

# 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  $\geq 4\%$  / 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

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



# Happiness at baseline

	JEEViKA	Comparison
Very sad	742	720
Sad	1,295	1,197
Neutral	1,423	1,439
Happy	665	679
Very happy	391	363
<i>p</i> -value (Pearson $\chi^2$ ): 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

## 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.