

SAFE-World Project/Initiative Summary

Country: India

Project/Initiative Title: Aga Khan Rural Support Programme – Gujarat State
1985

Nos. farmers: 4000

Hectares: 5000

Agro-Ecological Zone: II-III

Improvement types

1x	2	3x	4	5x	6x	7x	8	9
----	---	----	---	----	----	----	---	---

A. Key Impacts

A1 – Productivity

	Before/Without	After/With	% change
Rice (wet season)	220 kg/ha	560 kg/ha	155
Rice (dry season)	990 kg/ha	1850 kg/ha	87
Sorghum	500 kg/ha	700 kg/ha	40
Cotton	380 kg/ha	580 kg/ha	53
Pigeon pea	155 kg/ha	346 kg/ha	123

A2 – Impacts on natural capital

- ?? Increased tree planting
- ?? Water harvesting has led to increased water tables
- ?? Farmers now tilling land (where before it was left abandoned)

A3 – Impacts on local community (social capital)

80-100 villages

A4 – Impacts on households and individuals (human capital)

- ?? Village extensionists trained and spreading methods/approaches
- ?? Reduced migration (more local jobs and increased agricultural productivity) – before project 80% income from migration; after project only 20%
- ?? Increased savings in groups

A5 – Key changes in farm / regional system

- ?? Dryland development
- ?? Water harvesting
- ?? Watershed improvements

B. Types of Sustainable Agriculture Improvements

Type 1: Better use of available renewable natural capital

- Type 2: Intensification of single sub -component of farm system
- Type 3: Diversify by adding new productive natural capital and regenerative components
- Type 4: Better use of non-renewable inputs and technologies
- Type 5: Social and participatory processes leading to group action for making better use of natural capital
- Type 6: Human capital building through training-learning programmes
- Type 7: Access to Finance
- Type 8: Add value by processing to reduce losses and increase returns
- Type 9: Add value by direct or organised marketing of produce to consumers

	Yes/No	Narrative
Type 1	x	
Type 2		
Type 3	x	
Type 4		
Type 5	x	
Type 6	x	
Type 7	x	
Type 8		
Type 9		

D. Contact Point for Project/Initiative

c/o Rachel Hine
 Senior Research Officer,
 Centre for Environment and Society
<mailto:rehine@essex.ac.uk>

E. Project Narrative

The Aga Khan Rural Support Programme, Gujarat State, India

AKRSP is a non-government organisation established in 1985 to promote and catalyse community participation in natural resources management. A central part of the work has been to support the emergence of strong village institutions that can design, plan, implement and monitor their own watershed development and run their own extension system.

The first stage of watershed management involves participatory appraisal of local natural and social resources. A sequence of participatory methods are used in joint exercises involving the external team and local people. This collaborative analysis ensures that the analytical capacity, knowledge and innovations of local people form the basis for the watershed programme. In some villages, this takes less than a month; in others, it may take six months. Next, village institutions (VIs) are formed for implementation of the village natural resources management plan. The VI nominates three members as extension volunteers (EVs), who are then provided with basic training in PRA methods, technical skills for soil and water conservation, and project preparation and accounting procedures. The EVs then manage the extension process at village level on behalf of the VI, with the teams dividing up responsibilities between soil and water conservation, dryland farming, credit and other commercial activities. The EVs are

compensated by the VIs, and most have opted for performance-related payment.

As a result of soil and water conservation with contour cropping, bunds, gully checks and percolation tanks, millet, rice and pigeonpea yields more than doubled, and sorghum and cotton improved by 20-50%. Knowledge about the success of village-based EVs has also spread rapidly, and EVs have been invited by other villages to assist them in conducting participatory appraisals and in developing village institutions of their own. This has reduced the dependence on AKRSP staff for project initiation and training.

The cost of watershed treatment is some Rs 1340/ ha, compared with the Rs 3000 to 7000/ ha incurred by nearby government programmes, all of which still give a 100% subsidy to farmers. Many communities have also taken up a number of group operations such as ploughing, plant protection and use of implements and post-harvest equipment, coupled with credit and pooled marketing of produce. This shows that VIs are becoming a conduit for greater economic investment and diversification. This is also reflected in the willingness of banks to advance credit to VIs with a large membership of small farmers. These were earlier considered as too high a risk by bankers.

There have also been changes in migration patterns, with a dramatic rise in the number of individuals and families staying all year in their own communities. This has resulted in higher school enrolment, and improved nutrition and health standards. In some villages, there have been changes in local leadership patterns, with a shift away from traditional leaders (who lead by virtue of lineage, patronage, social hierarchy) towards functional leaders (the EVs and active members of village institutions who lead by virtue of their performance). This could have long-term implications for improving governance and enhancing local democracy.

Data for this project is in hard copy format and is not currently available electronically. If you would like further information please contact Rachel Hine