



## Joint efforts towards achieving Common goals : GO - NGO collaboration

Poverty is just a single word, but poverty reduction is not a simple task. In the past, the Government of Andhra Pradesh and Non Government Organizations (NGOs) have implemented poverty eradication programs independently. Although both governments (GOs) and NGOs have invested large amounts of time and money in these programs, neither group has seen adequate results. Moreover, while conducting research studies, APMAS discovered that unnecessary competition and duplication of efforts was occurring between GO and NGO-supported programs. For example, in the district of Ananthapur alone, around 70% of women were found to have dual membership in community based organizations. Based on this discovery and the organization's already good rapport with both GO and NGOs, APMAS developed a strategy to establish a GO-NGO coordination that could compliment the efforts of both groups in achieving their desired objectives.

The Government of Andhra Pradesh also recognized APMAS' unique position as an organization with strong ties to both GO and NGOs, and the potential to leverage this to develop APMAS into a nodal agency for microfinance, institution building and NGO coordination. The government asked APMAS to organize state and district level workshops on GO-NGO collaboration in order to bridge the gaps between the groups. During these workshops, senior civil servants and prominent NGO representatives discussed, debated, and clarified issues ranging from children's rights to tribal empowerment. At the end of each workshop, APMAS facilitated the formation of NGO committees and a GO-NGO action plan. As a direct result of these workshops, the Government of Andhra Pradesh has issued government orders, paving the way for the

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*To further promote a healthy environment for self-help promoting organizations, APMAS has played a key role in obtaining a government order to provide scope for the merger of NGO and government-promoted mutually-aided cooperative societies (MACS). Following the government order, a number of NGO and GO promoted MACS did merge, demonstrating the demand for such an order.*

formation of joint action committees for implementing development programs.

In order to strengthen NGOs and encourage their participation in poverty reduction programs, APMAS has implemented several programs, such as the district resource person program, which links NGO expertise and experience with government programs to strengthen the self help group movement. Although GO organizations have been using the services of over 200 district resource persons, the NGO community still felt that their capacities were not adequate and hence the quality of implementation was suffering. This concern was raised with the Minister for Rural Development during a one of the state level workshops, another example of the new communication links facilitated by APMAS.

To date, the state-level joint action committee has been formed with a senior retired civil servant as its vice-chairman, and several district-level committees have also formed. In west Godavari, the district collector is regularly attending the GO-NGO coordination committee meetings and is providing valuable inputs to both GO and NGO staff. Based on the success of its previous workshops, the Department of International Development has assigned APMAS the task of facilitating three regional and one state level civil society organization consultation workshops on Centre for Good Governance.



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