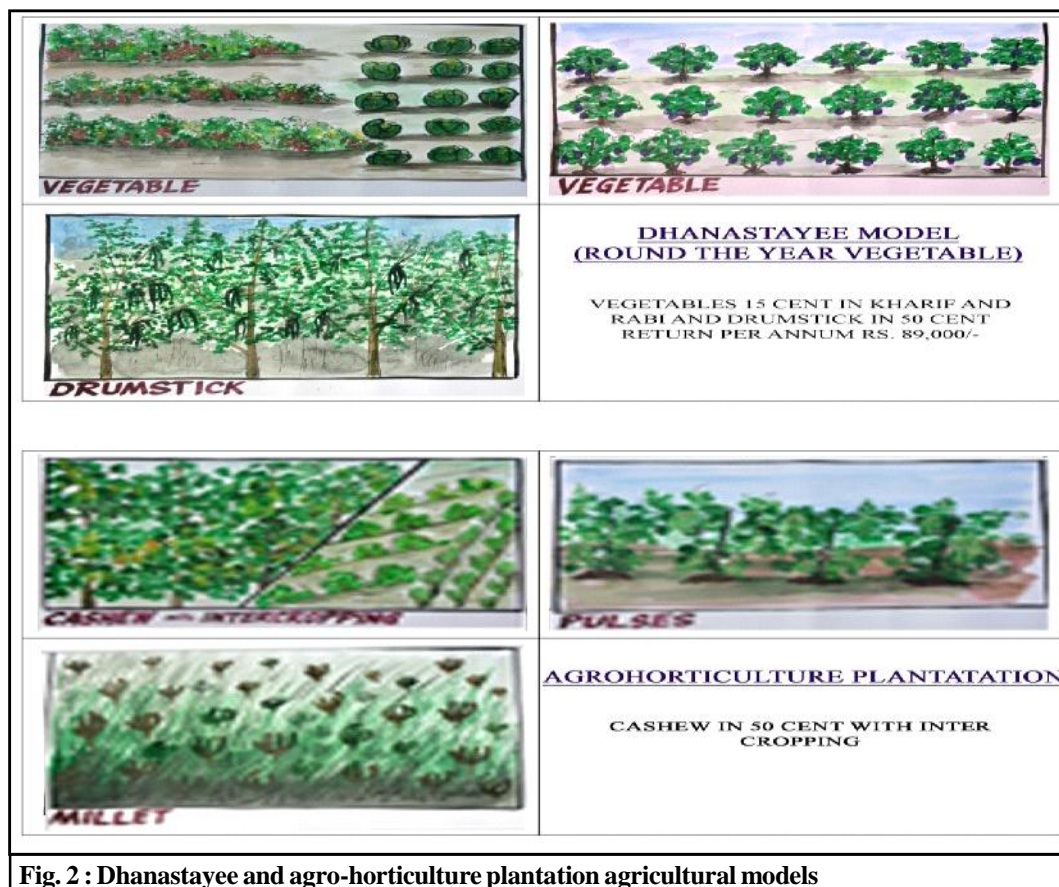


Fig. 2 : Dhanastayee and agro-horticulture plantation agricultural models

Table 2 : Crops Produced by the Beneficiaries of the Harsha Trust					
Sr. No.	Crop	Variety	Packet contain	Area/packet	Production Quantity
1.	Chilli	Vnr 2/2	10 gram	10 dcml	2-4 quintal
2.	Brinjal	Vnr 2/2	10 gram	10 dcml	3-4 quintal
3.	Beans	Kamal Gold	500 gram	10 dcml	3-4 quintal
4.	Tomato	Surakshya, JK seed, Bhagya	10 gram	10 dcml	2-4 quintal
5.	Cauliflower	White marble, Dhaval, 107	10 gram	10 dcml	2-4 quintal
6.	Cabbage	H. Krishna	10 gram	10 dcml	2-4 quintal
7.	Bitter gourd	Syngenda	10 gram	02 dcml	2-4 quintal
8.	Onion	N53	500 gram	10 dcml	2-4 quintal
9.	Broccoli	N 350	10 gram	10 dcml	2-4 quintal
10.	Cucumber	415	25 gram	10 dcml	2-4 quintal
11.	Sweet corn	N 8680	500 gram	50 dcml	2-4 quintal
12.	Watermelon	F1 Hybrid	50 gram	10 dcml	2-4 quintal
13.	Green pea	N8-1100	1 kilogram	50 dcml	2-4 quintal
14.	Millet	Local version	6 kilogram	01 acre	07 quintal
15.	Paddy	Indo-american, drr44, drr 402	6 kilogram	01 acre	15-18 quintal

Source: Harsha Trust (NGO), 2018.

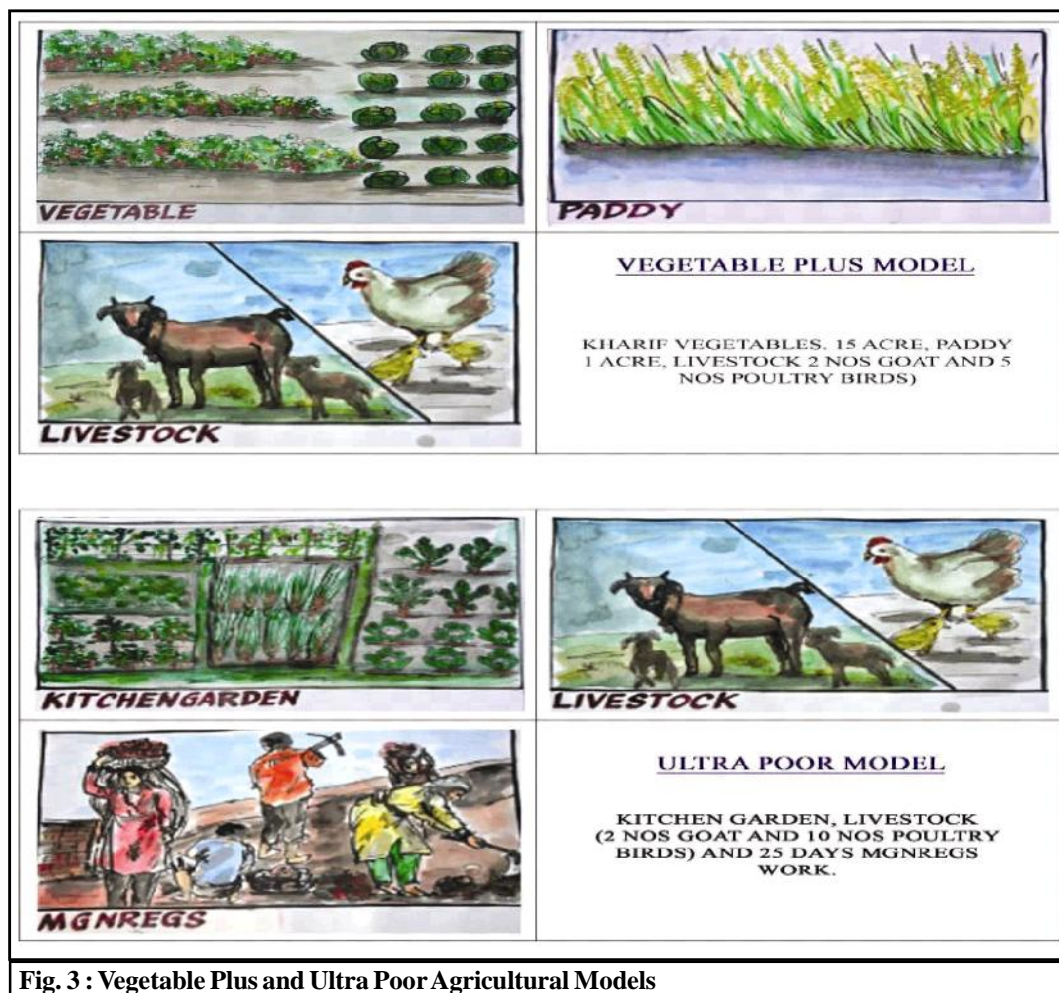


Fig. 3 : Vegetable Plus and Ultra Poor Agricultural Models

gourd, chilli, green pea and water melon were through HYV seeds and purely for commercial purpose. The return per packet of seeds was a good amount received by the tribal farmers.

Under Wadi project, 20 Cashew, 16 Litchi 4 Mango and 120 Eucalyptus plants as live fencing existed for a single farmer on 45 dcml of land. Plants like cashew and litchi clones were developed through grafting method for high yield. The Eucalyptus included clones 526, 288 and 316. Under Tata trust Livelihood Empowered Programme in Southern Odisha (LEPSO) project, water resources were developed on Wadi field for growing of 15 dcml commercial vegetable by each farmer throughout the year for sustainable development.

Table 3: Plants purely meant for cash crops

Sr. No.	Plants	Variety
1.	Cashew	Vengular-4
2.	Litchi	Mujaffarpuri
3.	Mango	Alfanzo

Source: HarshaTrust (2018)

Perception of NGOs towards farming:

1. Variations in land holding size of the farmers acted as a hindrance to provide equal opportunity to all farmers.
2. Lack of transportation to many interior belts resulted in rotting of perishable goods.
3. Presence of processing units was found to be a better opportunity for the farmers in this block.
4. The farming process through various models was productive and hence, a good scope existed for financial upliftment of tribal population of this block.
5. The tribal farmers were hard working and regular to their fields which resulted in regular monitoring of the growth and maintenance of crops.
6. The agricultural development inculcated an idea of self-esteem and progress which restricted them from going to outside states for wage earnings.

Situational constraints faced by NGO members:

Following were the constraints faced by the members of NGO on operational process of agricultural practice in this region:

1. A continuous and high rainfall during rainy season leading to fluctuations in field trip and contact with field staffs and farmers.
2. Illiteracy of farmers was a big hindrance to make them access the agricultural techniques and process.
3. Due to some social norms of farmers, the poultry and goats were rarely sold to gain financial assistance.
4. The fear of taking risk in cash crop production by farmers.

Conclusions and recommendations:

It was observed that though tribal farmers were hardworking, their illiteracy remained a big factor in accessing the new technology. The NGOs have played an effective role in bringing about agricultural change among the tribal farmers for their economic upliftment. Some unique models of agriculture introduced by the NGO were effective as they addressed every section of the population. The organisational structure of NGOs, which included field staff from villages, was a good step to have vigil on field. The study revealed the role of members of the NGO was commendable, even as regular meetings and interactions were necessary for technological access.

Regular field trips by the members of the NGOs may prove fruitful to farmers in this region for agricultural improvement. Demonstrative cultivation process may overcome the problem of technical access. Friendly relationship and personal touch may lead to adoption of new cash crops by tribal farmers. Establishment of processing units in this zone and development of public transport is the need of the hour in this tribal dominated block.

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