The Social Observatory

Research to Improve Adaptation and Implementation
The “Theory”

STATE

Electoral & Social Accountability

CITIZENS/CLIENTS

Access & Accountability

MARKETS

CIVIL SOCIETY
Challenges

- Repairing civil society and political failures is a much harder task that needs a fundamentally different approach to development.

- Variability of local context and the unpredictable nature of change-trajectories highlight the importance of developing effective systems of internal learning and monitoring.

  - Such projects require constant adjustment, learning in the field, and experimentation in order to be effective.
  
  - “Scaling-Up” is one of the biggest challenges - Interventions that work well with small populations routinely face serious challenges in expanding to a larger number of communities.

Hence Adaptive Capacity ➔ Social Observatory

- Improving the project’s ability to see, learn, and adapt is critical for complex projects and for scaling up
  - Development as Prozac and Development as Therapy

- Lots of talk:

- But little action:
  - World Bank VP for South Asia, Isabel Guerrero – Put up or Shut Up

- 2011: The SO set up as a joint initiative between the World Bank Research Department and the Bank’s South Asia Livelihoods team
  - Leverage $4 per $1
Principles of the SO

- “Embedded” Research
  - Collaboration between research and project staff
  - TTLs, Project Director, M&E in Charge, and grass roots functionaries

- Inter-disciplinary
  - Question Drives Method(s)
  - Team of economists, sociologists, management information specialists, behavioral scientists

- Objective:
  - Research for better implementation
  - Help projects build adaptive capacity
Our partners

$ 2 billion India Livelihoods Portfolio

- Bihar – The JEEViKA Project
- Tamil Nadu – Pudhu Vaazhvυ Project
Livelihoods Projects: Women’s Empowerment and Poverty Reduction

- CORE: Facilitated credit intervention. SHG mobilization. 7-12 women. 10-15 per village. Headed by a Village Organization

- SHG Federation: Village-Block-District

- VERTICALS: Think of SHGs as a highway. Roll out various anti-poverty programs, nutrition interventions, women centered interventions (about 30 verticals currently in operation)

- GOALS: Women’s Empowerment, Poverty Alleviation, Building Sustainable Livelihoods
Adaptive capacity in practice

1. **Long-Term Feedback:** Mixed-Method IEs (Quant to understand magnitude of impact – “how much”), Qualitative (to understand mechanisms - “why”)

2. **Everyday Feedback:** Management Information Systems, Decision Support Systems, Process Monitoring

3. **Citizen/Beneficiary Feedback:** To give beneficiaries a role in improving design and implementation
LONG TERM FEEDBACK

Mixed methods evaluations in Bihar
Long-Term Feedback

- 6 IEs of the “Core Intervention” in Four States for External Validity

- 4 IEs of “Verticals”

- Will focus on two sequential mixed-method evaluations of JEEViKA in Bihar to understand the added value of integrating qualitative and quantitative methods in evaluation
JEEViKA timeline

Project Timeline

Phase 1  Phase 2  Phase 3  Target
375,692  741,847  2,908,010  12 million


PSM Data

RCT Baseline  RCT Midline  RCT Endline

Qualitative Start  12 cycles  Qualitative End

Research Timeline
## Impact of JEEViKA in Phase 1: Propensity Score Matched on Project Selection Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Savings and Debt (Diff-in-Diff)</th>
<th>Effect Size (Percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Savings</td>
<td>290.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent HH with high cost loans (from 2008)</td>
<td>-43.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount borrowed (New loans)</td>
<td>-46.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Empowerment (Diff-in Diff)</th>
<th>Effect Size (Percent)</th>
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* Datta, Upamanyu (2015), World Development, Volume 16
Why qualitative?

• How did the project change culture and social norms to help equalize gender relations?

Qualitative: Methodology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Village</th>
<th>No. of open-ended Interviews</th>
<th>No. of FGDs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Joiner</td>
<td>Non-joiner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madhubani</td>
<td>Phase I</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phase II</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>24</td>
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- Subset of quantitative sample – 5 matched treatment (Phase I) and 5 control
- 3 years, 10 villages, 12 cycles of data collection
- 1 cycle = 200 interviews, focus group discussions and direct observation of group activities, which amounted to 2400 transcripts.
- Five ethnographers entered each village every quarter for a week
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-themes</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Act of borrowing</td>
<td>Less humiliating and more dignity when borrowing from SHG versus moneylender</td>
<td>Considered begging; do not like borrowing or being rejected or defaulting with a moneylender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to obtain a loan</td>
<td>Depends on collective capacity to bargain</td>
<td>Depends on individual capacity to bargain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision on taking loans</td>
<td>Made by women themselves</td>
<td>Women typically act on behalf of husbands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information on village credit</td>
<td>Women are better informed on village moneylending networks and interest rates</td>
<td>Women lack village-wide information on credit networks</td>
</tr>
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# Social and Political themes

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capabilities</td>
<td>Women see themselves as capable of being active participants in public debate</td>
<td>Women see public sphere as ‘masculine’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinions on local govt.</td>
<td>Women voice opinion on corruption and necessity of bringing change</td>
<td>Women seldom give their opinion on a public forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem-solving</td>
<td>Jeevika women arbitrate among themselves, e.g. land conflicts, domestic violence.</td>
<td>Women’s issues are rarely taken up by themselves or in Aam Sabhas i.e. public forums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighting elections</td>
<td>For Sarpanch, Mukhiya, ward members</td>
<td>Only proxy-Mukhiya i.e. on behalf of husband</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How did change come about?

- JEEViKA gives women exclusive access to a set of physical resources, symbolic resources, and an institutional environment – all of which were perceived as ‘masculine’ prior to project
- PHYSICAL RESOURCES
  - Group money, a passbook, a moneybox
- SYMBOLIC RESOURCES
  - Creating an alternative identity for poor women that cuts across caste
  - Democratizing financial decision making on disbursement of loans, signature and financial literacy
- INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT
  - SHGs, VOs, CLFs, rituals
  - Access to an alternative source of credit than moneylenders
How JEEViKA alters deeply entrenched social norms

Culture is not an immutable constraint for development: can be undone by giving economically and socially disadvantaged women access to a well-defined network of peer-women and new systems of ‘knowledge’

Norms can be changed in a short period of time: a re-iterative process of collective violation of behavioral injunctions on women is key (Butler 2004)
Impact of JEEViKA in Phase 2: RCT with Pre-Analysis Plan*

- Randomized Phase-in across 7 project districts
  - Evaluation sample: 9000 households in 180 Villages

- 90 villages randomly assigned to project treatment
  - Project did not know which villages were part of the evaluation sample

- Baseline Survey- 2011

- First follow up - 2014
  - Exposure of around 2.25 years to the project

- Second follow up scheduled for 2016

# Impact of JEEViKA: Phase 1 Vs. Phase 2

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Phase 1: PSM Diff-in-Diff</th>
<th>Phase 2: RCT ANCOVA estimates</th>
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* Due to the retrospective nature of the PSM, some variables were defined in slightly different ways
Why the difference in results?

1. Difference in methodology

2. Shorter time lines:
   Five years in Phase 1, and two years in Phase 2

3. Difference in implementation quality
What went wrong with implementation in Phase 2?

Common Knowledge:

A. Doubling coverage
   • Large number of new staff hired

B. Poor decision support systems to manage expansion:
   o Proper MIS not set up
   o Poor process monitoring

→ Insights from our qualitative research
   – Differences in the quality of project facilitation between Phase 1 and Phase 2
## Initial Mobilization

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<th>Phase II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Doing a thorough power analysis / informal information gathering</td>
<td>Getting ‘buy-in’ for the project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social mapping as a means of taking the site of knowledge production to the village</td>
<td>Social mapping is done as a means of arriving at a number of target households</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making self-help the end goal</td>
<td>Making jobs or lower interest rates the end goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turning first movers into ‘eyes and ears’ of the community</td>
<td>Turning first movers into ‘eyes and ears’ of the facilitators</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Group Meeting Stage

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<tr>
<td>Ritualization / ‘performing’ of participation</td>
<td>Rituals are seen as burdensome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community ownership over the project is taken literally</td>
<td>Community ownership over the project is rhetoric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging head-on with the messy business of preventing elite capture</td>
<td>Keeping community politics at bay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolling a nexus of supporters through the project’s life cycle</td>
<td>Building support is limited to the beginning of the project</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Learning and Adapting from Evaluation

- Qualitative evidence critical in interpreting quantitative results
- Decision support systems for everyday learning are essential to manage expansion/scale-up
  - Next element of our work on building adaptive capacity
EVERYDAY FEEDBACK

Supporting Grassroots decision making in Bihar
Everyday Feedback

- V vs Tepee /
- Process Monitoring Systems
- Decision Support Systems for JEEViKA’s Core intervention (Huge Challenges)
- Tracks 3 million women
- Dashboards at Every Level
- Community Based Nutrition Intervention Tracking
CITIZEN FEEDBACK

Participatory Tracking in Tamil Nadu*

*Palaniswamy, Rao, Sakhamuri, Shajeevana, Xia, “Democratizing Data: Participatory-Tracking in Tamil Nadu, India,” (forthcoming)
Origin

- Modernize PRA with new technology and methods
  - Democratizing Data
- Census of program participants
  - Pilot of 32000 women in PVP
  - Government has requested an extension to 10 million women in Tamil Nadu
Step 1: Develop Questionnaire

- Community Based
- Uses women’s networks
- Tested by community members with community members
- Finalized questionnaire should take no more than 30 minutes
What makes this questionnaire different?

- Overlap in themes covered
  - NSS: 17 %
  - LSMS type survey: 70 %

- Covered a range of themes:
  - Livelihoods, Economic Welfare, Food Security and Nutrition, Empowerment, Access to public services and programs, Political Participation

- Differed in framing and emphasis
### A sample of questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food and Nutrition</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How much do you spend on the purchase of vegetables in a month?</td>
<td>Does the person who eats last get enough to eat?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What was your age at the time of your marriage?</td>
<td>Was your decision taken into account at the time of your marriage?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Did you marry your relative?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowerment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who makes decisions on assets and loans in your family?</td>
<td>Do you decide on what clothes to wear based on your own preferences?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have there been any instances of violence against women in your village?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Participation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you use a mobile phone on your own?</td>
<td>Can you read and send text messages?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Step 2: Data collection and management

- Participatory
  - Implemented and managed by CBO members
    - PVP project staff- Coordinating role

- Other Key features
  - Tablet based
  - Data Quality and Validation
    - Designed for users with low digital literacy
Step 3: Data visualization

→ Empower respondents to analyze and act on their own data
Pilot PVP: Data visualization

Face forces

Who has the dominant voice in household decisions? Dominant parties are represented with larger faces.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Agamalai - Tribal</th>
<th>H9 Manalathukudusal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is your opinion accepted related to your child's education and marriage?</td>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who makes the decisions regarding your clothing?</td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image4" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who makes the decisions regarding the number of children?</td>
<td><img src="image5" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image6" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who makes the decisions regarding when to visit your parents house?</td>
<td><img src="image7" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image8" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pilot PVP: Data visualization

Asset change

The change in assets of families in the village are shown. Green items have been gained in the last five years. Red items have been lost. Unshaded items were in possession both five years ago and now. Click to see different families.
Pilot PVP: Data visualization

Flowers and marriage

Each flower depicts a bundle of indicators pertaining to marriage. One flower represents one married woman. The height of the flower corresponds to the age at marriage where shorter flowers are women that got married at younger ages. The color of the flower represents whether the marriage was with a blood relative (red) or not (yellow). The type of flower represents whether the woman gave consent (bloomed) to being married or not (unbloomed). The number of leaves represent the number of children in marriage. Click to see different women in the area.

This visualization may be used to see relationships in the data. For instance, are there many short, unbloomed flowers? Are red flowers usually consensual or not? Does consensuality increase or decrease with age?
Step 4: Data Feedback
Feedback

- Village Planning
- Gram Sabha – Deliberative Decision Making
- Planning Village Organization Budger

- RCT - half the villages randomly received treatment
- PVP had problems unfortunately
- Yet, results show visualized data have better results
- Expansion to rest of Tamil Nadu
- Planning for Jharkand
Some Uses of Participatory Tracking

- An alternate citizen narrative of poverty and well-being
- High frequency census data
- Public goods decision making
Challenges

– No incentives for project managers to acknowledge or learn from failure
– No incentive to tolerate pesky researchers
– Requires a stable project with an engaged team and Project Director
  • So personnel changes can be a stumbling block
– Funding is a big issue – who pays?
Conclusion

- Projects have been very open and brave to allow us to observe them from such close quarters
- Extremely difficult to get implementation right in the field, especially for complex, large scale projects
- Embedded approach has been critical to the successes we’ve had
- Improving the adaptive capacity of projects by changing the culture of implementation is difficult but can be done
SO Team

**Core team:**  Vijayendra Rao (Head)
Nethra Palaniswamy, Upamanyu Datta, Shruti Majumdar, Smriti Sakhamuri, Samrat Ghosh, Nandini Krishnan, Madhulika Khanna, Nishtha Kochhar, G. Manivannan, Pankaj Varma

**WEBSITE:**  http://socialobservatory.worldbank.org

+ 15 Academic Collaborators
+ 13 Implementation Partners