

MPPP Village Visit 2018 – Madanapalle, Andhra Pradesh

Introduction:

The Bharti Institute of Public Policy, as part of its Management Programme in Public Policy (MPPP) conducted a village visit for the students of 3rd Batch. Eight students of the MPPP 3rd Batch chose to visit Madanapalle located in Andhra Pradesh for a period of five days from December 11-15, 2018 for their village visit module of the course. The Foundation for Ecological Security (FES), a non-profit organisation in the region had organised the visit for the students with the support from Indian School of Business (ISB). The main objective of the visit is to expose the students to the villages and understand the intricacies of rural livelihoods as complex adaptive systems.

Day 1:

Day 1 of the visit started with an early morning walk to discuss and understand the landscape and topography of Papagni region in Andhra Pradesh from an ecological, and bio-geophysical perspective. The students participated actively in the morning walk, and enjoyed the time spent together with the team, sharing about their ideas, perspectives, and experiences.

Figure 1: Morning Walk on Day 1



Upon completion of the morning walk and breakfast, a classroom session was held by FES to introduce the students to the works done by FES in the region with respect to history, landscape, and changes in cropping pattern. After the classroom session, the team travelled to Madanapalle where interaction with CEOs of NGOs functioning in the region had happened. During the classroom session and the interaction with the CEOs, the team was explained about the development discourse in Rayalaseema with focus on drought and distress issues that the farmers face. Sub-collector of Chittoor district joined the conversation, and suggestions were given by the students on improving the livelihood opportunities for farmers in the area. After this, the team travelled back to Horsley hills where the accommodation was arranged.

Figure 2: Classroom session and interaction with CEOs of NGOs



Day 2:

Day 2 of the visit started with the interaction with Karyashala team of FES, where the team explained the strategies of Karyashala, its operations in the southern region, and the role of Karyashala in scaling up FES work. This session was accompanied by poster presentation and photographs of FES interventions in the regions. After this session, Studies and Documentation team of FES presented about their work with specific focus on commons and its related issues. This team is responsible for studies and documentation undertaken to identify intervention in the location such as profiles of the location, impact assessments, etc. The participants actively participated in both sessions and exchanged ideas about the work involved.

Figure 3: Karyashala team interactive with MPPP students



Later, the MPPP team travelled to Thamballapalle village to interact with the community members of the village. During the interaction, the MPPP team learned about the community efforts of the village people in restoring the degraded common lands, secure tenurial arrangement and renewal process, and the impact of restoration on livelihoods. After this session, the team had their lunch at Thamballapalle block office of FES and travelled to Penderivaripalle village for a federation meeting. During this session, the MPPP team observed the meeting and learned about the role of local community federations in addressing the issues of the community. Later in the evening, the team visited an organic farming entrepreneur on the way back to Horsley hills, and observed the works involved in the farm, and interacted with the representative of the farm, and shared insights about organic farming, and its cost-benefits and marketing strategies. That's day 2 of the visit.

Figure 4: Interaction with Community members, and a Federation meeting in progress



Day 3:

After breakfast, the MPPP team travelled to NP Kunta to discuss with the farming community on the aspects of revolving fund, and the role of Mana Vittana Kendras (MVKS) in contributing to the seed security through the involvement of government functionaries, SHG village organisations, and NGOs. On the way to visit another village where water game was arranged, the team visited a mango plantation, which is nurtured through planned water harvesting systems.

Figure 5: Meeting with Farming Community, and a Mango plantation



After which, the few of the team members participated in a water game along with the village community members. The purpose of the water game is sensitising the village community in efficient and sustainable water usage, and to bring in the practice of sustainable water management. Other purpose of this game is to create awareness among the community to use less water-intensive crops, thus enable sustainable food production in the community. The team enjoyed the session and learned about sustainable water management.

Figure 6: MPPP students during a water game



Later in the evening, the FES team had arranged for a bonfire dinner, and the MPPP team enjoyed the evening with cake cutting and dinner.

Figure 7: Bonfire dinner



Day 4:

Day 4 kicked off early in the morning with the MPPP team engaged in cleaning one of the ponds of Madanapalle area on the way of Horsley hills. The entire team actively participated in removing garbage from in and around the pond, making the area litter free of plastics, glass bottles, etc. This event was organised by FES in a timely manner and was immediate. The MPPP team with support from FES team, and other volunteers managed to collect seven sacks of garbage from the pond area, and later, the garbage was cleared from that place.

Figure 8: Pond cleaning activity



After this event, the team went back to their accommodations, and got ready to visit Byraganahalli where interaction with the village community was planned. The team learned about the planning process and the impact of the eco-restoration initiatives on agriculture and animal husbandry. After lunch, the team visited another village to interact community resource persons (CRPs) in the locality and learnt about the experiences of people working in community, and shared insights to them. During, the team were exposed to activities of the CRPs including the role of technology in planning process. The CRPs were trained to use tablet devices and other technologies to create an impact in the locality.

Figure 9: Interaction with Community Resource Persons (CRPs)



Day 5:

During the final day of the village visit, a consolidation and feedback session was held by the FES team. The MPPP team shared their experiences about the village visit and gave ideas to improve on the work FES is currently doing in the locality.

Figure 10: Feedback session, and a group photo



Apart from that, improvements on the visit was suggested by the MPPP team. Overall feedback of the visit is given below:

1. Groundwater games are a good way of engaging with the communities and visitors. Suggestion was to involve children and youth so that they influence parents and elders in the village. Simple games are easy to learn, with inputs and its impact is visible at the field
2. Introduce more such games to reduce monotony of preaching/lecturing
3. There is a huge gap between government policies, schemes, programmes and the farmers' expectations and the farmers should be driven towards cooperative farming to reduce pressure on groundwater use – towards collectivization
4. FES restoration efforts are to be demonstrated to District Collectors as they could take it to scale.

5. All the participants were appreciative and admired the dedication, confidence and commitment of the staff (Officers and the Field Associates) and the way they mingle with the communities, and equally the sense of belongingness of the communities over their commons and how they relate to them as integral to the village and their livelihoods.
6. Reduce long travel
7. While appreciating the work of FES on commons the group felt that FES need to extend our work to health and education
8. Karnataka communities are in better situation as compared to AP
9. Instead of keeping the group intact, suggestion was to divide into small groups to get greater ground understanding
10. Profile of the participants can be shared (by ISB) earlier and this way we can do greater liaison and collaboration.
11. Have a group mail to share the progress of FES in different areas for cross-learning, new aspects could benefit both FES and ISB participants.