



Centre For Research and Community Action Trust (CeRCA)

Annual Report 2022-23



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Foreword

The compounding impact of climate change on ecosystem is felt through the rise in temperature and alteration in the water cycle. The rise in temperature has its impact on the earth's terrestrial surface and ocean surface. In marine world high temperature leads to increase in the acidity level, bleaching the coral reefs. It also has its impact on the availability of dissolved oxygen in the water. Rise in water temperature make the fish population swims towards relatively cold water thus altering the species across ocean world.

The high surface temperature of ocean creates conducive ground for the formation of tropical cyclones accompanied with heavy down pour. This cyclonic pressure has its pervasive impact on the marine world and terrestrial surface especially destroying the vegetative coverage. The change in temperature and precipitation pattern is impacting on the flowering pattern, the size and quantity of grains, pulses, fruits and vegetables. Irregularity in precipitations causing massive flood situation is eroding the top layer of fertile soil from the earth further posing threat to the ecosystem. Small species of plants and animal are unable to withstand the rise in temperature and humidity in tropical areas and succumb to the climatic pressure.

Restoration of ecosystem has the ability to halt the damage, address biodiversity crisis and repair damaged ecosystem. The natural restoration process takes long time, however passion towards this issue can motivate the human society to rebuild through collective action. In this context, the states have to play an important role in coming up with progressive policies to reduce the carbon foot print and help the society to regenerate the ecosystem. The antidote for the human suffering during the climate crisis lies in higher order of cooperation and sharing of knowledge and resources. Probably this is the most opportune time and calls for collaborative initiative to carry forward this work. As rightly said by Mahatma Gandhi, "The difference between what we do and what we are capable of doing would suffice to solve most of the world's problem" and the time has come that we walk the talk and build partnership with the poor and marginalized communities; who are in difficult situation. For sure, challenging days are ahead of us, we must make a decision between what is right and what is easy.

Dr. Shakuntala Pratihary

Research

Climate Vulnerability Analysis

Global warming induced climate change has multiple manifestations. Sea inundation and coastal erosion is pushing the communities to the inland areas. Satabhaya, a coastal region in Bay of Bengal, a compendium of seven villages, consisting of more than 1,500 households, is currently on the brink of complete submergence. The locals have shifted themselves to the new state-run rehabilitation center to avoid the casualties due to constant progression of sea waves. This study has made an attempt to capture the narrative of every day struggle of displaced communities and their coping strategies in a fragile geographic environment.



The lone survivor in Satabhaya



Field Assessment of Satabhaya Village, Kendrapada

Advocacy

CeRCA supported the research on the issues of climate change and its impact on human capability. The manifestation of climate change is experienced significantly in the form of extreme weather conditions and therefore impacting on the quality of life. Odisha has been facing disasters every year and the impact on the lives and livelihoods of the people becomes very vulnerable. In order to survive in the fragile ecosystem people makes various decisions, which impact severely on the quality of life and also makes a compromise on the aspirations. This erodes the human freedom thereby limiting the choice. It is undermining the international effort, national concern and regional willpower to combat poverty and un-freedom situation. Climate shocks in terms of cyclone, unpredictable droughts, unprecedented magnitude of flood, storm surge of unexpected height, lightning etc. figures prominently in the lives of the poor people. The above research was compiled into a book containing the issues of the communities facing the onslaught of climate change. The same book was shared with the Honourable Governor of Odisha, Prof. Ganeshi Lal to share the plight of the communities who are living in the margins.



Interaction with honourable Governor of Odisha his excellency Professor Ganeshi Lal

Collaboration

CeRCA made an attempt to build collaboration with various academic institutions by sharing its research findings. The lessons from surviving in a disaster prone state like Odisha, has made people to innovate and learn to live with disasters. Even though they are caught in “Everyday Disaster” like situations, they have been adapting to withstand the vagaries of nature. Existing research indicates that women and children are the worst sufferers in changing climate situations; however they are the last to participate in any policy influencing initiatives. It is important that we must create democratic space for women and children to reflect and advocate for their rights. In this context the vulnerable communities must create their own literature, so that the voice of the subaltern is no more an unheard voice.

Climate change is posing serious threat and eroding the human freedom thereby limiting the choices in lives of the people. It is undermining the international effort, national concern and regional willpower to combat poverty and situation. Climate shocks in terms of unpredictable droughts, unprecedented magnitude of flood, storm surge of unexpected heat and lightening are some of the extreme events affect the lives of millions in Odisha. These incidents threaten lives and leave people feeling insecure. Climate shocks also erode long term opportunities for human development, undermining productivity and eroding human capabilities.

This study has also come up with various suggestions which need to be executed in a system based approach through an institutional framework. The collaboration with the academic institutions will help the civil society organizations to share the evidence to initiate discourse related to disaster risk reduction and climate change to a higher philosophical order. This book will be an eye opener to carry forward research on topical issues related to climate change and surely help the policy makers to find solutions to the societal problems.



Community Action



Community Consultation

CeRCA believes in building partnership with the communities to facilitate building public institutions to carry forward the development projects. In this regard, CeRCA facilitated training and capacity building of the local communities on Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) to help them analyse their own problems and initiated discussions around the issues affecting their lives and livelihoods.

This has resulted in breaking the culture of silence and women have started discussing about their issues in public domain. The immediate impact of forming various groups to keep track of the gender related discrimination and violence was discussed in public meetings and necessary corrective measures were taken by the communities to ensure dignified existence for the women in the rural areas.

We are hopeful that this conscientisation process will help the rural women to identify the critical issues that have been perpetuating patriarchy and will be able to address such discriminatory practices in their own communities through social action. CeRCA believes in research based development solutions and plans to carry forward action research, so that the research findings add strengths to the social actions.

Climate Resilient Agriculture



CeRCA is working with small and marginal farmers on the principle of ecosystem and nature based agricultural activities. Ecosystem provides life support system to the human society that goes in conjunction with the environmental endowment along with abiotic element of the region. The basic need for human existence like food, fuel, water, fiber and shelter are constantly supplied by the surrounding biosphere. Other indirect benefits of ecosystem are the multiple function of biome that regulates the environment, support the nourishment and cater to the need of mental health along with maintaining peace and harmonious coexistence in the region. A healthy ecosystem replenishes the needs of locals in accordance with nourishing a healthy and harmonious society. Promotion of millets as climate resilient agriculture has been beneficial to the communities to ensure food security at the family level. This has been tried as a pilot and CeRCA plans to upscale this programme in the water stress areas of Odisha.



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