A “Social Observatory” for JEEViKA

A Project of the Bihar Rural Livelihoods Promotion Society
JEEViKA

- A poverty reduction project in Bihar to
  - improve access to credit
  - encourage stable livelihoods
  - engender social change

- Self-Help Groups (SHGs)
  - each group has 10-15 women
  - groups are federated into village organizations (VO)
    - 10-15 SHGs per VO

- Executed by BRLPS (an autonomous body under the Government of Bihar, supported by the World Bank)
Social Observatory

- Purpose— learning-by-doing
- Close collaboration with project implementers
  - Shri Arvind Chaudhari – CEO, BRLPS
  - Shri Ajit Ranjan – Head M&E, BRLPS)

5 parts

1. Quantitative evaluation (with randomized roll-out of the project)
2. Qualitative evaluation—in depth study of 10 villages over two years
3. Experiments to assess impact on psychological & sociological outcomes
4. Process evaluation to track implementation challenges in a rolling sample
5. Improving quality of management information system (MIS) database with user-friendly dashboards
Outcomes of interest

Economic outcomes of households
• Debt-level and cost of debt
• Assets
• Consumption
• Income-generating activities

Women’s empowerment and welfare
• Dignity, voice and mobility
• Say in household decision-making
• Happiness

Public engagement
• Participation in political processes
• Collective action
Part 1
Quantitative Evaluation

- Baseline survey
  - 8950 households across 179 panchayats and 7 districts
  - Done by GFK-MODE in July-September 2011
- JEEViKA will be implemented in 90 randomly selected panchayats
  - Random sample is stratified by district & average cost of outstanding household debt ≥ 4% / month
- Follow-up survey in July-September 2013.

Joint with Mr. Upamanyu Dutta (Economist, NRLM), and Prof. Vivian Hoffmann (Dept of Ag. Econ, University of Maryland)
Study Instruments in Baseline

Household questionnaires
- General module on economic indicators
- Women’s module: mobility, decision-making, public participation

Community questionnaires
- General: village composition & wealth distribution
- Women’s: quality of public services & collective action
Study Instruments in Follow-up

- Household questionnaires
  - Two modules as in baseline
  - Objective measures of empowerment: e.g.
    - willingness to travel alone to receive compensation
    - household choices over compensation

- Community questionnaires
  - Two modules as in baseline to assess changes in:
    - collective action
    - participation in local political processes
## Sample characteristics at baseline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>JEEViKA</th>
<th>Comparison</th>
<th>P-value of difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High-cost debt (Rs.)</td>
<td>8499</td>
<td>8472</td>
<td>0.925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(211.8)</td>
<td>(189)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-day food cons (Rs.)</td>
<td>2638.5</td>
<td>2676</td>
<td>0.1436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(18)</td>
<td>(18)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own-produced food (Rs.)</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>0.9491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(9.3)</td>
<td>(9.4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have say over own work</td>
<td>0.795</td>
<td>0.792</td>
<td>0.7464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.006)</td>
<td>(0.006)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit health ctr. Alone</td>
<td>0.304</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.5017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.007)</td>
<td>(0.007)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit friend alone</td>
<td>0.214</td>
<td>0.203</td>
<td>0.2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.006)</td>
<td>(0.006)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Happiness at baseline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>JEEViKA</th>
<th>Comparison</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very sad</td>
<td>742</td>
<td>720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sad</td>
<td>1,295</td>
<td>1,197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>1,423</td>
<td>1,439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>665</td>
<td>679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very happy</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>363</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p*-value (Pearson chi²): 0.420
Part 2
Qualitative Study

Sheds light on:
• social and political processes behind the changes
• catalysts and challenges affecting such interventions

Joint with Paromita Sanyal, Dept of Sociology, Cornell U.
in collaboration with Praxis
Open-ended questions to be investigated

- How the intervention actually functions
- Processes of economic, social, & political change
- Role of inequality in influencing change
- Gender dynamics of the intervention & potential backlash by men
Selection of villages for Qualitative Study

- Using data from Baseline Survey, select villages in JEEViKA and comparison panchayats that have similar:
  - Demographics
  - Land distribution
  - Administration - within same block and similar leadership
  - Credit access
- Field visits to confirm qualitative similarity and finalize selection of 10 gram panchayats across 4 districts
Methods

- In two districts: randomly assigned JEEViKA-comparison pairs
- In two districts: triplets (JEEViKA, comparison, & a Phase-1 village where Jeevika has been active for 2 years)
- Each village will be visited every three months by a team of 3-4 investigators, who will reside in the village for a week
- In-depth interviews with key informants, FGDs, PRA work
- Summarize findings in village reports
- PIs will participate in field visits
Part 3
Experiments

- An important source of change in the development process occurs within people:
  - their self-concepts
  - their world-views
  - their sense of having certain basic rights

- Experiments are well-suited to assessing such transformations

Joint with Karla Hoff (Development Research Group, The World Bank) and Tauhidur Rahman (U. of Arizona)
Questions to be investigated

Project impacts on:

- Women’s self-confidence & persistence in the face of challenges
- Their ability to work together, & with people of higher status
- Their say in the household & possible backlash from men
- Their access to social networks to obtain information

The results will complement & provide a check on qualitative work that assesses whether women gain agency (e.g. to confront problems in their villages through collective action)
Methods

- Same villages as in Part 2 (Qualitative Study)
- For most experiments, the villages will be 4 JEEViKA and 4 comparison villages
  - 2 different years to assess treatment effects in the short- and long-run
  - Our detailed knowledge of these villages will help us assess the channels through which JEEViKA affects outcomes
- For one experiment—a test of self-confidence—we will draw a random sample of all JEEViKA and comparison villages
- Experimental subjects will be a random sample from these villages
Part 4
Process Evaluation

- Conducted for JEEViKA’s own management purposes
- Rolling sample of villages
- Investigation to includes social and economic changes
- Our hope is to learn how to improve implementation over time

Conducted by Sutra
Part 5
Management Information System (MIS)

- Profile of an SHG & constituent members
  - annual survey capturing socio-economic indicators for members
- Monthly Didi sheets capturing the weekly transactions of savings, disbursements & repayments
  - transaction data are available with at least 1 month lag
- VO-level MIS, similar to SHG-level
- Dashboard to display results
  - for project staff at all levels
  - tools for simple cross-tabs & graphical analysis

Conducted by BRLPS M&E team and facilitated by Upamanyu Dutta
Conclusion: Our goals

- To make Bihar a test-case for a Social Observatory for the India-wide Rural Livelihoods Mission
  - 25 states, 270 million women, $5 billion

- To create a culture of learning-by-doing in a large-scale community-based project that requires an enormous amount of contextual understanding, innovation, experimentation & learning from failure, to be effective.