

Report of the Dissemination Workshop

Impact of Community Mobilization on Land Rights Governance Evidence from a Homestead Land Entitlement Initiative in Gaya District, Bihar

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To discuss findings and policy implications from the present study at midline, International Growth Centre (IGC) and Asian Development Research Institute (ADRI) hosted a dissemination workshop. The goals of the workshop were to share insights from the research relevant to practitioners, and, in turn, to request insights and inputs from participants in interpreting results and shaping future rounds of research.

The workshop was introduced by Mr. Abhinav Kumar and presided over by Dr. Shaibal Gupta. Dr. Gupta was the ideal host for the event because, in addition to his academic knowledge and policy experience, he had enabled the study by introducing the two investigators to one another—one a development practitioner and researcher, and the other a university-based academic and policy researchers. More generally, Dr. Gupta and many others from ADRI and IGC who were present at the event had been central in facilitating the collaboration and knowledge sharing that underpinned the study.

Following the opening remarks, the investigators presented an explanation of the study and its implications. First, Sanjay Kumar outlined the problems that motivated the study. He then explained the rationale behind and design of the intervention. Then Andre Nickow outlined three case studies from the research, explained the study goals and design, and both highlighted implications for administration and policy.

The audience consisted of a mix of academic researchers and policy practitioners (several government officials had planned to but were not able to attend), and a discussion ensued with many important insights put forward by attendees. For example, Dr. Gupta highlighted the importance of providing historical background to the state-level homestead land policies at the heart of the study.

Dr. Ghosh emphasized the importance of taking into consideration the wide range of mechanisms through which improved homestead and micro-plot land rights can benefit livelihood. He referenced the example of Kerala, where related policies had proved transformational.

An attendee from the CPI(M) clarified the labor classification of the target population, and one from ADRI asked about potential connections between homestead land rights and climate change (given the prevalence of floods and other climate-related disasters within Bihar).

Dr. Ghosh raised the question of how far the program could be expected to go, since it would seem unfeasible or at least undesirable to have to set up CBOs in every village. Additionally, he pointed out the conspicuous absence of political party action from the discussion. This led to further discussion about the logistics of scale-up and the equilibrium effects of mass CBO formation and titling, as well as the depoliticization of development. It also highlighted a central policy theme of the project: the need to pass the Right to Homestead Bill first put before the state assembly in 2014.

The workshop ended with a vote of thanks presented by the hosts. Attendees were encouraged to contact the researchers with any further insights and suggestions.