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WORKSHOP

ON

**SUSTAINABLE NGO/CBO
AGRICULTURAL MARKETING INITIATIVES**

Bangalore

27 – 28 March 2003

Tiago Wandschneider

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The views expressed here are not necessarily those of DFID.**

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SECTION 1 - Introduction

1.1 Background to the Project

The present workshop is part of a research project on best practices in agricultural marketing initiatives by Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and Community-Based Organisations (CBOs). The research is funded by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) under its Crop Post-Harvest Research Programme (CPHP). The Natural Resources Institute (NRI) is responsible for undertaking the research in collaboration with local organisations in India and Uganda. In India the main partner organisations are Cirrus Management Services Ltd (CMS) and Agriculture Man Ecology (AME).

The project purpose is to identify and disseminate best practices for effective and sustainable NGO and CBO interventions which address the constraints that poor and remote farmers face in accessing markets on favourable terms, especially for food crops. The research is based upon a series of case studies developed after consultation with key stakeholders in India and Uganda.

Focus is given to NGOs and CBOs as service providers. It is felt that these organisations are well placed to understand and respond to the constraints and needs of resource-poor farmers, but they often lack the expertise and contacts to develop commercially sustainable and replicable marketing interventions. This research aims to contribute to bridging this gap.

The emphasis on resource-poor farmers and food crops seeks to address gaps in the literature and to sharpen the poverty focus of the marketing initiatives it aims to inform. India and Uganda were the chosen study countries because they fitted well with this research agenda. Both countries have a large rural population and agriculture remains central to people's livelihoods. In both countries marketing problems continue to pose significant constraints to improved farmer incomes. The two countries also provide an interesting comparative perspective given their very different agro-ecological, socio-economic, cultural and policy environments.

1.2 Introduction to the Workshop

This two day workshop, held at the Ecumenical Centre, Bangalore had three main objectives:

- **Disseminate, discuss and improve research findings**
- **Inform policy processes and relevant project and programme interventions at various levels**
- **Identify channels and strategies to bridge the gap between existing knowledge and practice**

There were 42 participants representing NGOs, donor-funded rural livelihood projects, government agencies, and research and management organisations from India. There were 2 participants from Uganda.

Following a brief introduction to the research project, some key issues related to agricultural marketing were presented. Findings from the Ugandan and Indian case studies were shared and discussed. The experiences of BASIX in agricultural marketing and of INDOCERT in organic certification were also presented. Presentations were followed by plenary discussions, where participants were encouraged to share their individual experiences. Group discussions were held on key issues that emerged during the two days.

1.3 NGO/CBO agricultural marketing interventions: An introduction (Peter Greenhalgh, NRI)

Dr Peter Greenhalgh (NRI) started his presentation by outlining some key characteristics of agricultural markets in developing countries. These markets are strongly influenced by uncertain events such as weather or pests. Demand is highly variable and is often concentrated on low value products. Transaction costs are high because of poor infrastructure, the scattered and small-scale nature of production, and contract non-enforceability. Monitoring and regulation of agricultural markets is often difficult given the informality of most transactions. In many countries market volatility and risks have intensified as a result of liberalisation.

Dr Greenhalgh defined agricultural marketing interventions as those that aim to increase farmer incomes from the sale of raw or processed agricultural produce. These interventions typically seek to improve market access so as to enable increased produce sales and/or higher produce prices. Value addition is a common feature of many marketing interventions. Common agricultural interventions include support to producer groups; promotion of market linkages; delivery of marketing extension and training services; provision of marketing information; and development of inventory credit schemes.

The fact that marketing interventions may sometimes lead to increased exposure to risk was emphasised. Such outcome may arise from greater specialisation, a shift towards more remunerative but riskier crop markets, or a rise in the proportion of total household production sold in the market.

The need for generating 'win-win' outcomes – whereby both farmers and other players in the supply chain benefit – was deemed essential for maximising impact and ensuring sustainability. For example, *ceteris paribus*, buyers will not pay farmers a premium or increase purchases unless they experience consistent improvements in delivered quality and/or a reduction in transaction costs.

The comparative advantage of NGOs in agricultural marketing was also discussed. NGOs have close contact with rural communities and farmers, an inclination to adopt participatory approaches, and a poverty focus. Consequently, they are potentially well

positioned to understand the complex needs of resource-poor farmers and to address identified needs in a flexible and innovative manner. However, to effectively play this role, NGOs need to develop business-like approaches and allocate adequate resources to that task.

Over the last decade, NGOs are gradually becoming more involved in agricultural marketing. One contributing factor has been the realisation that, many years after market liberalisation, smallholders continue to face acute marketing constraints. There is also increased awareness of the limitations of production-oriented agricultural interventions which neglect post-harvest issues. Changes in development and donor thinking have contributed to these changing views: market and private sector development are increasingly seen as valid goals in the pursuit of sustainable development.

Smallholder farmers may be targeted directly or indirectly. Interventions can either work directly with producers or seek to improve returns from marketing by addressing downstream or upstream bottlenecks in the marketing system. This latter approach may entail working directly with traders and processors.

NGOs can play a direct role, taking on responsibility for marketing functions. Alternatively, they can help farmers to market for themselves, thereby playing a facilitation and capacity building role. Direct approaches are appealing because they offer a quick-fix solution to marketing problems, but NGOs tend to be poorly equipped to run commercial activities successfully and sustainably. Facilitative approaches generally take longer to produce significant results but actually attempt to address some of the underlying causes of poor market access and low prices.

Dr Greenhalgh concluded his presentation with a discussion on subsidies. He noted that NGO agricultural marketing interventions always comprise subsidised elements, but stressed the importance of using subsidies selectively and within a defined time period. Subsidies can be very detrimental to sustainability as they tend to create dependency on the intervening agency.

Issues raised by participants

During the discussions participants stressed two issues. The first related to the need for NGOs to gain an improved understanding of markets, business and finance, and to pass on these skills to farmers. The second issue was the need for devoting greater attention to value addition as a strategy to reduce commodity price fluctuations.

SECTION 2 - The Ugandan Case Studies

Despite the contextual differences between Uganda and India, it was felt that the Ugandan case studies provide interesting insights to an Indian audience. Interventions supporting farmer group formation and development by three small local NGOs were presented. The experience of one donor-funded project in the provision of market information was also discussed.

2.1 Farmer group formation and development for marketing: The experience of BUCADEF, CEDO and VEDCO (Tiago Wandschneider, NRI)

Why support marketing groups?

Mr Wandschneider started his presentation by explaining the rationale for supporting the development of farmer groups. He emphasised the potential of group co-operation to:

- **generate economies of scale in marketing and processing;**
- **strengthen farmers' bargaining position in the market place;**
- **enable improved access to agricultural services such as credit and extension;**
- **improve the lobbying capacity of farmers; and**
- **enhance social capital through the development of contact networks within and outside the community.**

However, group participation also entails costs and risks. Farmers weigh the costs and benefits of co-operation when deciding whether to participate in group ventures. Costs include diminished scope for individual decision-making, time spent in group activities, and payment of membership and other fees. Perceptions regarding the likelihood of mismanagement of group activities and funds may also critically influence farmers' willingness to engage in group ventures.

What makes group marketing successful?

Mr Wandschneider then highlighted several factors which critically influence the performance of marketing groups. These include:

- **good leadership;**
- **participatory and transparent management systems;**
- **simple group activities, in accordance to management and organisational capacities;**

- **manageable group size;**
- **homogeneous membership;**
- **member-driven agenda;**
- **internal resource mobilisation; and**
- **good market links.**

Research shows that groups with long-term links to agribusiness firms are likely to outperform groups without such links. The private partner can help overcome management and entrepreneurial skill shortages at the group level by providing access to inputs (often on credit), markets and technical assistance. These advantages notwithstanding, groups which rely on linkages with specific private companies (for example through contract farming) are less able to respond to emerging market opportunities elsewhere in the economy. Moreover, their performance is largely dependent on the business success of the private partner.

Mr. Wandschneider considered that the lessons learned from primary farmer organisations are also relevant to farmer fora (second and third-tier organisations). These apex bodies have a large membership and are therefore well positioned to exploit economies of scale in input purchases and crop sales, to access services, and to lobby for improved public policy and investment. However, given that inter-group communication is crucial, second-tier farmer organisations should be limited to a relatively small number of neighbouring groups. Support to these organisations should take place only when primary groups have achieved an advanced stage of development. The management and business skill requirements of fora widely exceed those of primary groups and should not be underestimated.

The three case study interventions

Few exceptions aside, the three case study NGOs are not subsidising inputs or group marketing operations. They are not intervening directly in marketing, playing instead a facilitation and capacity building role. Supported groups tend to be small-scale and self-selected, and decision-making is left largely in the hands of members, with the NGOs playing an advisory role. While case study NGOs have yet to venture into farmer fora development, they need to intervene in this area when fora formation is happening spontaneously.

Case study research shows that many of the supported marketing groups have enabled members to gain improved access to technologies and markets and have led to increased returns from marketing activities. However, most of the supported groups are still at an incipient development stage. Sustainability therefore remains the main challenge: the task of building effective and sustainable marketing groups is a long term one.

Lessons from the three case studies

Many lessons can be learned from the three case study initiatives. Mr. Wandschneider stressed the following:

- **Differentiated approaches and interventions are required to account for group characteristics, including gender composition, members' landholding size, marketed crops, and so on. CEDO and VEDCO differentiate between more and less commercial groups and provide differentiated support to them. Moreover, CEDO makes a distinction between women groups and mixed groups.**
- **NGOs rarely emphasise all required support areas. For example, CEDO gives greater emphasis to promoting appropriate internal group features whereas VEDCO stresses market linkage development. Given the relevance of both types of interventions, a more integrated approach is desirable.**
- **The promotion of sustainable market linkages is a major challenge in view of the incipient nature of agricultural markets and the agribusiness sector in Uganda. The challenge is greater the more remote the location, the more subsistence-oriented the group members, and the lower the value of the crops marketed. Hence the need for a systematic and well-informed approach to market linkage development.**
- **In all three case study interventions there is scope for greater emphasis on the provision of marketing information and business advisory services. The skills and profile of project staff must be adapted accordingly.**
- **Partnerships between the three case study NGOs, international NGOs and large donor-funded projects have proved effective, and should be further developed. Such partnerships have enabled local NGOs to access skills while at the same time broadening the range of services available to supported groups.**
- **The three case studies show that NGOs undergoing a transition towards market-oriented initiatives often face difficulties in adapting their monitoring and evaluation systems. Current systems do not allow for proper monitoring and impact assessment of marketing interventions, and should therefore be improved as a matter of urgency.**
- **Most case study interventions have a strong learning-by-doing element, with NGOs becoming aware of 'bad practice' through experience. For example, none of the case study initiatives was preceded by a detailed analysis of relevant sub-sectors and marketing systems. The design and implementation of marketing interventions suffered as a result.**
- **Training should be provided to NGOs at an early stage to minimise mistakes along the way. While training needs differ**

across case study NGOs, all would have benefited from capacity building in areas such as market analysis, business advisory services and market linkage promotion. Partnerships can contribute to addressing some NGO capacity weaknesses.

2.2 The provision of marketing information: Lessons from the IITA/FOODNET experience

What is marketing information?

The differences between market and marketing information were discussed. Whereas the former comprises information on crop prices and quantities, the latter concept encompasses a much wider range of information that is relevant to support decision making processes in the production, buying and selling of agricultural produce. Examples of marketing information include details on marketing arrangements, demand and supply volumes in different markets, available marketing options, inventory of buyers, availability and cost of transport, and market requirements (quality, timing, volumes, packaging, etc).

Why develop marketing information services?

Mr Wandschneider justified the importance of marketing information systems in term of its contribution to market efficiency and producer incomes. Improved availability of marketing information makes production more responsive to market requirements, reduces transaction costs and marketing risks, contributes to shorter supply chains, and leads to increased spatial and temporal arbitrage. In the case of farmers, it helps them adapt production and post-harvest practices to market requirements; select where and to whom to sell their produce; decide when to dispose of it; and bargain more effectively in the market place.

The extent to which farmers benefit from marketing information depends not only on their ability to understand and process it, but also on their capacity to change production and marketing strategies accordingly. This capacity is influenced by a wide range of factors, including availability of family labour, access to finance and inputs, risk-taking ability and scale. Therefore, marketing information is most beneficial to farmers when they are organised in group enterprises, procuring inputs and selling their output collectively.

The FOODNET Market Information System

Past government marketing information systems have generally failed to meet expectations. These systems suffered from many weaknesses, including insufficient attention to the quality of collected data, poor links to farmers' information needs, time lags between collection and dissemination of information, inappropriate dissemination channels and products, and limited donor and government funding.

The recently established IITA/FOODNET market information system seeks to avoid these problems. It is a nation-wide, locally based agricultural market information service. Price information on 28 raw and processed food crops in 16 districts is provided. The information is collected and disseminated on a weekly basis. Prices in three Kampala markets are collected daily. This is complemented by information on trade volumes, quality of produce in the market, weather conditions, price projections for major staples, and market news covering Uganda and neighbouring countries. The information is disseminated in local languages via FM radio stations. Newspapers and mobile phones are complementary dissemination channels. Local languages are used.

The FOODNET system has performed well in terms of frequent and timely dissemination of relevant information through appropriate channels. Radio and mobile phones have the potential to reach large numbers of clients at a low cost. Many interviewed farmers are aware of the radio slots and listen to them regularly, especially during the marketing season. Many find the information relevant and useful. Institutional clients such as the Food Early Warning System (FEWS) and IDEA Project also consider the information provided relevant and useful.

Enhancing the impact of the FOODNET MIS

Despite these achievements, Mr Wandschneider considered that there is room for improvement. While price information is well covered, other important types of marketing information receive less attention. This is the case, for example, of information on volumes sold in different markets, price behaviour over time in these different markets, price differentiation according to variety and grade, type and location of buyers, road conditions, and transport availability and costs.

The decision to focus on price information was based on its known relevance to farmers and traders and a conscious effort to work effectively within existing budget constraints. Rather than compromising quality by extending the type of information supplied, FOODNET opted to concentrate on prices and ensure that data is collected regularly and reliably, processed quickly, and disseminated on a timely basis. If FOODNET is to broaden the range of information provided, then additional funding must be made available.

In addition, field research confirmed that many individual farmers have limited capacity to process marketing information and face acute constraints in changing production and marketing strategies. FOODNET must find ways of addressing these problems. The three on-going 'micro' pilot initiatives are an attempt to better target farmers through the provision of more detailed data and direct work with farmer groups. Unfortunately, this intervention has been undermined by resource limitations.

Mr Wandschneider recommended several possible strategies to address this problem:

- **FOODNET should use the wealth of information and knowledge about markets and market operators to become more active in linking farmer groups to specific buyers, and vice-versa.**

- **FOODNET MIS should expand partnerships with NGOs and other organisations working with farmer groups to enhance the capacity to use marketing information at the producer level.**
- **NGOs should become more involved in the dissemination of FOODNET marketing information and should feed this information into their agricultural extension services.**
- **FOODNET has a wealth of time series data that could be analysed to provide a better understanding of profitability of different crop options and production systems.**

Sustainability of the FOODNET market information system

Ensuring the sustainability of the FOODNET MIS remains the main challenge. Given the public good nature of information disseminated via the radio and written media, and the ensuing impossibility of charging for the service, government and/or donor funding is required over the long-term. Current efforts to increase own revenues through mobile phone messaging and radio slot sponsorships are important as indications of demand for the service, but the revenue thus generated will not ensure full cost-recovery. Data processing and analysis services for specific clients, such as agribusiness firms and NGOs, can become an additional source of revenue, but this will entail additional staff costs. In short, long-term sustainability can only be achieved through institutionalisation of the FOODNET MIS and the assured long-term funding associated with it.

Issues raised by participants

One participant felt that marketing information systems should be used to predict market trends and prices in order to allow farmers to make informed choices about which crops to grow. In Karnataka the *Raitha Mitra Kendra* provides on-line spot marketing information to farmers, but no forecasts are made.

Mr Wandschneider pointed out that FOODNET provides indications about future price trends based on expected weather patterns and their impact on crop production levels within the country and in neighbouring countries. He further mentioned that information on current prices is valuable in itself. It can increase farmers' bargaining power, help them decide where and whom to sell, and improve the functioning of marketing systems by reducing the risk associated with sales and purchases of agricultural produce.

Another participant stressed the negative impact of government policies on producer prices. In India, the government manages imports so as to maintain prices below certain levels. In contrast, in Uganda the government does not intervene to stabilise agricultural prices.

Equity and gender issues were also discussed. In Uganda, NGOs involved in agricultural marketing do not target the poorest of the poor, having a tendency to work with farming households that produce some surplus for sale. Ugandan NGOs sometimes support women associations, but most marketing groups they work with are mixed,

comprising both men and women. Gender discrimination in Uganda is not as prevalent as in India.

One participant considered that contract farming had not benefited Indian farmers. Some experiences have failed because contractors rejected farmers' produce. Mr Wandschneider stressed the need for NGOs to play the role of 'honest broker' between farmers and buyers, and be selective in choosing private firms which can work with farmers in a mutually beneficial way.

SECTION 3 - The Indian Case Studies

3.1 Agricultural marketing in India: An overview (M S Ashok, CMS)

Background

The on-going importance of agriculture and its structure were discussed as a background to the presentation. Agriculture accounts for approximately 30% of India's GDP. Livestock contributes to one-fifth of total agricultural production. Commercial crops and horticulture cover 13% and 10% of the total crop area, respectively. Plantations account for less than 1% of total area.

More than 70% of the rural population still depend primarily on agriculture for their livelihood. Landholdings are small and productivity and profitability of individual farms vary widely. After decades of investment, irrigated agriculture covers only 38% of cultivated land. Consequently, agricultural production remains highly dependent on seasonal rains.

Policy highlights

In describing the agricultural policy context in India, Mr Ashok stressed its changing nature over time. After independence governments consciously pursued policies aimed at food self-sufficiency. Large investments in irrigation and technology were carried out, and a favourable subsidy and assured minimum price regime introduced. Support focussed on the high-potential areas of north-western India, leading to the 'Green Revolution'. Attention to less developed, rain-fed areas increased during the 1980s, with the overall emphasis still lying on food grain production and productivity.

India's food grain production increased fourfold between 1950 and 1999. Recently food stocks peaked at about 70 Megatons, far beyond the minimum reserve requirements of 17 Megatons. While the country has achieved self-sufficiency in basic food grains, hunger and malnutrition have not been eliminated.

Increases in production contributed significantly to economic and political stability. Farmers and urban consumers have traditionally enjoyed significant political clout, but pervasive fiscal problems at the central and state level during the 1990s led to major shifts in the agricultural policy regime. A reduction of subsidies and price support measures were accompanied by an opening up of the sector to international competition.

Some realities and constraints

Several problems confronting Indian agriculture were outlined. Real agricultural wage rates have remained almost static for a decade. Economic returns to farmers have been declining for many crops, especially rice and wheat. Production remains uncompetitive internationally due to high production costs and non-standardised quality.

It was noted that farmers sell mainly to local traders (often their financiers) and to government procurement agencies. Produce is largely traded and consumed in villages and small towns. Value addition is limited and prices are very volatile.

The need for farmers to become more entrepreneurial was stressed. While urban and international markets present new challenges and opportunities, radical changes are required if farmers are to tap into these opportunities. Presently, agricultural production is overwhelmingly oriented towards the domestic market, with exports accounting for less than 1% of total agricultural production.

Mr Ashok also emphasised the need for innovative partnerships and coalitions for strengthening links along supply chains, achieving scale economies, disseminating information and technologies, and improving the competitive position of Indian agriculture. In his view, the private sector must increasingly be seen as a partner, in conjunction with NGOs and farmer organisations.

New kinds of advisory and support services are also required. Crop choices must be based upon a broad range of options (including commercially viable forest species) and opportunities for local value addition (including intermediate processing). Suitable input delivery systems and agricultural services demand greater emphasis on market and other information, the development of equipment maintenance and repair services, and improvements in economic infrastructure. New skills and competencies are also critical.

Cooperatives

The importance of cooperatives within the agri-business sector was emphasised. This is evident in their number and range of services provided. The cooperative sector in India claims a staggering 528,000 societies and a membership of nearly 229 million. Almost all villages are said to have been covered by the cooperative movement, with about 67 percent of all rural households enrolled as members. These claims are highly exaggerated. Despite some cases of robust, self-governing cooperatives, very few are on a sound footing financially and few would survive the withdrawal of government subsidies and support.

NGOs

Mr Ashok concluded his overview of agricultural marketing in India by discussing the role of NGOs. Given that government agencies alone cannot address the challenges facing Indian agriculture other players must step in to provide complementary services. NGOs can contribute to filling existing institutional gaps, especially in view of the weaknesses that characterise the private and co-operative agribusiness sectors.

The number of NGOs in India is estimated at approximately 12,000 – an average of more than 20 per district. Indian NGOs address a very wide range of issues but relatively few specialise in agriculture. Those that do have agriculture on their agenda tend to regard it as part of a larger and more important set of concerns, including natural

resource degradation, poverty and social discrimination. Involvement in agri-business development, value addition and agricultural marketing is rare.

NGOs generally define their role in agriculture in terms that exclude business aspects. The occasional marketing initiative normally entails an attempt to replace intermediary traders, with the NGO buying directly from farmers and adding value to production before selling it in the local or regional market.

NGOs have played a critical role in shaping the government agenda for rural development, micro-credit, watersheds and joint forest management. Can they do it for agricultural marketing? While their track record in the field of microfinance is generally good, experience in promoting micro-enterprises is very limited.

Finally, a distinction between highly productive and rain-fed areas was established. In high potential areas government subsidies and price support mechanisms undermine market-based approaches. In rain-fed areas marketing interventions must account for the limited cropping alternatives available; water availability constraints and soil erosion problems; the subsistence-orientation of most farmers; their aversion to risk; inadequate input delivery systems; and poorly developed markets.

3.2 AME Case Studies (S Pattabiraman, AME)

Mr Pattabiraman presented three case studies: one on inventory credit services, another on value addition, and a third one on the marketing of poison free produce.

Delayed marketing initiatives by TMSS Society

Small and marginal farmers with poor access to institutional credit access agricultural loans through informal moneylenders, having to pay very high interest rates. Moreover, they are forced to sell soon after harvest, when prices are lowest, in order to repay their debts and meet input and other expenditure needs.

In 1990 the Tiruchirappalli Multipurpose Social Service Society (TMSSS) decided to provide storage cum credit services for non-perishable agricultural commodities (mainly paddy and groundnuts) to small farmers located within 10 kilometres of a newly constructed centre. Information on daily market rates for different paddy varieties and other major crops is also provided to help farmers understand market trends and decide when to sell the stored produce.

TMSSS staff received training from another NGO in warehouse management and accounting. Caritas India provided funds for investment in storage infrastructure. A van was acquired to transport produce to the storage centre, with farmers paying for the diesel. After some time farmers opted for other, cheaper means of transport, including their own.

Farmers can obtain loans of up to 70% of the stored paddy value and 50% of the value of other stored crops (mostly groundnut). An annual interest rate of 8% is charged. Farmers also need to pay a daily nominal rent of 20 paise per quintal, with no rent being charged for the first 15 days. The stored produce serves as loan collateral. To effectively target marginal and small farming households, an identity credit card system was introduced and a maximum credit limit of Rs.10,000 stipulated.

The initial investment amounted to Rs.900,000. Annual net revenues (after meeting variable costs) amounts to about Rs.50,000, which is spent on other programs. Storage capacity is fully utilised during the harvesting and subsequent months. The speedy processing of loans has been vital for the success of this initiative. Future challenges include the need to avoid misuse of the system by traders and medium and large farmers, to maintain the quality of stored produce, and to insure existing storage facilities.

Marketing initiative by BAIF - Karnataka

Intervention in marketing is not the core focus of BAIF. It evolved from concerns over the difficulties that farmers in watershed areas face in selling their production, especially during peak marketing periods. The idea of raising farmers' income through value addition also prompted the inclusion of marketing initiatives within watershed programs.

In 1995 BAIF arranged exposure visits to Kerala markets and encouraged collective marketing of watermelons, enabling farmers to obtain higher prices for their produce. In 1996-97 it organised a *Mango Mela* in Tiptur where produce from an orchard programme could be sold. BAIF bought the produce from farmers. Although the aim was to increase producer prices through direct sales to consumers, a loss was made. This experience was undermined by harvesting, grading and transport problems. One of the lessons learned is that interventions that by-pass existing intermediaries do not always succeed.

Since 2001 marketing initiatives have become more institutionalised. Multi-state cooperatives and a marketing task force are currently being developed. The focus is on value addition activities, which include the production of mango pickles and jams, ragi malt, fresh cashew nut, banana chips and dehydrated banana, chilli powder, and jackfruit chips. These products are marketed under a common brand. Target beneficiaries include SHG members (mostly women and landless labour), fresh produce farmers, retailers and consumers. BAIF supports farmers and SHG members by undertaking consumer surveys, organising exposure visits and training, promoting participation in fairs, providing equipment, and carrying out packaging and branding.

It is felt that as a result of this intervention, target beneficiaries have gained confidence to take risks and market a wide range of agricultural produce. Farmers have also gained improved bargaining power and negotiating skills. Savings and credit activities by SHGs have reduced dependency on external sources of finance.

Marketing of poison free foods by Venture Trust, Tamil Nadu

Venture Trust is promoting organic farming in Pudukottai district of Tamil Nadu. The organisation decided to become involved in agricultural marketing in an attempt to improve prices accruing to organic farmers. It buys paddy from project farmers, adds value through milling, and then sells the produce locally. Farmers receive one rupee above the prevailing market price for each kilogram sold. The reduced cultivation costs associated to organic practices also contribute to increased farmer returns. Consumers get premium produce (organic) at affordable prices.

Organic rice is sold to NGO staff, other NGOs selling organic produce, staff friends and relatives, and institutional clients (health clinic, university, etc). The strategy has been to create demand for organic production through direct intervention in the marketing chain. However, in 2002, five years into the intervention, only 60 farmers had adhered to the programme. Venture Trust expects this number to double in 2003 as a result of on-going seed multiplication efforts.

Issues raised by participants

One participant compared the services provided by TMSS Society with those delivered through the District Marketing Centres (DMC). The main difference lies in the lower interest rates and rents charged by the project. Such low charges could compromise sustainability, but according to Mr Pattabiraman that is not the case. Interest rates and rents were determined taking into account business volumes and possible losses due to depressed prices.

Regarding the BAIF intervention, it was mentioned that the main rationale behind processing activities is to extend the shelf life of agricultural produce and thus avoid spoilage. Indeed, the price fetched by processed produce is often low compared to fresh produce. Potential problems of excess supply were deemed unlikely since the activities and products differ across SHGs. Moreover, products are marketed in different parts of India through a multi-states cooperatives.

Different questions about organic farming were raised. The need to develop awareness campaigns as a strategy to expand the size of the market for organic production was stressed. In most parts of India marketing channels for organic produce do not exist or are at a very incipient stage. In this context, it was mentioned that organic markets are most likely to develop in large urban centres. The sustainability problems of most NGO interventions in organic markets were discussed, with special emphasis given to the limited sale volumes achieved and high subsidisation of marketing activities.

3.3 CMS Case Studies (Y C Mallikarjuna and R T Nataraj, CMS)

Large cooperative federation in fruit marketing

The case study co-operative federation is a not-for-profit cooperative federation marketing several kinds of fruit and vegetables in domestic and overseas markets. It was set up in the 1980s in Maharashtra State with funding from government. The constituent units are local primary cooperative societies. Primary societies are responsible for cold storage, grading and packing facilities. The federation markets on behalf of members, provides technical services, and links farmers to banks. Fees are charged for these services.

The co-operative has been very successful, despite complex government regulations and highly volatile and competitive export markets. Access to high-value markets has been the driving force behind the success of the whole operation. Clearly defined responsibilities have also proved important. The experience and skills of technical and other professional staff and the linkages developed with technical institutes and government bodies such as the Export Promotion Council were other important contributing factors.

NGO promoting organic farming in a local area

The NGO began work on organic farming in 1993. It tested and demonstrated locally appropriate organic farming practices. After initial resistance, the new ideas gained local acceptance. The NGO procures produce from farmers at assured prices that are marginally higher than local market rates. Paddy, the main crop, is then converted to rice, cleaned, packed and sold by the NGO through its own retail shops and urban outlets.

Between 1998 and 2002 the quantity of rice sold increased from 5 to 50 tonnes. New items like mango, coconut and vegetables have been added to the inventory over the years. The NGO had to work hard to create consumer demand for organically grown produce, but its niche in the market now seems secure. The profit made from this activity is used by the NGO to expand activities and improve coverage. While there are plans to expand markets through international and national certification, a strategic business plan is yet to be developed.

NGO promoting SHG as vegetable supply contractor to an industrial unit

An NGO with experience in micro-credit had an existing partnership with a large and modern industrial unit. There was an opportunity to supply vegetables for the cafeteria of this industrial unit and the business appeared simple and not too demanding in terms of investment. In an attempt to develop viable business opportunities for SHGs, the NGO decided to act as facilitator between these groups and the industrial unit. SHG members were responsible for buying, grading and supplying vegetables. The quality and amount of vegetables to be supplied and the unit price were agreed in advance.

This intervention failed mainly because the agreed price was lower than the market price, resulting in a significant loss for the SHG members and the NGO. The required working capital was also grossly underestimated. This experience shows the potential problems associated with the involvement of NGOs in areas where they have little expertise.

Women's SHGs undertake post-harvest value addition with NGO support

This initiative was implemented in the context of an internationally funded agricultural project in relatively remote tribal areas of east-central India. The implementing NGO has made a number of attempts to promote post-harvest value addition activities, some of which were successful.

One initiative involved a SHG with ten women members. After appraising several income-generating options, members picked *sattu* because there seemed to be too many people already making other products like *papad* and pickles. The NGO arranged visits to markets and other women's groups in nearby villages. It also provided 200 kg of raw material as a start-up grant. By 2002 the SHG was manufacturing some 2,500 kg of *sattu* per year, with each member earning about Rs.10 per day. Production is sold in various pack sizes in local village markets and nearby towns. The business provides a 12% return on capital invested per cycle.

The second case study SHG has 14 members. Visits to local markets showed that women from other villages were selling de-husked paddy, for which there seemed to be a large demand. The profit margins seemed good, paddy was easily available locally and the process was simple. One lot could be processed within the home in a two-day cycle and sold in local weekly markets. Husk, the by-product, could be used as cattle feed or as fuel for boiling paddy.

The NGO provided a start-up grant of Rs.5,000 to each SHG member wishing to take up the activity. Quantities processed by individual members vary, depending on time available and working capital, as well as weather conditions (sun for drying). Profits range from 10% to 40% per cycle, and each woman reportedly earns between Rs.40 and Rs.50 each week, equivalent to two full days labour in the fields.

NGO supporting SHG in vegetable marketing in local government facility

An internationally funded project working with women in agriculture assisted one SHG to sell vegetables in government market yards, where space and power were free, weighing facilities were transparent and there was close supervision by government officials. The SHG had 18 members. They all invested in the business and chose five members to handle it. There was initial agreement among the members on transactions, commitments and rules. Profits were reinvested.

The business expanded gradually but was eventually closed down the government decided to abolish the market yard.

Pre-marketing interventions: grain and seed banks

Three case studies were undertaken to understand pre-marketing interventions. In all cases the NGOs are seeking to improve agricultural-based livelihoods of poor people. These interventions included micro-credit provision (leading to the leasing of land for cultivation), dissemination of improved agricultural practices, and support to grain banks for enhanced food security.

Through the grain banks agricultural produce is pooled and stored after harvest, being later on drawn by members for consumption and/or sale. These initiatives experienced management problems, quality and valuation of individual lots being two examples. The technologies used were also inappropriate. Technical and management issues were even more complex in the case of seed. Much needs to be done before grain/seed banks become sustainable.

3.4 Synthesis of case study findings (M S Ashok, CMS)

While stressing the difficulties in generalising from a small number of case studies, Mr Ashok considered that the research offers interesting insights into the nature of NGO marketing interventions in India, the performance of these organisations in this relatively novel field, and the challenges they face.

Mr Ashok then stressed the tendency for NGOs to gravitate towards areas where others have failed to provide adequate answers. They perform a critical social function and address needs of disadvantaged groups and regions. To some extent, NGOs cannot be faulted for failing where others have feared to venture.

It is however legitimate to ask what NGOs have learnt from their experience, what new opportunities they have opened up for others, what pressures they have developed for better government policies and programmes, and what new incentives have emerged as a result of their endeavours for people (and businesses) to act in ways that make further NGO intervention unnecessary.

Case studies indicate that:

- **SHGs are eminently suitable for savings and credit initiatives but not necessarily for enterprise development.**
- **NGOs should perform a facilitative rather than direct marketing role. They should provide training, exposure and information, kick-start subsidies and encouragement. However, clients should decide based on their own judgement and interests. Even very poor people are capable of appraising feasibility and making informed choices.**
- **Risk exposure is a matter of personal choice. People are often forced to sell their produce or assets at a heavy discount when they cannot sell risks. There is a need for better risk arbitration in**

markets. An agency can reduce the risks poor people face by providing alternatives. Financial aid may lower the threshold of risk acceptance, but can also have other (undesirable?) effects.

- **Over-subsidisation can have distorting effects. Success and sustainability are more likely when inputs (including subsidies) are demand-led, contextually appropriate, and provided on principles of 'drip irrigation'.**
- **A single intervention or strategy is often inadequate or ineffective in addressing the multiple problems and constraints poor people face. Moreover, intervention strategies must change as people move from one level to another. Credit is critical, but so is technology, infrastructure and access to market distribution networks. Post-harvest value addition is a way forward for economic and social inclusion, especially for landless people and women.**

There is no evidence to date that NGOs are poised to influence agricultural policy. It is not easy to bring together and maintain a combination of technical expertise, financial resources and political/bureaucratic goodwill necessary for relatively large scale interventions which impact beyond the micro-level. Financial and technical resources are abundant in India but political/bureaucratic goodwill remains a critical constraint.

Mr Ashok concluded his synthesis of the case studies by outlining some unanswered questions:

- **What needs to be done to scale-up interventions for larger impact? Are there any tested models?**
- **How do NGOs move on from pre-marketing interventions to bring the poor into the economic mainstream, without raising risk exposure to unacceptable levels?**
- **What theoretical and practical understanding do NGOs and others have of poor people's responses to risks of various kinds?**
- **Is there sufficient understanding of economic (and other) distortions in the environment under which the poor operate?**
- **Do NGOs know the cost of their services? How and when will they fully recover service provision costs?**
- **A number of NGOs seem to have assumed direct roles in markets. In such cases, do they have the full range of competencies needed? What new competencies and organisational changes are needed?**
- **Do NGOs need new partners?**
- **When should NGOs depart? Should they depart? Or transform? If so, into what?**

SECTION 4 - Other experiences in India

4.1 The BASIX experience in market linkage development (N V Ramana, BASIX)

Mr Ramana presented the experience of BASIX in the agricultural marketing sphere. He considered that market linkages are one amongst several services which are essential for improving rural livelihoods. BASIX is promoting market linkages in several commodity sub-sectors in Andhra Pradesh and other states. BASIX collaborates with other agencies to exploit synergies and complementarities.

BASIX has been piloting interventions in the groundnut sub-sector in Anantapur District. The objective is to help reversing declining yields and prices through improved agronomic practices, the development of market linkages and institutional support. Some of these pilots have shown potential for replication. For example, produce de-cortication has enabled 30 farmers to sell directly to oil millers/wholesalers and thus fetch higher prices. Millers have gained access to good quality seed, increased capacity utilisation and reduced production costs.

In the dairy sub-sector, BASIX has been collaborating with the Andhra Pradesh Dairy Development Co-operative Federation (APDDCF). BASIX provides loans for livestock purchases and supports the revival of milk co-operatives at village level. APDDCF supplies marketing and technical services to co-operative farmers. Several new milk routes have been opened as a result of this collaborative effort. The viability of milk chilling centres has been assured by adequate milk supplies. This intervention has benefited nearly 15,000 milk producers and has generated incomes in excess of Rs.30 crore.

In Adilabad District BASIX has encouraged cotton growers to adopt integrated pest management practices and deliver properly weighed and cleaned cotton directly to spinning mills. Millers provide technical services to growers. Producer prices have risen as a result of this intervention.

Livelihood-enhancing opportunities in the vegetable sub-sector have also been identified, especially in areas around big cities and satellite towns. BASIX focuses on credit supply to growers, productivity enhancement and produce marketing. Collective marketing and links to specific urban buyers are given special emphasis. Local NGOs collaborate in this initiative, especially in the area of group formation and strengthening at village level. Specialisation and improved market links have resulted in higher incomes and employment creation. There are future plans for installing a small refrigeration unit to preserve the vegetables in case of over-supply.

Several lessons have been learned from these experiences. First, a good understanding of the sub-sector must precede the design of the intervention, helping to identify the exact nature of the problem and the opportunities available. Second, possibilities for adding value to the produce for local markets must be explored before looking at opportunities in more distant markets. Third, local institutions have an important role to

play, especially in organising growers to achieve economies of scale. Fourth, there is much scope for using low-cost technologies that increase the shelf life of perishables such as vegetables and milk. Finally, scaling up can only succeed if pilots prove effective and replicable, generating “win-win” outcomes. There are opportunities to work with wholesalers and processors in ways that benefit producers.

Issues raised by participants

During the discussions it was mentioned that groundnut production is damaging the soils and that biodiversity should be accounted for in marketing interventions. Traditional crops like millets can play an important role in this regard. However, the fact that groundnut is raised in dry lands, where crop alternatives are limited, was pointed out. The need to bear in mind the livelihoods of farmers and the returns offered by different crops was also emphasised.

Some participants felt that marketing initiatives should not start from the assumption that all middlemen are exploitative. An intervention that successfully reduces the number of intermediaries in the product chain can generate tangible benefits to farmers.

4.2 The role of organic certification (B V Niranjan Kumar, INDOCERT)

Dr Kumar introduced INDOCERT and its activities. INDOCERT is a national charitable trust accredited by the Government of India. It was set up by a group of Indian NGOs and corporate organisations, and receives technical assistance from several reputed Swiss institutions. The organisation is based in Kerala but provides organic inspection and certification services across the country. In addition, it functions as a platform for training, awareness raising, information dissemination and networking in the field of organic farming. Its mission is to establish a fully accredited Indian certification program that delivers reliable and affordable services.

Certification assures consumers that claims made regarding the organic nature of the product are accurate, ensuring that it was produced and/or processed under conditions required by national and/or international standards. Certification covers agricultural production, animal husbandry, processing and trade, and collection of products from wild areas. It takes two years for annual crops and three years for perennial crops to be certified as organic. The certificate remains valid for 18 months from the date of certification or until the next certification decision is made. Re-inspection has to be carried out every year if the certification status is to be maintained.

While the certification agency provides applicants with sufficient information to enable them to comply with the national standards, it is prohibited from giving advice or supplying consultancy services. INDOCERT is not involved in marketing. At the moment it is not certifying any organic inputs but may do so in future.

Dr Kumar also stressed that organic agriculture goes well beyond chemical-free production. Producing organic is a commitment to a system which ensures that healthy,

nutritious food can be grown year after year without degrading the environment. Organic farming can reduce production costs and help farmers fetch a price premium. Export markets are growing rapidly. Opportunities in the domestic market are also emerging.

Issues raised by participants

Discussions centred around the difficulties small and illiterate farmers experience in accessing organic inspection and certification services. The process is complex, time consuming and expensive. In response, Dr Kumar mentioned that the required forms are simple to fill in and that applicants can get assistance from family members or NGOs. Small and marginal farmers can also access such services as a group, thus sharing service costs. Still, care must be taken to avoid a situation in which non-compliance by one member disqualifies all other group members. It is also important to acknowledge that it takes about two years for organic farming to yield good returns.

4.3 Deccan Development Service (Ms Salome Yesudas)

DDS is especially concerned with protecting biodiversity. In this context, it is developing efforts to revive and preserve traditional foods through awareness campaigns. It also sells organic foods through its shop, charging a higher price than the one fetched by conventional foods.

SECTION 5 - Group discussions

Participants were divided in four thematic working groups. Group views, findings and recommendations were presented and discussed in the final session.

5.1 Policy advocacy

How can NGOs influence the policy agenda in areas directly related to marketing? Identify strategic options and opportunities.

- **Access to market information - information is power.**
- **Mobilisation and networking of CBOs.**
- **Documentation of NGO experiences.**
- **Capacity building of NGOs in market and business aspects.**
- **Show alternatives while seeking changes in policy.**
- **NGO/CBO participation in decision making fora and agricultural marketing committees.**
- **Adopt a pro-active attitude in policy reform processes.**

What are the key marketing policy issues that NGOs should try to influence?

- **Pro-poor policies.**
- **Local marketing through the public distribution system (PDS).**
- **Public investment in storage infrastructure.**
- **Market information.**

Issues raised by participants

During the discussions it was suggested that NGOs should approach the Agricultural Marketing Division regarding policy matters. Lobbying under one single umbrella could prove more effective than individual efforts. However, care should be taken to ensure that membership in statutory boards does not compromise NGOs' independence and impartiality.

5.2 Orientating NGOs towards agricultural marketing

Developing appropriate competencies: needs and strategies

In order to develop effective and sustainable marketing interventions, NGOs must:

- **Hire competent staff;**
- **have a good understanding of marketing mechanisms;**
- **understand finance and business;**
- **gain expertise in value addition;**
- **develop a long-term vision; and**
- **develop NGO networks.**

Three strategic options were proposed:

- **conduct feasibility studies;**
- **use of various media and new technologies for information sharing; and**
- **link up with professional institutions in areas such as technology and value addition.**

Legal implications

Direct involvement in marketing has legal implications, including the need for registration and compliance with fiscal and labour laws. Such a role implies that the NGO takes on marketing risks.

Scaling-up and replication: options and strategies

- **networking and partnerships between NGOs with similar activities and complementary capacities;**
- **sub-contracting of other NGOs;**
- **developing strategies for mainstreaming marketing activities bearing in mind limitations in terms of the geographical area an NGO can cover and the period over which it can continue with a certain activity;**
- **establishing links to other institutions, becoming increasingly professionalised, and treating the intervention as a fully fledged business.**

Issues raised by participants

One participant emphasised that any efforts to replicate an intervention must be preceded by a detailed impact and sustainability analysis. This requires an understanding of the external environment in which an intervention takes place. Moreover, it was felt that interventions with a high subsidy element are costly and therefore more difficult to scale up. The need for exit strategies was also discussed. Unless these strategies are developed from the onset the sustainability of the intervention is at risk.

5.3 Promoting backward and forward market linkages

Options and opportunities

Pre-harvest inputs include working capital, seeds, fertilizers and technology. Post-harvest requirements comprise marketing channels and service providers. NGOs can play a useful role in linkage development, but must be aware of the following problems and challenges:

- **Some critical links are missing.**
- **There is a lack of coordination between stakeholders.**
- **NGOs may not be able to access the best service providers due to difficulties in relating to business and limited resources and geographical outreach.**
- **Farmers' financial and/or other contributions are essential if they are to gain a sense of ownership.**
- **Group development is critical for improved access to upstream and downstream services.**

Issues raised by participants

The role of NGOs as “honest brokers” was emphasised. Such organisations are well positioned to build trust between producers and other market participants, which is fundamentally important in informal markets where contracts are difficult to enforce. These linkages will only be sustainable if the underlying transactions are mutually beneficial. NGOs should therefore identify opportunities that benefit both farmers and buyers.

5.4 From local to global market opportunities

Advantages and issues confronting local markets/wider markets

Local markets (within district) offer several advantages vis-à-vis non-local markets, including:

- **accessibility;**
- **greater scope for building consumer awareness;**
- **lower infrastructural and information requirements; and**
- **lower marketing risks.**

Non-local markets (outside the district) usually have greater absorption capacity, thereby enhancing the scope for scaling-up. Equally important, prices in these markets are often higher than local prices. However, product requirements are generally more stringent and distance increases networking difficulties. For these reasons, farmers targeting non-local markets must have higher levels of expertise and risk taking capacity.

In which situations should local markets/wider markets be favoured?

A decision regarding the target market will depend on the objectives pursued by the NGO and the farmers they work with. Their levels of expertise are also important. Finally, the crops grown by farmers must influence market choices due to the crop-specific nature of opportunities available locally and elsewhere.

Targeting strategies

Any market targeting strategy must be informed by an analysis of the sub-sector and an identification of market opportunities. NGOs can either play a direct or facilitation role in helping farmers explore identified opportunities. Wider markets require greater networking efforts aimed at developing business linkages and building capacity at all levels. Multi-tier federations of producers may also help members accessing non-local markets.

Issues raised by participants

The importance of local markets for food security was emphasised. A distinction was made between producers with limited surplus and producers marketing significant volumes. Non-local markets are more relevant for the latter category.

5.5 Views and comments of participants

At the end of the workshop participants were given the opportunity to express their views on workshop-related issues. Below are some of the issues raised:

- **NGOs involved in marketing issues should form a network and exchange information on a regular basis. Successful experiences need to be disseminated.**
- **Documentation is required to share experiences across states. However, it is important to remember that government policies differ from state to state.**
- **A workshop on capacity building of NGOs for marketing could be held in the future.**
- **Workshops such as the present one should invite experts and representatives from the private sector. There is a clear need for greater interactions between NGOs and the commercial sector.**
- **The government (e.g. departments of rural development, agriculture, horticulture, watershed development and agricultural marketing) should also be better represented at future workshops. NGOs should participate in government planning processes. Moreover, NGOs and government institutions could work together to improve the outreach of specific government schemes.**
- **In future events of this kind, farmers could be invited to make a presentation.**
- **NGOs should work with tribal communities to certify and develop markets for their products.**

Annex 1 - Acronyms

AAMP	Area Based Agricultural Modernisation Programme
AFARM	Action For Agricultural Renewal in Maharashtra - an NGO
AME	Agriculture Man Ecology – an NGO
APDDCF	Andhra Pradesh Dairy Development Co-operative Federation
APEDA	Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority
APRLP	Andhra Pradesh Rural Livelihoods Project
BAIF	<i>Bharatiya</i> Agro Industries Foundation
BUCADEF	Buganda Cultural Advancement and Development Foundation
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CEDO	Community Enterprise Development Organisation
CMS	Cirrus Management Services
CPHP	Crop Post-Harvest Programme
DFID	UK's Department for International Development
DMC	Delayed Marketing Centre
DPIP	District Poverty Initiatives Project
DRDA	District Rural Development Agency
FEWS	Food Early Warning System
FiBL	Swiss Research Institute of Organic Culture
GUS	<i>Gram Utthan Samiti</i> (village level body)
HIVOS	Humanist Institute for Co-operation with Developing Countries – a Dutch NGO
HPS	hand picked and selected
ICAR	Indian Council of Agricultural Research
IDEA	Investment for the Development of Export Agriculture Project
IITA	International Institute for Tropical Agriculture
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
ITC	a large corporate house in India
LEISA	Low External Input and Sustainable Agriculture
MACTS	Mutually Aided Co-operative Thrift Society
MIS	Marketing Information Service
MSSRF	M S Swaminathan Research Foundation - an NGO
MYRADA	Mysore Rehabilitation and Development Agency - an NGO
NAADS	National Agricultural Advisory Services
NABARD	National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development
NCAP	National Centre for Agricultural Economic and Policy Research
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NPOP	National Programme for Organic Production
NRI	Natural Resources Institute
NSOP	National Standards for Organic Products

PDS	Public Distribution System
PRA	participatory rural appraisal
RBI	Reserve Bank of India
RUSAH	An NGO
SECO	Swiss State Secretariat of Economic Affairs
TMSSS	Tiruchirapalli Multipurpose Social Service Society – an NGO
UAS	University of Agricultural Sciences
VEDCO	Volunteer Efforts for Development Co-operation
VFPC	Vegetable and Fruit Promotion Council
WORLP	Western Orissa Rural Livelihoods Project
WTO	World Trade Organisation

Annex 2 - Workshop Agenda

27 March 2003		
1000 – 1100	Registration and Tea	
Session 1		
1100 – 1115	Welcome	Peter Greenhalgh (NRI)
1115 – 1140	Introduction to the workshop	
Session 2	Issues in Agricultural Marketing	
1140 - 1150	Introduction to research project	Tiago Wandschneider
1150 - 1230	Agricultural marketing interventions: key issues	Peter Greenhalgh
1230 - 1330	Lunch	
Session 3	Findings from the Uganda case studies	
1330 - 1430	Findings from the Uganda case studies	Tiago Wandschneider
1430 - 1445	Plenary discussions	
Session 4	Findings from Indian Case Studies	
1500 - 1600	Agricultural Marketing in India: an overview	M S Ashok (CMS)
1600 - 1630	Presentation of Case Studies	Pattabi Raman (AME)
	Plenary Discussion of case studies	
1630 - 1730	Tea	
1730 - 1820	Presentation of Case Studies	Nataraj and Mallikarjun (CMS)
1820 - 1900	Issues to be raised for Group Discussions	Tiago Wandschneider
28 March 2003		
0900 - 0930	Synthesis of case study findings	M S Ashok (CMS)
0930 - 1020	The BASIX experience in Agricultural Marketing	N V Ramana
1020 - 1045	Tea	
Session 5	Other Experiences in India	
1045 - 1130	Organic Certification and it's role in Agricultural marketing	Indocert
1130 - 1145	Plenary Discussions	
1145 - 1205	Film - Breaking New Ground	APRLP
1205 - 1215	Participants' experiences	
Session 6	Working groups	
1215 - 1230	Set out working groups	
1230 - 1315	Lunch	
1315 - 1445	Group discussion	
1445 - 1600	Presentations	
1600 – 1615	Tea	
Session 7	Workshop conclusion	
1615 – 1700	Summing up and Closing remarks	

Annex 3 - Workshop Evaluation

1 *Content and presentation*

Most participants ranked the content and presentation of the different workshop sessions as “excellent” (1) or “good” (2). The overall average for content and presentation ranged between 1.60 and 2.40.

	Content	Presentation
Session 2 - Issues in Agricultural marketing	1.65	1.61
Session 3 - Uganda Case Studies	1.84	1.85
Session 4 - Finding from the Indian case studies	2.13	2.33
Session 5 - Other Indian experiences	2.23	2.36
Session 6 - Working groups	1.65	1.94

(Key: 1-Excellent, 2-Good, 3-Average, 4-poor)

2 *Missing topics*

While almost half of the participants considered that no important topic was missing from the workshop programme, 53% expressed a different view. Below are some of the issues participants felt could have been addressed or better developed during the workshop:

- **marketing of non-timber forest produce, with a special focus on poor tribal communities and individuals;**
- **views from policy-makers and government officials;**
- **the sustainability of facilitative and interventionist NGO marketing interventions;**
- **the role of NGOs in the development of forward and backward marketing linkages;**
- **the links between micro-credit and marketing;**
- **local markets; and**
- **the legal framework regulating interventions by different stakeholders.**

3 *Relevance of workshop presentations and discussions to participants' work*

All the participants agreed that the workshop presentations and discussions were relevant to their work. About half considered them “very relevant”.

	Very Relevant	Quite Relevant	Not Relevant
% of participants	52.9	47.1	0

4 *Overall evaluation of the content of the presentations and discussions*

Concerning the content of the presentations and discussions, two thirds of the participants considered it to be “about right”.

	Too general	Too detailed	About right
% of participants	11.8	20.6	67.6

5 *Mix of presentations and discussions*

More than two-thirds of the participants felt that the balance between presentations and discussions was about right. Almost one-third thought that there were too many discussion sessions.

	Too many plenary presentations	Too many discussion sessions	About right
% of participants	31.3	0	68.7

6 *Workshop organisation*

The organisation of the workshop (venue, audio-visual equipment, helpfulness of staff and refreshments) was positively evaluated by a significant majority of participants. Yet, about 30% felt that advance contact and information about the event was inadequate (average or poor).

	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor
Contact and info in advance	30.3%	39.4%	27.3%	3.0%
Venue	35.3%	55.9%	8.8%	0%
Audio visual	47.1%	47.1%	5.8%	0%
Helpfulness of staff	47.1%	47.1%	5.8%	0%
Refreshments	17.6%	67.6%	14.8%	0%

7 *Overall assessment of the workshop*

Almost all participants (97.1%) were satisfied with the workshop as a whole, and 14.7% rated it very highly (excellent).

	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor
% of Participants	14.7	82.4	2.9	0

Comments

Several participants noted that the time available during the two days did not allow for a full discussion on the whole range of issues concerning agricultural marketing and the role of NGOs. They felt that one additional day would have been justified. As a result of time constraints, not enough time was devoted to plenary discussions. Some participants expressed an interest in similar events where the lessons from marketing initiatives could be shared to a wider audience.

Another issue raised was the need for more background information on the workshop, which would help participants understand the questions under discussion and make informed interventions.

Several participants also felt the need for greater participation of donor agencies, policy-makers and government institutions.

Suggestions

Suggestions for future workshop topics included capacity building of NGOs for improved market analysis and effective marketing interventions; post-harvest management; and marketing of organic produce and non-timber forest products. Some participants also recommended holding the current workshop in other parts of India to expose a wider audience to the research findings.

Annex 4 - List of Participants

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