Perspective Plan
2012-2016

Table of Contents

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BRG	Bio Resource Governance
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CCAP	Climate Change Action Plan
CD	Community Development
CFM	Community Forest Management
FRA	Forest Rights Act
FMT	Fund Mobilisation Taskforce
GoI	Government of India
GoO	Government of Odisha
GP	Gram Panchayat
IWRM	Integrated Water Resource Management
JFM	Joint Forest Management
NREGS	National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
MIS	Management Information System
NRM	Natural Resource Management
NTFP	Non Timber Forest Produce
OTELP	Odisha Tribal Empowerment and Livelihoods Programme
PESA	Panchayat Extension to the Scheduled Areas
PME	Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
PRI	Panchayati Raj Institutions
RCDC	Regional Centre for Development Cooperation
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
RTE	Right to Education
RTI	Right to Information
SHG	Self Help Group
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
TSC	Total Sanitation Campaign
WORLP	Western Odisha Rural Livelihoods Programme

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INTRODUCTION
A Renewal of Resolve and Purpose

Regional Centre for Development Cooperation (RCDC[1]) is a rights-based non-government and not-for-profit organisation based in the state of Odisha in India. It has been working in some of the poorest parts of Odisha for about two decades to promote community-based solutions to issues around natural resource management and livelihoods security.

RCDC has worked with the belief that proper management of natural resources can take care of most of the current development problems and the local communities are the best managers of these resources as they have the highest stake and the time tested knowledge. Over the years it has evolved into one of the premier action research and policy advocacy institutions of the country working on natural resource management in the non-government sector.

This perspective plan document marks the crossing over of RCDC to a new strategic phase in its organisational life. Since its inception in 1993 RCDC has grown considerably in its range of concerns, its programmes, its networks and its ambitions as an organisation committed to strengthening development partnerships, promoting innovations and adding value to the capacities of the NGO sector. Its priorities, programmes and structure have largely been guided by the common vision of a group of committed and experienced individuals.

Even though its priorities and programmes have been strategically defined at different times, RCDC had not developed an organisational perspective plan document per se. As the organisation has matured and has grown in scale and complexity, the need for a perspective plan document has been felt across the organisation, particularly in the context of new issues and challenges in socio-economic environment and socio-environmental concerns like climate change. This perspective plan document has been prepared in a participatory manner and is the culmination of following processes.

- An analysis through literature review and consultations of RCDC's external environment and the context in which it operates as a support organisation
- A broad review and critique of RCDC's programmes and interventions through study of reports, evaluations and detailed discussions and interviews with programme teams, staff and founder members
- Consultations with RCDC's key collaborators
- Consultations with Government officials concerned or connected with RCDC over the past years.

This perspective plan will provide RCDC with the roadmap for the period 2012- 2017. The broad purpose of this perspective plan document is to articulate RCDC's strategic direction, programme priorities and institutional arrangements for the next five years. It provides the basis for more detailed operational planning while maintaining a flexibility to respond to new developments and opportunities that may not be evident today and yet may be important in relation to RCDC's vision.

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[1] Regional Centre for Development Cooperation (RCDC) is registered as a non-profit under the Societies Registration Act of 1860 and Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act of 1976 of India.

A REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENT ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN ODISHA

This chapter analyses the external context in which RCDC has been operating and will be mostly operating during the next five years. It looks at key development issues that impact on poverty and marginalisation of the poor in Odisha.

Poverty and Food Insecurity in Odisha

Odisha remains one of the poorest states of India, with about 47 percent of its population living below the poverty line. It is home to just 3.5 percent of India's total population, but poor in Odisha constitute 6 percent of India's total poor. With 83.3 percent of people living in rural areas,[2] Odisha is a rural based state. The extent of rural poverty, among all Indian states and Union Territories, is highest in Odisha. Urban poverty in Odisha is second highest in India, marginally below Bihar. It may be mentioned that with a per capita income of Rs. 36,923[3] Odisha figures at the fourth-lowest place among all states and Union Territories in India. It is two-thirds of the national average. Odisha's rural poor spend only Rs. 458 per month.

Odisha is ranked poorly at 32nd place[4] on Human Development Index rank among 35 Indian states and Union Territories. An effect of poverty is the worsening misery of women. Women bear the brunt of pitiable living conditions. The Maternal Mortality Rate is 258/100000, which is more than India's average.

Around 62 percent of Odisha's total workforce depends on agriculture and allied sectors – which contributes just 20 percent to the state's GDP - for employment and sustenance. It emphasises the primarily subsistence condition of the agriculture sector.

Odisha is the second most tribal dense state of India. Out of 30 districts, seven have more than 50 percent tribal concentration. More than 22 percent of Odisha's population is tribal with the highest diversity of Scheduled Tribes and Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in the country. Schedule Castes constitutes 16.5 percent of total population. These two groups taken together comprise the bulk of people living in poverty.

[2] As per provisional estimate of 2011 Census survey (Available at http://censusindia.gov.in/2011-prov-results/paper2/data_files/Odisha/5-fig-Odisha-9.pdf)
[3] Directorate of Economics and Statistics (2009-10); Government of Odisha
[4] HDI and GDI Estimates for India and the States/UTs - Results and Analysis (2008); Planning Commission of India; Pp 31-32

The following table summarizes some key information concerning poverty and human development indicators in Odisha.

Indicators	Odisha average	India average	Source of data
Human Development Index	0.442	0.504	UNDP India 2011
Per capita income	Rs 36,923	Rs 54,835	Proceeding of Lok Sabha on 04.08.2011
Percentage of people below poverty line	46.4*57.2**	27.5*37.2**	Planning Commission of India * Lakdawala methodology ** Tendulkar methodology
Literacy (Male)	82.4	82.14	Census 2011
Literacy (Female)	64.36	65.46	Census 2011
Infant Mortality Rate	71	55	NRHM 2007
Maternal Mortality Rate	258	212	NRHM 2007
Percentage of land under forest coverage	31.41	21.05	India State of Forest Report 2011
Percentage of ST population	22.13	8.2	Census 2001
Percentage employed in agriculture sector	57.7	53.39	Economic Survey GoO 2010
Irrigation density/percentage of net area irrigated (2006-07)	29.74	43.80	Economic Survey GoO 2010
Drinking water supply coverage percentage (as of Jan 2012)	74.76	89	MDWS, India
Rural Sanitation coverage percentage (as of Jan 2012)	53.27	66.72	MDWS, India

Rich Land, Poor People

The state has abundant natural resources such as forests and mines but the path of natural resource based industrialization has been controversial. Most of these natural resource rich areas are inhabited by tribal people who do not have any control over these resources. Mineral extraction and related developments are creating social and environmental challenges apart from affecting traditional livelihoods and displacing people from their ancestral habitats.

Odisha has forest cover in about 31.4 percent of total area (as per remote sensing data), which, in addition to ecological contribution, provides primary or secondary livelihoods sustenance to about 40 percent of the state's population. About 56.6 percent of villages of the state either lie inside or on the fringe of forest areas. The poverty ratio in forest rich areas is higher than state average of 52 percent, underlying the fact that forest-based livelihoods have largely remained at subsistence level. The threat of rapid degradation of forest, due to unsustainable uses and deforestation, continues to grow. More than 12,840 hectares of forest area has been officially diverted to non-forest use in just 10 years – from year 2000 - 01 to year 2009 -10.[5] Maintaining and augmenting quality of the forests and their resources has to be a top priority to safeguard and improve forest dependent communities' livelihoods and also stabilise a rapidly degrading environment.

[5]   Economic Survey (2010-11); Government of Odisha; P 90

Odisha has about 6.4 million hectares of cultivable land, but the agriculture sector is underdeveloped and the productivity level is among the lowest in India. Food grain per hectare yield rate of 1,393 kg in Odisha compares poorly against the Indian average of 2,080 kg[6]. The contribution of agriculture to Net State Domestic Product (NSDP) has declined from 67 per cent in 1951 to around 20 per cent in 2011. However 62 percent of the workforce continues to directly engage in the agriculture sector for employment and livelihood. About 2.9 million hectare of cultivable land has been identified with acute soil erosion and quality problems further exacerbating the issue.

The state, with 478 kilometers long coastline, 0.418 Million Hectares (MHa) of brackish water lake and 0.671 MHa of fresh water area, provides considerable scope for water-based livelihoods. But water-based livelihoods remain largely unorganised and at subsistence level. Cyclones, storm surges, floods and coast erosion regularly hit the coastal areas.

Resource deprivation and alienation through forced diversion and acquisition of land is emerging as a big socio-economic problem. Odisha has become home to major social movements around rights to water, forest and land.

The private sector's presence has been growing rapidly in Odisha particularly to capitalize on rich mineral resources. Large-scale mineral based extractive activities have not only endangered the ecological integrity in some of the poorest areas of the state, but also have affected poor peoples' access and control over their land and other natural resources. Odisha has witnessed a number of resistance movements against extractive industrial activities. This is negatively affecting peace and development.

Rights, Ownership and Access to Natural Resources

Large proportion of the population still does not have secure rights and entitlements to resources where rights are protected. Skewed distribution of land is a feature of Odisha. Small and marginal farmers with holdings of less than one hectare constitute about 83 percent of farming households.[7] There were about 445,450 landless individuals in the State as per 2004-05 records. There are about 2, 49,334 homeless families in the State.[8]

Historical injustice towards tribal forest dwellers is acutely pronounced in Odisha. Their access to and rights over forest land and areas are yet to get proper recognition. Various resolutions and policies of the government lay importance upon giving more autonomy, authority and rights to community to manage and own forest resources. However implementation of the laws and policies has been tardy. The Forest Rights Act, 2006 (FRA) and the Panchayat Extension to Schedule Areas Act (PESA) 1996 have not yielded the benefits as per expectations.

Although Odisha is leading the country in granting individual rights under the FRA, only 650 Community Forest Rights (CFR) claims have been settled. The State is yet to come out with a rule to implement PESA. In absence of that, governance of forest and other local resources continue to be under the control of the government. The state government is yet to notify State Biodiversity Rules, which is why Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs) could not be constituted. PRIs, particularly in PESA areas, need to meet their responsibilities in an informed manner.

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[6]   Economic Survey (2010-11); Government of Odisha; P 77
[7]   Odisha State Agriculture Policy (2008); Government of Odisha, P 4
[8]   Land rights and ownership in Odisha (2008); UNDP India, P 16

Lack of legal and social recognition of women's rights over land and property remains a big social problem. Women's land rights have often been subsumed beneath those of their husband's. Women are not counted as owners in their own right and this makes them disproportionately vulnerable to losing their entitlement to land.[9]

Governance

Governments, both at Centre and State, have taken up numerous positive initiatives, including flagship schemes like Forest Rights Act (FRA), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), Right to Information (RTI), Right to Education (RTE), National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP), Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) etc. for welfare of people and overall development. In addition, the Government has developed institutions to improve human rights, rights of vulnerable groups and decentralisation of authority. Governance failures and inadequacies at all three levels- statutory, executive and delivery levels - affect proper implementation of the initiatives. As a result, the benefits do not reach most of the target population.

The decentralisation process has not worked well so far largely because of political and bureaucratic indifference /resistance. The Panchayatiraj Institutions have not been given authority to function independently. Panchayat representatives are constrained by capacity to influence and establish leadership over grassroots governance. Though reservations for weaker sections and women have resulted in increased improved social equity, serious efforts need to be made to enhance their functional capacity.

Gradual withdrawal of the government from basic service delivery and leaving them to private sector is creating a void. In the absence of proper regulation and enforcement, private interest groups, particularly corporate houses seeking to tap the rural markets, are taking over resulting in a degradation of the state's welfare mandate.

[9]   All India Reporter (1986), Kunjalata Purohit v Tahasildar, Sambalpur and others, Odisha, 115.

Climate change and natural disasters

With deviations in temperature, rainfall and pattern of natural disasters, Odisha is being referred to as 'disaster capital', 'climate's first orphan' etc. by experts and researchers. Disasters such as droughts and floods have become annual events making more and more people vulnerable. A poor community, a broke traditional coping mechanism and underdeveloped / inadequate infrastructure contribute to impeding community's resilience to climate change and mitigation of climate change impacts. Climate change interventions and investments, both at public and private sector, are being mainstreamed into major development initiatives.

The Odisha state government has approved the Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) in 2011 though its actual implementation is yet to be started properly. RCDC has played a critical role in the civil society effort to contribute to the process of analysing the draft CCAP so as to suggest a more comprehensive, effective, holistic, and participatory plan for climate readiness. For the CCAP to be implemented properly, inter-departmental coordination at the state level and at local level needs to improve significantly.

Polity, Civil Society/NGO and Media

Odisha has seen stable government as one party and one Chief Minister is ruling the state since 2000. However, allegations of an authoritarian rule and governance, particularly in the absence of a strong opposition party, are getting louder. Populist ideas have dominated the political mainstream, but long-term vision and leadership seems to be lacking. This plan period will see two major elections; one for the PR structures in 2012 and the other one for the state assembly in 2014.

Civil society is playing an increasing role in filling up voids created by a retreating government supporting implementation of government programmes and in catalyzing rights-based movements and actions. It is also playing an active role in advocacy efforts.

Various categories of Civil Society Organisations (CSO) are working in Odisha, with different levels of professionalism, styles of work and acceptance. Most of the NGOs are dependent on external funds, from either government or foreign donor organisations. This is limiting their independence, scope and effects as fund from such sources may come with conditions, rigid frameworks and time limits. The role of civil society and NGOs at the state level remains unorganised. Networks with national and international organisations have not been effective.

Many NGOs have developed good, context relevant, and cost-effective development models, but such models have only created 'islands of development' as large-scale replications have not materialised. Government has not shown much interest, nor has it developed mechanisms to adopt NGO promoted models or accommodate CSO voices. The outcome of CSO/NGO efforts in influencing government has been dependent on individual officers and politicians. There are a handful of NGOs that have taken up serious research, documentation and communication to maximise the impact of their work. However, this situation is changing as NGOs are adopting professional measures to deal with the government.

Media, both mainstream and development media have become proactive in creating and mobilising public opinion. They have been instrumental in improving governance and transparency. The CSO/NGO efforts have got support from certain sections of the media. Some NGOs are also publishing good quality development magazines and newsletters for target audiences. Media freedom remains a positive sign in Odisha.

The private sector has grown substantially in the service delivery sector, particularly in health and education, but it comes at a cost which alienates vast sections of the society who cannot afford these services. On the other hand, government health and education institutions on which poor and rural people depend have deteriorated in quality. Privatisation of some major service sectors like energy has not brought any change in quality of services.

The growth of industry and the private sector, however, has also increased availability of funds through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). However CSR spending, with apprehensions of ethical impropriety, intentions to further the corporate agenda and narrow objectives have their own limitations and acceptance.

International organisations and funding agencies

Multilateral Development Banks like the World Bank and Asian Development Bank, Banks like Japan Bank of International Cooperation, and foreign government aid agencies like the DFID, USAID etc. have been supporting the state through their loans and grants. They exert considerable influence on the government and often their roles have been criticised. Coordination among different international organisations and their programmes seem to be poor and as a result their respective impacts are somewhat compromised. UN organisations like the UNDP and UNICEF play a key role in shaping development direction and supporting model interventions. Both of them actively work with civil society.

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A REVIEW OF RCDC'S GROWTH AND ACHIEVEMENTS

This chapter reviews the growth of RCDC in its programme and organisational aspects since its formation in 1993. It highlights the achievements made and challenges faced during this period.

3.1 The journey so far

RCDC embarked on its journey in 1993 with the resolve to play a distinctive role in empowering rural communities for the sustainable management and development of natural resources for securing their own livelihoods as well as for conservation of the eco-system. Pursuing a multi-pronged approach towards this mandate, it has been enabling rural communities to restore and/or assert their traditional rights over local natural resources and enhance the quality of their lives through improved management and use of resources.

The philosophy underlying RCDC's operations is that appropriate management of natural resources is necessary to address the current development problems in a lasting manner and that the local communities with their traditional knowledge and high stakes are or can be the best managers of the resources.

The organisation owes its genesis to a small group of committed and experienced individuals who recognised the need for an agency to function as a resource centre in the Natural Resource Management (NRM) sector focusing particularly on the eastern and central Indian states. With this common vision and their diverse skill sets they came together under a unified banner to establish what would in later years become an organisation known and respected nationally and internationally for its significant and seminal contributions to research and policy in the management of natural resources.

The rapid strides made by the organisation in its initial years were followed by a period of consolidation, reflection and restructuring that provided important lessons in organisational evolution and development. A strong and dedicated Board of Directors steered the organisation through these turbulent times which inevitably saw the exit of some valued human assets even as some others were gained. Nevertheless RCDC has continued to deliver expected results and further strengthened the faith that communities and people's networks have reposed in it. What started as a small beginning has now grown into a respected organisation having presence in almost half of the state of Odisha and being well known for its pioneering work in NRM sector.

3.2 Main Programmes of RCDC

Since its formation RCDC has emphasised on community forest management, drought proofing, land and water management, sustainable agriculture, food & livelihood security, strengthening local self-governance through development and implementation of people's plans and capacity building of PRIs. Its major thrust areas over the years have been studies and research on sustainable natural resource management, developing best practices and demonstrative models, promoting collective action through education, and networking and advocacy for appropriate policy and practice changes.

All the above that have evolved over the last 18 years can be broadly organised into the following five major programmes. While the first three are thematic areas, the latter two cut across the thematic areas as integral components in order to realise the programme objectives.

- Community Based Natural Resource Management (with a greater focus on community forest management)
- Sustainable Rural Livelihoods
- Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction
- Local Capacity Building and Support Services to NGOs and Development Support Agencies
- Research, Documentation and Policy Advocacy

The summaries of activities undertaken in each of the programmes are mentioned below.

Community Based Natural Resource Management

Community based natural resource management has been the cornerstone of RCDC's existence. It believes that the communities not only have the highest stake in the local natural resources but can also be the best managers of these resources if provided with adequate support. It advocates for community based NRM because community management can ensure sustainability of the effort for conservation and development of the resources. At the same time it emphasises the fact that community interest in NRM can only be sustainable when the resources generate a meaningful livelihood for the people who depend on them and when they play a central role in the management of these resources. NRM is a broad programme area that includes Forest, Land and Water with several cross cutting issues like sustainable agriculture.

Community Forest Management

RCDC's interventions in this field started against the backdrop of Joint Forest Management (JFM) that the state government came up with in early 1990s. RCDC felt that JFM was going to have a disturbing impact on communities that were protecting and managing their own forests traditionally, by taking away the key management rights from them. RCDC began working with these communities in Balangir district in western Odisha and then moved on to other districts to assist them to systematically adopt sustainable management practices, to undertake advocacy and lobbying for upholding their rights over forests and produces thereof, as well as protect their forests from both external and internal threats. It made an attempt to bring together forest protecting villages/ groups at the cluster, block and district level to share their experiences, difficulties/ challenges and further to evolve collective interventions for strengthening Community Forest Management (CFM). RCDC adopted multifaceted approaches to initiate and strengthen forest protection and management by the local communities by emphasising appropriate land management and agriculture development to bring together communities to initiate forest protection.

RCDC established a name for itself as a clearing house of information on community forest management and also on NTFP. Its newsletters, news updates and journals - Ama Jangal Amara, Jhardarab, Jangal Khabar and Community Forestry - provided a different identity to the organisation. These periodicals captured the field realities, popularised the best practices and raised the issues that require attention by the policy makers. They played a significant role in bringing communities together to fight for their rights and entitlements.

CFM has since then taken the form of a movement spread across more than 10,000 villages of the state and RCDC has been providing support to not only individual CFM groups in its field areas but also their federations at district and state level. RCDC has also emerged as one of the pioneers in advocating for CFM not only at national level but also at international level (for instance, RCDC played an important role in the establishment of an exclusive unit on community forestry at the International Union of Forest Research Organisation).

In recent years it has tried to take CFM to a different level by encouraging communities to develop productivity and income potential in the forests that they manage through Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) practices, and also to adopt a more holistic/integrated approach in view of biodiversity conservation and climate readiness. It has also piloted a concept of BRG (Bio-Resource Governance) that has used CFM as one of its key tools of intervention in its all embracing arena of resource governance.

Bio-resource Governance

Biological resources are the focus of natural resource management and related developments. Whereas the Biological Diversity Act mandates for a certain stake of the local governance institutions in biodiversity management as well as the benefit sharing thereunder, PESA recognizes a right of the local indigenous communities to safeguard and manage the local resources in their traditional way, but within Scheduled Areas only while the Forest Rights Act recognizes the rights of the scheduled tribes and other traditional forest dwellers, everywhere in the country, to continue their traditional access to the forest and also to conserve, protect, and regenerate the community forest resource through traditional community institutions(Grama Sabha) that are more at grassroots than those (Panchayat) of the Biological Diversity Act.

The BRG model envisages a livelihood security and community development process through the application of the following four principles:

i.   Ownership (over local bio-resources through secured legal rights)

ii. Self-confidence (that these resources can help in socio-economic development, and this will come through proper awareness about the potential of the available resources as well as the know how to make optimum use of the same)

iii. Sustainable management

iv. Social justice (in benefit sharing).

The programme also has to address issues related to non-biological resources like land and water since these form the habitat of bio-resources. PESA, Biodiversity Act, and Forest Rights Act are used as tools to materialize the programme objectives.

Eco-system conservation for sustainable development

Higher and broader than 'CFM' is the concept of bio-resource governance, so is the ecosystem approach higher, broader, and more integrated than the concept of bio-resource governance. Ecosystem implies a larger area under focus and also an interlinked system of various natural elements that affect and get affected by humans. RCDC, as a member of the multi-country Eco-system Alliance, is implementing the Save Eastern Ghats-Odisha Ecosystem programme focusing on livelihood development through ecosystem conservation, in the pilot intervention areas of the state. The programme intends for restoration of the natural ecosystem in the select pockets of the Eastern Ghats range, along with enhanced livelihood

security for the local indigenous communities. This programme also introduced the concept and format of Eco-system Register for the first time in the world.

Land Resource Management

While working on forestry issues in Balangir district, RCDC realised that an intimate correlation existed between the depletion of forest resources and recurring drought in that district. Its research showed that the decline of traditional land (and water) management practices was largely responsible for the recurring droughts that in turn resulted in poor people resorting to forest felling as a survival measure. It made an attempt to document the traditional practices in land (and water) management in that district and worked with several community institutions therein to help them manage their land and water in the traditional way.

Steps were taken to revive the traditional water bodies and institute efforts for their management, mobilise the communities as well as the District Administration and PRIs to focus on treatment of farm land, evolve appropriate water management, land management, cropping patterns etc. through participatory and consultative processes. This led to the revival of traditional mechanisms such as upland bunding, cultivation of minor crops (such as millets), use of traditional, drought resistant varieties of seeds, resort to mixed farming and move to less water intensive crops. These small changes brought about a big impact by increasing the viability of agriculture as the main source of livelihoods. These measures have now spread to different parts of Balangir and Nabarangapur districts. In Nabarangapur district the work on land and water management moved to a different level where RCDC had to intervene on land alienation and tenurial insecurity.

RCDC has undertaken watershed development programmes for organising and empowering the rural poor for the fulfillment of their sustainable livelihood and food security. Under the Western Odisha Rural Livelihood Project (WORLP) in Balangir, it facilitated the processes of formation of watershed associations in four watersheds. Under the Odisha Tribal Empowerment and Livelihoods Programme (OTELP) in Nabarangapur, RCDC has been trying to achieve effective management of land and water resources at community level to improve household livelihood opportunities.

RCDC has used its field experience to carry out documentation and advocacy on a broad range of issues concerning land and water management.

Water Resource Management

Water gradually became a focal issue, along with forest and land, for RCDC and this was not limited to the drought prone areas. After studies and action in the field, RCDC realised that civil society needed to play an important role with regard to water management. Statistics do give an impression that Odisha is a water surplus state, but the very fact that droughts are becoming more pronounced and that there is critical water scarcity in more than two-thirds of the state completely belies such a notion. Poor irrigation coverage and bad irrigation management contributed to increasing farmer's risks and decreasing land productivity.

A part of Odisha is traditionally flood prone. However increase in flood affected areas and flood casualties, water flow extremes in the rivers indicated that something is grossly wrong with water management. These had ramifications in people's access to drinking water and sanitation as well. On both these parameters Odisha fared very poorly at national level. Casualties of water-borne diseases were very high.

Considering the above, RCDC started intervening through small actions and pilots on key issues related to water i.e. irrigation management, land-water management, drinking water security and sanitation improvement. It also conducted research and evidence-based advocacy on water policies, water governance, river basin and watershed management and integrated water management.

As part of its water resource based interventions, RCDC adopts three pronged strategy; (1) add community capacities to enable them to assert their 'right to water' (2) pilot community-based integrated water management models to combat water led disasters, improve water-based livelihoods and secure quality access to drinking water and sanitation, and (3) facilitate community action and involvement in government's drinking water and sanitation programmes.

While every programme of RCDC is gradually mainstreaming water issues into its intervention plans, present programmes having water-centric focus include (1) piloting models of drinking water security and sanitation in 30 Gram Panchayats of Balasore, Balangir and Nayagarh districts, (2) integrated water management based disaster risk reduction in 2 Gram Panchayats of Puri district, (3) drinking water quality mitigation through local resource management and community compatible technologies integration in 5 Gram Panchayats of Nuapada district, and (4) watershed based natural resource management in many programme areas of RCDC. School water education, as an innovative approach to community action and awareness, is being implemented in more than 100 schools across Balasore, Balangir and Nayagarh districts.

RCDC has emerged as a strong advocate on water related issues in Odisha. Its quality research and advocacy agenda include and help other civil society groups, government and activists to define and design their programmes and shape discourses. RCDC publishes a quarterly newsletter in Odia language 'Jala Jeevan Sambad', through extensive coverage of research and witness based water issues which is the only of its kind magazine in Odisha and which caters to varied requirements of policy makers, practitioners, students, academicians and community members. The newsletter, with a circulation of over 1,500 copies, now reaches an estimated 15,000 serious readers through a dedicated network of study circles.

Sustainable Rural Livelihoods

Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFP)

RCDC has become a leading organisation in Odisha to work on Non Timber Forest Produce (NTFP) with years of experience implementing NTFP based programmes and promoting it as a development initiative from the grassroots to the international arena.

During the 1990s RCDC along with different community-based organisations and NGOs began working towards bringing in greater focus of government as well as civil society on NTFP policy, management and trade. RCDC carried out several studies/ research projects and mobilised different stakeholders to fight for appropriate changes in the NTFP policy, particularly for liberalisation of collection and trade.

After promulgation of PESA in 1996 and state confirmatory acts in 1997, RCDC emphasised on the advocacy for special policy on NTFP by the State. After declaration of NTFP policy of 2000 (State of Odisha) RCDC's work on NTFP has been focused on implementation of the policy through innovative actions such as creating an alternative arrangement for marketing of NTFP, working on market intelligence, product development, sustainable NTFP harvesting, processing and management protocols,

promotion of community managed NTFP enterprises, working with other stakeholders to come up with a uniform NTFP policy for the Central Indian States. RCDC has had policy level interactions with relevant ministries (Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Ministry of Environment & Forest, and Ministry of Rural Development etc.) on issues of enterprise development, marketing and minimum support price of NTFP, policy issues in forest and environmental governance, and livelihood development strategies.

RCDC has been trying to help communities to have a more sustainable and forest friendly livelihoods base. Over the years RCDC has helped form NTFP cooperatives and also federations of these cooperatives with an objective to enable forest dependent communities to control, manage and trade NTFP and their agriculture produce. It has formed 30 Self Help Cooperatives (SHC) covering 70 GPs in 18 blocks of five districts covering more than 14,000 families.

RCDC has promoted a website www.banajata.org that presents all possible information on NTFP management and trade mostly relating to Odisha and its neighbouring states.

Sustainable Agriculture

Almost all of RCDC's target communities are substantially dependent on agriculture for their livelihood. Agriculture as a sector and farming as a livelihood are going through a critical period. While farmers are leaving farming as a livelihood option, people's access to food is becoming far more complex. RCDC's interventions on agriculture stem from a belief that unless external dependencies are minimized, agriculture productivity and profitability will continue to face greater risks. RCDC has been focusing on local resource based agriculture, crop diversity and land-water-crop management as a sustainable approach to agriculture.

RCDC is also facilitating and strengthening community institutions like Food Security Committees to help them in planning their own agriculture and food management. RCDC has achieved notable success with regard to promotion of local species, crops and farming technologies. In addition RCDC has also achieved substantial technology and process infusion through integration of System of Rice Intensification (SRI), production of own manure through vermi compost, green compost, liquid manures etc. RCDC's agriculture specific interventions are more pronounced in Balangir and Nabarangpur districts where the agriculture crisis and food insecurity are among the severest.

Over the years, RCDC has perfected a strategy for promotion of ecological farming with a clear focus on enhancing local agricultural productivity and in turn enhancing income security of the farming and farm dependent communities.

Enhanced Access to Government Schemes and Programmes

There are a number of government schemes that are meant to improve livelihoods of local poor. RCDC works extensively to enable CBOs and their apex bodies at Block and Panchayat level to mobilise government schemes and programmes, particularly relating to food, livelihood and social security. RCDC plays a supportive and catalytic role, facilitating dialogue between government department officials and the community, to ensure eligible persons get what they are legally entitled to. Village micro-plans, which incorporate the list of eligible beneficiaries under different food and social security schemes (namely MGNREGS, FRA, Vasundhara, Mo Jami Mo Diha, Indira Awas Yojna, Mo Kudia, etc.), are annually updated which helps in assessing the initiatives taken by such village institutions. Based upon the village micro plan, an annual plan is developed and activities chalked out on the basis of their priorities.

Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction

This is a new programme that RCDC has undertaken. This programme consists of two initiatives. One is part of 'A Multi Country initiative on increasing resilience and reducing risk of coastal communities to climate change and natural hazards in the Bay of Bengal' in selected areas in Kendrapara and Jagatsinghpur districts (supported by European Commission). The other one is a UNDP supported initiative in Puri district on 'Climate change adaptation and reducing vulnerabilities of communities to climate change and disaster risk through integrated water management'. Both these initiatives started in 2011 and are still in their infancy. RCDC believes that these two initiatives hold a lot of promise to explore localised solutions to climate change impacts and develop models to learn from.

Development through People-led Approach in the Balangir district

People-led Development Process (PLDP) is one of the successful self initiatives by the people of the state of Odisha as has been exemplified by the community forestry initiative in the district of Nayagarh. Community forestry is one of the best examples of PLDP in the state that has emerged and established itself without any external support. However, such spontaneous PLDP has normally not been holistic or integrated in its approach (e.g., community forestry has been timber-centric and NTFP management has been ignored); and has not even taken into consideration some of the emerging challenges such as climate change. External development actors such as NGOs like RCDC have made an honest attempt to make best use of the potential of PLDP, have helped in disseminating the information about such models for wider replications of the same, and have also tried to make them holistic and updated. The concept of bio-resource governance reflects this approach of RCDC, and has thus PLDP at its core. However, the attempt to make PLDP a holistic and updated one may appear to be a supply-driven programme in some cases and for some time, and it is in this phase that the external agency has to make special efforts, including financial investments, to get things established. For this purpose, the activities that are undertaken by the external facilitators are capacity building of the Palli Sabha/Gram Sabha and other such community bodies, participatory planning, conflict resolution, due attention to gender & equity issues, and linkages with other relevant institutions/schemes/programmes. It must be noted here that even though it appears like a supply-driven programme, it is introduced with the acceptance as well as moral support of the concerned community for the same. RCDC has made successful experiments in the process in Balangir district.

Strengthening local capacity for Participatory Development

Strengthening local capacity has been integral to all the programmes that RCDC has carried out. RCDC organises the community in various forms so that they can assert their rights and entitlements collectively in a more organised manner. These processes emphasise the involvement of the most vulnerable sections of the poor people like women, landless, dalits, tribals, children etc.

Through its interventions, RCDC has formed CBOs such as Village Development Committees (VDCs), Forest Protection Committees (FPCs), Food Security Committees (FSCs), Self Help Groups (SHGs), federation of the SHGs and Watershed Associations (WAs). These are local level institutions that use their collective strength to address livelihood and food security issues and exercise their rights in local governance processes. RCDC has facilitated linkages between these local institutions and various government departments.

In order to expand the horizon of people's participation in local self-governance, RCDC has initiated and sustained a process of peoples' planning. This was initiated primarily to get the communities involved in the identification and analysis of problems for formulation of Micro Plan. It has focused on

training of PRI members so that they can meet their rightful responsibilities effectively. It has also developed a training module and materials in consultation with various stakeholders and executed the capacity building programme for PRIs jointly with the District Administration in Nabarangapur district.

Research, Documentation and Policy Advocacy

Research and knowledge generation have remained an integral part of the identity of RCDC since its formation. It has always focused on high quality research on which are based its work on the ground and its efforts at policy level. Its research has generated good amount of information that has shaped the understanding of a broad range of issues both within and outside RCDC. It has used its research findings to determine and refine its own activities, inform its publications, reinforce its campaigns and shape policy advocacy agenda and actions. Its research activities so far include a gamut of issues ranging from forest conservation to industrial pollution, from drinking water to the impacts of climate change, from NTFP to traditional knowledge and many more.

RCDC uses networking to gain and share knowledge and work together with others in the sector to achieve its goal. It has also developed networks among the community institutions that it has promoted over the years.

RCDC has successfully used the media and its own publications to reach a wider audience in order to raise public awareness on key poverty issues. It has used both public campaign and tactful lobbying with policy makers to influence policy decisions in favour of poor people.

3.3 RCDC – its growth as an organisation

Since its formation RCDC has grown steadily and is now recognised as one of the premier non-governmental organisations in Odisha. It is well respected because of its strong work on the ground, its studies and research, the passion and competence of its board and staff, its place in and contribution to important policy discourses, and its ability to remain transparent and accountable as an organisation.

In order to remain efficient and effective RCDC has tried different things. There is separation between the Governing Body (GB) and the RCDC management successfully barring any GB member to hold any position within RCDC. While this has been a positive move, the efforts to decentralise functions by creating centres within RCDC and devolving powers to them did not yield positive results. This created problems of coordination and financial reporting. The decentralisation process therefore had to be rolled back.

A period of 18 years is a reasonably long time in the life of an organisation. Many organisations may have come and gone during that time. But RCDC has remained young and vibrant because it has adapted well with the demands of time and has remained relevant. As the following map and chart show, RCDC has been growing both in its reach and its resources.

The following map of Odisha shows RCDC's programme presence (highlighted by green colour) as of December 2011. RCDC's interventions now cover 1,035 villages, spanning 39 Community Development Blocks in 15 districts of Odisha.

Map of Odisha
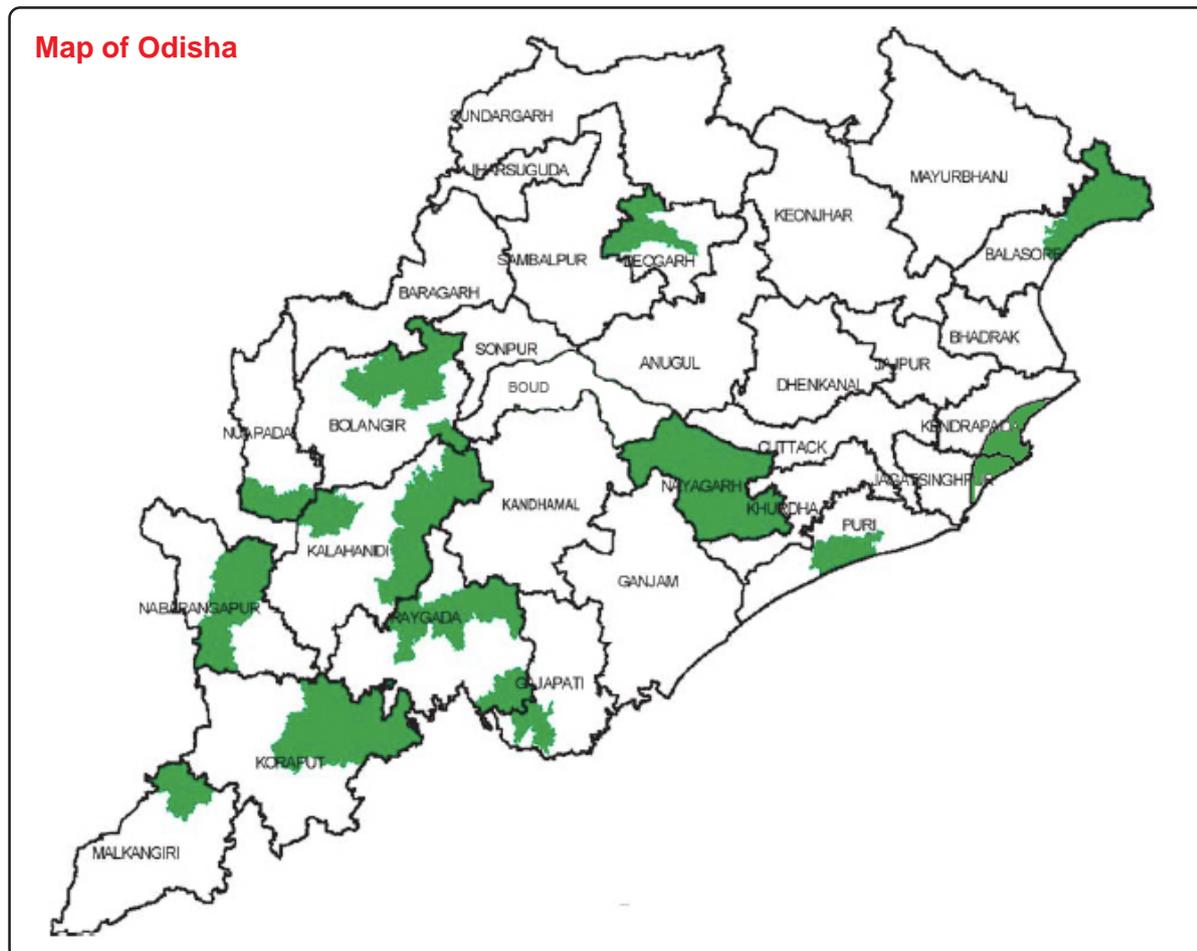
The following graph gives a picture of the steady growth that RCDC has registered over the years in raising resources for its work. It gives a year-wise breakdown of funds raised for the period from 2000 until 2011.
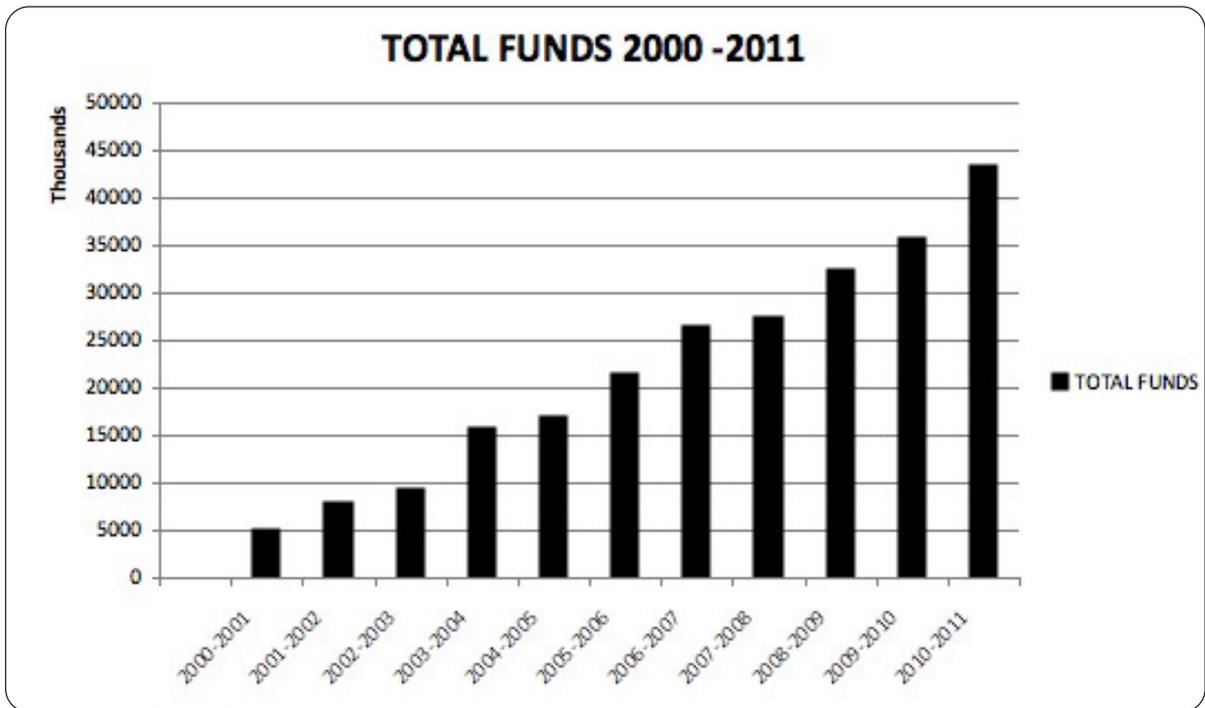
Both the map and graph above point out that RCDC has been able to deliver quality programmes covering a wide area, attracting funds from a diverse range of donors that include government, international donors and UN agencies. It has continued to enjoy the confidence of its donors on its ability to design programmes that deliver and make significant impacts and to effectively account for the resources raised. Several of its donors have continued with RCDC for more than 7- 8 years.

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VISION, MISSION AND CORE VALUES

This chapter outlines the Vision, Mission and the Core Values of RCDC, which make RCDC what it is today. These have been integral to RCDC's existence and its successes. These will continue to be the guiding spirit for RCDC for the next five years.

4.1 Vision:

"Rights Secured – Resources Managed and Sustained – Poverty is Past"

4.2 Mission:

"To support and facilitate the struggle for rights of the poor and marginalised community over resources, opportunities, institutions and processes to improve their quality of life, economic status and ensure social uplift and environment sustainability".

4.3 Core Values:

RCDC continues to treasure the following core values. These will continue to guide its work during the plan period.

Transparency

Transparency is a cherished core value of the organisation and is practiced in all its operations, both internal and external. This is because it is believed that trust is the foundation of every relationship and transparency is its basic building block. It applies to the communities the organisation works with, its staff and volunteers, partner organisations, donors that support its work, consultants and other colleagues.

In practice this is translated through timely and complete sharing of information (proactive disclosure) open forums for discussion and joint assessment of outputs/outcomes.

Inclusive decision-making

Democratic decision making on all programmatic and most administrative matters is promoted within the organisation.

Democratic decision making processes are also facilitated and promoted in village committees, and Panchayat, block, district and state level federations of people's institutions.

Financial integrity and accountability

Honesty and trustworthiness are deeply valued in the handling of funds; within the organisation, with the communities the organisation works with, and its partners/ donors that support its work. It is important to sustain the trust and confidence posed in the organisation by the donors, public and the government (regulators) regarding its financial competence and integrity. The organisation adheres to the highest standards of financial accounting and transparency. It routinely shares financial information with communities and has its accounts audited annually by external certified Chartered Accountants.

People centeredness

This is the bond between the organisation and the people who are its raison d'être and the people that make it possible (its own human resources and supporters) to achieve that reason. It strives to be a people centered organisation and focus on the overall growth of these people.

The organisation believes that human resources are its most valuable asset and its endeavour is to nurture and provide an enabling work environment for them, build their capacities, and retain skilled staff, particularly women. The organisation has always been prepared to walk the extra mile in its efforts to accommodate staff interests and provide an environment conducive to their growth.

In its work on the ground the organisation applies this through the relationship of equality that it develops with its communities, the commitment that it shows to their causes and the approach of empowerment that it takes to improve their lives.

Gender equity

Gender equity is taken seriously at all levels of RCDC. It has initiated an organisation-wide effort to ensure gender equity within the functioning and programmes of RCDC. A Gender Cell has been established, and steps have been taken for formulation of a gender policy through a consultative process with all staff members.

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KEY ISSUES AND STRATEGIC CHOICES

5.1 Issues for the Perspective Plan

Some of the questions that face RCDC at this juncture include the following:

1. What should RCDC do in order to continue to remain relevant to the context and deliver quality programmes?

2. What should be the key themes on which RCDC should focus for next five years and how? How should it achieve integration among its programmes?

3. What should be the appropriate strategy for making maximum impact? Should it be expanding its reach or consolidating its interventions and experiences?

4. How can RCDC be more efficient and effective in its operations?

5. How should RCDC be structured given that there are multiple and overlapping roles between individuals and teams?

6. What should be the strategy for raising resources?

It is these questions that this Perspective Plan seeks to answer in subsequent chapters.

5.2 Strategic Choices

RCDC, through various planning and consultation processes, has identified a number of important issues that require attention in the new perspective plan. These issues have been clearly articulated in Chapters 2 and 3. These strategic issues refer to impact level issues which RCDC should address in this Perspective Plan (PP), as well as institutional and operational aspects of RCDC that need to be addressed in order to effectively implement the Plan.

Based on a careful analysis of all the identified issues, RCDC has decided on the following strategic choices that define the broad policy parameters and directions for the plan period.

- It will focus on higher level interventions to make higher level impacts. This will mean addressing issues holistically, forging strategic partnerships at all levels and exploring and utilising opportunities to influence policy and practices.

- It will not expand into new geographical areas during the plan period. It will intensify operations in some of the existing areas with increased convergence of interventions. While NRM related work and sustainable livelihoods work will be intensified in the tribal dominated districts in South and South Western Odisha, coastal districts will be focused for climate readiness related work. This will help achieve a consolidation of its work so far.

- It will intensify its operation in areas affected by chronic poverty and marginalisation. An estimated 400 villages will fall under intensive operation. An assessment will be carried out soon to determine these areas. Areas under extensive operation will be those where issue / theme specific work and opportunistic policy influencing work will be undertaken.

- It will take a programme approach rather than project approach in planning, implementation and monitoring. It recognises that most of the funding will be project specific but hopes that by developing a holistic understanding of various issues and through convergence among various projects, it can move towards a robust programmatic direction.

- It will continue to work on the programmatic themes of NRM/Bio-resource Governance, Sustainable Rural Livelihoods, and Climate Readiness. It will continue with its time tested means of direct field operation, research and advocacy with focus on people-led approach.

- It will mainstream climate change considerations into all aspects of the programme. While RCDC will try to develop a solid understanding about the issues and implications of climate change it will also undertake action research projects to develop models on climate change adaptation and community resilience development.

- It will consider water security in a holistic way analysing from localised water resource management angle while placing emphasis on water for domestic use and consequently on sanitation, water quality and hygiene issues.

- It will undertake disaster response measures only in its operational areas.

- It will monitor the impact of mining and other industrial activities on local ecosystems and livelihoods.

- Institutionally it will continue with its commitment to building a high calibre team by developing its work force.

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PROGRAMME PRIORITIES

This chapter sets out the priority thematic areas and programmes to which RCDC will devote itself in the coming five year period. The priorities are derived from the analysis of the development issues and challenges (Chapter 3) and RCDC's own competencies and achievements (Chapter 2).

Programme Components

Facilitating **Rights & entitlements of the poor** to resources they traditionally access, depend on, own, manage or are natural custodian of; **Economic and social empowerment of the poor and vulnerable people** *through promotion of natural resource based livelihoods*; and **Environmental sustainability** *through community-based action and advocacy* will be the focal objectives of all programmes. These objectives will be achieved through three priority thematic interventions, (a) Natural Resource Management and Governance (b) Sustainable Livelihoods Promotion and (c) Climate Justice.

6.1 Natural Resource Management and Governance

This programme component will focus on governance and sustainable management of natural resources by communities, including forests, land, and water. RCDC will adopt a multi pronged approach including its interventions at the state level with government and civil society organisations. These are documentation and dissemination of findings on SFM based on research data, participatory development of workable models for integrated natural resource management, capacity building of governance institutions and CBOs established specifically for natural resource management, and supporting communities and their collectives/ federations in their struggle for ownership and management of natural resources.

Based on the needs at the grassroots and our programme experiences, we envisage three areas of work within this programme. It may be emphasised here that these should not be seen as watertight compartments, but as related and overlapping sub-themes focusing on different features within a broader programme theme:

a) Sustainable Forest Management

b) Bio-resource governance

c) Water Resource Management

d) Sustainable Land Management

The following will be the broad strategies under each of the sub themes

(a) 'Sustainable forest management' and 'Community rights over forest resources'

- Enable and support forest-dwelling community's legitimate rights over forest and allied resources by improving their capacities to take up rights based activities and campaigns.

- Support and facilitate community/local government centric bio-resource governance that includes integrating governance of all natural resources at the local level with special focus on the biological resources.

- Explore and monitor community capacity to engage with emerging programmes such as REDD+ and assess their impact on their efforts for resource management and poverty reduction.

- Facilitate integration of land-soil-water-agriculture-biodiversity management in forest and adjoining areas.

- Provide resource support to government and non-government organisations and institutions on Sustainable Forest Management.

(b) 'Bio-resource governance', 'Bio-diversity Conservation', and 'Bio-resource Development for Livelihood'

- Help ensure tenurial security for the local communities over local bio-resources.

- Facilitate an enhanced livelihood security through proper utilization and development of biological resources.

- Help develop model GPs in bio-resource governance specifically in the light of the Biological Diversity Act, PESA, and FRA.

- Conduct research on some of the merging issues relating to the subject for advocacy and sensitization.

(c) 'Sustainable water management' and 'Right to water and sanitation'

- Establish and scale up models of community-based drinking water, sanitation and water resource management for water security.

- Pilot action research on community-based drought proofing and flood mitigation through localised IWRM.

- Provide resource support to government and non-government organisations and institutions on Sustainable Water Management.

- Replicate watershed-based development approaches with further innovations.

(d) 'Rights, Entitlements and Access' to land resources and their sustainable management

- Promote and facilitate community action for secured entitlement and productive access to land resources, particularly of tribal, women and vulnerable people.

- Pilot community based integration of land, water and forest resource management for resource sustainability.

6.2 Sustainable Livelihoods promotion

RCDC believes that issues of food security and malnutrition/ under-nutrition are not so much problems of demand and supply as they are of deprivation of entitlements or inability to command food supplies and related resources. It is also apparent that rural households, particularly in Odisha, stitch together multiple sources of income to make a living. Given this understanding and position, it follows that any organisation that aims to enhance rural livelihoods towards making them sustainable must necessarily adopt a multi-pronged strategy for doing so covering the entire livelihoods gamut from production and

skill enhancement to rights, entitlements and social security schemes.

RCDC will promote and enhance ***natural resource-based and wage and social security based livelihoods*** for rural poor and natural resource dependent communities through the following interventions. A key focus of all livelihoods promotion interventions will be to achieve food security. Promoting market access will be mainstreamed in all livelihoods interventions.

(a) Forest based livelihoods

- Promote and facilitate community-based/managed micro enterprise development.

- Advocate for formulation and implementation of pro-poor and gender equal forest based livelihoods policies and programmes.

(b) Farm based livelihoods

- Promote and facilitate integrated approach to improve land-based livelihoods by enhancing local resource based farming, cost and input rationalisation, crop diversification, horticulture, agro-forestry, sustainable organic farming and water stress management through micro-irrigation and water harvesting structures.

- Advocate (organise farmers and local institutions) against mono-cropping, conversion of agricultural land for non agriculture purposes and corporate farming or corporate induced farming wherever it goes against the interest of indigenous communities and the local environment/ ecology/biodiversity etc.

(c) Wage and social security - based livelihoods

- Promote, facilitate, support and monitor rights-based initiatives and schemes for employment, income and social security.

- Advocate for greater convergence of MGNREGS with NRM related activities.

6.3 Climate Justice - Resilience to climate change and disasters

The impact of climate change on agriculture, forests, and other life support systems threatens human existence on earth with the poor and resource-dependent communities likely to be the worst affected. This will be on account of the physical/environmental changes as well as the policy and institutional dynamics of climate change negotiations. An emerging programme area for RCDC is climate change and adaptation. It is our mandate to ensure that the interests and concerns of our constituencies are adequately represented in decision and policy-making forums on climate change negotiations. We shall pilot adaptation strategies, develop models and replicate them to reduce livelihood vulnerabilities and food insecurity resulting from anticipated climatic variations. The following will be the broad strategies.

- Develop understanding of our communities and ourselves on impacts of climate change through various action research projects and studies
- Explore and experiment with different possibilities for appropriate integration of interventions related to climate change adaptation and mitigation with actions of other thematic areas of RCDC
- Galvanise collective action on state policy on mitigation of and adaptation to climate change; to facilitate and promote development of a collective action plan for adaptive and mitigating initiatives on climate change through awareness generation, capacity building, advocacy, and model development
- Support and facilitate community resilience development and disaster risk reduction measures to mitigate impacts of climate change induced disasters
- Support community led forest conservation and protection initiatives linking to larger initiatives such as REDD+.

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PROGRAMME APPROACHES

Programme Approaches

RCDC will follow a number of approaches to implement the Perspective Plan. These approaches are aligned to RCDC's vision and core values and will be applied in all operational areas with necessary adaptations to suit local circumstances.

Focus on the excluded and marginalised

RCDC has always focused on the excluded and marginalised people in its work. Most of its interventions are located in poorest districts of Odisha with focus on geographically and socio-economically excluded communities. While this approach will be further strengthened in the southern and western Odisha, RCDC will work with communities in the coastal belt that are at the receiving end of the vagaries of climate change.

Rights based and resource centric

Our 'rights based approach' seeks to promote the rights of people and build their capacities for asserting the same. This approach stems from concerns regarding the (re)distributive aspects of conventional (economic) development impacts. We recognise that politically neutral strategies contribute to the depoliticisation of poverty, and continuing with the basic needs and welfare approach results in the perpetuation of impoverishment. We believe that the needs of the poor cannot be addressed without addressing their rights, where rights are not only legal rights but also entitlements and claims that stem from moral and ethical aspects.

Through this approach, we seek to achieve a positive transformation of power relations among the various development actors and signal a move towards a more genuinely inclusive and democratic process of popular involvement in decision-making over the resources and institutions that affect poor peoples' lives.

Strengthening local and institutional capacity

Closely interlinked with the rights-based approach mentioned above is the PLDP approach with people's participation in key political processes involving them in monitoring & evaluation, advocacy and mobilization.00000000000000 A distinction needs to be made here between participation as a cost-effective strategy for programme implementation versus participation to promote political consciousness towards attainment of rights. Thus our approach involves building and strengthening people's institutions/community-based organisations with a focus on the marginalised and/or vulnerable sections to enable them to fight their own battles, with RCDC providing facilitative support. Capacity building is particularly focused on helping the poor become aware of the relevant policies and practices, analyse the causes of their deprivation, identify and prioritise issues, and acquiring necessary skills for planning, implementation, monitoring, review and evaluation of planned activities, among others. Grassroots CBOs are further clustered and federated at higher levels around common issues, and this has led to

the emergence of local leadership from among the deprived classes. This approach will be continued and further strengthened.

Multi-stakeholder and multi-dimensional engagement

The problems and issues that besiege poverty and resource degradation are varied and complex involving many stakeholders with diverse interests. We realise that these long standing and multi-faceted issues have no quick and easy solutions; instead they require multi-stakeholder engagement over long periods of time even for arriving at a consensus regarding the causes, and for identifying the pathways out of it.

We shall work in partnership with CSOs, Networks, PRI institutions, Government Institutions, Academic and Research Institutions, and when needed with institutions in the market for our market access interventions.

Research and evidence-based position and advocacy

Our position on issues concerning resource management and policies pertaining to people's development is based on research and evidence. We are aware that solutions to resource management issues are location specific and what has worked elsewhere may not be appropriate in the context of Odisha. RCDC is committed to finding location specific solutions and with that in mind it has been working to improve some of the government programmes and make those more community centric. Its involvement with WORLP and OTELP are example of such experiments.

We also believe that having a position is not enough and that efforts need to be made to influence decision makers to consider the rationale behind our positions. This will mean that we shall work with other CSOs to have wider debate over our evidence-based positions.

Knowledge-based communication

Knowledge is the basis for decision making and consequent actions and it has always been our endeavour to keep the civil society informed and updated of developments on issues pertaining to our priority areas of intervention.

Communication for information and education is one of the most critical and effective approaches that we follow and over the years we have developed a body of literature on issues pertaining to rights and resources. Our newsletters on community forestry and water, on account of their quality and content, have created a niche as well as demand among development practitioners, policy makers and bureaucrats alike. Many of our other publications have also been rated highly by the readers. We are dedicated to principle centered knowledge leadership.

Mainstreamed sub-themes

The following sub-themes will be mainstreamed into all three aforementioned thematic interventions. They are *(a) Governance; (b) Gender; (c) Advocacy (d) HIV / AIDS.*

(a) Governance

This will be realised through coordinated action as part of above-mentioned programme priorities. Effective governance will be a cross cutting element of programme strategy. The following will be the broad strategies.

- Facilitate capacity building of representatives of PRIs, with more focus on Women, Schedule Tribe and Schedule Caste members, to enable them to play leadership roles and develop Panchayat institutions as, a) functional local governments that can make appropriate integrated planning to address poverty and food insecurity, and b) implement various development and welfare programmes and schemes with efficiency and transparency

- Facilitate developing models of effective Panchayat centric governance of natural and bio resources, including integration of FRA, PESA Act and MGNREGA etc. and convergence of various schemes

- Advocate for democratic functioning of the Panchayats and primacy of the Gramsabha and Pallisabha as the primary decision makers/planners

- Support, facilitate and advocate for community monitoring, social audits and access to information at various levels, service delivery and governance

- Research and analysis of governance mechanism at various levels. Make appropriate advocacy interventions to improve governance and encourage the decentralisation process.

(b) Gender

RCDC will continue focusing on reducing the gender gap in all areas. It will empower women in all its grassroots initiatives and consider gender in the design of all its research, policy and advocacy activities. Women will be kept at the forefront of all community-led action and interventions. The primary effort will be to augment women's capacity to demand justice, seek rights, develop entrepreneurial abilities, and establish leadership abilities.

(c) Advocacy

Advocacy has been and will continue to be an integral part of all RCDC's work. In order to ensure maximum impact from its work, RCDC will complement its grassroots interventions with integrated research, networking and advocacy activities. It will further strengthen its research capacity to get to the core of the various issues that confront its target communities and will use campaigns to spread awareness among larger audiences. It will continue to forge effective alliances to exert greater influence. All these will help in influencing policies and practices at various levels in favour of the poor people that it works with.
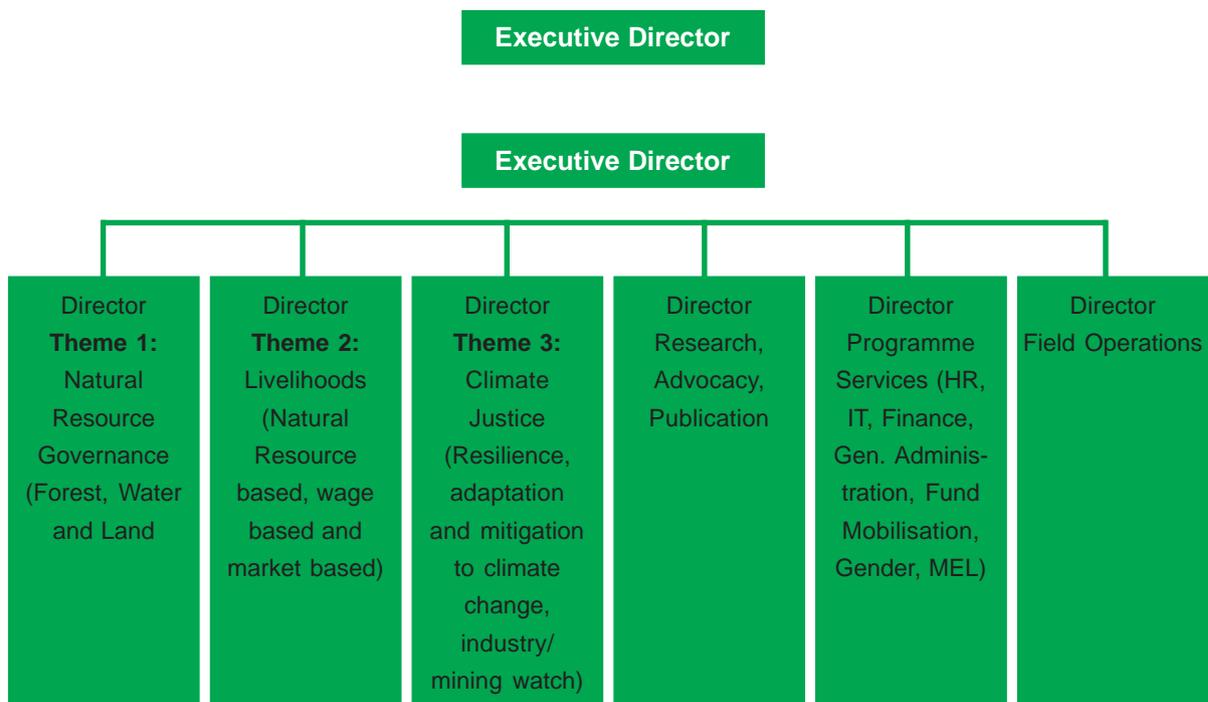
(d) HIV / AIDS

Most of RCDC's programmes have HIV and AIDS incorporated into programme plans. RCDC will try to mainstream HIV / AIDS considerations into all its future plans. The issue will continue to be raised at community meetings in order to generate awareness.

For Programme Strategic Goal and Objectives please see **Annexure-1**

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STRUCTURE & IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS

The following organogram outlines a structure of the top management level of RCDC that is expected to develop a robust but a lean structure to be able to implement this Perspective Plan efficiently and effectively.

Executive Director

Executive Director

| Director **Theme 1:** Natural Resource Governance (Forest, Water and Land | Director **Theme 2:** Livelihoods (Natural Resource based, wage based and market based) | Director **Theme 3:** Climate Justice (Resilience, adaptation and mitigation to climate change, industry/ mining watch) | Director Research, Advocacy, Publication | Director Programme Services (HR, IT, Finance, Gen. Adminis- tration, Fund Mobilisation, Gender, MEL) | Director Field Operations |

8.1. Human Resources

We recognise that our human resources are our most important asset. Our success is based on a premise that we may not be able to remunerate adequately to attract and retain good quality staff but we can offer a fulfilling work environment and experience so that we get the most from our committed work force. We intend to continue with the good practices that we have and work on the following to further improve our human resource management.

- Develop a systematic Human Resource Development Plan focusing on good induction for newcomers and skill development

- Strengthen line management culture to enhance accountability among staff

- Ensure effective handover from outgoing to incoming staff

- Develop an internal grievance redressal mechanism to address staff discontent and grievances.

8.2. Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (PME)

RCDC presently follows a project-based approach to PME. There will be a gradual shift towards a programme based approach without compromising the accountability and commitments to project sponsors. A 'Programme Implementation Guideline' will be developed to clarify and facilitate role sharing, communication and coordination and would result in increased accountability. This will also help in strengthening community monitoring system and defining exit policy.

The 'Executive Board'/'Governing Body' as the supreme authority within the organisational framework will continue to provide strategic oversight.

The Senior Management Team (SMT) will be the apex body at programme management level and day-to-day affairs. The SMT will be responsible for visioning, programme monitoring and overall management direction.

The SMT will form an 'Internal Monitoring and Evaluation (IME)' unit. This unit will comprise of seven members – five members from programme team and two from programme support. The unit will be responsible for each programme/project evaluation at least once in a year and submit their report to the Executive Director (ED). ED may take appropriate steps on the recommendations and suggestions of the IME or place it in the SMT for further action.

RCDC presently follows an 'objective setting' to individual and team planning and performance appraisal. This will include measurable indicators for more efficient monitoring and evaluation.

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FUND MOBILISATION-RESOURCING THE PLAN

RCDC does understand that the funds it gets are hard earned money of individuals and organisations and that their wish to put their money for good causes of the marginalised people and greater cause of the society have to be upheld at any cost. It has succeeded in maintaining trust and confidence of government and non-government, national and international donors and funding agencies.

RCDC's vision to integrate all thematic interventions in most of its presently intervened areas will require substantial effort for fund mobilisation. RCDC estimates that for a visible effect on a larger scale, it requires to double its annual turnover from the present Rs. 50 million to Rs.100 million in the next five years.

i. Fund raising sources

RCDC will mobilise funds from the following sources.

a. Grants (national and international; government and non-government). This is going to be the most important source in the next five years.

b. Loans – to fund entrepreneurship programmes. Before taking loans RCDC will prepare a comprehensive plan. It has been decided that no loans will be taken before 2014.

c. Consultancy services involving training, evaluation, studies etc. will be further strengthened and expanded

d. Corporate Funds-RCDC may mobilise fund from this source provided its core values and focus are met. RCDC will not take any fund from corporate and companies, (a) whose substantial portion of business comes from exploitation/extraction of forest, minerals and water resources, (b) who are involved in land grabbing and/ or resource alienation of the poor and/or exclusion of the local people, and (c) who extensively pollute the environment in the process of their business

e. Public and individual donations – RCDC will try to mobilise individual and public donations primarily through appeals on its website and other communications without investing much.

ii. Fund raising mechanisms

RCDC will employ the following mechanisms for effective fundraising.

a. A Fund Mobilising Taskforce (FMT) will be formed under the Chairmanship of the Executive Director. A senior functionary may act as convener of the FMT. The FMT will prepare a funding strategy and annual action plans to guide fund raising efforts

b. All fund raising initiatives must adhere to the adopted themes, strategies and ideologies as spelled out in this perspective plan.

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RISK ASSESSMENT

We have identified the following risks and also agreed to take adequate measures to manage these risks.

Funding uncertainties

The funding scenario has become unpredictable. So far, RCDC has been successful in its efforts to raise funds for its programmes but it recognises that there will be challenges ahead. It needs to ensure that its programmes achieve certain degree of sustainability. RCDC also needs to build capacity to cope with unexpected shocks by developing a corpus fund. It intends to address this through.

- Developing a fund raising strategy to enhance resources for our programmes and

- Identifying and developing initiatives to get government funds to make its programmes sustainable (wherever possible).

Attracting and retaining good quality staff

In the growing competitive environment the organisation not only faces the issue of attracting adequately trained professionals for its operations but also retaining them in the existing pay structure of the organisation.

Recognising this as a big challenge, RCDC will continue with its efforts to be an employer of choice among the local NGOs providing reasonable pay and benefits and an enabling working environment.

Impact of disasters

Odisha is disaster prone and RCDC works in many of the districts which usually are some of the worst affected. Severe disasters can have damaging impacts on its target communities and slow down programme delivery.

RCDC hopes to minimise the negative impacts through some of our programmes. Even though disaster response is not our immediate mandate we shall develop and maintain capacity within our existing programme teams to respond to severe disasters to help our target communities and ensure minimal disruption to our long term programmes.

Statutory issues

We anticipate that Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) and Income Tax Act may be more stringent in the future. These may not affect our programmes but may impact on our administrative set up with less support but more work in terms of compliance with statutory provisions.

We shall study the situation as it unfolds and continue to keep up with compliance requirements.

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PROGRAMME SRATEGIC GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

RCDC programme goal

Well-being[10] of marginalised rural communities ensured through recognition of their rights and ownership over the use, management and control of Natural Resources (NR).

Strategic Aims and Objectives

The Strategic Aims, Objectives and Indicators matrix for the programme strategy is given below:

Change objectives	Indicators
Forest resources are sustainably managed by forest dependent communities for livelihoods security and conservation along with the emerging need for climate readiness.	Evidence of sustainable forest management practices in 1000 villages in Odisha. Protocols on sustainable forest management including NTFP management are in place in at least 100 villages (these villages will serve as CFM models). Enhanced community access to emerging and innovative livelihoods and income options. Strong community forestry institutions and networks in all forest rich districts and the state taking up collective action and advocacy for greater community rights over resources. Emergence as a civil society leader and advocate on decentralised forest governance. About 100 villages prepared themselves for participation in REDD+ activities.
Water resources are sustainably managed for water security both for domestic and productive purposes.	Strong community led initiative in 37 GPs to improve drinking water and sanitation access and sustainability is evident. Potential of integrated water management are piloted in two diverse agro-ecological zones. Model water-land-crop management piloted in at least 20 GPs. RCDC emerging as a civil society leader and advocate on water governance.

10 'Well-being' defined as: food security; livelihood security; gender equality; access to basic rights pertaining to health care, education and social security; social dignity; security; and meaningful participation in governance institutions

Communities, particularly the rural poor, gain better access to and sustainably manage land resources and safeguard/improve environmental and livelihood requirements.	Evidence of effective land and water management practices in 200 villages. Potential models of sustainable agriculture, particularly smallholder agriculture, are demonstrated in at least 100 villages. RCDC emerges as a lead action and advocacy organisation at the state level on land rights, land reforms and land resource management.
Strategic Aim 2: RCDC will promote and facilitate greater food and livelihood security for rural poor in Odisha.	Strategic Aim 2: RCDC will promote and facilitate greater food and livelihood security for rural poor in Odisha.
Change objectives	Indicators
Access to and control over collective forest based livelihood options for forest dependent communities are sustainably enhanced.	Strengthened capacity of forest dependent communities for micro enterprise development in more than 300 villages. Demonstrated Integrated Community Development Programme (ICDP) in 400 villages.
Agricultural potentials are sustainably developed for greater food security while safeguarding environmental concerns.	Improved land (farm) based livelihood opportunities generating sustained income for local communities are demonstrated in at least 100 villages through enhanced integration with other natural resources like forest and water. Local resource and processes based farming models and their integration with technologies like SRI, vermi compost, other compost and manures are piloted in at least 100 villages. High-risk farming, privatisation of agriculture, farming processes that exclude poor, marginal farmers and agriculture labourers are protested by the communities and CSOs.

Access to rights based initiatives / schemes for employment and social security for the rural poor are productively enhanced.	Increased access to MGNREGS and other food, employment and social security schemes for the rural poor. Greater convergence between MGNREGS and NRM based activities. Increased community action and advocacy on PESA to demand and facilitate decentralisation of governance and efficient management of resources.
Strategic Aim 3: RCDC will promote and facilitate enhanced resilience of target communities for effective adaptation and mitigation of impacts of climate change.	Strategic Aim 3: RCDC will promote and facilitate enhanced resilience of target communities for effective adaptation and mitigation of impacts of climate change.
Change objectives	Indicators
Understanding development within RCDC through various action research and studies on impacts of climate change in integration with actions of other thematic areas.	Evidence of good understanding within RCDC and among targeted communities on climate change related issues in at least 10 Gram Panchayats across three coastal districts. Correlation between natural resource degradation, including mining and industrialisation, and climate change with focus on their effect on target community and environment is studied at the micro level. RCDC recognised as a resource body on debates around climate change in Odisha. Community-led disaster risk reduction and coping mechanism successfully piloted in three climate hazard coastal zones in Odisha.
Community resilience developed and disaster risk reduction measures enhanced to mitigate climate change induced disasters. Collective action galvanised on state policy on mitigation of and adaptation to climate change.	Community-led initiative to combat drought and water scarcity is piloted in three drought hit districts. Government's climate change action plans and other

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