



**ASIAN INSTITUTE OF POVERTY ALLEVIATION**  
**Activity Report 2015-2016**



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*Join us to make a difference*  
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**A** sian Institute of Poverty Alleviation (AIPA) is a nonprofit development organization committed to improving lives across a dynamic and developing Asia.

**Our work across the region addresses the following five goals:**

1. Explore evidence based research to expand economic opportunity
2. Strengthen governance
3. Empower women
4. Increase environmental resilience
5. Promote regional cooperation



## Enduring Values Lasting Impact

Our mission to improve the quality of life and economic wellbeing of women, vulnerable groups and communities of Asia region is the foundation for everything we here at Asian Institute of Poverty Alleviation (AIPA) aim at. Building better livelihoods in developing regions is the vision of AIPA's work through effective policy dialogue, field research, supporting institutions, organizations and citizens in developing their capacities to lead pro-poor and inclusive development and implementation efforts.



We strongly believe that human development has a strong relation between social and economic prosperity and are inextricably linked. It is virtually impossible to have one succeed if the other fails. AIPA has focused on understanding the societal issues that stand in the way of people achieving a better quality of life. We work on evidence-based solutions to reduce the level of vulnerability, improve income security of marginalized groups and enhance educational outcomes. Further we provide policy makers and community workers with the knowledge, information and technical skills to tear down barriers and improve lives.

We have transformed thousands of lives through evidence-based programmes that focus on expanding women's economic opportunities, increasing women's rights and security, and advancing women's participation in governance. AIPA practices an integrated approach that promotes gender equality across all programmes.

We believe collaboration with government, private sector and local NGOs in this work, which is vital to ensuring good stewardship of participatory approaches. We believe we have succeeded when our work is sustainable, measureable, scalable and replicable.

We are immensely grateful to our supporters and our board who generously share their time, skills and resources to help build enduring values, lasting impact and open doors for all to create hope. We invite you to join in this work.

### **Amalendu Pal**

Honorary Director and Board Member



## Key Findings of Assam Livelihoods Initiative (4000 households) Implemented in 2013

Monthly household income				
Total Household Income in Rs.	% households in 2013	N (4,000)	% households in 2015	N (4,000)
Less than Rs. 5,000	80.0	3,200	9.1	360
5,001-10,000	17.7	710	67.4	2,700
10,001 and above	2.3	90	23.5	940
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>4,000</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>4,000</b>



## Livelihoods Strategies and Future Expectations

- ▶ There is a prevailing perception among respondents that livelihoods are improving, with rising incomes, rising overall living standards, and professional advancement. A subjective perception of upward social mobility was widely shared among respondents.
- ▶ There are prominent income and social inequalities. Inequalities are present between regions and individuals that enjoy employment in the primary labour market (more secure and better rewarded jobs requiring higher skills) and those who work in the secondary labour markets (informal, occasional, less skilled, and lower-paid jobs).
- ▶ Establishing or developing a private business is the most frequently identified strategy for improving livelihoods.
- ▶ Respondents most often identify obstacles related to insufficient skills, poor education, poor infrastructure and access to market, and environmental risks (droughts, floods, etc.).
- ▶ The survey reveals a strong attitude of self-reliance among respondents, and expectation for better environment in the form of government support from social protection policy provisions, banking and quick credit facility for small business initiative and professional support both for financial and product value chain, guidance for standardisation and quality for better production and improving market.

## What are the main obstacles that could prevent in fulfilling effective livelihoods plans for poor?

Obstacles	% of answers	% of cases
Lack of skills, education	25.2	45.8
Corruption	13.9	25.2
Poor access to market of products and services	11.8	21.5
Natural obstacles	10.3	18.8
Poor infrastructure in the community	10.1	18.4
Poor employment prospects	7.4	13.4
Political instability, oppression	4.8	8.8
Insecure property rights	4.8	8.7
Administrative obstacles	4.6	8.4
Obstacles to access natural resources	4.2	7.5
Lack of information	1.9	3.4
Other	0.9	1.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>-</b>



## AIPA'S Initiative 2015-2016

### Stewardship of Resources and Leveraging for Impact

#### Helping women farmers to gain economic independence

**A**IPA's policy to work with women farmers and assist small-scale agriculture producers to become more competitive in the emerging markets by diversifying and expanding production along with increasing the quality of their goods. Over the 24 months life of the improved and diversified agriculture initiative farmers of north east part of India have collectively increased their exports by 30% and 60% higher sale of products in domestic markets.

Markets for agriculture and other natural resources are probably most central to development, providing the main source of productivity gains, inputs and labour for economic diversification and means for the poor to improve and diversify their incomes.

The greatest risks to agriculture are natural disasters, erratic climate events and temperatures that destroy crops and rural livelihoods. AIPA's technical teams work in collaboration with local farmers to raise their food production capacity by implementing resilient farming that raises income, conserve the environment and improve overall economic growth.



#### AIPA's core competence and experience includes:

- ▶ Inclusive growth and pro-poor market development
- ▶ Value chain development in agriculture and forestry
- ▶ Water sector development and climate change adaptation and mitigation
- ▶ Sustainable land administration and support for land rights
- ▶ Support for good governance and citizens' participation

**5,600**  
**Women Farmers**  
have been  
helped to gain  
**Economic**  
**Independence**

The pathways to reducing poverty differ across contexts, reflecting the diversity of livelihood strategies pursued by the poor. Where the poor are predominately landless, or smallholder farmers, increased productivity and resilience to shocks is a key pathway to poverty reduction. Productivity increases can be achieved through conservation and effective use of genetic resources. Access to productive assets such as land and water will unlock further productive potential, especially for women. Diversifying opportunities, such as moving into higher value products like livestock, fish, vegetables, fruits or other tree crops, can increase income. Improving access to markets, strengthening financial and other services, or local processing of produce also increase livelihood opportunities for smallholders. AIPA field research initiative recognises that no single pathway to poverty reduction will hold across all settings. It is vital to rigorously assess the full range of outcomes from our work and to learn from experience.



## Experience from agro-ecosystem and sustainability initiative

**M**ulti-functional agriculture can enhance benefits from ecosystem goods and services and build a more productive agricultural sector in the long run. We need agricultural systems that are diversified in ways that protect soils and water helping to control soil erosion and improving its organic content, while also ensuring biomass for storing carbon and mitigating climate change. Natural capital must be enhanced and protected, from climate change as well as from overexploitation and other forms of abuse. In high-risk areas, enhanced conservation of habitats and resources is needed. Finally, we will restore degraded agro-ecosystems, and more sustainably manage them for increased resilience of those ecosystems and the communities that depend on them.

AIPA puts stress on achieving sustainability in income generation from natural resources. Creating equitable access and local ownership are crucial elements. AIPA works with governance aspects and focus on decentralised management models, be it for forests, watersheds, wetlands or fisheries. Results from pilot initiatives have shown that it is crucial that Governments translate existing natural resource management strategies and legislation into tangible action that reduces poverty in the country. Awareness amongst policymakers is the key point in removing bottlenecks for sustainable harvesting and managing natural resources.

## Outcomes of initiatives 2015-2016

- ▶ Building capacities of women farmers in improved agriculture practices
- ▶ Increased participation of women in local governance, public leadership and decision-making
- ▶ Expanded opportunities for women's entrepreneurship, education and employment
- ▶ Improved rights, entitlements and security for women
- ▶ Collaboration with health institutes in addressing issues of non-communicable diseases

## Accountability Framework

**A**IPA's plan of work is always designed as a result-based approach, which includes both outcomes and impact. The approach clearly define outcomes in addition to understanding the relevant issues, ground situations, challenges, setting out on, paths to reach outcomes, while all the time maintaining scientific process and professional excellence. It ensures regular monitoring, learning from practices and to improve performance over a time. Our accountability framework portraits the results framework and support the process of initiative as per the organisation's mission. AIPA's accountability framework serves multiple users; stakeholders including donors, programme team and local participants as well as the public at large.

AIPA follows two levels of accountability frame work: i.) Programme-level accountability and ii.) System-level accountability. Programme-level accountability relates to measuring results for excellence and generation of outcomes. It also ensures measuring and reporting indicators of outputs and outcomes. System level accountability highlights roles, collective responsibility, methodological challenges related to measuring attribution including contribution analysis to understand impact pathways, quantitative and qualitative evidence.





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**Promoting models that are self-replicating and sustainable to reduce poverty**

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