

Building Sustainable Community Systems is an engaging process for practitioners, exciting exploration for researchers and challenging task for policy makers. In all, it is indeed a liberating process of the self, the community and the society at large from the various lock-in processes. A community system not only consists of certain number of families in a cluster of villages but also a certain extent of geographical spread with its ecosystem. Accordingly, micro-watershed, the basic unit of ecology forms the technical base of our community system. However, for optimization of size for economic viability especially under diverse production system, and for easier identification of physical boundary by the people; a Gram Panchayat (GP) or Ward that may consist of 2-4 micro-watersheds depending on whether it is in coastal, plain or hilly region is considered as an optimal community system for analysis.



Brutland's framework (1987) of sustainability provides a structural framework. We look at the basis for it to function. *"Sustainability is a dynamic state of deep relationships among the people and all the constituents both living and non-living within a micro ecological unit that strongly values the acts of sacrifice, reciprocity and love for each other; where the priority is to strengthen the weakest in the system and the spirit of high external cooperation and high internal competition not only drives its own ecological unit to eternal peace, joy and happiness but also inspires other micro ecological units for such deeper inter relationships."*

While the intent in many of our initiatives towards economic growth and sustainability; whether in production systems, farmer producer organizations, community governance, and institutions may have been noble; inconsistencies between the intent and approaches, methods, tools, techniques and actions often make these initiatives unsustainable over time. Inequality has been a growing phenomenon across the world. The faster has been the speed of growth; greater has been the growth in inequity. Apparently the designs and systems in our industrial growth models seem to rupture relationships at levels of our economic-political-social- environmental engagements. The inherent technical inconsistencies and tensions thereupon in the designs and lack of synergy across different systems perpetuate lock-in effects and greater external control than freedom. Apparently, there are infinite combinations of designs and systems that can lead us to unsustainability but probably only a few simple combinations to achieve sustainable communities and society at large. Accordingly, this symposium will also deliberate and discuss the hidden challenges of unlocking sustainability in Agriculture, Farmer Producer Organisations, Community Governance, Institutions and culture of Relationships that bind them all. It will

deliberate and discuss the possible combinations and paths to transit towards sustainable communities.

### **Objective:**

The objective of the Symposium is to deliberate and discuss the various lock-in-effects arising out of design and systems of our production systems, organizational design, institutional architecture, governance mechanisms and trans-rational dimensions; that apparently hinder our transition to sustainable communities. Thereby be able to suggest policy on the changes and strategies for agriculture, rural development & sustainable communities.



### **Tracks of the Symposium:**

#### **Track 1: Trans-rational dimensions of Sustainability**

- 5.1. Culture, social capital, & social wealth
- 5.2. Faith, Belief & Mental Construct
- 5.3. Ethics, Morals & Values
- 5.4. Ethos & Pathos
- 5.5. Trust & Love

#### **Track 2: Sustainable Agricultural Systems**

- 1.1. Seed: indigenous & genetically stable seeds
- 1.2. Soil: soil life, soil health, etc.
- 1.3. Moisture: in-situ water conservation
- 1.4. Diversity: multi-cropping, integration of horticulture and livestock
- 1.5. Ecology: local ecology
- 1.6. Economic principles of Sustainable Agricultural Systems

#### **Track 3: Organizational Design of CES - FPOs**

- 2.1. Size: membership and geographic cluster
- 2.2. Scope: product basket, services, and activities
- 2.3. Technology: agricultural production and value addition activities
- 2.4. Management: routines, systems, processes, accounting, marketing
- 2.5. Ownership: equity structure and sense of belongingness

#### **Track 4: Local Institutions for CES - FPOs**

- 3.1. Institutional Architecture: GP, Block & District levels
- 3.2. Policy Signaling: convergence at CES-FPO level
- 3.3. Development Approach: saturation in block & district levels
- 3.4. Institutional Support: managerial, credit & infrastructure

3.5. External Networks: optimal market landscape & global market intermediation at district level

### **Track 5: Local Governance of CES - FPOs**

- 4.1. Boundaries: value creating boundaries of FPOs at GP, Block & District level
- 4.2. Convening Processes & Community Mobilization
- 4.3. Volunteerism & Community Champions
- 4.4. Decentralization: transparency, accountability, Participation & PR Institutions
- 4.5. Power Asymmetries: social-cultural, economic, political, etc.
- 4.6. Social & Solidarity Economy

### **Day 1: Inauguration & Opening Plenary, 19<sup>th</sup> January 2017, 10.00 AM**

The First Symposium on Transition Strategies for Sustainable Community Systems was organized by Xavier University Bhubaneswar at Hotel SWOSTI Premium, Bhubaneswar on 19-20 January, 2017 in partnership with the state government, academic institutions, & the corporate sector. His Excellency Dr. S. C. Jamir, Honorable Governor of Odisha inaugurated the symposium by lighting the lamps.



At the outset, Vice-Chancellor of Xavier University Bhubaneswar and Director of XIMB, Prof. Fr. Dr. Paul Fernandes, S.J., welcomed all participants and delivered the welcome address.

Dr. H. K. Bhanwala, Chairman of NABARD, addressing the symposium delegates said that for India to catapult its growth rate beyond the present 7% we need to include agricultural farm systems that will generate fresh demand. He also said that the sustainability of agriculture

subsumes the sustainability of agricultural institutions and the ability to manoeuvre the challenges of climate change. He highlighted the need for precision agriculture and the need for Farmer Producer Organisations to counter the declining size of landholdings.

Dr. Peter Kenmore, former head of FAO and present advisor to the UN gave the key note address. He said that the national policy on agriculture in India needs drastic changes. The families are too poor even to buy cereals. There is a need for change in production and research. There is a need for stress on how local ecology is preserved instead of how much tones of grains were put in the central storage.

While addressing the symposium delegates, the Governor of Odisha, Dr. S. C. Jamir, said that though the world has witnessed unprecedented progress, it has been threatened by pervasive environmental changes requiring a huge effort “to turn these environmental perils into opportunities through a cooperative, thoughtful and determined effort.” He said, ‘the path to sustainability is different for every community but the common elements are a healthy environment, a strong economy and the wellbeing of the people living in the community. When sustainability areas are addressed in tandem with each other, they have a powerful, positive effect on the quality of life and future of a community.’ Adding to it he stated that the human nature was the greatest stumbling block on the path to attaining sustainable goals. So, he urged for developing a lifestyle that is less consumption oriented and caters to conservation.

Describing agriculture as a basic human activity, he said the policy choices made for increased production had created serious resource degradation while not being environmental friendly. He urged the farmers to adopt the sustainable practices which will make them good stewards of the soil, reduce ground and surface-water pollution. Sustainable agriculture requires both a change in the economic and institutional framework and farmers’ motivation and values. He said the climate change, environmental degradation, sustainable economic growth and dwindling reserves of precious resources have laid bare the limits of the old paradigm of growth. It is important to realize the enormity and inter-connectedness of all these challenges. He said that clear and consistent vision and strong leadership, both at national and regional level, are required carrying it forward to truly unlock various lock-in-effects.



The post inaugural sessions were followed by five plenary sessions viz. Trans-rational dimensions of Sustainability, Sustainable Agricultural Systems, Organisational Design, Community Governance, and Institutions. The above plenary sessions were chaired by eminent personalities belonging to different fields. The symposium was attended by Academics, Senior Practitioners, and Representatives/Delegates from Government, CSOs/NGOs, & Corporate.

