

## Adivasi Development Programme Valsad and Dang Districts, Gujarat

The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), Mumbai had assigned the task of conducting the third impact evaluation study of the Adivasi Development Programme for Valsad and Dang Districts in Gujarat to the Institute of Rural Management (IRMA), Anand, in June 2007.

The Adivasi Development Programme has been in operation in Gujarat covering Valsad (Dharampur and Kaprada blocks) and the Dang districts since 2000, benefitting 13,663 families. The evaluation has highlighted the following points:

Against the planned coverage of 10,000 acres of land, 12,732.5 acres were achieved, benefitting 13,663 tribal families. A holistic approach through soil conservation, water resource development, health promotion, building people's organisations and credit programmes helped to improve the quality of life of the participants.

Wadi is a holistic programme which combines livelihood generation through multiple need-based activities with various components to improve the quality of life, reduce drudgery and results in capacity building and empowerment of the tribal families. The programme was based on a robust conceptual framework developed by BAIF taking into account the diversity of the local situations and the multiple needs and priorities of the tribal families. This holistic approach was a major

departure from conventional development efforts which are highly sectoral in content. The wadi programme has a well defined core activity (one acre wadi) that is supported by other distinct interventions like soil conservation, water resource development, supplementary livelihoods, community health, skill development and building sustainable people's institutions. The approach also has ample built-in flexibility for adaptation to location specific needs.

To ensure active involvement of the participants and sustenance of the programme, Dhruva has built People's Organisations at various levels. Gram Vikas Mandals for village level planning committee is the most prominent organisation to ensure effective launching of the programme and its sustenance. Although it was informal, it was instrumental in hastening the decision making process at the village level.

Before joining the programme, the tribal families were cultivating a few crops like finger millet, pearl millet, sorghum and niger mostly on their uplands. In the absence of good quality land and improved agricultural practices, there was a chronic shortage of

food which compelled almost 90% of the families to migrate to cities merely to ensure food security. The fruit trees enabled the participants to generate cash income while they were able to meet most of their food requirement from



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inter-crops. After establishment of wadi, they were able to intensify their food crop production mostly in the form of inter-crops, which enhanced their crop production. Subsequently, they were able to meet over 70% of the required paddy, 78% coarse cereals, 95% pulses, while they had market surplus of oilseeds and vegetables. Almost all the families took advantage of the public distribution system and procured available quantity of wheat and started using it for home consumption. Subsequent to participation in the wadi programme, livestock has become an integral part of the households to meet food, meat, egg, animal power, manure, etc. They have started maintaining a wide range of animals like cows, buffaloes, bullock, sheep, goat and poultry. Most of the families retained small quantity of milk for home consumption and sold the rest.

The wadi programme reduced the dependency of the tribals on forest and community lands to meet their basic needs to a great extent.

The wadi programme not only brought the families out of poverty but also significantly improved the eco-system, ground water table and reduced soil erosion thereby improving soil fertility and the environment.

After the establishment of wadi, surplus biomass was available for meeting their domestic fuel.

The wadi participants were now able to have free access to micro-finance. However, their preference for the available loan was from banks, self help groups promoted by BAIF and dairy cooperatives.

Before initiation of the wadi programme, almost 97% of the non-wadi families migrated to ensure food security. With the establishment of wadi, there has been a

significant reduction in the migration. Less than 25% of the wadi farmers were occasionally migrating for a shorter period particularly the males, to meet their extra expenditures such as marriages, construction of houses or education of children.

The wadi beneficiaries had acquired several assets like pumpsets, radio and bicycles apart from renovating the old houses and constructing new houses.

Health has been a major concern of tribal women. However, with the launching of the wadi programme, there was significant improvement in primary health care through training of local mid wives and network of traditional healers (“Bhagat”) who participated in the community health programme. There has been greater awareness among women particularly among children. The self help groups took the responsibility of organising training of Anganwadis of girls who had studied upto the secondary school. One of the reasons for improved health status was the increase in consumption of fruits, vegetables fat and livestock production. Greater awareness on immunisation, regular participation in health camps and public meetings also had a positive impact on the health. With the initiation of the wadi programme, there was greater awareness about the wadi programme and the children started attending the local school.

All the participants had strong attraction and a feeling of ownership to their wadi. It was a symbol of status and security. The wadi participants had a sense of happiness and fulfillment. The wadis have given a strong emotional and spiritual security to these households. Some women expressed “we can consider wadi as our earning son who will stay with us forever”.

