This report can in no way reflect all the inspiring and dynamic human encounters and interaction within the Joint Assessment Team and between the team members and all the people involved in the two organisations, Accion Fraterna and Seva Mandir.
Nor can the report do justice to the very positive process of change in livelihoods initiated in two extremely difficult areas, geographically and culturally. It would be presumptuous for outsiders even to pretend to understand the historical, social and economic traditions embedded in the Natural and Human Resource Development including gender roles on the one side and issue of Livelihoods on the other, and thus to boldness of the challenge undertaken by Accion Fraterna and Seva Mandir.

On behalf of the team, I would therefore like to express our gratitude to all the generous and wonderful people involved in the two organizations, who had patience to look after us and answer to our questions.

The effort required to recruit us and brief us, albeit long distance, and to prepare our programme of meetings, field visits, cultural events and entertainment was tremendous and much appreciated. Our thanks go to ICCO in Zeist, Netherlands, to Accion Fraterna and Seva Mandir management, and especially to the leaders of the organizations Mr. Y.V. Malla Reddy and Ms. Nilima Khetan for their generosity and attention.

We were deeply moved and impressed by the committed, hard working and kind people among the field staff, and villagers- women, men and children we met during our field visits. Our sincere thanks go to them for preparing our visits so well and receiving us so warmly. We feel encouraged and privileged to have been in contact with such promising projects in the present world atmosphere of pessimism and cynicism.

I would personally like to thank my team members, Ms. Daman Singh and Mr. Viren Lobo for their wonderful team spirit, their sincere, hard and professional work as well as their friendship. The observations, recommendations, and conclusions of the report are jointly made by the team, but the responsibility of this final version of the report, edited by myself, rests with me.

Jaipur, January, 2002

Aparna Sahay
Team Leader
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I. BACKGROUND

Accion Fraterna in Anantpur in Andhra Pradesh, and Seva Mandir in Udaipur in Rajasthan are experienced development organizations having a longstanding and well established relationship with EED and ICCO. They are also cooperating with other foreign partners, as well as with the local government. They work in environmentally degraded, drought prone areas, with the objectives to strengthen the economic livelihood of the weakest section of the society, to improve gender relations and to strengthen the position of the rural poor in civil society.

The organizations implement wide range of programmes, varying from education, health, capacity and awareness building, to support to watershed/village funds and natural resource management programmes. They support large number of poor families. The major share of the activities of Accion Fraterna consists of natural resource management programmes like watershed development programme and (agro) forestry whereas Seva Mandir implements a comprehensive range of activities in social and ecological sector.

Recent contextual changes like increased drought and decentralization of governmental support necessitated the donor agencies to reflect on the vision, intervention strategy and programmes, through a joint reflective assessment. It was expected that the assessment will strengthen the overall learning capacity of all involved.

Although the joint assessment took place 18 months and about two and half years respectively for Accion Fraterna and Seva Mandir, after the formal commencement of the present projects, it was by no means restricted to the period under reference. As ICCO-EED have been collaborating partners with both the organizations since mid-80s and supporting their part of the activities of their comprehensive plans, it is therefore, in continuation from where the earlier evaluation mission, if any, left. The goals, mission & vision, intervention strategies, role in building civil society institutions, programme components, effect and impact etc., have been looked into.

The Evaluation Team would like to take the opportunity to express its sincere gratitude to the staff and management of Accion Fraterna and Seva Mandir for their unreserved support and for the hospitality extended. On the whole, it was a humbling experience- it has opened our eyes to many layers of socio-economic, political-administrative and ecological realities that affect livelihoods of people living in difficult circumstances even after fifty four years of Independence.

1.1 Composition of the Team, and Programme for Assessment: The team comprised three consultants from diverse professional fields like: overall experience in development work; natural resource management programmes; and livelihood aspects. The team was led by Ms. Aparna Sahay, an expert in Social Development issues. The team members were

- Ms. Daman Singh, Consultant on Livelihood aspects
- Mr. Viren Lobo, Specialist in Natural Resource Management

1.2 Criteria for Assessment: The Terms of Reference defined the criteria for assessment, which are as follows:

- To assess the quality, effects and impact of the present development programme as compared to the aims and objectives of the agreement between the organization and EED/ICCO
- To reflect on the mission, intervention strategy and role of organization within a changed context
- To assess whether new, innovative changes in the role and programme can strengthen the impact of the support to the improvement of the livelihood of the poor

1.3 Assessment Methodology: The Team was provided with substantial amount of very high quality documentation from both the organizations. The list of reference documents is enclosed. The Team must admit that Seva Mandir's ability to document activities and processes is indeed impressive.
Two weeks were set aside for field visits, one week each to Accion Fraterna and Seva Mandir. To create a joint frame of reference, it was decided to go together to all the areas, and look at various activities under different conditions.

Discussion were held with the management and staff of both the organizations upon reaching Anantpur and Udaipur respectively, followed by visits to the field, where further interaction took place with the members of the Watershed Development Committees, Women’s Groups, Forest Protection committees, Self Help Groups, Village Development Fund Committees and elected leaders of PRIs. Meetings were held with the government officials concerned i.e., Project Directors of Desert Development Programme and the District Rural development Agency in Anantpur and Project Director of District Rural Development Agency and Chief Conservator Forest Department (Joint Forest Management) in the case of Udaipur. Throughout the study continuous contact was maintained with the management of the two organizations to clarify issues, test ideas and to contribute to the further development of concepts. At the end of field visits, formal debriefing meetings were held in both Accion Fraterna and Seva Mandir.

Two weeks were set aside for field visits, one week each to Accion Fraterna and Seva Mandir. To create a joint frame of reference, it was decided to go together to all the areas, and look at various activities under different conditions.

1.4 Field Visits: Discussion were held with the management and staff of both the organizations upon reaching Anantpur and Udaipur respectively, followed by visits to the field, where further interaction took place with the members of the Watershed Development Committees, Women’s Groups, Forest Protection committees, Self Help Groups, Village Development Fund Committees and elected leaders of PRIs. In Anantpur, meetings were held with the Project Directors of Desert Development Programme and the District Rural development Agency. Throughout the study continuous contact was maintained with the management of the two organizations to clarify issues, test ideas and to contribute to the further development of concepts. At the end of field visits, formal debriefing meetings were held in both Accion Fraterna and Seva Mandir. Field visits are categorized into two phases. Phase I consisted of visit to Accion Fraterna, and Phase II to Seva mandir; the details are as follows:

**Phase I Accion Fraterna**

Schedule of visit to Anantapur

**September 17, 2001**

- Preliminary meeting with Shri Malla Reddy, Director Ecology, AF
- Meeting with the staff of AF

**September 18, 2001**

- Visit to AF office in Kalyandurg; meeting with area staff
- Visit to village Mallapuram; observed watershed programme activities; discussion with programme participants, Watershed Development Committee, Village Development Committee, labour groups, women’s Self-Help Groups, and with disabled persons’ group.
- Visit to village Kadiridevapalli; observed watershed programme activities; discussion with programme participants, households engaged in dairying, members of Watershed Development Committee and labour groups.
- Visit to a nursery managed by AF at Mallikanur, and to a mini milk chilling centre
- Meeting with Ms. Anne Ferrer, Associate Programme Director, RDT (in charge of women and child development and health sector)
September 19, 2001
- Visit to village Hanumanreddipalli; observed watershed programme activities; discussion with programme participants, Watershed Development Committee, Watershed Advisory Committee, labour groups and women’s Self Help Groups
- Visit to Mandal community centre at village Atmakur; discussion with community
- Visit to village P. Yaleru; observed watershed development activities; discussion with programme participants and Watershed Development Committee.
- Visit to village Srigampalli that has alkaline land; observed a farm pond

September 20, 2001
- Studied documents and had discussions with AF staff at Anantapur

September 21, 2001
- Meeting with Project Director, District Rural Development Agency and Project Director, Desert Development Programme
- Visit to the RDT hospital and residential school for children whose hearing and speech is impaired at Battalapalli.
- Visited village Kariganipalli on the occasion of a woman having been elected to the post of sarpanch in a reserved constituency; observed RDT’s work in rural housing; discussion with community, and with scheduled caste families

September 22, 2001
Debriefing meeting with AF staff

Phase II Seva Mandir:

October 3, 2001 Brief Meeting in Seva mandir with the management and staff of Visit to Delwara village, meeting with the Group involved in patchwork activities, Women’s SHG, Balwadi Sanchalika and Village Health Worker etc.
Visit to Karawadi village Balwadi, Pastureland (Charnot), meeting with SHG, PRI members, and other groups

October 4, Visit to Jhadol block, meeting with block and zonal staff of Seva Mandir; visit to Bada Bhilwara/ Shyampura/ Bicchiwada villages; meeting with village groups

October 5, 2001, Visit to villages Badava, khandwali, Naya kheda and Badgaon: observing Common Pastureland, Agriculture farms, JFM and Watershed Development works; Visit to school; Meetings with the GVK and other village groups

October 6, 2001, Visit to Kegra village, observing Balvadi, NFE Centre; meeting in the village with men and women, para-workers and other groups Meeting with Panchayat functionaries and field functionaries of Seva Mandir in Kaya

October 7, 2001 Individual interaction with the Specialists and staff of Seva Mandir

October 8, 2001 Debriefing meeting at Seva Mandir
October 20, 2001 Joint Meeting in Delhi with Accion Fraterna, Seva Mandir & ICCO
November 8, 2001 Meetings with Forest Department Officials in Jaipur
December 13, 2001 Meeting with Project Director DRDA, Udaipur
II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. Both Accion Fraterna and Seva Mandir are have played a proactive role in ensuring livelihood and social equity for rural poor. Both share a common albeit ethical mission moored in the principles of mutuality and fellow feeling. In this respect, the entitlement approach by emphasizing legal entitlement detracts from these ethical and moral imperatives which are at once democratic and polyarchic.

II. Both organisations work in environmentally degraded and drought prone areas where developmental interventions have their limitation in terms of increase in income of rural poor. Major causes for this can be attributed to severe and longer periods of drought as well as general backwardness due to the geographical location of these areas.

III. Moreover, socio-economic problems like indebtedness, social fragmentation and gender inequality are astounding.

IV. In-spite of decentralisation of local self governance and constitutional provisions supporting the same, along with major interventions through centrally supported Drought Prone Area and Desert Development Programmes, Drought Relief Packages, Tribal Development, externally aided projects for infra-structure and social development and so on, the poor in the work area of Accion Fraterna and Seva Mandir by and large remain un-reached in so far as improvement in their well-being is concerned. However, both organisations work in collaboration with the government as well as independently in the field of Natural Resource and Human Resource Management. Government of India’s Forest Policy especially Joint Forest management and new guidelines for Watershed Development seem to have led to increased collaboration.

V. Problems of women are more or less same in both areas, in the sense that it is essentially male defined (though there are differences in tribal and non-tribal women as tribal women’s work participation rates are higher; household work and survival chores do not form part of work participation). The feudal, patriarchal social structure and high rates of illiteracy among women in Rajasthan render them more vulnerable though.

VI. In the given scenario, these organizations work for common property resources’ benefit to rural poor on the one hand and social cohesion and co-operative association, on the other.

VII. As such, both implement integrated rural development programme, aimed at poverty alleviation, capability building, drought mitigation and building civil society institutions.

VIII. The organizations share excellent rapport with the donor organizations and hence, their financial sustainability is sound. To that extent comprehensive plans are prepared and shared with the donors, which makes a departure from a project based development activity to a wider programme based strategy planning and implementation.

IX. Seva Mandir activities relate to natural resource development, water harvesting, education, health, women and child development and institution building aimed at livelihood, capability building and institution building.

X. Accion Fraterna works in the field of ecology and employment/livelihood. However, the parent organization Rural Development Trust (RDT), provides an enormous support umbrella and goodwill of people. RDT has been working in the field of education/supplementary coaching, health, rural housing and Women and child development.
XI. The foray of both the organizations make sense in terms of socio-economic impact analysis. It can be said that they have developed significant capabilities in this regard and have demonstrated that physical works combined with right approaches of participation, decentralization and equity help in building community solidarity, strength and resource capital at the village level. In fact, these organizations have gone further and have created civil society institutions capable of supporting local initiatives and bargaining with power structures for their concerns i.e Village Development Fund, Permanent Drought Fund, Forest protection Committees, SHGs, and so on. To that extent their mission, goals, strategies and programme activities are relevant in the present scenario of decentralisation in government support or recurring drought.

XII. Functionaries, both men and women, of the internal organization of Action Fraterna and Seva Mandir are by and large drawn from the local milieu, and are therefore, well aware of the local constraints and concerns. Also, most of those in supervisory positions had earlier worked as field functionaries and understand functional dynamics very well. For technical support, highly qualified and competent staff is available who are oriented to the philosophy and mission of their respective organisations.

XIII. Mission, vision, strategy and implementation mechanisms have had a major impact not only on the target groups, but have also demonstrated to the community and government as such, the relevance and appropriate methodology/technology to move in a desired development direction and are therefore, releva
Accion Fraterna, Anantpur
Chapter 1

Introduction

The Rural Development Trust (RDT) was founded in 1969 in Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh, by Fr. Vincent Ferrer. It works with socially and economically disadvantaged communities, primarily scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, in the areas of health, education, and ecological development. In 1982 RDT set up Accion Fraterna (AF) as a separate organisation that specialises in ecological development. While AF has its own legal identity, financial resources and programmes, for all practical purposes it functions as the ecology wing of RDT. While this review concentrates on the partnership between ICCO/ EZE and AF, it draws upon relevant features of RDT.

ICCO and EZE have a long history of supporting RDT and AF. EZE financed RDT projects during 1978 to 1988. Direct funding to AF by ICCO/ EZE began in 1987 and continues to date. During this period, AF undertook an internal evaluation of its programmes in 1989 and in 1993. An external evaluation took place in 1994. The present agreement between ICCO/ EZE and AF was signed in the year 2000. Thus, this review took place about eighteen months after the current agreement was signed. Rather than restrict itself to the ongoing phase of collaboration, the review examines key aspects of the partnership and picks up from where earlier evaluations left off.

The terms of reference (TOR) for the review were guided by a perception of recent contextual changes such as increased drought and the decentralization of governmental support and government institutions. This stressed the need to reflect on the vision, intervention strategy and programmes. The main purpose of the review was:

- to assess the quality, effects and impact of the present development programmes as compared to the aims and objectives of the agreement between AF and ICCO/ EZE
- to reflect on the mission, intervention strategy and role of AF within a changed context
- to assess whether new, innovative changes in the role and programme can strengthen the impact of the support to the improvement of the livelihood of the poor

In addition, the TOR framed two leading questions, the first relating to optimal interventions to support the rural poor, and the second relating to the optimal role in building civil society.

The review team had three consultants from different professional fields, drawing upon an overall experience in development work, social development, natural resource management, and rural livelihoods. The team was led by Ms. Aparna Sahay (from The Hunger Project, India) who is an expert in social development, and included Mr. Viren Lobo (from the Society for Promotion of Wasteland Development, New Delhi) who specialises in natural resource management, and Ms. Daman Singh (a freelance consultant) who works on issues of natural resource management and rural livelihoods.

In September 2001, the review team spent six days with AF in Anantapur (schedule in Annex 1). The visit began with an introductory meeting with AF staff and ended with a meeting where the preliminary assessment was discussed in considerable detail. The team visited six villages, including one where the physical work was over, one where the physical work was going on, and two where AF collaborated with government. In each village the team met with communities participating in the programme and visited locations of physical work. It interacted intensively with AF staff on a daily basis. It also consulted various documents and material (list in Annex 2).

On October 20, 2001, the draft report was presented at a workshop at New Delhi that was attended by representatives of ICCO, Accion Fraterna and Seva Mandir, and was facilitated by Dr. N C B Nath. The final report draws upon the deliberations at the workshop as well as on additional inputs subsequently provided by AF.
Chapter 2

Anantapur: bio-physical, socio-economic and institutional context

This chapter presents key features of Anantapur district. It is largely based on available statistics. However, it also draws upon insights gained during the field visit (select information on the four villages visited is presented in Annex 3) and through discussions with AF staff. An understanding of these features is useful to reflect on the mission, intervention strategy and programmes of AF, and to assess the implications of recent contextual changes.

2.1 The bio-physical context

Anantapur is one of the four districts of the semi-arid Rayalseema region in Andhra Pradesh. The district has three natural divisions, viz., the northern part that has largely black cotton soil; the central part that is an arid, treeless expanse of poor red soil; and the southern plateau (that connects with the Mysore plateau) with sandy red soil of normal productivity. Its rivers originate in Karnataka, prominent among which are the Pennar, Jayamangala, Chitravathi and Vedavathi or Hagari. Generally, the topography undulating with an average elevation of 1000 feet above mean sea level. The soils are mostly red (76%) with pockets of black cotton soil (24%) in certain areas.

Its geographical position makes Anantapur the driest part of the state, lying in the rain shadow area of both the north-east and the south-west monsoon. It recently slipped from being classed as drought prone to being termed as a hot arid district, as the normal annual rainfall reduced from 533 mm to 520 mm. Some parts even receive as little as 300 mm a year. Severe soil erosion, high temperatures, low, erratic and unevenly distributed rainfall and excessive evaporation losses result in conditions of moisture stress. These factors are manifest in periodic drought and crop losses. Groundwater reserves are low and the district falls in the dark zone, indicating that extraction exceeds 85% of annual recharge. Local scarcity of drinking water, fodder and fuel is reported in almost every alternate year.

The topography of a typical village is dominated by small, scattered hillocks, rolling upland transected by gullies and seasonal streams, and compact pockets of lowland. Vegetation is very limited, except in some stream courses and where trees have been planted on field borders. The hillocks have large boulders or sheet rock, with minimal soil cover. The extent of common, or non-private land is variable (in the four villages visited, this ranged from 2% to 12% of the village area). The cultivated upland is gently undulating or with long unbroken slopes of 2-5%. The unbunded fields are mostly put to groundnut cultivation. The lowland is interspersed with small privately owned tanks and sometimes large common ponds. Here one can see levelled, bunded paddy fields and other crops such as groundnut, sunflower, and cotton, irrigated by borewells and dug cum borewells. Irrigated farming supports dairy animals (notably buffalo), while farmers owning upland commonly keep cows and herds of sheep and goat. The extent of irrigation varies a great deal (from 5% to 17% of the cultivated area, in the villages visited).

The actual forest cover is scanty and has been susceptible to degradation over the last four decades. Grazing grounds are limited, and livestock commonly graze on barren and unculturable land (often consisting of rocky outcrops), current and other fallows and on cultivated land after the harvest. Dryland agriculture dominates land use statistics. Irrigation is limited to about 14% of the net sown area in a year of normal rainfall.
Agriculture in Rayalseema region is characterised by the widespread cultivation of non-food crops. This feature is particularly marked in Anantapur, where 79.4% of the area was under non-food crops in 1999-00. Groundnut is the overwhelming preference (cultivated on 70.6% of the area in 1999-00, as against 5.7% under rice, 5.6% under pulses and 3.2% under jowar). Compared to other rainfed crops, groundnut is seen to be the most drought-resistant. In 1999-00, Anantapur had the highest area under this crop as compared to other districts in Andhra Pradesh and accounted for 39.9% of the total area under groundnut in the state. The agricultural economy (and in fact, the entire economy) of the district is thus dominated by groundnut cultivation.

It would be useful to study annual crop yields for a period of three to five years, however such data is not presently available. Data for a single year does not reflect the fluctuations that take place due to variation in rainfall. Nevertheless, data for the year 1999-00 shows that the yield of groundnut (383 kg/ha) and red gram (167 kg/ha) was far below the state average (607 kg/ha and 385 kg/ha respectively). On the other hand, jowar did well (1384 kg/ha) as did rice (2626 kg/ha) against the state average (728 kg/ha and 2710 kg/ha respectively). Jowar is grown on a very small scale, and is often irrigated. Rice is an irrigated crop.

### Table 1: Land use in Anantapur district, 1999-00

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Area (ha)</th>
<th>% to geographical area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Geographical area</td>
<td>19,13,492</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Forest</td>
<td>1,96,778</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Barren and uncultivable land</td>
<td>1,72,949</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Land put to non-agricultural uses</td>
<td>1,61,754</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Culturable waste</td>
<td>83,870</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Permanent pastures and other grazing land</td>
<td>23,341</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Land under miscellaneous crops and groves</td>
<td>11,256</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Current fallows</td>
<td>1,71,514</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Other fallows</td>
<td>1,15,649</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Net sown area</td>
<td>9,76,381</td>
<td>51.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Net irrigated area</td>
<td>1,38,405</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: GOAP 2001
Discussions with farmers and with AF staff indicate that rainfed cultivation has a three year cycle. Farmers expect a good crop only one year in three. The average income from groundnut in such a year is estimated at about Rs. 3000/ acre. In the other two years they either experience poor harvest (about 40% of normal yield) or crop failure (with 25% of normal yield). Moisture stress due to low or untimely rainfall and pest attack are chiefly responsible for crop loss. Tank irrigation is also fairly precarious. Tanks normally get filled only once in five or six years, when farmers are able to take a normal crop of paddy. The situation in fields irrigated by borewells and dug cum borewells is far more secure. Depending on water availability, farmers grow a variety of crops such as paddy, groundnut, sunflower, jowar, ragi, and mulberry as well as fruit crops like pomegranate, sweet orange and papaya. While this offers a fair degree of food and fodder security as well as sizeable income, few households own lowland, and fewer still can afford to invest in borewells. The local economy thus generates little surplus on a regular basis. Indebtedness is high and living standards are weakened by each successive cycle of drought.

For the district as a whole, groundwater is the chief source of irrigation. Tubewells and dugwells respectively accounted for 44.5% and 27.5% of the net irrigated area in 1999-00. In the same year canals irrigated 22.2% of the area (30,727 ha). This is considerably lower that the command areas of Anantapur’s
single major irrigation project and three medium irrigation project, officially estimated at 61,138 ha. The share of tank irrigation is relatively low at 3.4% of the net irrigated area.

Livestock plays a major role in farming systems of most semi-arid areas. Clearly this is so in Anantapur as well. The livestock population figures illustrate three interesting trends. First, there was a huge decline in numbers Yet others (such as H.R Palli) have a sizeable number of families engaged in this activity. Generally, the herd size tends to be large. Only few villages have surplus milk production and the network of milk procurement and chilling centres is extremely thin.

**Table 2: Livestock population**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.no</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>1983</th>
<th>1987</th>
<th>1993</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>No. per household (1999)*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cattle</td>
<td>7,08,243</td>
<td>5,96,086</td>
<td>7,63,656</td>
<td>6,63,126</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Buffalo</td>
<td>2,58,399</td>
<td>2,36,614</td>
<td>2,70,999</td>
<td>3,13,284</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sheep</td>
<td>7,76,621</td>
<td>5,61,974</td>
<td>8,79,496</td>
<td>9,29,581</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Goat</td>
<td>4,99,583</td>
<td>3,78,880</td>
<td>2,75,099</td>
<td>3,42,915</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

number of households as per 1990 census Source: GoAP 2001

Anantapur is modestly endowed in terms of minerals. In terms of value of production in 1998-99, the largest was of gold (Rs. 4.8 crore) followed by limestone (Rs. 3.97 crore) and iron ore (Rs. 3.14 crore). Smaller amounts were realised through extraction of quartz, clay, steatite, and dolomite.

To sum up, the biophysical features of Anantapur district are as follows:
- Poor resource endowment, both by virtue of low, erratic rainfall and poor land capability
- Recent trend of reduced normal annual rainfall and thus increased vulnerability to drought
- Mostly dryland agriculture, of low and highly variable productivity
- Limited extent of irrigation, mostly through groundwater extraction
- Dominance of groundnut farming
- Importance of livestock rearing, including of small ruminants

### 2.2 The socio-economic context

Anantapur is considered the poorest district in Andhra Pradesh. It has 11 towns, 964 revenue villages and 2415 hamlets. Scheduled castes and scheduled tribes together account for 18% of the population. The village community is deeply divided on lines of caste, politics and local factors. There is a large gap between urban and rural literacy, and between male and female literacy. While separate figures for SC/ST communities are not available, it is expected that their literacy rates are far lower than the average.

**Table 3: Population of Anantapur district**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.no</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>39.00 lakh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Urban population</td>
<td>9.17 lakh  (23.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Rural population</td>
<td>29.83 lakh (76.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Population of scheduled castes</td>
<td>5.53 lakh (14.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Population of scheduled tribes</td>
<td>1.36 lakh (3.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Females per 1000 males</td>
<td>946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Literacy rate</td>
<td>48.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Urban literacy rate: Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>60.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>73.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>48.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Rural literacy rate: Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>35.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>50.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>21.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census of India 2001
Among various basic amenities, the coverage of primary schools is most encouraging. While about 25% of villages do not have primary schools, 20% have access to schools within 2 km. On the other hand, the situation of upper primary schools is dismal. Drinking water facilities are available in a majority of villages, but this is an amenity that simply must be universally available. High fluoride content, brackish water and the lack of facilities are reported in problem villages. Communication seems to be a relatively weak area. Government medical facilities at the village level are extremely scarce. For as high as 44% of villages, these facilities are located over 5 km away.

Table 5: Access of villages to amenities (1997)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.no.</th>
<th>Amenity</th>
<th>No. of villages</th>
<th>% coverage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Situated on main road</td>
<td>1183</td>
<td>39.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bus stop</td>
<td>1717</td>
<td>56.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Post office</td>
<td>776</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Primary school</td>
<td>2279</td>
<td>75.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Upper primary school</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Government medical facility</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Veterinary facility</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Adequate drinking water facility</td>
<td>1881</td>
<td>62.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Anon. undated

Table 6 presents data for enrollment and drop-out of school students (both rural and urban). It would be reasonable to expect somewhat lower enrollment and higher drop out in village schools. Given the extensive network of primary schools in rural areas and high enrollment figures, it is surprising that rural literacy remains rather low. This could either be due to an indifferent quality of teaching, or to a high drop-out rate. Diminishing enrollment in class VI to class VII and the escalating drop-out rate suggest that very few children ultimately make it to high school. Figures for Anantapur conform closely to the average for Andhra Pradesh.

Table 6: School enrollment and drop-out rates (as on 30.9.99)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.no</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Enrollment rate</th>
<th>Drop out rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I to V (age 6-11)</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>93.08</td>
<td>34.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>93.48</td>
<td>41.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>93.28</td>
<td>37.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>VI to VII (age 11-13)</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>54.69</td>
<td>56.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>41.70</td>
<td>63.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>48.38</td>
<td>59.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: GoAP 2001

Agriculture is main occupation of the people, as industry and services remain highly underdeveloped. Table 7 shows the percentage of cultivators and agricultural labour to the total main workers, as enumerated in the 1991 census. The general pattern is of high dependence on agriculture, with roughly similar numbers of workers being cultivators and labourers It is pertinent to note that among scheduled castes, the dependence on agriculture is far greater than the average. Also, the share of cultivators is extremely low. Thus, the vast majority of scheduled caste families survive by way of agricultural labour. Interestingly, the situation of scheduled tribe workers is closer to the average.
### Table 7: Workers in the agriculture sector (% to total main workers)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.no.</th>
<th>Category of workers</th>
<th>All classes</th>
<th>Scheduled castes</th>
<th>Scheduled tribes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cultivators</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>30.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Agricultural labour</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>73.2</td>
<td>49.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Total agriculture sector</td>
<td>74.1</td>
<td>89.3</td>
<td>79.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: GoAP 2001

The large number of agricultural labour points either to a high incidence of landlessness or to many marginal land holdings. In the four villages visited, 11% to 25% of families did not own any land. Of these families, 25% to 75% belonged to scheduled castes or scheduled tribes. In all, 43% to 72% families had less than 5 acres of land. Figures for the district show that the average land holding is 2.51 ha (1995-96), the highest in Rayalseema. An estimated 31% of land holdings are below 1 ha.

In the past, Andhra Pradesh witnessed an intensive drive to distribute cultivable land to the landless. In most areas this seems to have reached saturation point. Therefore, it may be assumed that the recourse to agricultural labour is inevitable, in part due to the uncertainty of rainfed farming. Persons engaged in agricultural labour work on the fields of large farmers in their own village. Greater employment is found in irrigated farms. They also migrate to other parts of Andhra Pradesh and to parts of neighbouring Karnataka. Women are generally paid lower wages than men (Rs. 25 versus Rs. 30 at present).

The socio-economic context may be summed up as:
- High incidence of poverty
- Deeply divided village society
- High number of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, whose basic quality of life is far below the average
- Low rural literacy, despite an extensive network of primary schools
- Poor access to government medical facilities
- High dependence on agriculture as an occupation, particularly in the case of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes
- High dependence on agricultural labour, particularly in the case of scheduled castes

#### 2.3 The institutional context

Anantapur district has three revenue divisions and 63 mandals There are 1003 gram panchayats, each covering 3.4 rural habitations on an average. So far, the state government has introduced very few measures to empower gram panchayats. Of the 29 subjects listed in the eleventh schedule to the 73rd Amendment of the Constitution, only three have been fully transferred with budgetary powers to panchayats. These are education, social and farm forestry and fuel and fodder plantations. Another eight subjects have been partly transferred but without necessary budget powers. Generally, panchayats have been entrusted with survey, beneficiary selection, monitoring and review of certain government programmes. As a result, the move towards local self-government in Andhra Pradesh is still exceedingly slow. AF perceives that panchayats presently play a minimal role in village development.

On the other hand, the state government has launched a major initiative to bring the administration in direct contact with the people. In 1997 the ‘Janmabhumi’ concept was introduced as a people-centered development process. The gram sabha provides the forum for mandal level officials to sanction funds (upto a certain limit) under a variety of government programmes (prominently, various welfare schemes), receive proposals for local works and address grievances. Guided by a habitation level committee, the people are expected to choose and execute development works (of a given nature and upto a certain value). They must also contribute 30% to 50% of the estimated cost of each work. Among various activities, priority is given to tanks, canals and water harvesting structures; school buildings; approach roads; primary health infrastructure; village veterinary infrastructure; drinking water facilities; welfare hostel buildings and drainage.
The Janmabhumi process is accompanied by the delegation of powers of sanction (technical as well as administrative) to local officials, simplified procedures, and practices for transparency in planning and implementation and including social audit of work done. These are important steps towards improving governance and bringing the administration closer to the people. The effort to get people to propose and execute works is also highly progressive. Yet, the fluidity of the gram sabha and existing schisms in village society could affect the legitimacy of its actions. It is important to note that there is no formal role for the gram panchayat in Janmabhumi. Rather than give power to the panchayats, these have been vested in the bureaucracy.

2.31 Natural resource management

The district administration implements a number of programmes for natural resource management. The resources to do so were enhanced in when Anantapur was declared desert prone, rather than merely drought prone. Till 1994-95 the district was eligible for the Drought Prone Area Programme, but since then it has availed of the Desert Development Programme (DDP).

The potential for soil and water conservation in Anantapur is considerable. According to official estimates, water conservation and water harvesting structures taken up in the years 1993-94 and 1994-95 alone resulted in the additional recharge of about 1000 million cum. At present, this is the focus of two major programmes, viz, watershed development, and ‘Neeru-meeru’ and is also a priority in drought relief works.

Both programmes are designed to be implemented through stakeholder groups and essentially exclude the gram panchayat. Some analysts argue for a greater role for panchayats in the interest of strengthening this institution of local self-government. They also observe that in the context of ambitious targets, only limited investment is made in community mobilisation. The programmes are thus liable to be dominated by the rural elite and contractors. This puts a question mark on the issues of equity, effectiveness, and sustainability of the programmes.

At the state government level, the watershed development programme is administered by the commissionerate of rural development at Hyderabad. At the district level it is headed by a project director who is assisted by a multidisciplinary team drawn from line departments. There is no formal role for the Zilla Parishad, or the Mandal Panchayat. These entities are not even represented in the state level and district level advisory committees. NGOs may be invited to participate as project implementing agencies.

In Anantapur the programme is overseen by the Project Director of the DDP and financed through four schemes. These are the DDP, the Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS), the Andhra Pradesh Hazard Mitigation and Cyclone Emergency Programme (APHMECRP), and the Rural Infrastructure Development Fund Programme. So far, NGOs have implemented the programme in 17 of the 453 micro-watersheds. The total expenditure during 1995-96 to 2000-01 was Rs. 48.24 crore. On account of the drought situation in 2001-02, the emphasis has been on employment generation to reduce migration of agricultural labour. Drought relief work is being carried through food for work (to the extent of half the wages) in the watershed villages.

The watershed programme is based on central guidelines issued in 1994 and revised in 2001. It involves the village community by creating watershed committees, watershed associations, user groups and self-help groups. Physical activities include continuous contour trenches, construction of check dams, percolation tanks, feeder channels, repair of breached tanks, farm ponds, agave plantation, tamarind plantation, and seed dibbling. The unit of area to be treated is about 500 ha. The financial allocation of Rs.20 lakhs per watershed was revised to Rs. 22.50 lakh in 2001. Of this, Rs. 18 lakh is earmarked for physical work while Rs. 4.50 lakhs is for community organization and administrative cost.
Table 8: Status of the watershed development programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Scheme</th>
<th>No. of watersheds sanctioned</th>
<th>No. of watersheds implemented</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1995-96</td>
<td>DDP, 1st batch</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EAS</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1996-97</td>
<td>DDP, 3rd batch</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1997-98</td>
<td>APHM &amp; CM</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1998-99</td>
<td>DDP, 4th batch</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1999-00</td>
<td>DDP, 5th batch</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2000-01</td>
<td>DDP, 6th batch</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>RIDF</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>612</td>
<td>453</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DDP 2001

The Neeru-meeru programme started in the year 2000 with the involvement of seven main departments, viz. rural development, forest, minor irrigation, rural water supply, panchayati raj, and municipal administration. The objective of this programme is to promote soil and water conservation and water harvesting through community participation. Neeru-meeru is directly implemented with user groups at the village level. Its physical components include continuous contour trenches, check-dams, percolation tanks, farm ponds, dug out ponds, sunken ponds, rockfill dams, feeder channels, supply channels, diversion drains, desilting tanks, restoration of tanks, breach closing, contour bunding, plantation, water harvesting structures, restoration of old structures and so on. This programme is expected to create an additional volume of water storage of about 1.28 million cum of water at a cost of Rs. 26.1 crore.

Joint forest management (JFM) is the third major intervention in natural resource management. Promoted at the national level in 1990, it began in Andhra Pradesh in 1992. In line with national guidelines and the state government policy, the forest department enters into an agreement with village level forest protection committees (called Van Sanraksha Samitis in Andhra Pradesh) to jointly manage degraded forest. The VSS is responsible for protecting a designated patch of degraded forest, and is entitled to a share in forest produce. This includes all non-scheduled non-timber forest produce (here the position vis a vis the gram sabha are not clear), and net proceeds on intermediate harvest and final harvest of trees and bamboo. Anantapur district has 243 VSSs protecting an area of 67,070 ha. In all, 17 NGOs are associated with this programme.

2.3 Social development

The District Rural Development Agency was established in 1978 to take up various pro-poor developmental programmes such as the integrated rural development programme (IRDP), TRYSEM, SITRA, DWACRA, the employment assurance scheme (EAS) and SFPP. In 1999 all these programmes were revamped and merged into the Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana (SJGSY). As the name suggests, this programme focuses on self employment for individuals living below poverty line, who are willing to take up income generation activities by way of bank credit and subsidy. The beneficiaries or ‘Swarojgaries’, 40% of whom are supposed to be women, are to be assisted to earn a monthly income of at least Rs. 2000.

In addition to the SJGSY, DRDA also implements the self-help group (SHG) programme for economic empowerment of women. Anantapur has 18,329 SHGs with 2,70,773 women members. 14,660 groups have received financial assistance by way of revolving funds or matching grants against savings, amounting to Rs.19.06 crore. 899 groups have been provided with an amount of Rs. 6.26 crore as subsidy and Rs. 6.83 crore under the group loan scheme of the erstwhile IRDP and the SGSP.

The DRDA also implements the National Social Assistance Programme consisting of the National Old Age Pension Scheme, the National Family Benefit Scheme, and the National Maternity Benefit Scheme. It
is entrusted with the responsibility to train and orient office bearers of newly elected panchayati raj institutions.

The Andhra Pradesh District Poverty Initiatives programme supported by the World Bank covers six of the poorest districts, including Anantapur. It aims to benefit one lakh poor families through thrift groups and other economic activities. Components include human and institutional capacity building; creating of community investment funds; educational support for girls, child labour and school drop outs; and project management, monitoring and evaluation and studies. The Andhra Pradesh Rural Livelihood Programme to promote off-farm and non-farm enterprise has just begun. This expects to bridge the gap left by the present watershed development programme.

This year the state government has announced a Rs. 321 crore drought relief package (figure to be verified). This includes pensions to four lakh elderly people; a 5% interest rebate on short and long term loans designed to benefit 35 lakh farmers; and a Rs. 500 million corpus towards wages for employment. In addition to a series of measures planned to tackle drought-related issues, the state government has sanctioned Rs. 10 crore for additional seed subsidy for the farm sector and Rs. 7 crore for fodder development.

The institutional context may be summarised as:
- Move towards better governance, bringing the administration closer to the people, greater transparency and accountability
- Emphasis on stakeholder initiative and responsibility in implementing works in various government programmes
- Panchayats remain largely peripheral in the development process
- Major programmes for natural resource management; pooling of financial resources for their implementation; working directly with stakeholder groups; uncertainty about issues of equity, effectiveness and sustainability
- A number of programmes for social development, including new initiatives for poverty alleviation and livelihood security
Chapter 3

Accion Fraterna: mission, intervention strategy and programmes

Accion Fraterna may be viewed as the ecological development wing of RDT. While AF shares its mission with RDT, it has a distinct intervention strategy and essentially independent programmes. This chapter presents an organisational overview of RDT and its agenda, and discusses the role of AF.

3.1 Mission

RDT is governed by a strong philosophical base. It believes that it has a place in the struggle against powerful and inimical forces, to transform society into a humane, compassionate and just one. In this struggle, there exist a higher level of principles and values that precede and influence the philosophy of life and consequently the principles of development. These values and principles guarantee the sanity and intellectual health of all philosophies and eventually the strategies for development. Some of these principles are:

- the dignity and value of each human being without which the deprived remain unprotected and easily dispensed with
- the sacredness of life
- the common destiny of mankind
- that the end does not justify the means
- the simple values of speaking the truth
- not harming others
- helping those in need

Essentially, these universal principles have a common denominator expressed by the human concern for others. This concern shapes the spiritual foundation and legitimacy of RDT. The other guiding principles are to work beyond the demands of duty, the pursuit of excellence and to reach as many poor as possible.

RDT believes that it must work towards building a democratic society, as this is essential for it to be humane and just. While it steers clear of any association with party politics, its interventions do have a place in the larger political process. It sees itself as a permanent presence in the Rayalseema region, in order to address weaknesses in the prevailing social structure and the long term development of the area. It views development as a dynamic process that cannot be achieved in a short time span of five to ten years.
The mission of RDT is articulated as a commitment to:

- consider people as the main actors of their destiny and RDT as an integral part of the people of the area in its historical journey towards a humane, compassionate and just society
- transform the present condition of people’s poverty and suffering into self-reliant and self supporting communities living in harmony with one another
- transform the semi-desert land of Anantapur into a land capable of sustaining its population with people and land living in harmony with one another
- build a dynamic and creative organization that will continuously strive to participate in all developmental efforts with the characteristics of:
  - being spiritual in its motivation
  - based on knowledge and skills
  - committed to share the aspirations and the struggles of the poor and disadvantaged
  - adapting itself to the changing times and needs of local people

The review team felt that RDT’s principles are generally shared by the staff. There seemed to be a sort of missionary zeal, a strong emphasis on quality and a capacity for innovation. It is interesting that RDT’s mission includes a commitment to its own development. The emphasis on dynamism and creativity is a major strength of RDT. Evidently, the philosophy and mission of RDT provide the organisation with a firm foundation in its long term strategy for working with disadvantaged communities in the area.

As seen in the previous chapter, Anantapur is the poorest district in the state, characterised by social and economic disparity. Poor natural resource endowment and resource degradation affect a large section of the rural population, particularly the poor. In this context, RDT’s focus on local initiative, poverty and resource degradation is well founded. Taken together, these three elements help to define the nature of RDT’s field interventions. It is interesting to observe that there is a pacifist aspect here. RDT seeks to achieve harmony between communities, and between land and people.

It is pertinent to note that RDT sees the need for long term intervention, rather than implementing short term projects, withdrawing, and then moving on. Thus, it seeks to play a part in social reconstruction, rather than merely programme execution. This is certainly highly relevant, given the context of a highly fragmented village society, the absence of functional local institutions and the need to stimulate collective action.
3.2 Intervention strategy and programmes

RDT is a functionally diverse and structurally fairly flat organisation. There are eight sectors, respectively dealing with education, women, disabilities, housing and school construction, health, referral hospitals, culture and ecology. Separate units look after finance, transport and monitoring and evaluation. Fr. Ferrer is the Programme Director, Ms. Anne Ferrer the Associate Programme Director, and each sector is headed by a Sector Director. Operationally, there are five regions (each with a Regional Director), subdivided into 24 areas, each covering about 50 villages. Each field team is headed by an Area Team Leader and assisted by community organisers, trainers, cultural organisers, and an accountant. The ecology sector has separate area teams for the watershed programme, with a team leader assisted by field supervisors, engineering supervisors, and village level socio-technical supervisors.

The organisation believes in a work culture of collective decision making, of team work and maximising the potential of each individual. It has a core team that frames organisational policies and programmes and also monitors and reviews programmes. An executive committee of the core team manages day to day administration. About 1300 people work at RDT. Staff turnover is low and many people have been with RDT for a number of years.

At present RDT works in about 1450 villages of Anantapur district. Its primary target groups are scheduled castes (SCs) and scheduled tribes (STs). These communities are particularly disadvantaged, on account of social, economic, as well as political marginalisation. While most of its programmes aim to assist SCs and STs, some also include other economically weaker sections of society.

RDT estimates that literacy among SCs and STs is a massive 95%. The objective of its education programme is to enable children to successfully complete primary schooling. Rather than create additional schools or introduce non-formal education, RDT supports supplementary schools managed by the target community. The community selects a suitable local teacher and pays part of the salary. These schools run after the hours of the government schools and provide special attention that is necessary to help Cultural education to encourage children develop their talents is an important part of teaching. RDT reports that the
The drop out rate has come down from 85% to 50% and efforts are being made to reduce it further. In addition, special care and schools for children with special needs figure prominently in RDT’s mission and programmes. The team visited schools for hearing and visually challenged children, in which each child’s growth milestones and progress are monitored assiduously.

The women’s development programme promotes self help groups to encourage collective problem analysis and action, and savings and credit. This often provides the opportunity to develop leadership and managerial skills and to organise the groups for new initiatives. RDT provides a revolving fund to finance viable income generating activities.

The health programme has a special focus on maternal and child health through awareness workshops, campaigns, training, periodic antenatal clinics, and regular check-up of school children. It also supports trained community health workers and dais. Patients needing treatment are referred to RDT's hospitals, or, if necessary, to other medical institutions. RDT has two hospitals and two more are to function shortly. These hospitals treat patients from all communities and charges according to the families’ ability to pay. Generally, treatment is either free of charge or highly subsidised.

RDT reports that 4-10% of people in rural areas suffer from some form of disability. Such people tend to be isolated, neglected, and marginalised by virtue of social, economic, physical, psychological and cultural barriers. RDT aims to improve the quality of life of the disabled (from all sections of the village community, and to help them play a meaningful role in society. It runs four special schools for mentally retarded children, three schools for the visually impaired and two schools for the speech and hearing impaired. It also promotes savings in the name of such children at the village level.

The ecology sector strategy has taken shape somewhat differently from that of other sectors. Since this sector is essentially the domain of the partnership with ICCO/ EZE, it is discussed in greater detail in a separate section.

3.21 Ecology sector strategy

In its early years AF began land-related activities with the aim of economic upliftment largely by way of drought relief. In response to three successive years of drought during 1984-86, AF formulated a programme for soil and water conservation and afforestation in 1987. Over the years its focus on the SC and ST communities (RDT’s primary target group) enlarged to encompass other sections of the village community as well. In 1991 an integrated eco-employment programme was launched, with an emphasis on raising environmental awareness, enlisting local participation and organising all sections of the village community. Its social, technical and operational approach has been successively refined to culminate in the watershed programme currently being implemented.
In a parallel development, government agencies and bilateral donors have identified watershed management as a major intervention in rainfed areas. In 1995 the government of India issued guidelines for such programmes; these were revised in 2001. Since then, the Anantapur district desert development programme has worked on 453 micro watersheds over a period of six years. Although the AF programme is broadly similar, it has a larger budget per village and a different manner of implementation. In some villages AF is the project implementing agency of the government programme, as are 13 other NGOs in the district. Here it supplements the activities financed by government, for which it draws funds from Fundacion de Vicente Ferrer on a purely temporary arrangement.

- **Staff and supervision**

Just as the other sectors in RDT, AF is headed by a Director (Shri Malla Reddy, who is assisted by a Technical Director, Shri Raghu Rami Reddy) and has a group of resource persons or subject matter specialists. These are drawn from the areas of agriculture, horticulture, veterinary sciences, engineering, and geology. The area teams include both technical supervisors and community organisers. Virtually all staff is from the district and most have worked in RDT/AF for a number of years. Nine have professional qualifications and four previously worked with government.

It was a challenge for AF to find suitable people to work at the village level, which is where much of complexity lies. It created the post of socio-technical organizers, for candidates that had completed high school, advertised this locally, and tested a large number of applicants. This was followed by an intensive two month training that was designed in-house. The training included the identification and mapping of sites, and design of water harvesting structures. In many development programmes, such subjects are very rarely entrusted to non-technical staff. AF has thus managed to achieve a blend of social and technical skills down the line.

Specialist staff provide services in terms of technical guidance and periodic training. Construction work is supervised by the area field civil engineer and monitored by the subject matter specialist for water harvesting structures. From time to time circulars are issued relating to design of structures, monitoring of costs, problems in implementation and monitoring of quality (Annex 4 provides an example). The subject
matter specialists have also innovated with the technical design in order to reduce costs. This was achieved in structures in black cotton soils having deep soils, by reducing the cost of the foundation without compromising on quality. There are well established systems for physical and financial monitoring as well as for internal meetings (twice a month), internal audit (once a year), and internal evaluation (once a year). These systems are progressively modified as new needs emerge.

AF’s strengths include its experienced staff, most of which is drawn from the rural areas of the district; its ability to retain professionally qualified persons; imparting both social and technical skills to village level workers; achieving a blend of social and technical skills down the line; and systems for monitoring and evaluation. The only weakness appears to be the small number of women staff. There are only three women community organisers. AF plans to increase their numbers in the future. It may also consider drawing more formally upon resource persons in the women’s development programme.

- Scale of the watershed programme

There are a total of 964 revenue villages and 2415 hamlets in Anantapur district. The district administration has so far sanctioned micro watershed development at 612 locations. AF has the capacity to operate in about 100 villages at a time. Currently, it is working in 65 such villages at various stages of progress, including 48 supported by ICCO/ EZE, and 17 partly supported by government. In addition, RDT is working in 35 villages in a similar fashion. In terms of scale, the watershed programme is therefore a major intervention in the area. It has considerable potential to impact the natural resource base and rural livelihoods. It also has the potential for significant demonstration effect.

- Funding by ICCO/ EZE

Unlike government departments as well as many NGOs, AF has the privilege of a long term financial support. Each successive phase of its partnership with ICCO/ EZE is based on a proposal that sets out the rationale, nature and costs of activities. There is a large degree of flexibility in individual components and in the programme as a whole. The combination of financial security and flexibility provided by ICCO/ EZE translates into much needed (and much valued) operational freedom. This allows AF to proceed at a pace that is set by local communities, to respond suitably to different village situations and to address new needs as they emerge.

In its watershed programme, AF deals with whatever area in a village needs attention, and that the people are willing to work on; there is a 500 ha ceiling in the government programme. AF spends Rs. 30-40 lakh per village over 4 to 7 years, against a government budget of Rs. 18 lakh over 4 years. AF has cost norms, but may deviate from them if the situation so demands. It goes by annual plans proposed by the village community rather than by a comprehensive blueprint made at the outset. It may withdraw from a village in the event of misuse of funds, or politicisation, or factionalism, or limited participation of the people.

- Collaboration with government

AF sees working with government as a means to increase its outreach, as well as to demonstrate the effectiveness of its approach. Collaboration presents the opportunity to influence the design and implementation of the government programme. The ability of AF to influence government is strengthened by three features. First, unlike other NGOs working with government in the area, AF has a large independently financed and credible watershed programme. Second, there is an emerging demand of village communities for the greater participation, financial discipline and quality of work that is commonly experienced in the AF programme. Third, AF has both formal and informal interaction with government officials at the district and state level. Fr. Vincent is a member of the Society for Eradication of Rural Poverty and Shri Malla Reddy is a member of the State Water Conservation Mission. Both committees are headed by the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. RDT is represented in the executive council of the district primary education programme at the state level and at the district level. AF is a member of the forum
‘district water and you’ chaired by the district collector. AF staff are invited to attend all district level meetings on watershed development.

AF faces numerous difficulties in working with government. Yet it has been able to show results without compromising its own principles, and has earned the respect of the district administration. It assumes responsibility for both social and technical components, a concession that is rarely made to NGOs. Additionally, AF has successfully tapped other government funds for activities such as biogas, smokeless chullahs, dairying, tamarind plantation, horticulture, water harvesting and food for work.

AF has helped to influence the government programme on several counts. It contributed to the national guidelines framed by the Hanumantha Rao committee. Two aspects that it stressed were, the importance of working with the gram sabha, and, eliciting cash contribution from farmers, rather than deducting these from wages. The latter often translates into lower payment to labourers rather than a real contribution from land owners. At the state level it has successfully argued for higher allocation for the landless, microplanning and specific practices for transparency. At the district level it convinced the administration to allow wage payment directly to labour groups rather than to land owners, thus ensuring full payment as per standard norms; revision of the design of bunds from a cross section of 0.50 m² to 0.72 m²; and, introduction of pebble bunding.

At present AF is working with the government in 17 watersheds. Although the government seems willing to increase the scale, AF sees some constraints in doing so. The timing of funding is inflexible and not necessarily linked to AF’s need or capacity to take on new work. The relationship depends heavily on the individuals posted to key positions in the district administration, who tend to change very often. Therefore, for strategic reasons, AF needs to have an independently financed programme as well. It would like to maintain a ratio close to 50:20 between ICCO/EZE support and government support.

Aside from the funding relationship, AF personnel have been invited to impart training to state government officials in participatory rural appraisal; to programme implementing agencies in Anantapur district; and to chairpersons and members of village watershed committees. AF strongly believes that only the government can deal with problems of poverty and resource degradation on a large scale. It considers training government personnel as a strategic opportunity for the future.

- Participation: structures and systems

AF’s commitment to local decision making and management has to contend with a clearly divided village community. Its approach is to build a coalition of all interest groups. Efforts are made to engage with each interest group; all of these must hold together in order to collectively benefit from the programme. By design, no single group can dominate the others. This coalition is expected to abide by predetermined systems for collective responsibility, transparency and accountability (closely monitored by AF), failing which the programme may be curtailed (as has been demonstrated in one case).

To begin with, a village must submit a formal application to AF, expressing its interest in the programme and agreeing to various conditions (including one on village unity). At least 90% of the households must come together to form a gram sabha. Each such household is represented by one man and one woman and each must pay a membership fee of Rs. 11. An eleven member Watershed Committee is the executive of the gram sabha. It draws representatives from user groups, labour groups and the panchayat and at least 40% of its members are women. There is a five member Watershed Advisory Committee, of respected village elders (including the sarpanch; he is, however, debarred from presiding). Each entity has a well-defined role and is expected to meet at fixed intervals.

The community contributes to the programme investment in cash and in kind. Since 1995 AF has followed a policy of gradually increasing the percentage of cost sharing by farmers. In soil and water conservation measures, farmers have contributed up to a maximum of 30% in black soils, and 10-15% in red soils. Beneficiaries of water harvesting structures contribute 10% of the cost. SC/ST families are required to pay
half the amount paid by others. Cash contributions are pooled in the Watershed Development Fund, which is to be used for collective benefit.

There is also a fair proportion of shramdan, or voluntary labour, which, however, is not quantified. Families use their bullock carts and employ their own labour in stone and pebble bunding (for which the budgetary provision is limited). Farmers estimate that this could be valued at Rs. 1000 to Rs.1500 an acre. At the end of each working season, each farmer hosts a lunch for all labourers who worked on his field.

The Watershed Committee president and the AF Area Team Leader operate a joint account for programme expenditure. Wage payments are normally made directly to leaders of the labour groups rather than to landowners. The bank account of the Watershed Development Fund is jointly operated by the AF Area Team Leader and presidents of the Watershed Advisory Committee and the Watershed Committee. AF’s internal auditors audit the accounts of this fund.

The emphasis on active user groups and labour groups, the two committees and the gram sabha means that a large cross section of the community gets to know how things are going. This is reinforced by a practice of presenting a formal report on physical and financial progress to the gram sabha at its biannual meetings. Key information is prominently displayed at the programme office in the village. AF staff maintain meticulous records that are kept at this office.

Participation in the programme has certain broader dimensions as well. Recently, AF has attempted to bring together all village committees, including the education committee, DWACRA groups, water users associations and the watershed committee in a single group, viz., the village development committee. This is designed to stimulate a collective approach to various programmes (whether supported by government or by RDT/ AF). The second dimension relates to the gram panchayat. While the gram panchayat has no formal role to play in the watershed programme, some of its members are coopted into various committees. This helps to avert conflict with powerful interests. It also serves to involve elected representatives in a genuine democratic process. It is interesting to note that AF has encouraged villages to put up consensus candidates for reserved seats in the recent panchayat elections. This is a major achievement as panchayat elections are normally hotly contested and divisive affairs.

**Strengthening civil society**

The sectoral programmes have a strong component of strengthening civil society. However, RDT/ AF use four other means to achieve this end. First, it engages in policy advocacy. Apart from the points made earlier, RDT is working to shape a new law for the physically and mentally challenged. It is also trying to get the government to introduce more incentives for sterilisation of men rather than women alone. The second means is to reinforce official accountability. Along with a large group of people from various local organisations and from the media, it visits villages where drought relief works are carried out and presents its observations to the district administration. Progressive district collectors have actually encouraged this practice. Third, it interacts with the local press and takes members to visit its work area to sensitishe the media to development concerns. Finally, RDT is a member of the Voluntary Action Network, Anantapur, of which Shri Malla Reddy is the president.
Chapter 4

The watershed programme: quality, effects and impact

Previous chapters described the bio-physical, socio-economic and institutional context in which the watershed programme is placed, and the organisational framework through which it operates. This chapter assesses aspects of quality, effects and impact in relation to the programme objectives. The five stated objectives are listed below. Since the second objective is closely linked to part of the first, these are discussed together.

The objectives of the watershed programme are:
- To restore the natural resource base and improve the carrying capacity of cultivable land, water resources, grasslands and land under vegetation
- To increase the agricultural production to an optimum and sustainable level on a permanent basis
- To organise and establish peoples’ institutions to conserve and manage the natural resources and agricultural production in a sustainable manner
- To focus the attention of women and men on gender equity and enhance the role and participation of women in land use and management at household as well as community level
- To promote non-farm and off-farm income generation and employment opportunities for labour groups of men and women

The components of the watershed programme include planting trees on hillocks and other vacant areas; treating upland with soil and moisture conservation measures; promoting better rainfed agriculture practices; promoting fruit crops in upland; improving groundwater recharge through rain water harvesting structures that benefit lowland cultivation; and, promoting household activities such as biogas, smokeless chullahs, kitchen gardens, backyard fruit trees, poultry and sheep rearing. These activities are supplemented by additional RDT programmes exclusively with SC/ST communities, including housing, community health, education, and savings and credit. All programmes are implemented through beneficiary groups that are involved in decision making and management.

Before coming to the assessment it is relevant to note that the programme does not strictly adhere to boundaries defined by hydrological units. In the interests of social cohesion, the programme essentially works with the village as a unit, whose area broadly conforms to a micro-watershed. However, technical design takes into account the upstream and downstream implications of the various physical activities. Annex 5 presents some of these features relating to water harvesting structures.

4.1 Cultivated land:
The objective of the programme is to improve the carrying capacity of cultivable land and to increase agricultural production to an optimum and sustainable level. The optimum nature of increased production may be assessed in terms of technical aspects as well as socio-economic or distributional aspects. A sustainable increase in production suggests that it does not deplete the natural productive capacity of the land and hence holds good in the long term (say 10-15 years). These issues are discussed separately for upland and for lowland.

4.11 Upland
The activities on upland fields are earthen bunding or pebble bunding (where there is high pebble concentration on the soil surface); waste weirs (arresting gully formation in fields); planting and dibbling on field bunds; improved cultivation practices; and mango orchards.

AF has modified standard parameters of soil and water conservation measures in line with farmers’ concerns to have reasonable field dimensions and ease in ploughing. These tend to do away with bunds along the slope and to increase the distance between bunds across the slope. The emphasis is therefore on soil concentration and a certain degree of moisture conservation, rather than on maximising runoff control. Seeds of *Pongamia pinata* and *Glyricidia spp.* dibbled on earthen bunds come up fairly well and natural grasses provide good cover.
In line with recommendations of the Acharya N G Ranga Agricultural University, AF has been promoting a number of improvements in groundnut cultivation. Farmers have taken well to ploughing across the slope (facilitated by the presence of bunds across the slope), seed treatment (to check pest and disease), intercropping with red gram and early weeding. They are less receptive to manuring (due to low availability of manure), higher seed and fertiliser rate (reluctance to invest more in an uncertain crop), and leaving dead furrows (seen as a waste of space). AF has also tried to promote castor (which was found less drought tolerant than groundnut).

The combination of soil and water conservation measures and improved cultivation practices seems to result in a 10% increase in groundnut yield. This figure is based on a general impression held by AF as well as by farmers, rather than on actual data. It is presumed that better yield is experienced in years of ‘good’ rainfall as well as years of ‘not so good’ rainfall, compared to groundnut grown on untreated upland in the vicinity. However, when crops fail in the area, they also fail in the treated upland. Again, there is no data to qualify these observations.

Crop diseases and pests are serious problems in the area. Farmers are generally reluctant to invest in their control as rainfall and consequently, returns, are highly uncertain. AF took up demonstration with a large number of farmers in the 2000 and 2001 seasons. In the 2000 demonstration of leaf spot control it was found that pod filling was better, pod yield was 36% higher and fodder was more palatable. Results of demonstration of stem rot control showed that 37% less plants were affected and the plant population was 9% higher. AF has been giving wide publicity to measures that prevent and control the incidence of the red hairy caterpillar. These measures include light traps, bonfires, mechanical collection and burning, deep summer ploughing, growing trap crops like cowpea and castor, besides use of chemical dust at the initial stages of attack.
Mango orchards are promoted as a means to help farmers withstand the periodic crop failure due to drought. Mango saplings need to be watered only during the first two summers. An economic yield is expected after the seventh years, and the net income is estimated at Rs. 5000-6000/ acre. Predictably, there is a marked difference between plant survival and growth in upland (with pot watering) compared to lowland (with irrigation). AF is also promoting tamarind plantation. Trials with ber were not encouraging due to pest attack.

*From the technical point of view,* the increase in production from upland is certainly positive, although AF sees the scope for further improvement. It would be useful to consider the following measures:

- Increase the sub-soil moisture regime with off-farm measures (such as gully plugs) in the upper reaches of gullies and streams. Currently, rainwater harvesting is only for the purpose of groundwater recharge, and is confined to the lower reaches of streams.
- Continue to attempt to reduce the distance between bunds across the slope, and to increase the length of such bunds where possible
- Continue to reinforce better cultivation practices
- Launch a major initiative to help control pest and disease attacks
- Carry out studies in sample villages (stratified by type of soil and topography) to quantify the relationship between upland treatment and crop productivity in normal, sub normal and drought years

*From the socio-economic point of view,* better upland agriculture is certainly a crucial intervention, as all farmers (whether marginal, small or large) own such land. Further, programme support is provided to all farmers that wish to participate.

*From the point of view of sustainability,* the investment in upland does enhance the productive capacity of the land over the long term. It is clear that farmers can, and do, maintain the bunds and waste weirs on their respective fields. Also, they have adopted a number of new practices to the extent that are likely to adhere to them in the future. On these counts it does seem that the increased agricultural production on upland is sustainable.
On the other hand, a sustained increase in production does not necessarily translate into a consistent increase in income. While groundnut oil prices have been generally stable during the nineties, trade liberalisation has resulted in the import of cheaper substitutes such as palm oil. This has reduced the demand for groundnut oil from lower segments of the market. AF reports that this adversely affects groundnut farmers. Along with other NGOs and civil society groups, AF is already taking up this issue to press for the highest possible import duties to protect domestic groundnut farmers.

4.12 Lowland

The activities on lowland are construction of check dams and check walls in streams; and construction of percolation tanks. Priority is given to repairing existing structures, and of locating the amenities close to those who need them most. AF has progressively made changes in the design of these structures to improve construction quality and to lower costs. The effectiveness of these structures is well established, which is impressive considering the fact that most of the on-site supervision is done by non-technical staff that has been trained in-house. The link between water harvesting and groundwater recharge is obvious.

During the last six years a number of new wells have come up the villages visited (18 in Mallapuram, 17 in K.D Palli, 8 in P. Yaleru, and 6 in H. R Palli). In some places old wells that were unused for some years have now become functional. The increase in irrigated area varies from 0-50% in these villages (it would be useful to check how much of this can be directly attributed to the intervention). Farmers report a greater diversity of crops and assured crop yields. Five year old mango orchards have already started giving economic yield. Some amount of medium land (or lower upland) has also become irrigable. Thus, lowland farmers now have a greater degree of food, fodder and income security and are less vulnerable in years of drought. None of these changes have, however, been documented.

From a technical point of view, the improved crop production on lowland due to augmented groundwater aquifers is certainly optimal. Nevertheless, AF sees the potential to further increase production through better pest and disease control, as in the case of upland. It would therefore be useful to:

- Launch a major initiative for pest and disease control
- Conduct studies in sample villages on the quantitative and qualitative impact of groundwater recharge
From a socio-economic point of view, this increase is sub-optimal. While the programme invests in increasing groundwater recharge, the benefits only accrue to farmers in the command area that either have, or can afford, a borewell (which costs about Rs. 65,000). This means that less endowed farmers do not have the opportunity of similar gain. Two options may be considered to balance the distribution of benefits of irrigation:

- Some priority could be given to constructing water harvesting structures at (technically suitable) sites where upland farmers singly or collectively resolve to invest in borewells. This would dilute the existing priority given to sites with a large number of existing borewells downstream. Lift irrigation could be a viable alternative.
- AF could assist small and marginal farmers to avail of government subsidies and bank finance under existing minor irrigation schemes. It is already performing such a role in promoting biogas plants, smokeless chullahs and dairying.
- The programme could consider investing in group borewells for small and marginal farmers.
- Conduct studies in sample villages to examine the extent to which small and marginal farmers have access to the increased groundwater recharge.

From the point of view of sustainability, it is evident that the level of groundwater extraction exceeds that of recharge even though quantitative estimates are not available to establish this. Although AF advises farmers to grow less water intensive crops, farmers obviously try to maximise their returns in the short run. Given the fact that the region is already classified as a dark zone, this intervention is not sustainable in the long run. The existing policy and legal framework do not provide the necessary support to push for sustainable groundwater utilisation. AF is already voicing its concern on this matter at various forums. The question of sustainability of the water harvesting structures themselves is discussed in the next section.

4.2 Water resources

The programme aims to improve the carrying capacity of water resources. It does this by repairing and constructing water harvesting structures that recharge groundwater. While the stated objective does not include optimality and sustainability, it makes sense to discuss these aspects as water resources are closely linked to agricultural production.

From the technical point of view, the water harvesting structures clearly harness runoff that is usefully applied in irrigating crops. It is however possible to increase benefits through more sub-soil moisture conservation in upland, both on-field and
off-field (as discussed in the previous section).

From the socio-economic point of view, the structures are sub-optimal. There is scope for greater distributive benefit by siting structures where more upland farmers can avail of irrigation, and by assisting small and marginal farmers to access groundwater (as discussed in the previous section).

From the point of view of sustainability, the fate of the structures is not entirely certain. Although beneficiary farmers are expected to maintain the structures, at this stage it is difficult to say whether they will actually do so and for how long. While some amount of risk will remain, it would be useful to build some safeguards into the programme design, for instance:

- Farmers benefitting from a particular structure could give a written commitment to the gram sabha to maintain it; actual construction could be conditional to this
- A separate maintenance fund could be made for each structure, to which beneficiary farmers could make an annual contribution; actual construction could be conditional to raising a certain amount upfront

4.3 Grassland and land under vegetation

There are virtually no grasslands in the area, so this section is confined to land under vegetation. Common land largely consists of barren hillocks, tank foreshores and other patches of culturable waste. While some villages have considerable common land, others have only small area of such land. Where feasible, AF has supported protection of existing natural vegetation, and plantation of mixed species and of tamarind. All sites are protected by the village community.

Given the extreme degradation of hillocks and other common land, regeneration is often a very difficult task. Yet plants survive and village communities do protect such sites even though there is free grazing
elsewhere after the cropping season. This suggests that it is certainly possible to achieve a higher level of production. The plantations are still too young to estimate the quantum of such an increase.

Nevertheless, it does appear that the potential to regenerate common land is not extensive. Villages are compelled to earmark an area for grazing (particularly by goat and sheep) during the monsoon. Rocky land and salt affected soils are inherently unsuitable for treatment. Given the sometimes restricted area available for planting or protection, the per capita gains in terms of increased biomass or income could be relatively small. On the other hand, developed patches of common land could have useful implications for soil and moisture conservation. Equally, they could be a rallying point for collective action.

It would be useful to consider the following options in the future strategy to develop common land:

- Continue to regenerate common land as is being currently done; however the intended purpose, viz., economic gain, soil and water conservation, or simply collective action should be clear. In either case, it is important to link the activity to a permanent village institution responsible for protection and distribution of benefits.
- Where direct economic benefit (biomass or income) is likely, it makes sense to opt for high value plants and to invest in necessary land treatment. In some cases it may be possible to link the plantation with the village temple, as these bodies do manage such land and use the proceeds for extending credit in the village. It would be useful to study the role of temples in managing common land and the income derived from it.
- Where the main purpose is soil and water conservation, it is preferable to follow a low cost regeneration package, largely of non-browsable species.
- Planting and dibbling (of non browsable species) could also be carried out in gullies and stream that have higher moisture availability, particularly where water harvesting has already taken place.
4.4 People’s institutions

One of the aims of the programme is to organise and establish peoples’ institutions to conserve and manage natural resources and agricultural production in a sustainable manner. AF organises the village community at four levels, viz., user groups or labour groups, the Watershed Committee, the Watershed Advisory Committee and the gram sabha.

Enormous amount of time and organisational skills go into motivating the community and its respective sections to constitute these entities, in communicating to them their respective roles and responsibilities, in training them and in guiding them. While their performance is closely monitored and AF has a say in financial matters, most decision making power rests with the community.

This system seems to work well as long as the physical work is being carried out in the village. It is difficult to say how the groups, the two committees and the gram sabha function after this. The upland farmers’ groups and labour groups would largely be redundant as individuals would look after their own interests. On the other hand, the lowland farmer groups still need to hold together to maintain the water harvesting structure (as discussed earlier). The Watershed Committee would probably disband as its executive functions would end. The Watershed Advisory Committee would probably cease to function, but the individual members would continue to command the respect they hold in the community.

The importance of the gram sabha outlives the programme implementation period. This institution must try and balance competing needs of different sections of the village community and conflicting demands on the village resources. These could stem as much from the measures introduced by the programme as from newly emerging issues. Operating the Watershed Development Fund could be one area of concern. Grazing and water utilisation could become contentious, particularly in times of drought.

Informally, AF continues to be in touch with the community after the implementation phase is over. However, it is yet to define its formal relations in the medium and long term. The following suggestions could be useful in doing so:

- Encourage the gram sabha to continue to meet twice a year even after the programme implementation period, with AF staff attending the event purely as observers
- Continue to support some activities, however small, that keep some level of collective or group action alive (dibbling, planting, agriculture demonstration, or training)
People from these villages could play an important role in training people from new villages in the programme

Introduce a participatory system of impact monitoring to track changes in resource use and productivity, as a precursor to taking further measures if and when called for. Such changes could be discussed at gram sabha meetings

Consider the feasibility of remodelling the Watershed Development Fund as one of annual contributions that are rationalised not on the basis of costs (that are large, variable, and only incurred once) but on the basis of benefits (that are modest, fairly uniform and earned over a period of time). The ability of farmers to part with large sums of cash upfront, is severely limited. In fact, it is quite remarkable that AF has been able to mobilise the current level of contributions. Nevertheless, it is obvious that the benefits of irrigation outweigh those of rainfed farming. This differential must be clearly reflected in the quantum of contribution in order to reinforce the principle of equity. Annual contributions to the fund could help it hedge against inflation. A larger fund would increase the opportunities to finance activities for community welfare. This would help to keep alive an institutional mechanism of collective action.

4.5 Gender equity

The programme aims to focus the attention of women and men on gender equity and enhance the role and participation of women in land use and management at household as well as community level

Women’s development as a route to gender equity is a strong focus of RDT and one that is central to AF as well. This is evident in the programme concept, design and operating systems, as well as in the manner of implementation. In fact, even before the programme starts in a village, RDT’s health, education, housing and income and savings programmes have already taken several steps towards gender equity (albeit among SC/ST families alone).

The programme has several measures to involve women, including in decision making and management. These are listed below.

- Households interested in participating in the programme must enroll in the gram sabha on payment of Rs. 11 per member. Each household must be represented by one man as well as one woman.
- Each year about 30 women from each village are to attend a training programme at the village level, on the importance of their participation, and in technical aspects
- Women constitute at least 40% of the members of the Watershed Committees. In fact, four villages have all-woman committees. In a village where men from different factions do not want to be seen cooperating (even though they may do so behind the scenes), forming a women’s committee is a safe, non-controversial option.
- Both men and women members of the Watershed Committee are trained in the programme concepts (including the role of women) and management systems
- Men and women labourers are paid equal wages in the programme. This is not the norm when farmers hire labour to work in their fields; in many of the watershed villages there has been a shift towards payment of equal wages.
- The presence and participation of women at meetings held by AF staff (very many of which are held to educate visitors) is greatly emphasised.
- AF promotes various household level largely involving women, viz., biogas, smokeless chullahs, kitchen gardens, backyard fruit tree plantation, dairying, sheep rearing and poultry keeping.

The programme certainly draws the attention of the village community to gender equity. Women seem to be well aware of various dimensions of the programmes, are articulate and enthusiastically express their views. While representation of women on the Watershed Committee may not have been spontaneous, AF finds that women members do take responsibility and perform competently. Thus, the programme has definitely enhanced the role and participation of women at the community level. Due to lack of time the review team did not explore this aspect at the household level.

In order to further strengthen the element of gender equity, it may be useful to:
- Intensify the household activities with women. Although this was not studied carefully, it appears that these activities are somewhat peripheral to the programme.
- Encourage Watershed Committees to nominate women members to preside and be signatories to the project account
- Have more women’s organisers in AF. At present there are just 3 for 65 villages.
- Explore the possibility of a formal linkage with the women’s development sector in RDT

4.6 Non-farm and off-farm income generation

An objective of the programme is to promote non-farm and off-farm income generation and employment opportunities for labour groups of men and women.

Families that have little or no land generally live by agricultural labour, both in the village and at distant locations. Most (but not all) of them belong to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, the primary target group of RDT. Providing such families with a secure and fair source of employment is a major concern of the watershed programme. During the programme implementation period, each family in the labour groups is able to earn about Rs. 40,000 over five years on an average. This is a sizeable amount of money that is earned within the village and through a fair system of payment (interestingly, it corresponds to the average income earned by cultivating groundnut on a 5 acre plot of land). Apart from meeting basic needs, some families manage to repay debts, to pay for their children’s higher education, to buy productive assets or to acquire consumer durables. Many invest in gold ornaments, and a few in bank deposits. Around five consecutive years of assured employment in their respective villages can obviously help the families to recover from past economic crises and achieve a modest quality of life. But this may not last for long.

The programme increases crop production in upland as well as lowland, neither of which generates a significant amount of additional employment. On the other hand, an increase in irrigated area in some villages, and a shift from groundnut to, say, paddy, results in an incremental demand for agricultural labour. AF estimated the labour input in paddy and groundnut at 129 versus 68 persondays/ ha respectively (of course not all operations would be carried out by hired labour). Equally, a shift from groundnut to, say, mango would reduce the demand for labour. Evidently, agriculture in the area does not have the capacity to create very many more jobs for the landless, and for marginal farmers.

Agricultural labour outside the village is one option that people are exercising. Seasonal migration is an annual feature that intensifies during drought. This is accompanied by the increased workload of women, irregular attendance in schools, and adverse health impacts on the family. The labour market certainly provides an income to such families, however it does not enable them to accumulate enough wealth to improve their standard of living. This underlines the importance of exploring supplementary livelihood options, as well as of investing in social development of wage labour-dependent families.

AF has some amount of experience in ventures such as making agarbattis, jute bags, embroidery and kalankari. Like most NGOs, it is not well equipped to deal with markets forces, whether for goods or for services. Nevertheless, it has various strengths that could be tapped to run an efficient and effective livelihood support programme. It has the ability and the experience to organise groups and to build their technical and managerial capacity. New avenues of local contribution, savings and credit have already been created and there seems to be local capacity in the villages to manage finances fairly well. Decades of RDT’s educational activities have produced a large number of young men and women who would possibly be receptive and adaptive to the idea of entrepreneurship.

Theoretically, opportunities must exist in crop processing (paddy, groundnut, pulses), biomass processing (agave, palmyra), fruit processing (mango, tamarind, papaya), to make intermediate or final products. Another stream of activities could relate to services such as masonry, carpentry, blacksmithy, mechanical repairs, and hiring out implements. It would be necessary to employ an appropriate social, technical and economic framework both to generate livelihood options, and to evaluate them in the local context.
The Indian Grameen Services (a section 25 company, based in Hyderabad) is part of the BASIX groups of companies whose mission is to provide credit and technical services to improve rural livelihood, including of women and poor sections of society. It is yet to operate in Anantpur in a big way, but pilot lending operations have begun in Hindupur, Narpalla, Battala Palli, Garladinne, Pedda Vadugur, Patha Kotha Cheruvu and Pamidi mandals. These center around dairying and the apparel sector. It plans to explore other options such as processing groundnut, maize and paddy to make confectionary (such as chiki) and other food items; and rearing of silk cocoons.

Although IGS is in touch with AF, the idea of collaboration is yet to be explored. In association with the New Economics Foundation, United Kingdom, IGS has designed a training framework to analyse livelihood interventions, having reviewed cases such as Operation Flood, PRADAN, SIFFS and Goras Bhandar. As a starting point IGS could be invited to organise such a training workshop with AF. This could help AF to design a livelihood support component of the watershed programme as well as an overall strategy towards income generation in the area.

In order to initiate a livelihood support programme, it would be useful for AF to consider the following:

- Intensify household activities with women
- Train men and women as skilled construction labour. The programme expenditure on skilled labour is considerable and the shortage of hands is often met by people from nearby towns and villages.
- Closely examine the performance of self help groups; particularly their ability to handle accounts, to maximise fund-utilisation and to invest in income generating activities.
- Once again consider ways to extend community health and education services to all poor families (these are currently available to SC/ST families). RDT has tried this before and abandoned it due to difficulties in ensuring social cohesion and the tendency of services to be dominated by the resourceful. However, the watershed programme could provide AF with a suitable platform to give this another try.
- Jointly organise a training workshop with IGS to evaluate alternative livelihood interventions.
Chapter 5

Conclusions and recommendations

The core of RDT’s philosophy, goals role and strategy is to strengthen the position of the rural poor in civil society. Most of its field activities in the sectors of education, community health, women’s development, and housing focus on the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, the most disadvantaged sections of society. Its services for the physically and mentally challenged, and its medical facilities are open to all needy people. The watershed programme has an emphasis on assisting small and marginal farmers and on providing fair employment to agricultural labourers. It also seeks to create a space for these people in newly created village institutions. Roughly a third of the programme is implemented in collaboration with government. This gives RDT/AF the opportunity to directly demonstrate to the administration, measures that are inclusive of the poor.

The commitment to the poor goes much beyond sectoral programmes. Its credibility helps RDT to argue the case of the poor in policy making forums, with the media and with other non government organisations. To capitalise on its position of strength, AF would like to initiate a programme to train and build the capacity of government functionaries. This is seen as another step towards replicating its approach to watershed management. Given the fact that AF has a collaborative relationship with the administration, the prospects for such an initiative are certainly bright.
Clearly, RDT is engaged in a far sighted, mature and concerted effort to give the poor their rightful place in civil society. Nevertheless, there is still a long way to go. The village panchayat is a case in point. In order to give them a legitimate in local self government, a number of seats are reserved for women, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. However, apart from holding regular elections to panchayats, the state government is yet to empower them. Without directly working with panchayats, AF coopts some its members into its watershed programme, thus exposing them to a genuine democratic process. Further, it encourages communities to withstand divisive forces and put up consensus candidates for reserved seats in the local panchayat elections. These two measures partly help to build local capacity for self government.

The ecology sector strategy is consistent in its focus as well as adaptive to emerging needs. It is geared towards effective implementation of a highly participative programme that has the potential for far reaching impact. The watershed programme is designed for comprehensive development of land and water resources. This is expected to increase land productivity and generate employment. Farmers benefitting from increased groundwater recharge report major improvement in cultivation. Farmers benefitting from improved dryland agriculture report moderate gain in productivity. Labour dependent households report investments in repaying old debts and in childrens’ education, apart from savings and consumption. They also report that there is no need to resort to migration during the years that the physical work is being implemented. While this review attempted to capture the impact of the intervention, many aspects need to be studied further for a better understanding.

Although land is virtually the only economic asset in the villages, there are obvious limitations to a land based intervention. First, the poorest families own little or no land and distribution of holdings is skewed. Second, there are limits to the extent that productivity of dryland agriculture can be improved in the face of poor land capability and recurrent drought. Third, common land is not generally available for regeneration. In this context, the review suggests some options to strengthen the existing efforts to achieve the intended effects and enhance impact. The detailed analysis of chapter 4 leads to recommendations in seven broad areas:

- **In depth study in sample villages**, particularly of the impact on upland productivity and groundwater recharge under conditions of normal and subnormal rainfall; the performance of self help groups and the manner in which temple funds function

- **Enhancing upland productivity**, through increased investment in moisture retention and mechanisms to irrigate upland; and through a major initiative to control crop disease and pests

- **Strengthening distributive equity**, through increased investment in upland, including mechanisms to irrigate upland; and redefining the structure of cost sharing

- **Strengthening peoples’ institutions**, through measures to perpetuate gram sabha meetings; redefine the watershed development fund; and a system of participatory impact monitoring

- **Strengthening gender equity**, by intensifying household activities; encouraging communities to place women in leadership positions; reinforcing women staff; and, creating a formal linkage with the women’s development sector

- **Strengthening off-farm and non-farm livelihood**, by intensifying household activities, particularly with women; imparting training for skilled labour; and conducting a training workshop to evaluate options for a livelihood support intervention

- **Expanding the ambit of education and community health services**, to cover economically marginalised families from all sections of the village community
Annex 1
Schedule of visit to Anantapur

September 17, 2001
- Preliminary meeting with Shri Malla Reddy, Director Ecology
- Meeting with the staff of AF

September 18, 2001
- Visit to AF office in Kalyandurg; meeting with area staff
- Visit to village Mallapuram; observed watershed programme activities; discussion with programme participants, Watershed Development Committee, Village Development Committee, labour groups, women’s Self-Help Groups, and with disabled persons’ group.
- Visit to village Kadiridevarapalli; observed watershed programme activities; discussion with programme participants, households engaged in dairying, members of Watershed Development Committee and labour groups.
- Visit to a nursery managed by AF at Mallikanur, and to a mini milk chilling centre
- Meeting with Ms. Anne Ferrer, Associate Programme Director, RDT (and in charge of women and child development and health sector)

September 19, 2001
- Visit to village Hanimireddipalli; observed watershed programme activities; discussion with programme participants, Watershed Development Committee, Watershed Advisory Committee, labour groups and women’s Self Help Groups
- Visit to Mandal community centre at village Atmakur; discussion with community
- Visit to village P. Yaleru; observed watershed development activities; discussion with programme participants and Watershed Development Committee.
- Visit to village Srigampalli that has alkaline land; observed a farm pond

September 20, 2001
- Meeting with Project Director, District Rural Development Agency and Project Director, Desert Development Programme
- Visit to the RDT hospital and residential school for children whose hearing and speech is impaired

September 21, 2001
- Studied documents and had discussions with AF staff at Anantapur
- Visited village Kariganipalli on the occasion of a woman having been elected to the post of sarpanch in a reserved constituency; observed RDT’s work in rural housing; discussion with community, and with scheduled caste families

September 22, 2001
- Debriefing meeting with AF staff
Annex 2

List of documents consulted


AF. 2001b. *Village level information* (compiled for the four villages visited by the review team)


http://www.andhrapradesh.com/
### Annex 3
#### Village level information

### Household information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. no</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mallapuram</th>
<th>Kadiridevarapalli</th>
<th>Hanimireddipalli</th>
<th>P. Yaleru</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Village population: total</td>
<td>1,340</td>
<td>1,012</td>
<td>823</td>
<td>1,748</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>male</td>
<td>633</td>
<td>531</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>female</td>
<td>707</td>
<td>481</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Number of households: SC/ST total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>total</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Female headed households</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Landless households: SC/ST total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>total</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Households owning upland</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Households owning irrigated land:</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SC/ST total</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Households owning bullocks</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Households owning cows</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Households owning buffaloes</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Households owning sheep</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Households owning goat</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Land resources (area in acres)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. no</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mallapuram</th>
<th>Kadiridevarapalli</th>
<th>Hanimireddipalli</th>
<th>P. Yaleru</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Village area</td>
<td>2,179</td>
<td>2,485</td>
<td>1,230</td>
<td>3,377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Area available for rainfed cultivation</td>
<td>1,983</td>
<td>1,971</td>
<td>995</td>
<td>3,012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Area available for irrigated cultivation</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Vacant area such as uncultivable waste/ barren hillocks, tank foreshores etc.</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Average size of upland holding</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Distribution of upland holdings:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Upto 5 acres</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 - 10 acres</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 – 15 acres</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; 15 acres</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Average size of irrigated holding</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Distribution of irrigated holdings:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>upto 1 acre</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 - 2 acres</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; 2 acres</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Livestock population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. no.</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mallapuram</th>
<th>Kadiridevarapalli</th>
<th>Hanimireddipalli</th>
<th>P. Yaleru</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Number of bullocks</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Number of Cows</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Number of buffalo</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Number of goat</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>1,115</td>
<td>506</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Number of sheep</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>1,985</td>
<td>5,060</td>
<td>1,930</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Increase in number of borewells and dug cum borewells

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. no</th>
<th>Number of new wells</th>
<th>Mallapuram</th>
<th>Kadiridevarapalli</th>
<th>Hanimireddipalli</th>
<th>P. Yaleru</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Upto 1994</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Total in October 2001</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Increase in command area of all irrigation sources (in acres)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. no</th>
<th>Additional command area.</th>
<th>Mallapuram</th>
<th>Kadiridevarapalli</th>
<th>Hanimireddipalli</th>
<th>P. Yaleru</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Upto 1994</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Total in October 2001</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: AF 2001b
Annex 4

Examples of technical circulars

Accion Fraterna/ Rural Development Trust

Ecology Sector – Water Harvesting – Engineering Division

Technical Circular No.2, dated 03-11-2000

Sub: Construction of Water Harvesting Structures – Procedures – Regarding

In a check dam the main components are weir, bank connections and the bund. In a few cases, I have observed that, bund is being formed prior to the construction of weir, leaving a gap of 2 to 3 m. for bank connections. This gap is being filled later after the construction of weir and bank connections. This is an unsound practice for the fact that the gap filling cannot be compacted well and the bund will also not be monolithic due to lack of bonding and cohesion. During heavy inflows this can lead to piping, out flanking subsequently causing failure of the bund. Hence it is advised to complete the masonry structure first and then only start bund formation.

(Khaleel Ahmed)

Subject Matter Specialist

To: All Eng. Supervisors
Copies to: Mr. Y V Malla Reddy- Director Ecology, for information
Mr. B Raghu Rami Reddy, Technical Director, for information
All Area Team Leaders (Ecology) for information
Office file
Accion Fraterna/ Rural Development Trust

Ecology Sector – Water Harvesting – Engineering Division

Technical Circular No.2, dated 03-11-2000

Sub: Construction of Water Harvesting Structures – Guidelines on calculation of cost/ cu.m. of storage – Regarding

All Engineering staff are advised to adopt the number of fillings per annum in accordance with the storage capacity of the structure, as per the chart given below, while preparing estimates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Storage Capacity (cum.)</th>
<th>No. of fillings per annum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1416</td>
<td>2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2832</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5663</td>
<td>1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8495</td>
<td>1.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11327</td>
<td>1.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14157</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16900</td>
<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19822</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22657</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25483</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28317</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cost/Cum of water storage can be calculated as under:

Annual storage  No. of fillings X storage capacity
Cost/ cum of storage  Estd. Cost/Annual Storage

The cost/ cum of storage should not exceed Rs. 26/-

(Khaleel Ahmed)
Subject Matter Specialist

To: All Eng. supervisors.

Copies to: Mr. Y.V. Malla Reddy – Director Ecology for information
Mr. B.Raghu Rami Reddy, Technical Director for information
All Area Team Leaders (Ecology) for information
Office file.
Design features of water harvesting structures

Rainwater harvesting in the watershed programme includes the following:

a) Constructing new water harvesting structure like checkdams, percolation tanks, check walls and farm ponds
b) Repairing and renovating the existing breached checkdams and percolation tanks
c) Conversion of old and breached tanks into percolation tanks.

In respect of repairing and renovating the existing breached structures, as well as conversion of old and breached tanks into percolation tanks as far as possible, mere renovation is being taken up to bring it to its original standards and put the structures in use. In respect of constructing new structures, certain criteria are being followed in selecting the site and the type of the structure. These are as follows.

Criteria for selection of sites:

To the extent possible, the following criteria are being adopted for selection of sites for locating the structure.

- There should exist a vagu with good flanks to accommodate the structure economically and with required head of water and freeboard.
- There should be at least 2 wells/bore wells for checkdams and 6 for percolation tanks to get the benefit.
- The foreshore should have good percolating medium.
- The arable lands getting submerged in the foreshore should be as minimum as possible.
- The catchment area at the proposed site should not be less than 20ha.
- The average annual rainfall should not be less than 380 mm.
- There should be possibility to leave the surplus water downstream without hindrance.
- The foreshore area should, as far as possible, be a saucer shaped one to enable to store as much water as possible and to provide wide percolating area.
- The structure at the site should not hamper the lower riparian rights.
- At the proposed site, as far as possible, the vagu should have straight approach and surplus channels for at least 15m both on upstream and downstream.
- On the upstream of the proposed site the vagu should not have steep bed slope.
- The impounding capacity of the checkdam should not exceed 5000 cubic meters, while that of percolation tank the limit is 20,000 cubic meters.
Criteria for selecting the type of structures

- Where the catchment area is less than 100 acres: Earthen checkdam with flush escape
- Where the catchment area is more than 100 acres but less than 400 acres: Either masonry or composite type checkdams, i.e. masonry wall and earthen bunds with free overfall type weir, generally B.C. weir
- Where the catchment area is more than 400 acres: Here also either masonry type checkdam with core walls for bank connections or composite type with high coefficient weir.

All the above structures will be located on 1st to 3rd order vagus nearer to the periphery of the watersheds or in the middle of the watersheds. At or nearer the outlet of the watershed, a percolation tank will be located with earthen bund and masonry weir like, BC weir or HC weir, either with core walls or abutments and wings for bank connections according to the depth of impounding of water. However, the structures will be located in such a way that the distance between two consecutive checkdams will be at least ½ km and that between two consecutive percolation tanks will be 1 km to enable to best utilize the percolation zone beneath them, in full.

Steps in designing a checkdam/ percolation tank

- Collection of rainfall particulars of the influencing rain gauge station for the last 40 years and determining the year of 75% dependability.
- Determination of the type of catchment, i.e., good, average and bad, depending upon topography, vegetation, obstructions, slopes etc.
- Based on the type of catchment and rainfall, determining the yield from the catchment using Strange's table and fixing the capacity of the checkdam/ percolation tank.
- By using toposheets, arriving at the catchment area of the proposed site.
- Using Dicken's formula, i.e., \( Q = \frac{cm^3}{4} \) determination of the maximum flood discharge. The following values of coefficient of run-off "C" is to be taken while calculating the discharge.
  - Good catchment: \( C = 1200 \)
  - Average catchment: \( C = 1000 \)
  - Bad catchment: \( C = 750 \)
- By studying the topography at the site, determination of the MFL, FTL, type of weir required and arriving at the head of flow over the weir, and free board. Generally the free board is being adopted between 0.50 and 0.70 m.
- Using the formula \( Q = C_d L h_3 \) determination of the required length of the surplus weir. The following values for the coefficients of discharge are being adopted.
  - Flush escape: - 1.36
  - Broad crested weir: - 1.84
  - Narrow crested weir or high coefficient weir: - 2.20
- Depending upon the discharge, head of flow, the location of the weir, length available, and cost, the type of the weir will be determined.
- Based on the DBL and Slope of the vagu, the foundation level of the weir wall will be fixed.
- The scour depth using the formula Normal Scour Depth \( R = 1.35 \left( \frac{q^2}{f} \right)^{1/3} \) will be determined. In this organization, \( f \) is being taken as 2. Using this nominal scour depth, the maximum scour depth on upstream is determined as 1.50 \( R \) and that on downstream side as 2 \( R \) from MFL and the levels upto which U/s and D/s cut offs to be taken will be decided.]
• Depending upon the height of the structure, the section of the weir wall will be decided, and checked for stability at two conditions, i.e. when the water is at FTL and the second at the MFL. For checking the section with water at MFL, the tail water depth will be determined using the formula

\[ Th = Hx1.66(Dn)^{0.27} \]

where

\[ H = \text{Height of the weir wall} \]

\[ Dn = \frac{q^2}{gH^3} \]

Here \( q \) = discharge over the weir per meter run
\( g = \text{Gravitational constant, i.e., 9.81.} \)

The top width of the body wall will generally be provided as 45 cm.

• Length of the solid is being determined using the formula

\[ L = 2dc + 2\sqrt{dc \cdot Th} \]

where \( dc \) is the head of flow.

This will be checked for the creep by determining the creep length required using the formula \( L = CH \) where \( C \) is the creep coefficient, i.e., "6" for gravelly soil.

• The thickness of the solid apron will be determined by arriving at the residual head at the toe of the body wall, calculating the uplift pressure, and equating with the dead weight of the apron at that print.

• Length of the loose talus will be determined by using the formula \( L = 2H \) where \( H \) is the height of the body wall. This is subjected to a minimum of 2m. Generally the thickness of the talus is being provided at 0.45 m which will sustain launching action due to scour.
Seva Mandir, Udaipur
Chapter 1

Initiative, Mission, Goals, Strategies and Internal Organisation

Seva Mandir started work at the initiative of a few enlightened citizens 30 years ago. From a very modest beginning, it has evolved into an organisation that is people centred. The criteria for undertaking any programme is that it strengthens village self reliance and autonomy. All programmes are based on the active involvement of village groups and their willingness to sustain what is initiated.

ICCO has been supporting different aspects of Seva Mandir’s programmes since 1980, and EZE has been involved with Seva Mandir since 1986. In 1990, Seva Mandir’s various programmes were integrated into a Comprehensive Plan, funded mainly by ICCO and EZE. The first phase was implemented from April 1990 to September 1994, and the second phase (incorporating the learnings of the first phase) started in October 1994 and will finish in March, 1999. The present project flows from these past collaborations and would cover the period of April 1999 to March 2002.

**Mission:** Seva Mandir has a long-standing commitment to people’s empowerment and self-reliance, through restoration of the disadvantaged populations’ ability to engage the resources available to them. Its mission is “…to make real the idea of society consisting of free and equal citizens, who are able to come together and solve the problems that affect them in their particular contexts. The commitment is to work for a paradigm of development and governance that is democratic and polyarchic. It is to institutionise the idea that development and governance is not only to be left to the State and its formal bodies like the legislature and the bureaucracy, but that citizens and their association should engage separately and jointly with the State….. to constitute the conditions in which citizens of plural backgrounds and perspective can come together and deliberate on how they can work to benefit and empower the least advantaged in society.

However, the degree of Seva Mandir’s involvement in these villages varies from a single development activity, to providing an integrated presence in the village through the implementation of various programs under health, education, natural resource development and women’s unit. Seva Mandir is comprehensively involved in 535 villages, out of which, it was possible to do comprehensive development work in 50 villages so far. Internal and external problems need to be resolved in other villages, which will facilitate the taking up of land related work. The pace of the development process, is slow and tortuous, and needs to be accounted for while working.

Seva Mandir’s mission is to create strong independently functioning organisations of the poor through which both the position of the poor and the influence in local society is improved in a sustainable way. The agreement between ICCO/ EZE and Seva Mandir sets out the following *short-term and medium term objectives:*

- **Livelihood improvement:** by enhancing the productivity of resources owned by project beneficiaries and their organisations; increasing their access to resources through creation of new resources; and advocacy to support their access to state controlled lands.
- **Capability development:** by improving the literacy and health status of the project beneficiaries; reducing gender inequalities among them; and encouraging and supporting the emergence of people-centered leadership.
- **Institution building:** by fostering social cohesion and leadership; strengthening peoples’ associations and local institutions for self-managed development; and building a civic consciousness appropriate to democratic and egalitarian agendas, both at the organisational and the community level.

The *long term objective* is “…to create strong independently functioning organizations of poor through which both the position of the poor and the influence in local society is improved in a sustainable way.”
Seva Mandir strives to reorder social relations in favour of greater solidarity among the poor. All the programmes in Seva Mandir are committed towards the building of effective village institutions and thereby self-reliance among the members of the community. In order to carry out the above mentioned mandate in the next Plan, Seva Mandir will address the following areas of concerns:

- Strengthening sustainable livelihoods of village communities
- Building local capabilities to achieve well-being in terms of health, education and gender equal relations
- Creating autonomous village level institution and supporting organic leadership.

Overall the project hopes to make real the idea of civil society possessing the capacity to solve the problems of society separately and jointly with the state.

Strategy: The strategy formulated for implementation of the Third Comprehensive Plan builds on the interventions and the learnings of the First and Second Comprehensive Plans and strives to correct inadequacies faced earlier. The Third Comprehensive Plan centres on the construction of village institutions and consists of three broad components:

1. Creating capacity at the community level for self-development.
2. Creating capacity to avail of State created opportunities for development.
3. Creating capacity in Seva Mandir to help empower the village community effectively.

Some notable strategy divergences have been made from Second to the Third Comprehensive Plan. These include a central focus on building village institutions that are capable or development of the village. Shifting the balance of power in joint ventures from Seva Mandir to village groups, allowing the village to become the senior partner and increased investment in monitoring are some ends that the organisation does hope to achieve over the years.

Aims: Seva Mandir has concentrated its efforts on achieving the following aims:

1. Enhancing capabilities of villagers (literacy, health, gender relations): Seva Mandir strives to enhance the capabilities of the rural poor in terms of gaining literacy skills, better health status and freedom from oppressive gender relations. The initial endowments of the people in terms of capabilities is extremely poor. The level of women’s literacy is virtually non-existent among tribal women, and for men it is also extremely limited. On the health front, the situation is daunting because government facilities, even when they are created, are often not manned. The case for overcoming oppressive gender relationships is fortunately not so discouraging, even though the present status of women’s well being is very poor. There is no deep resistance to reducing gender inequalities among poor peasants especially in respect to tribal communities.

2. Improving livelihood options and resource endowments: There is widespread livelihood insecurity in the region amidst vast tracts of highly degraded land and under-utilised natural resources. The reason for this is the State control over natural resources and the lack of any interest to manage these resources in the interests of the poor. Local communities, are effectively denied a stake in the management of these resources. Though thwarted by State policies Seva Mandir aims to make a beginning in improving livelihood options by improving the productivity of resources owned by the local people and the local councils. It aims also to help people improve access to water resources by building small dams and setting lift irrigation schemes. Advocacy to help people access state controlled lands is also an aim.

3. Building social cohesion and leadership: Central aim of Seva Mandir is to rebuild cohesion among the rural poor. Ironically while the tribal society is not sharply stratified along economic and social lines, State centred development to alleviate poverty has fragmented village solidarity and co-opted community leaders. The concentration of resources and authority with state functionaries causes the rural poor to seek patronage rather than self organise to promote their
development. The aim of Seva Mandir is to create a social base for village institutions and leaders to effectively undertake development and represent the interests of the poor.

4. **Strengthening people’s associations and local institutions for self managed development:** The lack of cohesion and the lack of livelihood security has vitiated people’s capacity to organise themselves and self develop. The State and the elite interests have successfully undermined the authority of local institutions by making people dependent on external assistance and compromising their autonomy. For instance while entitlements to forest lands are not permitted, gaining illicit access and being compromised is commonplace. Seva Mandir’s aim is to help people with the means to create their own institutions for development and governance.

5. **Building a civic consciousness appropriate to democratic and egalitarian agendas:** This region lacks a strong democratic tradition. The dominant values in society are patriarchal, paternalistic and hierarchical. Seva Mandir’s aim is to change these values so that people within the organisation and at the level of the community are able to create the conditions for achieving democratic and egalitarian agendas.

**Mission, Strategy & Programmes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mission</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make real the idea of society consisting of free and equal citizens, who are able to come together and solve the problems that affect them in their particular contexts. To constitute the conditions in which citizens of plural backgrounds and perspective can come together and deliberate on how they can work to benefit and empower the least advantaged society.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strengthening sustainable livelihoods of village communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building local capabilities to achieve well-being in terms of health, education and gender equal relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating autonomous village level institution and supporting organic leadership</td>
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<tr>
<th>Programmes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural Resource Development Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education, Women and Child Development, Health Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People’s Management School Gram Vikas Kosh Programme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Internal Organisation:** Seva Mandir has a matrix kind of organizational structure where the functionaries are accountable to the programme units as well as the area/zonal heads. Instead of a hierarchical administrative culture, it is interactive and transparent horizontal organization. Seva Mandir is staffed by 220 full time and 737 village level paraworkers. As they expressed the paraworkers are Seva Mandir’s sensors to the communities and work towards fulfillment of the organisation’s goal of making village groups autonomous and self-reliant. Most of the field
workers are drawn from the local area and communities who are familiar with the geography, culture, traditions and concerns of the target area and groups with which Seva Mandir works. The senior positions are filled with professionals in the technical and management fields. Seva Mandir has been able to accommodate individuals with often diverse backgrounds and styles; be it professionals, technical experts, retired government persons, foreign and Indian volunteers. There is a culture of creating space to each one who wants to contribute. The staff described Seva Mandir as a thinking organization which gives individuals flexibility and freedom to grow, where their ideas and views are genuinely respected. Continuous dialogue and interaction with colleagues through review and planning meetings at the field, zone, unit and central level adds to the richness and holistic flavour of any endeavour. The number of women at all levels is commensurate with men, which also adds to organization's gender balance in its working.

**Funding Scenario:** Seva Mandir got a renewal of its funding for Third Comprehensive Plan from the consortium of ICCO, Holland, EZE, Germany and CIVA, Canada. In turn, ICCO and EZE together also raised funds from the European Union for Seva Mandir’s Third Plan. Added to this list of donors was Plan International with whom Seva Mandir commenced working in 1999. Plan International’s focus is the welfare of children. Plan International supported Seva Mandir with grant funding for the Third Comprehensive Plan in 1999-2000, which will continue during 2000-2001. The Ford Foundation, Sir Ratan Tata Trust and the central and state governments continued to support Seva Mandir among other donors. CIVA has also provided an additional grant for the completion of the Referral Health Centre at Kojawara.
Chapter 2

External Context & Seva Mandir

Topography: The topography of Udaipur district features mainly rocks and hills. Part of the Aravalli Mountain Range, the area was once forested but is now excessively degraded. Of the total area under cultivation in the district (17.58%), only 28% of the cropped area is under some form of irrigation (irrigated cropped area constitutes 2.7% of the total land in the district). Farming in Udaipur is geared primarily to meeting subsistence needs. Nearly 50% of all the farm families in the district cultivate land under one hectare in size. The majority of these small and marginal farmers are from tribal and other disadvantaged communities, whose resource base is extremely limited. A rapidly deteriorating economic base in the area has negatively impacted on the productivity of these farmers. Recurrently faced with the spectre of drought in the Aravallis, they often have to cope with situations of food and income shortages. The district has suffered drought for 3 consecutive years; in the year 2001 though, first spell of monsoon was greeted with high expectations. Yet, one third of the villages have been declared famine-hit by the year end. Thus, there is a high rate of seasonal migration to nearby cities, industrial centres and mines by marginal farmers in search of wage labour to supplement their agricultural income.

The 535 villages covered by Seva Mandir constitute the remote tribal pockets of Udaipur District, where most of the rural population is tribal and lives below the poverty line. Seasonal migration from villages is high as only 32.92% of the population has work for more than 6 months of the year.

Socio-economic Milieu: These areas lack sufficient medical and educational facilities and the isolation of the rural habitations adds to the problems of accessibility of services. Child marriages, female illiteracy and low enrollment of girls reflect the wide gender disparity in the rural areas. Rajasthan remains one of the least developed states in India. The Aravalli’s (a major mountain system of the state) used to be densely forested with 50-60 percent deep forest cover but today only 10 percent of the total forest cover remains. As a result there has been excessive soil erosion and the ground water level has also dropped significantly. Further, between 1957 and 2001 Rajasthan has experienced 30 years of severe drought conditions.

UDAIPUR AT A GLANCE:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Area</th>
<th>11630 Sq. Km.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Normal Rainfall</td>
<td>650 mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>21.42 Lakhs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>4.90 Lakhs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>12.97 Lakhs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>13.35 Lakhs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M : F Ratio</td>
<td>1000 : 972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy Rate</td>
<td>59.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>74.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>37.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Labour</td>
<td>6.53 Lakhs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue Divisions</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Blocks</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Village Panchayats</td>
<td>498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue Villages</td>
<td>2235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamlets</td>
<td>2415</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Census 2001 ; Distt. Statistical Abstract

Udaipur and Rajsamand districts lie in the southern part of the Aravalli hill region of the state. The people’s (68% of whom are tribal), main economic activity is agriculture, which is primarily rain fed as
only 13.69% of the cultivable land in the area is irrigated. Most households cannot meet their annual requirements of food grains from agriculture therefore supplemental income is from livestock and migration for wage labour.

Historically, the princely state of Mewar was feudal. The unequal social structure of the area was further reinforced by the patron-client relationship between the lower castes, the large tribal population of Mewar, and the landlord class, including functionaries of the State.

The context of the poor in this region is defined by sharp structural constraints to improving livelihood and achieving well-being in terms of health, education and gender equality parameters. The area is characterised by lack of sufficient medical and educational facilities, which cause further problems like malnutrition, diseases, and infant and maternal mortality rate. Numerous constraints prevent the poor from participating in development programmes. Apart from capability constraints and restrictions on access to resources especially natural resources, the poor are also socially fragmented and it is difficult for them to come together and solve their many problems.

The economic systems led to an every increasing debt cycle, bonded labour, slavery, etc. In the present, the institutions of local self-government set up by the state, as also those exiting at the village level do not represent the agenda of the poor and disadvantaged. These institutions are dependent for their authority on the state and its functionaries. Very few civil society associations or institutions exist that can countervail their elite character.

**Institutional Context:** The Government of Rajasthan has shown its commitment to people centred infrastructure and social development programmes. Over the last three years policy measures relating to strengthening of local democracy and poverty alleviation schemes have been launched. What is probably missing is the antidote for administrative apathy that pervades at all the levels of government machinery, beginning from the cutting-edge level. However, “Prashasan Gaon Ke Sath” (Governance with Rural People), a campaign to administratively resolve plethora of problems relating to people in rural areas was launched on 2nd October, 2001, has proved to be considerably successful in addressing needs of rural folk.
Decentralisation: There were significant changes in the socio-economic context due to recurring drought and the institutional context of government has also changed. The move towards decentralised governance continues even as the second round of panchayat elections took place in 2000. In line with national policies, the state government has introduced major programmes for watershed management and joint forest management. In line with its own priorities, the state government launched a new programme for primary education and launched a major drive to improve the reach of social security especially for widows, elderly and disabled persons. Its programmes for community health, and savings and credit groups continue as before.

The smooth and regular elections to panchayats, and reservation for women and SCs and Scheduled Tribes are extremely welcome developments. The State government has reportedly transferred work relating to 19 departments (of the subjects mentioned in 11th Schedule). Centrally supported programs like Swarn Jayanti Swarojgar Yojana, Jawahar Gram Swarojgar Yojana, Employment Assurance Scheme, Indira Awas Yojana, Prime Minister Gramoday Yojana as also those under DPAP and DDP are also transferred to PRIs in so much as they should be approved in the Gram Sabha. On the other hand, panchayats are yet to be entrusted with functional powers and financial resources to become a meaningful player in the development process. Even in the event that they do, ridden as they are with social and political factionalism, it is doubtful if they will look after the needs of the poor. In this context it makes sense for Seva Mandir to continue to work with the village samuh, in order to strengthen livelihoods and capabilities. Yet, as the new panchayat system is still taking shape, it would be useful to explore the possibility of working with responsive panchayats. Seva Mandir can possibly take up a new programme in which capacity building of PRI leaders takes central focus.

The District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) is implementing a scheme for micro-watershed management in 160 villages in Udaipur district. A total of 12 such projects are entrusted to NGOs, 1 of which is handled by Seva Mandir. Similarly, the Forest Department is implementing JFM in about 200 villages. Here, NGOs have been permitted to work on 7 sites, of which 5 are managed by Seva Mandir. Incidentally, Seva Mandir is represented in related advisory / steering committees at the district level, the state level and national level.

Thus, while there appears to be plenty of space for Seva Mandir at the policy level, this is not true at the programme level. In some other areas, watershed schemes do allow for greater NGO involvement. On the other hand, JFM is primarily implemented by the government throughout the county. Both programmes are comprehensive in nature, with large unit costs and big budgets. With the current squeeze on expenditure, departments would naturally hold on to such programmes. Then again, there does not appear to be positive atmosphere for collaboration between NGOs (though Seva Mandir is generally looked up to) and government in Rajasthan. Consequently, it is unrealistic to expect that Seva Mandir could significantly increase its scale of watershed activities, or of JFM. A dialogue is however taking place with government officials to increase the space given to NGOs, there is some progress on this element.

In Jhadol, Seva Mandir formed a network of 40 villages FPCs working with the forest department under JFM. This has a crucial role in terms of liaising between the community and the department; promoting cooperation among villages; helping to resolve conflicts within villages; and helping to spread the message of JFM. This a highly constructive approach and one that must continue and grow.

Drought and initiative by Seva Mandir: The one thing that loomed over everything else was the drought for consecutive three years. The total precipitation received was just about a third of the average annual precipitation of 620 mm. In terms of the scarcities, while food and fodder production had been minimal, it was the drinking water scarcity that was affecting people (and animals) in an immediate sense. Seva Mandir initiated works to help in this situation right from January 2000. Although the primary goal of drought relief activities was to reduce the drinking water crisis, additional gains were achieved with employment generation, the creation of permanent assets and improved water and soil conservation practices. Drought-relief activities included individual and community well deepening, farm bunding, afforestation and medical assistance. These drought relief activities were in addition to the drought-proofing and water management work undertaken as part of Seva Mandir’s Natural Resource Management Programme. In terms of total expenditure, farm bunding was most important employment generation...
activity. About 10,200 households benefited from this activity. In all, Rs. 1.40 crore was disbursed to the beneficiaries, at an average of about Rs. 1350 per beneficiary household. In this activity, the selected beneficiary household takes up stone and/or soil bunding in its private agriculture fields and is paid on the basis of total quantity of work done with a predetermined upper limit, which in this case was of Rs. 1500. During the field visit undertaken by the evaluation team, in Selu we found that the community had to modify its initial list in order to accommodate the really needy.

During the period December 2000 to February 2001, Seva Mandir conducted a survey to identify the vulnerable households in the villages of its work area. Based on the information received from its field staff, Seva Mandir first categorized the villages according to severity of drought. Thereafter, a PRA was conducted in villages that were considered to be the worst affected. During this exercise, an assessment of drinking water security and categorization of households, based on their drought vulnerability, was done. To identify the needy households, criteria such as land holding, food grain stock, income security and social vulnerability (women headed households) were taken into consideration. The households were classified as ‘A’, ‘B’ and ‘C’ category households. In all 257 villages comprising 22969 households were surveyed. Out of these 2359, 3809 and 16801 households were classified as ‘A’, ‘B’ and ‘C’ category households, respectively.

Seva Mandir’s drought relief program focused at helping the ‘C’ category, or the most vulnerable households. It aimed at providing the ‘C’ category households with cash income of about Rs. 1500 through

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2 The ‘A’ category comprised of those households that had a permanent source of income and were relatively insensitive to drought related income loss. These included those households that had a member in government or private sector services or households that had a food grain stock to last the drought. The ‘C’ category households comprised the most vulnerable households. Such households did not have a permanent source of income and had a food grain stock of less than one and a half-month. All other households comprised the B category households.
various employment generation initiatives. Seva Mandir believed that the vulnerable households could use this income for purchasing about 250-kg maize, which would meet the food grain requirement of an average household for about three months. It took up activities such as farm bunding, construction of water harvesting structures, road construction, community pastureland development, etc. as employment generation activities. Further, well deepening and hand pump repair works were taken up to enhance the drinking water security for people. Additionally, it conducted health camps and provided medicines to villagers. In all, it spent about Rs. 2.17 crore in drought relief works out of which about 1.92 crore (88.5%) was in form of wage labour.

Women & Children: Malnutrition amongst children and women is rampant making susceptible to various infectious diseases. This along with poor utilisation of preventive and curative services contribute to high childhood and reproductive age morbidity in women to ultimately contribute to high infant and Maternal Mortality Rates. Rajasthan has the highest infant mortality rate (IMR) in the country, at 86 per 1,000 live births. Early marriages and early motherhood are very common in the area involving considerable risks for both mother and child.

On account of non-availability of safe drinking water, poor personal and environmental hygiene, waterborne diseases like diarrhoea, dysentery, intestinal worms, typhoid fever and jaundice are endemic in the area and affect all age and social groups of population.

The prevalence of tuberculosis and Malaria is also pretty high. There is a significant increase in incidences of Sexually Transmitted Diseases including HIV infection in these villages. Reproductive Tract Infections (RTI) are also quite common among women.

In the rural area, women and children form the deprived sections of society. The literacy rates amongst the rural population in Udaipur District are a mere 25.81% (COI 1991) of which 10.33% are females – again emphasising the problems for the girl child.

Human Development Index: Overall a larger perspective can be gained by taking into account the Human Development Index (HDI). Against the national average of 45, Rajasthan state is much lower at 38

In general, it was felt that the policies enjoining collaborative work do not get translated into practice. At the time of project implementation, space provided in policy to panchayats, the NGO sector and people’s associations, is denied. Seva Mandir in its independent capacity supports local initiatives, and provides collaboration which has become meaningful in easing constraints and ensure their well-being. In arrangements where it is operating to a project or was dependent on the State for resources, the outcomes were not so positive. Also, claim-making to the State does not yield obvious benefits to the poor, though it may change policy. In the case of Panchayati Raj, despite the 73rd Amendment, the State and society have not made this institution truly accountable to poor people. Infact, in the given scenario, Seva Mandir and People’s Institutions have to be genuinely autonomous and capable of countervailing state control over people and resources.

Civil Society’s lack of strength is because of the nature of social and power relations that characterise mass poverty. The poor are forced to seek powerful patrons to secure their wellbeing and subsistence in society and therefore lack the social base through which they can self govern and self manage their development. Their leaders are unable to crystallise meaningful political agendas in the absence of any scope for self managed development.

Unfortunately, despite tall claims, the role of State in mitigating the structural, institutional and capability constraints of the poor has been minimal. Progressive policies like Panchayati Raj aimed at building village level institutions and giving people voice, have rarely been translated into practice. Mere training and awareness building at the village level alone cannot transcend structural barriers that impede development. Interventions are needed that strengthen livelihood opportunities and reorder social relations to empower village people and their institutions.

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3 Maize is the staple food grain crop of this area.
Chapter 3

Strategic Areas of Operation

The activities promoted by Seva Mandir are the product of long years of collaborative work with the local people, such that the development programmes can be locally managed and that the least advantaged in the community be significantly benefited. The strategic areas of operation of Seva Mandir are given in the table 1.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Area of Operation</th>
<th>What these entail</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| Livelihoods                 | 1. Forestry & watershed development  
                            | 2. Water resource development  
                            | 3. Agriculture improvement |
| Capacity/capability building| 1. Literacy & education  
                            | 2. Health education & awareness generation  
                            | 3. Women & Child development  
                            | 4. Communication & training |
| Institution building        | 1. People’s institutions  
                            | 2. Capacity building  
                            | 3. Research & documentation |

The initiation of any strategic project requires that villagers deliberate among themselves and agree in writing to commit themselves to fulfilling the basic principles of self-supporting and equitable development. The project conditions represent historically evolved norms of cost sharing and project design, and they represent the immediate commitment of local people to honour the core principles of Seva Mandir supported development. However, for some activities for which the demand is latent (viz. Women’s Development, Reproductive Health needs), Seva Mandir participates as an equal partner working with people on initiating a dialogue on these issues, and addressing them subsequently.

The substantive involvement of people in the programmes supported by Seva Mandir is the result of the effort made to enhance people’s capabilities to achieve their own well-being; it is also the consequence of systematic efforts to shift the locus of authority for decision-making to people’s own organisations.

3.1 Livelihood of the poor

The terms of reference for the assessment list three main purposes of the exercise. The first is to assess the quality, effects and impact of the present development programmes as compared to the aims and objectives of the agreement between Seva Mandir and ICCO/ EZE. The second purpose is to reflect on the mission, intervention strategy and role of organization within a changed context. The last being assessment whether new, innovative changes in the role and model can strengthen the impact of the support to the improvement of livelihood of the poor.

Each of these objectives are sought to be fulfilled through specific, focused interventions. The intervention in livelihoods is largely through Natural Resource Development and Water Resource Development.
Capability Development entails activities relating to Education, Women and Child Development and Health. Institution Building involves Gram Vikas Kosh, People’s Management School, and other decentralized works like construction of Community Buildings, Cattle Sheds, Farm Bunding, Link Roads, Irrigation Channels, providing solar lighting systems and so on with community support. Gender Equity, People’s Participations and Decentralisation are common thread cutting across all the interventions and the manner in which they are implemented. It is, however, also the concern of a special intervention designed to this end.

While the above objectives were articulated in 1999, they basically built upon those of the First (1990-93) and Second (1994-1999) Comprehensive Plans. The First Plan Document spoke of the need to build the capacity of the rural poor to assert their rights and determine their developmental priorities; promoting cooperation; and bringing women into the mainstream of development work. The stated objective was to implement various activities in the sectors of NRM, health and education. The second plan document distinguished between short term and long term objectives. In the short term it intended to continue building peoples’ capabilities (literacy, awareness, health education) and bringing about gender sensitive development; and to strengthen the economic base of the rural poor. In the long term it hoped to help people reconstitute their social relations within the society.

3.1.1 Effect of degradation on rural livelihoods:
In many areas, people are finding it harder to meet their fuel-wood, fodder and timber requirement from the forest because availability of preferred species has drastically declined. This has led to adaptations among the local people; for example, in many areas of the district, people have started to use Euphorbia, an inferior fuel-wood instead of Acacia Nilotica in order to meet their household requirements. Similarly, for house construction and agricultural equipments, shifts have taken place. The continuing process of forest degradation has affected the soil moisture regime of the area. The ground water table has been steadily declining, and considerable decline in the productivity of agricultural land has been reported.
3.1.2 Seva Mandir’s experience:

Over the years Seva Mandir has tried out a number of activities (or ‘schemes’) in natural resource management to put together a comprehensive package of interventions that can be made in degraded common and private land. The ability to introduce one or more scheme on common land depends on its legal status (whether controlled by the forest department, the revenue department or the panchayat). It also depends on social cohesion to free such land of encroachment (a common situation) and to plan and manage the activity in an equitable, efficient and sustainable manner. Clearly, working on common land is a difficult task and one that may take years of effort in a given village before it takes off. Yet, working on common land is crucial, as such land constitute about 72% of the available land, and once developed, has the potential to substantially improve rural livelihoods, particularly of the poorer people. On the other hand, schemes on private land are less complex. It is relatively easier to work with single households and groups of households, both on their uncultivated land as well as on their fields. Schemes for improving land resources are complemented by those on water resources, both by harvesting rainwater and by accessing groundwater. While some of these provide irrigation, drinking water needs of the people and of livestock are of equal (if not more) importance.

3.1.2 Afforestation and water resource development: The package of schemes includes Afforestation and Pastureland Development, Raising of Seedlings, Work on Watershed Development, Deepening of Wells and Installation of Lift Irrigation Scheme, Agriculture Extension and so on. Seva Mandir has completed several works relating to field bunding, tree plantation on private (and pooled) wasteland, silvipasture on private (and pooled) wasteland, silvipasture on panchayat controlled pastureland, silvipasture on degraded forest land (through joint forest management), deepening of community wells and construction of anicuts. In a few villages (such as Barawa) entire micro watersheds have been treated in an integrated manner. In some villages, about 50 villages, it has been possible to do almost all these activities gradually and consistently in the last ten years. This has been important from the perspective of bio-diversity conservation too. (The complexities of working on common lands with local communities, is reflected in the case studies on silvipasture prepared in Joint collaboration with NRI etc. Annexure A attached gives the details of community dynamics in 5 villages and highlights the issues involved in creating vibrant institutional mechanisms ). In others, due to various constraints, only one or just a few NRM schemes have been implemented.

Table 2 Silvipasture development in the last 15 years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>No. of sites</th>
<th>Area developed (ha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Community pastureland   | 59           | 1038
| Joint Forest management | 4            | 187
| Sacred groves           | 12           | 36
| Private land            | 14340        | 7881
| **Total**               | **14,356**   | **9,142**           |

Table 3 Afforestation of Wasteland: Achievement in Hectares, year-wise break-up

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual Plantation</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>78.22</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>70.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minichak Plantation</td>
<td>16.97</td>
<td>83.13</td>
<td>260.40</td>
<td>260.60</td>
<td>278.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Chak</td>
<td>21.63</td>
<td>16.73</td>
<td>31.40</td>
<td>39.05</td>
<td>74.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasture Chak</td>
<td>38.35</td>
<td>60.26</td>
<td>31.27</td>
<td>94.08</td>
<td>96.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Chak</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devasthan Chak</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution/ Community Chak</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Forest Mgt.</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An estimated area of 50 hectares per year was to be afforested through individual plantations (scheme commenced in 1985) during the Third Comprehensive Plan (150 Ha in all). However, due to problems of encroachment and delay by government forest authorities, this hasn’t been possible. Nevertheless, about 13000 families have afforested an area of 4500 Ha under the individual plantation scheme till date. Under the Mini chak Scheme (started 1993), about 1500 families have benefited, developing approx. 1400 Ha of wasteland and planting of 450,000 seedlings.

3.1.3 Agriculture & livestock development: Seva Mandir has also engaged in agricultural and livestock extension activities in a small way. Shweta, a short duration Maize crop is being introduced. Seva Mandir faced the problem of availability of seed as the last 3 years of drought did not produce good seed quality material. Given the short duration of the rainfall pattern this variety seems to be appropriate, the potential has however yet to be realised. Seva Mandir will be looking at this variety more closely in the future. In response to the problems being faced in the cultivation of ginger by small and marginal farmers in Jhadol, Seva Mandir lobbied with the agricultural department to undertake research on the subject. Inputs were also taken from experts from outside the state. The result was some trials and demonstrations on better farming practises with respect to ginger. It must be noted here that the agricultural university has a norm of working on those problems that affect more than 5,000 hectares of land. The area of ginger though lower than this is highly remunerative and its economic significance is consequently much higher.

There appears to be one area in which Seva Mandir is yet to address the livelihood needs of the relatively poorer sections in the village. Generally, poor families, including tribals, have few cattle and instead rear goat and sometimes sheep. While goat milk is consumed, meat and wool are vital sources of income. The importance of goat and sheep is considerable, in view of the low investment cost, low maintenance cost, short term returns and low vulnerability to drought. These small ruminants browse or graze on open areas during the monsoons as well as on fallow fields after the harvest. This means that when private and common pastureland is closed, there is less space to graze. While the regenerated pastures yield grass for cattle, they are yet to produce appreciable loppings for goat and sheep (at some sites where they do, the community is yet to introduce a system for lopping). Goat and sheep also do not benefit from increased crop yields, as cattle do by way of crop residue. As a result, livelihoods built around goat and sheep are not only left out of the NRM programme, but are also weakened by it.
3.1.4 The quality, effects and impacts of the NRM programme are discussed in the following sections. These provide an overview of the programme rather than attempting to analyse each individual scheme.

**Quality:**
The quality of the NRM programme may be assessed in terms of its equity, level of local participation and sustainability. While efficiency is also an important aspect, it is difficult to discuss here as the team had only limited observations during the field visit. These observations generally suggest that the schemes are well executed. The individual beneficiaries participate fully; their labour and materials constitute approximately 50% of the total programme expenditure. They also contribute to Gram vikas Kosh, a token amount of Rs.100 as beneficiaries of public investment in private asset development of the village. Seva Mandir part finances on fencing to an extent of 50% (limited to a maximum of Rs.600/-)

**Equity:**
In all of its programmes Seva Mandir works with relatively remote villages and prioritises the needs of the socially and economically marginalised, particularly tribals. These communities constantly struggle with the issues of food security, fodder security, fuelwood security, drinking water security and income security. This struggle is made all the more difficult by frequent drought. By increasing resource productivity, the NRM package directly attempts to stabilise and enhance livelihood security. Since virtually all households have land (though the size of holdings is skewed), even poorer households can avail of the schemes on private land. Since activities on common land (and common water resources) are contingent upon equitable sharing of benefits, the poor have a share in these. Thus by design, the NRM programme directly addresses the needs of the poor.

The following examples illustrate how the issue of equity is addressed:
- It is often the relatively well off or influential people who encroach upon common land, thus denying access and user rights to the less endowed. Seva Mandir encourages collective action to remove such encroachment before its productivity can be improved. This has been possible in about 15 cases (such as Barawa, Selu, and Salukhera). Removal of encroachment by the people themselves is an enormous step towards greater equity in access and use of common land.
- Although poorer families have less (or sometimes no) livestock, they are entitled to an equal share of grass harvested from common pastures. In some places such families have sold their grass and earned a modest income.
- Community wells for lift irrigation are often are sited in medium rather than lowland, which is where the relatively poor households have land.
- Norms for distributing water for irrigation are based on an equal share of water for all households owning land in the command area. Thus, families owning more land get the same amount as families owning less land.
- Field bunding may generally be done for all households, but when there is a financial crunch (such as in the 2000 drought), Seva Mandir encouraged the village community to identify the most needy families for immediate assistance.

**Participation:**
Seva Mandir believes that local participation is vital not only to ensure sustained benefits, but also to build social cohesion, to enhance local capacity to handle developmental activities and to foster the emergence of responsible leadership. Thus, group building is an essential ingredient on all of its interventions. This assumes special significance in villages where work is done on common resources. There are two main ways of inculcating local ownership of the programme. First, people are expected to bear a portion of the investment and recurring costs, as well as contribute a token amount of the benefits realised. Second, they are expected to assume responsibility for planning, implementation and management.

GVK: Peoples’ contributions are credited to a common village fund (or the gram vikas kosh). This fund is essentially a corpus to be used by the village community (or samuh) for collective benefit. Contribution towards investment costs is made in the form of labour and varies across schemes from 10% (largely on common land) to 50% (largely on private land). For instance, if a particular scheme envisages a local
contribution of 30%, Seva Mandir pays wages to the extent of 70% and directly deposits the remaining sum in the Gram Kosh. Recurring costs (such as protection of common silvipasture) are either directly borne by households (such as taking turns in patrolling; or pooling cash or grain to pay a hired guard), or met from the Gram Kosh or paid by Seva Mandir. Token money of Rs 50-100 per beneficiary household (for instance, on obtaining grass from the common pastureland, or after harvesting irrigated crops) is also deposited in the Gram Kosh.

The system of contribution is well established and the practice of collection has become customary. As a result even when the samuh introduces a new element (such as bulk purchase of foodgrain for a number of families) it automatically builds in a token contribution. This is indeed a major achievement. Having being built from peoples’ contribution, the Gram Kosh is viewed as a collective asset that is almost jealously guarded. People are well aware of the need to preserve this fund till it reaches a reasonable size (around Rs. 5 lakh). At the same time some villages have used the interest creatively (such as bulk purchase of grass in a drought year) to help tide over difficult times.

Seva Mandir encourages people to take the initiative in decision making through extended discussion in the village samuh, while it continues to provide them guidance and support. The village samuh selects beneficiaries (in schemes for individual households), selects sites to work on, makes efforts to remove encroachments, chooses species for plantation, and schedules, executes and supervises work. People seem to appreciate the finer points of each scheme and tailor them in accordance with local priorities. However, the involvement of women in these processes seems to be rather low.

Handling project finances is one area in which Seva Mandir is yet to involve the village samuh. Payment towards the cost of physical work are made directly by Seva Mandir Workers. The only exception is in villages where micro watershed development is taking place under a state sponsored scheme. Here, it is mandatory for a project account to be opened and jointly operated by one nominee each of the village community and of the implementing agency (in this case, Seva Mandir).
Sustainability:
All the activities to enhance the productivity of land and water resources have a high component of wage labour. This is the most immediate benefit that people receive from the investment in private and common resources. Given the fact that the farming system only partly meets household needs and a large section of the village population must seek casual labour elsewhere, wage employment generated by the programme is of vital importance. This importance is considerably more in years of drought. Hence, peoples’ adoption of a scheme, and even contribution to its cost, do not guarantee its sustainability. The real test of sustainability is whether people actually maintain the improved resources, and resist social, economic and political influences that may operate to reverse the process of resource recovery.

In the case of cultivated dryland, it quite clear that families do maintain field bunds. In lift irrigation, pumpsets and field channels are also looked after well Private silvipasture has also fared well in terms of continued protection. Thus, the sustainability of improved individual and pooled resources is fairly assured.

In the case of common resources, the village samuh must find a way to deal with competing demands and conflicting views, and to institute strong systems for management. This is an enormous challenge. Seva Mandir estimates that as a result of the considerable work put in by it, in only 12 of the 59 pasturelands, has protection of treated common land has broken down over the years. In 50% of the cases, the performance is excellent . It is difficult to say how many of these instances are due to internal weakness, and how many due to external pressure, refer Annexure B.

Effects:
According to field observations and discussions with village people and with Seva Mandir staff, it is quite clear that the NRM schemes increase the productivity of land and water resources. Seva Mandir has documented this in some case studies that discuss both qualitative and quantitative aspects of this change. Some of the key findings are listed below:

Silvipasture
- Started in Barawa in 1990; between 1994 and 2000, which includes one year of good rainfall and two years of bad rainfall, the annual grass yield was 670-1160 kg/ha. In 2000, the standing stock of trees was 3.45 m³/ha, of which 2.82 m³/ha was of natural regeneration.
- Started in Selu in 1992; the annual grass yield has varied from 15000-36000/ 46 ha. The highest figure was actually obtained in a drought year, to the peoples’ surprise. There are 549 trees/ ha and soil testing has shown better nutrient content within the site, as compared to outside. It is reported that fields immediately downstream experience a 20-25% increase in crop yields.

Farm bunding, anicuts, and private plantation
- Farm bunding started in Rehetda village in 1983, plantation in 1986 and an anicut in 1987: comparison of crop yields in two years of normal rainfall (1988-89 and 1997-98) show a significant increase in Jowar (69%), Urad (37%), rice (23%) and maize (12%). The same period saw a decline in yields in a neighbouring village where the programme did not operate. It is important to note that these aggregate gains are largely linked to expansion of irrigation sources (rather than improved rainfed farming). Average crop yields more than halved during 1999-00, a drought year.

Integrated watershed management
- Started in Barawa in 1989; crop yields in 2000-01 were higher than in 1987-88. However, the figures should be discounted as 1987 was the last of three consecutive years of severe drought.

The above cases suggest that there has been an overall positive effect on resource productivity. In silvipasture systems, grass yield is impressive, even in drought years. The combination of planted trees and natural regeneration are likely to provide a useful order fuelwood and fodder through loppings during the next few years. Relatively little is known about changes in rainfed crop yields under varying conditions and treatment, particularly in drought years.
Seva Mandir recognises that it needs to bolster its monitoring system. In fact, the third comprehensive plan document sets out an impressive list of indicators for each programme. It is likely that this will provide far more information by the end of the plan period. The challenge is to effectively process and interpret this information so that it helps to understand the complex variables at work in the process of change.

**Impact:**
The effect of the NRM schemes on resource productivity impact the village community in more ways than one. Apart from direct impact that may be seen in the short term, there are also indirect impacts that are slower to emerge. In addition, cumulative impacts are created by synergies across schemes (and even across programmes); these synergies interact with the social, economic and institutional fabric of the village. It therefore makes sense to view the impact of the NRM programme, rather than of its individual schemes, in relation to its goals.

The primary goal of the NRM programme is to strengthen rural livelihoods, by way of increased food security, fodder security and water security. This is expected to reduce the dependence on wage labour, virtually the only means of earning cash income. Rural livelihoods (particularly of the poor) are highly vulnerable to drought. Hence the programme seeks to impart a certain degree of resilience against this frequent event. The programme also intends to help create strong village institutions. The degree to which these goals are being fulfilled is discussed below.

**Food security:**
Under normal rainfall conditions, rainfed cultivation provides only a few months’ food for a family. Which is one reason why able bodied men must seek casual labour, either in irrigated farms in the villages, or in mines outside the village or in farms in neighbouring Gujarat. In years of severe drought, (say one year in 10?) crop production would be minimal. This would result in large scale distress migration, often of entire families, and conditions of tremendous hardship.

Bunding of rainfed fields and creating new sources of irrigation (wells and anicuts) both increase crop production. Soil and water conservation measures in upper catchments (as is done in silvipasture sites) are known to increase soil moisture downstream and often to recharge wells. Rainwater harvesting structures also help recharge groundwater aquifers. All these measures should provide greater food security in years of normal rainfall, as well as in years of sub-normal rainfall. They probably would not help dryland cultivation in years of severe or continuous drought, but irrigated farms would be more resilient.

Irrigation is a sure shot way of achieving food security. However, the scope to expand irrigation sources in a big way is rather limited. Questions of equity (most irrigable land is in the valleys, owned by the relatively better off) and of sustainability (the annual level of extraction is likely to exceed that of recharge) plague irrigation projects in semi arid regions. Nevertheless, Seva Mandir has supported irrigation schemes in about 50 villages. It would be useful to know whether these are able to influence a better balance in terms of access to irrigation, than normally exists.

Improved rainfed farming has better prospects on both counts, viz., equity and sustainability.. The second order of benefit would occur where treatment has taken place on a large portion of the upper catchment as well as on the cultivated fields. It is not clear how many villages fall into this category. It is also not clear as to what extent crop yields can actually increase (including in a drought year). The third order of benefit would accrue where a large proportion of cultivated land has been bunded. Again, it is not clear how many villages fall into this category, nor the likely increase in crop yields.

Food security is possibly the most vital goal of the programme Therefore, it would be useful if Seva Mandir could estimate the range of first, second and third order increases in crop yields (in a normal year and in a drought year). It would also be useful to know how many villages fall into the first, second and third order categories. Finally, it would be useful to know just how many of the villages in which investments have been made on cultivated land, have actually moved towards appreciably greater food security.
**Fodder security:**
Open pastures yield only minimal grass. Therefore any effort to regenerate pastureland, whether private or common, can only move the village closer to fodder security. This process has been well documented in case studies prepared by Seva Mandir.

Crop residue is also a vital source of fodder. Its availability is, however, restricted by the size of land holdings and by the vagaries of rainfall. An investment to increase crop yields should provide additional crop residue for livestock (and green fodder under irrigated conditions). It would be interesting to study the extent of this effect, and to observe the cumulative impact of activities on pastureland and cultivated land. However, supporting data is not available.

In specific cases, silvipasture has had a major impact on fodder security:

- In Barawa, 1995 was a year of good rainfall. There was sufficient grass from private pastures, and so grass from the common pastureland was sold to someone from another village for a sum of Rs. 10,000. Even in years of poor rainfall, each family got 250-400 kg of grass. This would feed the cattle of the average family for 21 to 34 days. For the average Bhil family, the benefit would be higher, at 25-40 days.
- In Selu, it is reported that the common pastureland met 8-9% of fodder needs during 2000-01, a drought year

In order to produce similar impact in other villages, it would be necessary to develop a site whose size is proportionate to the cattle population. Annexure B divides the Charagahs protected into 3 categories, A well protected, B average and C where protection has broken down. Annexure C shows the production of grass in selected charagahs. Annexure D shows the impact on livestock in selected villages.

**Water security:**
Community wells and anicuts guarantee drinking water to livestock and people, in times of water stress. A detailed study of anicuts has been been done by Seva Mandir, to assess their impact. The major findings are as follows

1. Increase in availability of drinking water for cattle.
2. Some have taken up fisheries.

An average of 9.4 has of agricultural land has directly benefitted as a result of increased moisture availability increase in irrigation is 2.1 has per anicut.

**3.1.5 NRM & Migration:**
Seva Mandir expected increased productivity of the farming system to reduce the need of the people to seek casual labour outside the village. However, this does not seem to have happened. There could be three reasons for this. First, the impact of the NRM programme on livelihoods may not yet have reached its full potential. There may still be scope of increasing its intensity as well as expanding its outreach. Second, the inherent capacity of land and water resources to support the village population is low. Therefore, even enhanced production cannot sustain all needs, particularly those based on cash transactions. Third, while the local farming system is subject to annual uncertainty and periodic devastation of drought, casual labour is a relatively stable opportunity for employment. People are familiar with the system of seeking jobs in local mines, and avenues for agricultural labour in neighbouring Gujarat. After the harvest, however good, there is little to occupy able bodied men in the village. It is inevitable that such people would continue to seek employment elsewhere (even though there might be temporary reprieves back at home).
Less dependence on wage labour:
It is therefore logical to expect increased productivity of the farming system to reduce distress migration rather than all migration. Distress migration includes the displacement of old, weak or infirm men, and of women and children. Checking this would be more feasible in a year of normal or sub-normal rainfall, rather than in a drought year. It would be useful to know how many of the 525 villages have respectively reached these two states.

At present there is only one study of migration. This shows that the pattern in Rehetda village (where much NRM activities were implemented) is similar to that in a neighbouring village (where no such work was done). In fact, there is virtually no difference between a normal year and a drought year. This suggests that it would be useful to study the prevalence of distress migration in drought years.

A recent study on Expenditure behaviour in drought form money received from the drought relief work done by Seva Mandir (Neeraj Negi and Kanhaiya Lal) reveal that amount spent on foodgrains, accounted for 48% of the expenditure with debt repayment being 13% and fodder 9%. This clearly reveals the need for wage labour to buy daily necessities during the drought.

3.2 Strengthening capabilities:

Capability development consists of activities relating to Women and Child Development, RCH programme, Health awareness programmes, strengthening health parameters in the village and Educational Activities.

3.2.1 Women & Child Development: The stress of the women and child development programme is capatilising on the strength of women’s groups formed in villages. These groups build inroads for Seva Mandir’s work with the community, and provide inputs to strategy planning through a face to face with women and the issues affecting them. Training camps are organised for village level paraworkers. The focus is on gender issues, domestic violence, importance of credit, reproductive rights of women, and legal literacy. The legal literacy camp deals with laws related to divorce, domestic violence, property rights etc. Moreover, such camps are also organised for women’s and adolescent girls’ groups as a result of the persistent demand. Counselling continues as one of the main activities. The focus for discussions is role of women in politics, health issues and the relation between women and environment. The role of newly
elected representatives in Panchayats was also discussed. However, the scale of the celebration was toned down drastically in comparison to earlier years due to reallocation of funds for drought relief activities.

**a. Economic Empowerment:** The effort towards economic empowerment of women continues through the formation and strengthening of women’s Self-Help Groups (SHGs). The number of SHGs is about 200 and total membership exceeds 2000. At present, the money generated in these SHGs is more than Rs.6,50,000. In addition to the formation of new SHGs attention is paid that the existing SHGs evolve to the next stage of their life cycle. The young will be given impetus to decide upon rules and regulations, elect office bearers and decide upon the monthly contribution. The ones that have been saving for some time should now think of utilising this money.

Various studies were carried out on SHGs. Some of these studies have tried to categorise the SHGs based on parameters like regularity of meetings, utilisation of funds, solidarity in the group, age of the group, etc. These studies have helped in getting a picture of the status of SHGs as also to gauge the potential for Income Generation Programmes with groups which are ready to take them up. There is a need for better record-keeping system and accounts maintenance. Attempts have also been made to link SHGs with banks and other financial institutions. In Delwara village, 4 SHGs have received Rs.20,000 each as loan from the bank. In Jhadol, Manas and Ghativasala village groups have received Rs.30,000 each as loan. Eight groups are engaged in Income Generation Programmes (IGP). The activities include ginger cultivation, fertiliser trading, patchwork and grain trading.

*The patchwork programme* has improved its financial performance substantially, and has gone beyond break even. The programme started with 18 women from low income groups in 1988, now has 135 women from rural and urban areas. Starting with Rs. 2000 the programme now has a turn-over of over Rs.2 Lakhs. The production achieved by the women and the patchwork team is also the highest ever at Rs.17,90,654. The money paid to the village women was also the highest ever at 5.10 lakhs. The women who benefited from the programme now have an average earning of Rs.4000-5000/- per annum.

**b. Gender Equity/Sensitivity:** Seva Mandir’s approach to the women’s question is that, apart from empowering women and giving them importance, there is need to improve the status and well-being of their families and spouses. In the context of poor peasant communities, men are not endemically hostile to
the idea of greater women’s emancipation, even as they may be attracted to and are influenced by patriarchal values that characterise the economically and socially dominant groups in rural society. Seva Mandir’s Women’s Development Unit, under the proposed plan, will work with about 170 women’s groups in villages and concentrate on working – capability building aspects – through work on women’s health, literacy and leadership building; Working on increasing women’s access and control over resources – through work on self-help credit societies and small income generating initiatives; working on building confidence levels among women – through a number of group trainings, counseling, etc.; and working on increasing women’s substantive participation in all developmental activities in the village. Other than the work of the Women’s Development Unit, many of the other programmes of Seva Mandir also strengthen women’s autonomy and well-being. The work on natural resources (forestry, agriculture and water), consciously tries to ease the work load on women. The chores of fetching water, fuelwood, fodder, and food are eased as a result of improvements in the productivity and availability of these resources. The health programme, in its focus on the traditional birth attendants and spacing of children will also add to the well-being of women. Also, in collaboration with the women’s units, the education programme has been very successful in motivating parents to send girls to school. In the Non Formal Education (NFE) Centres, the proportion of girls is greater than that of boys. At an organisational level, gender sensitisation workshops for both male and female staff members are regular feature in Seva Mandir; a creche is run for children of staff members and allows somewhat flexi-hours to women staff members. Seva Mandir also has a tradition of women being in leadership positions in the organisation. A number of women are also in second line of leadership, represented in the figure of number of female professional staff at the organisation. The focus continues to be making gender issues a point of discussion within the organisation. Workshops on ‘Sex and Sexuality’ were organised with the staff. The first one was exclusively for men and the second one for women. These workshops were a new phenomenon for Seva Mandir since the issues touched upon were new and taboo even for some staff members. The feedback has been positive. Effort was made to include participants from all cadres and fields of the organisation, to make the experience sharing richer.

Child Care: The number of functioning balwadis at present is 119, enrolment of these balwadis is 2500. Regular training programmes are organised for balwadi sanchalikas to improve their skills in their job. Similarly, health check-up camps are also organised for children here. The prevalent disorders are found to be skin, ear and eye infections. Regular monitoring of growth of the children attending balwadis should be done, which will provide insight into the effectiveness of the programme.

3.2.2. Health:

Seva Mandir’s interventions in the area of health are carried out through its Health Education and Maternal and Child Health programmes. The two components of the programme are distinct in their strategy in terms of intervention and target group but are aimed towards the one goal of providing improved preventive, promotive and curative health care to the tribal and rural population of the area. Over 350 village level workers comprising Village Health Workers, Home Remedy Workers, Community Health Workers, Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs) implement this programme. They are intensively trained and are provided with a kit which contains common allopathic drugs, Ayurvedic and local herbal medicines. Another cadre of health workers that continues to be strengthened is that of Lady and Male Health Assistants (LHA/MHA) working at zonal levels. 20 LHA/MHAs were trained and supported during the course of the year. 

Maternal and Child Health Care: Under its commitment to safe motherhood and to child survival the following services are delivered at the village level through TBAs and co-motivators:

- Administration of Tetanus Toxide to pregnant women
- Safe and aseptic deliveries
- Natal care
- Child immunisation
- Distributing supplementary feed
Traditional Birth Attendants trained by Seva Mandir conducted 1,937 deliveries in 1999-2000. Three maternal deaths and 74 infant deaths were reported among the population with which the health programme of Seva Mandir is associated. All these cases were probed into as learning for the future.

*Saheli programme* As a spacing method of family planning this programme was started in collaboration with the government in January, 1999. 500 women of four blocks were selected for administering the contraceptive pill ‘Saheli’.

**Referral Health Services:** The referral health centres at Kochla and Kojawara continued to serve the rural population of the area. Patients are also treated in the field area. The Referral Health Centre at Kochla functions as a health-training centre as well.

Co-ordination: Sahabhagita Goshtis with a view to integrate the health programme with other programmes of the organisation are carried out to review, share and plan further

There has been smooth and effective co-ordination between the government health department in the pulse polio programme and in the supply of medicines and other inputs. Alliance has been established with 10 government sub-centres, which have been strengthened, in providing antenatal services to women. TBAs, co-motivators and LHA / MHAs keep in constant touch with Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANMs) at these centres.

### 3.2.3 REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH PROGRAMME:

A pilot reproductive health programme was initiated by Seva Mandir in December 1996 to address the social issues that adversely affect women’s health and to provide medical services at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels in remote tribal areas. The programme has three main strategies:

- Awareness camps for groups of woman, men adolescent boys and girls.
- Capacity building of RHP team members and creating a cadre of professional health workers who belong to rural communities.
- Provision of health services to the people.

In the pilot phase the project was implemented in 46 hamlets i.e. 16 clusters (each cluster comprises of 3-4 hamlets and approximately 1600 families) in five zones across four blocks (Jhadol, Kherwara, Badgaon and Girwa). In April 2000, the reproductive health programme was expanded to 79 hamlets i.e. 24 clusters (about 2400 families) across four blocks.
During the programme duration (Dec. 1996 to March 2001) a total of 155 three-day residential awareness camps were organized with women, men and adolescent boys and girls. And about 6155 participants were benefited from these camps.

A total of 140 medical camps for diagnosis and treatment of reproductive health disorders were held during the reporting period (Dec. 1996 to March 2001) and 3772 patients benefited from the treatment provided.

Apart from this, the referral health centres of Seva Mandir continued to strive in their effort to provide health services to the people residing in these areas.

For capacity building of the staff involved in the project 18 training programmes were organized which were attended by 374 participants.

3.2.4 Future Plans:

- continue with the current strategy of information-education-communication (IEC) programs complemented by referral health services and would seek to expand the program across twelve zones in five blocks.
- While the focus in the new zones will be on addressing the reproductive health needs of the target group, efforts in the five zones where the pilot project was carried out would be to build on the understanding developed so far.
- The enhanced awareness is expected to get translated into behavior. The training programs would be organized every year with the old and new team members (there is a total of 53 workers at all levels) that would focus on the meaning of reproductive health, the factors affecting a woman’s health, reproductive rights, reproductive health problems, counseling and treating some cases with locally available remedies.
- Training would also focus on building their communication and dissemination skills. These training programs are expected to impart them the ability required to manage the awareness camps and health counseling. Simultaneously, Seva Mandir will continue its efforts in exploring possibilities of linkages with the public health system so that dependence of people on Seva Mandir is reduced.

3.3 Education:

The guiding principle of the education programme, as earlier, was that it should cater to the specific education needs of the community and at the same time be instrumental in fulfilling the organisation’s goal of building strong people’s institution.

3.3.1 Non-formal Education:

The non-formal education (NFE) programme of Seva Mandir is aimed at educating children in the 6-14 years age-group who are deprived of formal schooling. The instructors of these education centres are recruited from the village itself. There are currently 189 such centres with about 2900 children there; 72 of these centres are running under a government-initiated programme for universalising primary education – the Lok Jumbish Programme. However, paradoxically, despite the increase in the number of centres, the total enrollment of children has fallen from being 3,472 to 2900.

The reason for this appears to be that during the last 3 years, under a new Rajasthan Government initiative called ‘Rajiv Gandhi Pathshala’, a number of single teacher schools were opened. The Government is making an all out attempt to reach out to each and every unreached child; “Education at Your Door-step” (Shiksha Aapke Dwar) aims to bring all out of school children in the age group of 6-14 years into the educational fold, either in non-formal or formal schools. However, the fast dynamic of experimentation in primary education by the government is presently adding to the confusion and tremendous uncertainty.

Several schools were reportedly opened in places where the Seva Mandir initiated NFE centre was doing well. These centres, therefore, were closed down and those that were not doing too well remained, leading to an overall drop in enrolment. The average enrollment in NFE centres was 20, but average attendance was 14.

Rs.40,203 went into different Village Development Funds as the education fees deposited by children. It was observed that most of the out-of-school children were engaged in some form of economic activity.
Children migrate out of their village to earn labour wages or were attending to household (agriculture) chores. In several families, one or two of the children would pursue education while the others were working to earn wages. Perhaps, one thing we can say at the end of the day is that while the supply side of education (both quantity and quality) is critical, it does not alone determine the degree of impact. Possibly, in the future, Seva Mandir could play a more effective role in monitoring the quality of education in the government run institutions or act as a resource agency to improve class-room transaction-curriculum development.

3.3 Youth Education / Adult Education: Also functioning are 15 Yuva Shiksha Kendras (Youth Education Centres) that aim to provide functional literacy to the rural youth aged between 13 and 25 years. Resource persons are invited to speak on Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Health, Law, etc. A manual linking Hindi alphabets and phrases with issues in agriculture was published and distributed to these centres. Efforts were also made to link the youth of these centres to the Jan Shikshan Nilayams. As part of its continuing education programme, Seva Mandir is running Jan Shikshan Nilayams (village libraries) and Satat Shiksha Kendras (continuing education centres). These centres (38 and 4 respectively) are libraries catering to the scholastic needs of the neo-literate. Through these centres, they can practice their literacy skills on a regular basis. Capacity building of preraks (those in-charge of the centres) was an area of focus. It is attempted to orient the prerak towards understanding the development needs of the village. A focused attempt at imparting literacy is made through 7-10 day residential literacy camps. The camps also have sessions on health, women’s issues, child health, health education, income generating activities, etc.

3.3.3 New Education Policy: The New Education Policy (NEP) of Seva Mandir epitomises its thirty-year experience in primary education. The experience points towards the ability of the samuh, with a certain amount of facilitation and resource support, to be able to shoulder the responsibilities of education. It was reported that the effort to consolidate work under the NEP has been further strengthened as the number of villages has gone up to 17 as against the 3-year target of 25. A total of 54 centres (28 non-formal education centres, 7 village libraries, 4 continuing education centres and 15 youth education centres) are using the mode of decentralisation as envisaged in the NEP. Village group members and specifically those who are on the elected village development committee monitor the running of the education centres in the village. They evaluate the work of the instructors and make stipend payments to them. At present, the stipend of 80 instructors is being routed through village committees.

Through this effort, Seva Mandir is getting a feel of the village groups’ ability for self-managed development and their understanding of it. Consequent to this effort, the regularity and quality of village group meetings have been affected positively in a number of places. Supervision of supplies in the education centres, requisitioning for material, maintaining records of the same and monitoring the functioning of the centres are some of the operational responsibilities of village management committees. The strategy for the future would mainly be on giving a greater push to capability building of the Samuh and to integrate other development works along with education programmes.

Impetus to Folk Culture: The Lok Sanskriti programme carries on publication of Saksharta Sandesh, Seva Sadhna Kranti and Gati-bimb on course. The Kisan Praveshika (resource material used at the youth education centres) has been revised. Folk culture is attempted to be restored in this institution and information is disseminated in local language/ mode, aimed at creating awareness about development works, education, health, women and child development activities.

3.3 Institution Building:

Seva Mandir has indeed played a pioneering role in building civil society institutions at the village level with a firm belief that these institutions can complement in poverty alleviation, self reliance and strengthening local democracy.
3.3.1. Strong people’s/ village institutions

Seva Mandir sees the NRM programme as providing a platform for local institution building. Common land and water resources and common issues that affect the village community become rallying points for collective action, and for the emergence of local leadership. Parallel programmes in health, education and gender equity reinforce this process. While the practice of creating common funds (or Gram Vikas Kosh, GVK) began in 1986, this process has become sustainable in most villages. The Gram Vikas Kosh (Village Development Fund) initiative is aimed at building corpus funds at the village level. However, the idea of building a corpus goes beyond its economic implications. Traditional and natural fora for village communities to gather around are in danger of encroachment and, hence are becoming fewer and weaker. In light of this, it was considered worthwhile to initiate the process of building an artifactual platform, which village can gather around and use for deliberation and action towards self-managed development. The Village Development Fund is envisaged to act as such a platform. Apart from giving an impetus for people to contribute financially towards building the fund, training and skills have been imparted to encourage village-level management and responsibility sharing. The hope is that such impetus will lead to a stage of autonomy with a lesser dependence on external structures of authority. The Gram Vikas Kosh (GVK) programme became an independently functioning programme with financial support of Rs. 10,219,000 from the Ford Foundation from April 1, 1999.

The amount in the fund varies from village to village, being less than Rs 5,000 in 148 villages with 12 GVKs having funds over Rs 1,00,000.

In some of the villages, the gram kosh has been used for community activity like channel lining in Selu, anicut desiltation in Dalvaton ka Guda and well reinforcement in Gairiyoo ka Guda. In a number of places however the village is not able to figure out a good activity to use it for. The then prefer to deposit it in an FD, so that the principal grows ( field visits and discussions with Seva Mandir ). More thought is needed on collective options in the village, which are unfortunately quite few. Some options are collective horticulture, animal husbandry etc. The concept of gram kosh, provides one more opportunity to the people for collective activity. During the drought, a number of villages visited during the field visit had used the money for collective purchases of grain to reduce the cost of purchase. In Delwada, the women’s group involved in Cloth Handicraft, used the money to deliver on an order for 50 pillows from Seva Mandir.
Since the timing and nature and extent of Seva Mandir’s work in its 535 villages varies, clearly, the strength of the village institution varies as well. So far a qualitative assessment of this impact has not been attempted. It would be useful to know in how many villages most of the community actually sits down to discuss important issues (for instance, in the Ward Sabha or Gram Sabha meetings, or Seva Mandir meetings); in how many villages the people actually resolve outstanding disputes relating to natural resources; in how many villages they maintain the improved common resources; in how many villages they cover the monthly stipend of para workers; and, in how many villages they are able to make well-reasoned demands on Seva Mandir and on the Panchayat.

3.3.2. Research Studies and M&E
Seva mandir has initiated number of studies on NRM (some mentioned above). They also have a newsletter in which articles on different issues of interest are published. Case studies on silvipastoral development have been undertaken, in which details of the process dynamics, socio-economic conditions and benefits from the silvipastures have been mentioned. These have been the basis for a number of discussions with concerned individuals and groups in Southern Rajasthan as well as at State and national level. Seva Mandir has consequently been invited by government, to give its views on a number of issues being on a number of committees at district and state level and including some national level bodies.

In Connection with the drought, Seva Mandir instituted studies on the impact of water harvesting structures and the impact of charagahs. These documents help provide them with a birds’ eye view on the impact of their programme on select parameters across a number of villages.

*Role of People’s Management School in Research and Capacity Building:* The third Comprehensive Plan of Seva Mandir envisages the role of the People’s Management School to strengthen the organisation’s efforts at institution building. The unit’s initiatives attempt at understanding and working on conditions for better governance.

The People’s Management School (PMS) has three broad divisions of work focus:
1. Research, Monitoring & Evaluation
2. Training
3. Strengthening the Social Environment

This is apart from the support services undertaken by the PMS. Several studies and information documents have been created by PMS. The Gram Vikas Kosh programme that was initially housed by the PMS is now an independent programme.

Investment was also made towards decentralisation of training programmes as well as towards awareness building. A manual for training village development committees was developed and used. Information about other facets of development has been imparted at training village development committees was developed and used. Information about other facets of development has been imparted at training programmes and conventions. The effort has been towards de-linking the GVK concept from the funds alone. A drama team was trained in raising awareness about GVK in different villages as part of the communication strategy. Refresher training programmes were conducted for 52 of the 128 village development committees. The process of re-elections has begun with a Jan Sunwai (public hearing) of the committee’s work preceding the election.
Chapter 4
Relevance and Impact of Seva Mandir’s Intervention

The mission and intervention strategy of Seva Mandir continue to be relevant and realistic. However, it may like to consider minor adjustments in its role:

- Working directly with responsive panchayats/ capacity building of PRI leaders (women?)
- Strengthening Gram Sabha and Ward Sabha
- Even where it cannot access forest and revenue land, attempt to integrate all other elements of the NRM programme (as well as the health, education and gender equity programmes)
- Strengthen and expand the network of forest protection committees

Seva Mandir’s role in building civil society: Inspite of tall claims of decentralization in governance, the departments of the State, institutions of Panchayati Raj and a spectrum of other such attempts at decentralization on the whole neither empower nor endow the poor with adequate means of livelihood. The structure of the State and the orientation of its staff is such that even people-centered policies end up being used to enhance control over the people rather than empower them. The forest committees that are set up in large numbers by the Forest Department lack autonomy and are sometimes directed to work in areas where their members have no stake and are not accountable to the communities they serve. These committees that are formed for most part depend on the State for their existence and authority and to that extent are not representative of the communities they belong to. The contradictions within the Forest Department is reflected in their inability to institutionalize a constructive response to bonafide efforts by NGOs to organize FPCs and the community to participate in the JFM programme.

The experience of Seva Mandir reveals that since 1991, it has been able to secure permission to work in only five locations. The manner of thwarting the efforts to collaborate and thereby strengthening local
communities is both overt in the sense of simply delaying permission to work, and also procedural where the rules for getting permission are so onerous that it is virtually impossible to meet the criteria to satisfy the requirements of FPCs getting registered with the Forest Department as a potential Project Implementation Agency. What is ironic is the fact that it is not as if Seva Mandir has been able to create a great deal of demand for JFM. The contradictions internal to local communities make this an extremely difficult task, especially when the entire revenue village has to agree to the terms and conditions for becoming partners to the Forest Department in protecting forest lands in isolated patches of 50 ha. Resistance to operationalising the JFM guidelines and the spirit of 1998 Forest Policy provides an insight into the nature of the State and its own internal contradictions.

The experience of collaboration on agricultural extension and research highlights the same tendencies, in addition to the fact that the Agriculture Department is neither equipped nor has a stake to respond to the localized problems or the demands of poor farmers. Also, as part of the larger bureaucratic system they are driven by the dictates of the State rather than local needs. The State has a great deal to offer by way of collaboration, but provided it changes its role from having a monopoly on implementing development to becoming an agency for facilitating work and enhancing local capacity for implementation of development work. Seva Mandir can help the State make this transition. Many NGOs are primarily oriented towards influencing the functioning of the state agencies. Their strategy is not so much to develop their own capacity to implement development, but to orient the State to respond to the claims of local people for development. This approach is attractive in that it suggests the possibility of scaling up the benefits of participatory development through large-scale transformation of State systems. What is not clear, based on the experience up till now, is the extent to which this then happens on the ground. Seva Mandir happens to be on several advisory forums of the government, both at the national and local levels, it may eventually improve in the functioning of the State agencies vis-à-vis the needs of participatory development. However, State’s willingness to share control and power with people remains to be seen, especially in the context of the mindset of people in positions of power.

Decentralisation and Panchayati Raj: It is believed that NGOs, in their diversity can provide an important policy instrument for bringing about changes in power and social relations, and can in turn create the social base that would regulate Panchayats to become responsive to people and less subservient to the State.

Panchayati Raj Institutions were conceived as people’s institutions to countervail the State. Rajasthan was the first state to initiate Panchayati Raj system in 1959. The village councils were envisaged to represent the needs of local communities vis-à-vis the State administration and also provide effective local self-governance. The positive potential of this conception was perhaps its undoing. Just when the Panchayats were coming into their own in terms of having the authority to respond to local needs, their growth was stalled. The different agencies of the State succeeded in slowly emasculating the vitality of these institutions. This was followed by stalling of PRI elections for the next 15 years.

The recent constitutional amendments have rekindled hope in the Panchayati Raj institutions. The constitutional safeguards, and affirmative action to enable women and members of the scheduled caste and tribes to participate in these forums has corrected some of the biases associated with their earlier system. The enactment of a long list of activities to be handled by the Panchayats reverts to earlier provisions of Panchayati Raj, the ones that were undermined by the State given to increasing centralization of power and control.

Notwithstanding all these recent developments, the expectations generated by professed commitments to decentralization have been belied. The State has not devolved power to Panchayats. Resource endowments remain extremely poor i.e., less than 10% of the state plan The State Finance Commission could only recommend 2.18% of total state resources as share of PRIs. The Panchayats have not been given the requisite financial authority and power to respond to the needs of their constituency. As regards the transfer of subjects/schemes, this is done in extremely lackadaisical manner.
More problematic is the fact that people who constitute the base of Panchayati Raj are embedded in patron client relations, are socially and economically stratified and fragmented so as not to be able to hold Panchayats accountable and make them respond to the basic needs of the deprived.

The emasculation of authority of Panchayat Raj on the one hand and the lack of cohesive social base on the other has meant that Panchayats do not represent the voice or will of the poor. These institutions are dependent on the State for funds and authority, and to that extent their loyalty is towards the State. The capacity of the State to control the Panchayats reflects itself in many ways. There are formal ways in terms of the sanctioning of state development programmes and there are informal ways based on the power of interpreting and applying a maze of rules that can constrain the freedom of elected leaders.

Panchayati Raj needs to be weaned away from its dependence and subservience to the state. It needs to be helped to become meaningfully autonomous and therefore responsive to grass-root needs. The process of making them autonomous requires that people who constitute the Panchayats are themselves made more autonomous and capable of associating with each other to represent their interest more purposefully. Trying to do this through merely training elected Panchayati Raj functionaries has not been found to be satisfactory. Those who are elected are embedded in the power structure, whatever be their gender and personal predilections and are constrained from acting on behalf of the long terms interests of their constituencies specially of the poor. A change in social relations and institutional capacity is needed to shift the locus of power from the State and the present nature of Panchayats.

**Decentralisation and civil society institutions:** The experience of Seva Mandir suggests that people can be made autonomous and a new social base created. Here the relationship of the elected leaders and their constituency is of joint responsibility to shared goals. The pressures of sustaining these relations are no doubt tremendous and far from stable. The point is to recognise that for the present the institutions of Panchayati Raj by themselves lack the social base and autonomy to defy the tendency of the State to control and co-opt. What is needed are strategies that will allow elected leaders to locate their source of authority with people and their network of associations. For this it is essential that there be a richer conception of decentralisation other than merely identifying it with the institutions of Panchayati Raj, the training of elected representatives and the mobilisation of the people when the issues around which people mobilise are reflective of patron client modes of thinking. Seva Mandir, and many other institutions have, over the years, evolved a different outlook on the question of dealing with the State. Rather than transforming the State they feel that the institutions of civil society must transform themselves. Their thrust is on the institutions of civil society, both at the level of NGOs and people’s organization reducing their dependency, on the state to do development. Their emphasis is on civil society building the capacity to contribute to development. It is felt that this strategy besides reducing dependency, improves efficiency, as the local associations are better informed about local conditions and also have a greater stake in positive outcomes. Also, this strategy can create a social and institutional base among the poor that can challenge the present patron-client model of development. The experience of Seva Mandir in many villages suggests that the social, institutional and structural barriers to development can be overcome. The critical issue for an NGO is to set in motion processes that will over time countervail its own inner tendency to become self-serving. The institution of Gram Vikas Kosh, autonomous village associations offer one such strategy.
All together, the critical need is to enhance the role of civil society institutions, be they NGOs, people’s organisations or activists to have the capacity to formulate and implement programmes of development in collaboration or independently of the State and the Institutions of Panchayati Raj. The touch stone of collaborations must be the extent to which these impact positively the structural, capability and institutional parameters of development. The State’s monopoly over development must be challenged and the institutions of civil society helped to gain the capacity to accomplish development themselves. Seva mandir has succeeded in evolving a long term strategy and has substantially invested in their capacity building to negotiate from the position of strength. So long as the State hold monopoly power over development it will not only emasculate the capacity of people to develop themselves, but it will also stifle the potential of institutions of Panchayati Raj to become autonomous of the State and responsive to the needs of people at the grass-roots.
Chapter 5

SEVA MANDIR-EXPERIENCES IN COLLABORATION

I. CO-OPERATION WITH THE GOVERNMENT

Advisory and Policy Advocacy Role –
Seva Mandir is member on Advisory boards and steering committees of various Government programmes at the National, Regional and State level.

1. Natural Resource development: In the area of natural resource management Seva Mandir is represented on the following committees – National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan is a Nation wide network setup by the Government of India, with the mandate to prepare state level action plans for Biodiversity conservation in a participatory manner. Seva Mandir as a member of the Rajasthan State Steering Committee is entrusted with the preparation of a strategy paper on people’s participation in Biodiversity conservation, which will feed into the State Strategy and Action Plan. Seva Mandir is a member of the State wide advisory board on Joint Forest Management, which is chaired by Secretary, Forests and has a number of senior Forest Department officers on it. The advisory board deliberates on implementation and process issues in Joint Forest Management, so that appropriate policy changes may be affected. Seva Mandir is also member of a advisory group set up at the Regional and District level by the Divisional Forest Department to share experiences related to performance of Joint Forest Management programme and NGO involvement in it at the field level. As member of these bodies, Seva Mandir was able to influence policy changes in the state government resolution on Joint Forest Management, as a result of its long standing experience in the field level execution of the programme.
Seva Mandir is a member of the District level steering committee on Watershed development, set up under the aegis of the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) and chaired by the District Collector. The committee is mandated to steer the progress of DRDA supported watershed programmes in the district and address bottlenecks in the field execution of the programme.

2. Women and Child Development: In the sphere of Women and Child development, Seva Mandir is part of several Government initiated bodies constituted at the national and state level. Seva Mandir is a member of the District level forum called “Zilla Sahayata Samiti” located at the Department of Women and Child Development. The forum meets to deliberate on issues of Violence against women and seeks their redressal. Seva Mandir is represented on the Governing Board of Reproductive and Child Health Society at the district level, chaired by the District Collector and initiated by the District Health Department. Seva Mandir is a trainer for women supervisors and Project Executives of the National level programme called “Indira Mahila Yojana”, a programme for development of microfinance opportunities for women at village level.

3. Rural Development: In the arena of Rural Development, Seva Mandir is a member of various district level committees set up under the department of rural development, at the DRDA. Seva Mandir is represented on a district level committee to steer the progress of a Central Government sponsored programme called the “Swaran Jayanti Swa Rozgar Yojana”, for provision of self-employment opportunities to deprived social groups and women in the villages, through the Panchayat. Seva Mandir is member on this committee in the districts of Udaipur and Rajsamand, which are the work area of Seva Mandir. Similarly, Seva Mandir is a part of the district level advisory committee on “Jawahar Rozgar Yojana”, another centrally-aided scheme for providing for development of rural-infrastructure and self-employment for the rural communities. At the Tehsil level, Seva Mandir is member of the Block review and planning committees set up by the Block Development Officer, to review the progress of various Government schemes being executed in a block. Seva Mandir is also member of the District Committee on Consumer Rights Protection in Rajsamand, set up by the DRDA. Seva Mandir has been nominated by the District Collector on the District wide committee on crisis management. Seva Mandir is a Facilitation
Centre of CAPART (Council for People’s Action and Advancement of Rural Technology) for Rajasthan state, to help NGOs access development funds from CAPART.

Education
Seva Mandir is also represent as member on several committees on Education. As a NGO with prominence in the field of education, Seva Mandir is a member of the District level committee on literacy called “Zilla Saksharta Samiti”. Seva Mandir is a member of the State Mission on Elementary Education called “Rajiv Gandhi Arambhik Shiksha Mission”. As the implementation agency of the Lok Jumbish programme on primary education, Seva Mandir is a member of the “Review and Planning Committee” of the programme at the State and Block level.

4. Health: In the arena of Public Health, Seva Mandir is a member of the governing board of the Rajasthan State AIDS Control Society, initiated by the State Medical and Health department and chaired by the Secretary-Health. Seva Mandir is also represented as a member on the District Committee on “Tuberculosis Control and Prevention” and Seva Mandir’s referral hospital at Kojawara is an affiliated centre for the tuberculosis control programme. Seva Mandir is an active partner in the Immunisation and Family planning programmes of the District Medical and Health department. Under this association, Seva Mandir supplies contraceptives and other family welfare schemes to the villages in its work area. The village health workers and the Block Health Educators of Seva Mandir liason with the Primary Health Centres located at the Panchayat/village level, and arrange for the delivery of state programmes on health. The Traditional Birth Attendants supported by Seva Mandir are recognised at the Primary Health centres, Government hospital at Udaipur and the cases referred by them to these places are duly attended to. The Birth Attendants also liason with the State supported Auxillary nurse and mid-wife for the complete immunisation of expecting mothers and infants in their work areas. Seva Mandir has also been actively collaborating with the Government during the Pulse Polio Campaigns, and been involved in its monitoring with the UNICEF.

II. COOPERATION WITH OTHER NGOS/ORGANISATIONS
Seva Mandir collaborates with various institutions
   a. as part of networks on specific subjects
   b. for strengthening ongoing programmes and on related concerns.

Collaboration networks
♦ Seva Mandir is the regional resource agency (Rajasthan) for the National Environment Awareness Campaign of the Ministry of Environment and Forests (Government of India). In this role, it has maintained linkages with nearly 150 NGOs of Rajasthan since 1993 through financial support towards environment awareness. Seva Mandir also helps the more promising among them access funds from other organisations.
♦ Seva Mandir is in the process of formulating the first of a series of management development programmes for senior managers of NGOs in Rajasthan along with ARAVALI, Jaipur. Members of other organisations (Foundation for Ecological Security, Society for Promotion of Wasteland Development and Aastha from Udaipur, Unnati, Jodhpur and URMUL, Bikaner) are on the advisory committee.
♦ Seva Mandir conducts training programmes and organizes on demand exposure visits for various NGOs on development related issues.
♦ As part of the Rejuvenate India Movement, Seva Mandir is working with 12 organisations in 10 states on broad-basing ideas of volunteerism in development. It is the coordinating agency for Rajasthan.

Seva Mandir is member of the following networks:
♦ Voluntary Action Network of India (VANI), New Delhi
♦ National Adult Education Association (NAEA), New Delhi
♦ ARAVALI, Jaipur
♦ Asia South Pacific Board of Adult Education (ASPBAE), Manila
♦ INAFI, an international micro-finance network
♦ Saadhan, a micro-finance network in New Delhi
♦ Institute of Rural Management, Anand (IRMA)
♦ National Support Group, Joint Forest Management based in SPWD, New Delhi.
♦ Forum for Children (FORCES), Jaipur

**Collaboration for ongoing programmes**

♦ The organisation collaborates with CHETNA and SARTHI, Ahmedabad for training and resource support in health education, especially for reproductive health for staff at all levels including, field level workers.

♦ Seva Mandir staff participates in health training programmes and workshops for capacity building at the Institute of Health Management Research, Jaipur. Students of the institute are sent to Seva Mandir as part of their internship programme.

♦ Under the drought relief effort of Seva Mandir in 2000-2001, the organisation worked with ARTH (an Udaipur based NGO working on health issues), in Kadiya zone (Badgaon block). The health paraworkers of Seva Mandir were guided by doctors of ARTH in treating malnourishment among children. The feed, nutrition and medicines were provided by Seva Mandir.

♦ Core group members of Seva Mandir working on the balwadi programme have been trained at SARJAN, Ahmedabad.

♦ 40 women’s self-help groups have been linked with banks for group loans under micro-credit.

♦ The legal awareness cell of Seva Mandir works in partnership with the *Atyachar Virodhi Manch*, Udaipur on issues of women and voilence.

♦ Seva Mandir is part of the district level Joint Forest Management network.
Chapter 6
Seva mandir: Specific Observations and Comments

Programme Monitoring and Evaluation: Programme monitoring and evaluation (PME) in Seva Mandir have been part of the different programmes of the organisation. Every programme has evolved its systems and mechanisms for monitoring and assessment – in both formal and ad hoc ways. However, some programmes like those on women’s empowerment are more complex than others in this respect and have needed more investment. Today, initiatives to strengthen these measures within all the programmes have been grounded or at the least recognized. While this process of programmatic monitoring continues, the need for an effort to build/strengthen an independent mechanism for monitoring and evaluation is also recognised. This was reported to be one of the areas of primary focus of the Fourth Comprehensive Plan. The RME (Research, Monitoring and Evaluation) Cell within People’s Management School will be entrusted the responsibility of undertaking this.

This independent mechanism would involve
a. Integration and standardisation of the PME system such that it can feed into a common structure of the organisation to work as a feedback mechanism of programmes as well as structure and processes of the organisation. A computerised village database system is being designed to record baseline information, initiatives undertaken by Seva Mandir and activities undertaken by other organisation (including the government). This software will help in the following:
   ♦ Programme management
   ♦ Village knowledge-base management
   ♦ Management information system
   ♦ Data transfer between head office and field offices

The proposed modular components will include details with respect to location (i.e. village), programmes, personnel and the beneficiaries.

b. Studies of sample villages/programmes to assess impact against pre-determined indicators. These studies will also capture organisational process as well as nature of its intervention.

In the case of programmes requiring a higher level of database management, Seva Mandir is working with external agencies. For instance, in March 1999 ICCO Consult of the Land and Water Conservation Programmes made a field assessment. Consequently, the natural resource development programme has stepped up its effect monitoring system based on the suggestions and through follow up

Phasing Out of the programme
The Comprehensive Programme of Seva Mandir is part of a long-standing and deep commitment on the part of the organisation to strengthen the ability of disadvantaged people to become more self-reliant and take up responsibility of their own well-being. Poverty is a chronic problem and cannot be addressed completely within a short span of time. As has been articulated through project documents, the structural constraints to poverty alleviation can only be addressed once the capabilities of the local communities have been strengthened as well as access of the poor to resources has been created, both of which will require a long-term presence of the organisation. While specific components of the programme will have a definite beginning and an end, the overall programme of the organisation will continue. Therefore, what is envisaged in terms of phasing out is not the “physical withdrawal” of the organisation but a change in role from an implementer to a facilitator.

The programme has been conceived in a way, that each of its component projects have an inherent viability and a long-term sustainability mechanism built into them. Most of the interventions of Seva Mandir can be classified into two categories, on the basis of the target group:

- Community as a target
- Individual household as a target
In all community based works such as pastures, forestry plots, watershed area, lift irrigation systems, community centres, day care centres for infants (balwadis), non-formal education centres (NFEs), the village group/community has been responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of these resources. Seva Mandir, as a part of its strategy, has emphasized the role of building human capital (in the form of village paraworkers and village institutions) to take up responsibility of managing development. For example, in village Shyampura, the Forest Protection Committee (FPC) has been managing the forest regenerated under the Joint Forest Management (JFM) programme, including the maintenance cost. Similarly, in village Barawa, the village group has been successfully managing its pasture including protection as well as annual harvest, without any financial assistance from Seva Mandir. However, all village group do not fall in the same category and Seva Mandir feels that it would need to provide support to other villages in order to enable them to achieve self-reliance.

In case of interventions targeted at individual households, such as sanitary toilets, cattle sheds, individual plantations etc., the beneficiaries are responsible for the maintenance of the resources, under supervision and support of the village institution. The status of these resources is assessed by Village Development Committees (VDCs) in the village meetings.

In both the above cases, Seva Mandir has tried to built-in sustainability by building a cadre of village volunteers (paraworkers) in all its projects. These paraworkers belong to the same villages where the projects are located and have been trained by the organisation to manage different developmental activities including technical components of the programmes. For example, through the Traditional Birth Attendant (TBA) programme, the village midwives have been trained to do aseptic deliveries. These TBAs also advice women in proper nutrition and medication. Similarly, the Village Health Workers have knowledge of basic health and hygiene and can carry out first-aid measures in case of emergency. The Balwadi Sanchalikas are trained to provide a children-friendly atmosphere at the rural crèches as well as use games and stories to teach very small children. The Vanpals are experts on plantation techniques while the nursery raisers are trained to provide saplings for plantation. Thus, the presence of this trained cadre will ensure the sustainability of the programme while the role of Seva Mandir will be more of a trainer to organize need-based trainings, workshops, seminars etc. for village groups, paraworkers and village leaders.

Since all the programmes are being managed by the village institutions and the village development committees, an important part of the strategy is to ensure the long-term sustainability of the group (village samuh) itself. This has been done by setting up Gram Vikas Kosh (GVK) in most villages where Seva Mandir works intensively. GVKs consist of village common corpus, which are built from people’s contribution and are managed by the village group themselves. These GVKs have been envisaged to give financial security to the project and the resources created during its implementation. These GVKs have been able to take care of the recurring costs of the projects, such as maintenance costs, protection costs, small administrative costs etc. In addition, the village groups can use its GVK as a collateral to access development funds from other agencies – such as the Panchayats and Government departments. For example, in village Nayakheda, the village group used its GVK to leverage financial support from the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) to set up a community lift-irrigation system.

Seva Mandir has been conscious of the fact that the village level paraworkers should be accountable to their respective village groups. Therefore, as a part of its phasing out strategy, it has been transferring control to the village groups, including supervision of the paraworkers and making payments to them for their work. However, this decentralization has been possible in villages where Seva Mandir had been working intensively (46 villages at present) and there is enough potential for replication of this process in other villages.
Financial Independence and Sustainability of Seva Mandir

The issue for Seva Mandir at this juncture is to realize the emerging potentialities at the grass root level and establish organizational forms and procedures which will consolidate and stabilize these social changes towards greater (democratic) associational life and self-governance modes of civil life. For this to happen, sustained work is imperative.

Seva Mandir has been working on rural development initiatives for the past thirty years and thus, it has considerable experience in generating financial support, from both within the country as well as outside. It realizes that in order to make real its goal of participatory rural development, it needs to be financially secure and autonomous. At another level, the quest for financial autonomy has to do with the circumstances in which the development sector is placed. The State has come to realize that it cannot alone alleviate poverty and improve people’s well-being. In the last decade or so the State has changed its policies. People’s participation along with Panchayati Raj is being considered as the panacea for better development and better governance. While this perception embodies a large element of truth, what it fails to recognize is the need for an institutional mechanism to create the social base for these ideas to take root and develop inner strength. The State is supportive of NGOs in policy, but has yet to develop the mechanism to support them financially and respect their independence and autonomy. The temptation is to co-opt NGOs into becoming an extension of State directed development.

Although in recent years, the State directed policies on development have been progressive and changed from a centralised approach to a decentralised approach, these policies are based on the assumption that the social base is ready to absorb them. Most of the policies talk of people’s institutions but shy away from explaining how these institutions will be created or empowered to access resources for the development to take place. This rhetoric on people centered development refrains from discussing how will the people come together, what kinds of values and principles they would need to make the policies work, or what kind of civil society institutions would be required to bring this change in attitudes. Experience of implementing this policies demonstrates that this paradigm shift will not happen on its own and will require an enabling environment and a committed support; which are unfortunately missed out in the prevalent discourses on development. For example, the Joint Forest Management programme envisages sharing of responsibilities and benefits between forest department and the local people, but does not comment on the privatisation of forests in the form of illegal encroachments or how would people be able to access these contested lands.

Therefore, in order to be able to effectively contribute in this changing development framework it is imperative that Seva Mandir be autonomous and equipped to chart its own course. Seva Mandir has attempted to build this financial security through setting up a Corpus Fund. The Fund consists of contributions and donations from individuals as well as institutions, as a testimony of their faith in the long-term vitality and utility of Seva Mandir’s work. The bulk of the contributions have been received from a group of well-wishers in England called as “Friends of Seva Mandir”, and the “Goodwill Association of America”. Hindustan Lever Limited, a top corporate house in India has contributed towards the corpus Rs.2.5 million, as a part of the on-going collaboration between Seva Mandir and the Lever group, wherein Seva Mandir has been organising courses in rural orientation for the young Management Executives of the company. Although the Corpus and Reserves fund available with Seva Mandir is in excess of Rs.25 million, it is still short of the target of Rs.100 million, which would be able to provide a long-term autonomy to the organisation. Therefore, Seva Mandir has been intensive in its efforts to generate more funds for building up its corpus and there have been positive responses from several institutions.

Apart from the Corpus, Seva Mandir has been able to generate programme support from the Indian donor organisations such as Sir Ratan Tata Trust and the Dorabji Trust, which demonstrates the confidence of these organisations in the efficacy of Seva Mandir’s Comprehensive Rural Development Programme. In addition, Seva Mandir has been fortunate in receiving financial support from several International donor organizations such as Fosters Parents Plan International, The Ford Foundation, and the GTZ (German
Agency for Cooperation. Seva Mandir is hopeful of generating interest of other donor organisations, in order to further broaden its support base.

The organisation has also been successful in leveraging government funds wherever a space for NGO participation has been created. Thus, Seva Mandir is a Programme Implementing Agency for Watersheds for both the DRDA as well as CAPART. Under the National Environment Awareness Campaign, the Ministry of Environment and Forests supports the organisation as a Nodal NGO for Rajasthan. During the recent drought, Seva Mandir was also able to undertake comprehensive Drought Relief programme, which was supported by CAPART in the form of a grant of Rs.15 million. Besides these, Seva Mandir has also been net working with the local branches of the Nationalised Banks to provide loans and advances to the women’s groups under the Self-Help Group (SHG) programme.

However, the support generated from the Indian and other International donors is still not enough to support all of Seva Mandir’s work, which has expanded rapidly during the last decade. Moreover, it is the quality of funding and the inherent flexibility available through the financial support, which is more significant for a grass-root organisation. While a target-based funding support can be useful in delivering efficiently some preconceived services, tackling the challenges to development requires creative space for an organisation to function. For Seva Mandir, this twin increase in pace of work as well as in creation of space for this work has been the result of its long-standing relationship with ICCO/EZE. Since the initiation of the comprehensive Plan, Seva Mandir has been successful in making a transition from project mode of working to a programme mode. This transition has enabled the organisation to look at structural constraints to poverty alleviation and come up with innovative solutions to deal with these constraints. The Gram Vikas Kosh, the New Education Policy of Seva Mandir, Common Property Resource Management are some the ideas that have evolved and have been tried out in the field in the last few years. They have been the result of the confidence and the committed support that Seva Mandir has received from the joint team of ICCO/EZE. Therefore, Seva Mandir envisages a continuity in this support, which on the one hand will enable the organisation to broaden and replicate its successes, and on the other hand, facilitate a long-term financial independence of the organisation.
Annexure A
Community Dynamics related to PSPAs

**Barawa** : Village Barawa is in Rajsamand district about 38 Kms from Udaipur city. The major communities in Barawa are Rebaris, Bhils and Rajputs. Out of a total of 104 Households, There are 63 Rebari families, 32 Bhil families and 7 Rajput families. The pastureland in village comprises of 29.1 hectares of land. Till about 50 years back, the pastureland was well stocked with trees such as khair, and Roonjia. The loppings of these trees were generally used for camel fodder. However it started getting degraded over time, mainly due to felling of trees, so much so that by early 80s, it had become a barren patch of land, totally devoid of any vegetation. In the drought of 1987, most of the farmers had to buy grass from outside, or sell of their animals.

A group of Rebaris sought to encroach on the pastureland. With this view in mind, they erected a temporary fence around parts of the pastureland, adjoining their own lands. This move was opposed by other Rebaris in the village. A move to protect the pastureland was initiated. Bhils who were initially not allowed to graze on the Pastureland, were invited to join in its protection. The encroachments were removed and the work of developing the Pastureland with the help of Seva Mandir was initiated. The sarpanch who belonged to Needach village was approached. The Sarpanch put obstacles in their way, refusing to grant the necessary lease, instead he planned to take up similar work through the panchayat with the help of the State Government. He also sought to create rift between the two rival Rebari factions in the village. Seeing this as a move to wrest control of the village pastureland by the Panchayat, 3 Senior Rebaris went on hunger strike. Under growing pressure, a lease was granted in 1987-88. The lease legally expired in 1992, but the village has continued protection without further permission due to the rift between the village and the Panchayat leadership. In order to placate the other Rebaris, who were interested in encroachment, about 7 has was kept for open grazing initially. However when the Rebaris tired to encroach on this land too, the villagers approached Seva Mandir in 1996-97 and closed this land too.

The Rebaris primarily had a large number of camels and bullocks, these have reduced over the years, due to the fact that most of the male members are employed in salaried jobs like guards in hotels, marble factories in the towns of Udaipur, Surat and Baroda. Increase in automated transport, and closure of forest lands are other reasons for the decline. The Rebaris have however increased their buffalo population as a source of ready cash through the sale of milk. Some of the Rebaris are now hiring bullocks to do the agricultural operations.

The Bhils are primarily dependant on agriculture and goat rearing. While the number of bullocks with the Bhils has increased, the number of goats have declined due to lack of availability of fodder and closure of the pasturelands. The Bhils however are now even hiring out buffaloes to the Rebaris.

The major benefit of protection, has been the grass. About 250 kg/ grass per family is being harvested by cut and carry method.

**Salukhera** : Salukhera is located at a distance of 53 Kms from Udaipur. The major communities are Rajputs ( Jhalas and Kharvars ), Gayris and tribals. Out of the total land of 361.39 has in Salukhera and 322 has in Sarna, 172 and 169 has respectively is forest land. The entire forest land of the two villages of Salukera and Sarna, have been developed as plantation and enclosed under Joint Forest management programme. The closure of these lands, has meant that free grazing has been stopped. Grass is being taken from these lands under the cut and carry system.

The forest land is part of the forest block of Narayan, which has an area of 1,339.95has. Rights and concession have been granted to the villages of Malpur, Chechlaya, Badrana, Khakra Khera, Salukhera, Nadela, Sarna and Mohammed Phalsia. About 40 years ago, the forest was dense in trees like Dhoada, Moka, Hald, Ronjhia, Bamboo, Khair, Khirni, Havna, and Mahua. Grasses like Bhamti, Heran, and Gunderi were abundant. Wld animals like tiger, leopard, deer, sambar, jackal and wildboar were also found in the forest.
The prime reasons for the degradation of the forests, were the charcoal coupes, sale of wood by the tribals and Gayris, use of wood for construction of persian wheel, use of fuelwood in making of jaggery.

The forest Department approached the village in 1993 to take up the protection and development of the forest lands under the Aravali afforestation project. The project envisaged closing 250 has of forest land. In addition, the territorial division of the forest department, enclosed a 50 ha patch.

Initially there was stiff resistance from the all communities due to encroachments by 11 families (one Jhala Thakur, 4 Gayris and 6 tribals) and free grazing. At the initiative of the Range Forest Officer, the encroachments were vacated. The thakur was convinced to give up his 20 year old encroachment on the condition that all other encroachments would be vacated. In return for this, he was given the job of supervisor, his brother appointed as guard and Chairman of the executive body of the FPC.

The Gayris resisted tooth and nail, they even sent their animals to graze when the enclosure was made. Stern action was taken against them. Nanga gayri was fined Rs.1250/-. The tribals were more acquiescent. They gave away their goats to relatives in nearby villages. They were also provided wage labour on the plantation. The Gayris on the other hand did not come for wage labour. The chairman too had to pay a fine of Rs 111/- when his animals were caught grazing in the forest. Some tribals too were also fined.

If one examines the composition of livestock before and after intervention, one finds that buffaloes have gone up while cows, goats and sheep have gone down considerably. The gayris have increased their buffalo herds from 85 to 144 with a decline in sheep from 940 to 620 and goats from 399 to 185. Their cows have declined from 212 to 43. The position of other castes is more or less similar, however they do not have that many sheep or goats.

Suali: Suali hamlet is part of Bhamti village located about 14Km from Falasia 44Kms from Jhadol and 93 Kms from Udaipur. Bhamti has 651 has of forest land. The total private land in Suali is 292 has, of which 162ha is cultivated. The communist party of India established its base here in 1970. It played an important part in mobilising people on social and economic issues. Under the influence of the CPI, a gram sabha was constituted in 1981. FPC, grain bank, women’s savings group etc were formed later. NGOs started work in the village from 1980. The spread of the bhakti movement in the village from late 1940s, has had a tremendous impact on the socio cultural environment of the area. Most of the people have given up meat and liquor consumption, as a result wasteful expenditure is minimal.

The forests of Suali, were well stocked in bio and animal diversity. Some 30 years back, the forest had numerous medicinal plants. As the population grew, the need for additional land was felt by the villagers. The process of encroachment on forest land began in the early 70s. The increased degradation led to a movement for the protection of the land. This led to giving up the practise of slash and burn. The process of protection of the forests began in 1985. About 500 has is being protected. A Forest Protection Committee was formed, which banned felling of green trees for timber and firewood. Nearby villages were also informed of the same. A regular patrol of the forest has been organised in which 2-3 families take turns to protect the forest on a daily basis. This system has now been modified to surprise raids by a group of 10-12 persons.

In 1987-88, due to the drought, the norms were relaxed. This resulted in a reduction of the tree population. There was a considerable reduction of illicit felling, however since some Instances of illicit felling were brought to light, the FPC decided to declare the site sacred. Kesar Chanta was resorted to in 1995. This has had a drastic effect on the illicit felling which has dropped to zero. The estimate of Seva Mandir, reveals standing stock valued at Rs 1.5 crores on the site.

The protection of the forest, has resulted in occasional tussles with people of the neighbouring villages. The people of Suali were denied use of the road to the nearby market. In 1992, Nathulal and Tejaram were beaten up at Neechli Sigri. With the intervention of the forest Department, who filed a case against the people of Neechli Sigri, access to the road was granted to the people of Suali.
During the last 13 years, there has been a dramatic decrease in the number of goats and cows in the village. On the other hand the number of bullocks has gone up. There has been an increase in the number of children going to school.

**Selu**: Selu is located about 35 Kms from Udaipur. Pasturelands and sacred groves comprise 80 has of the total of 717 has of land. Of these 46 has is being protected since 1992. The process of discussion was begun in 1990. At that time more than 50% of the land was being encroached by 16 families. Most of them were Dangis and Gayries, who are more powerful. Gameties were more interested in protection of the lands. As a result of regular meetings and visits to areas being protected, the encroachments could be vacated and development work was started in 1992.

Protection is being carried out by a chowkidar. Cut and carry method is being followed. Free grazing is being allowed on the other pastureland site. There is an office of 5 members 3 gameties, 1 Gayri and 1 Dangi. Each family is at present getting about 240 kg of grass from the PSPA.

In terms of livestock, the number of sheep have declined drastically to 1/8th of the 1990 figure, this is more due to the closure of forest land in the neighbouring village. There is a general increase in the population of other animals.

**Bada Bhilwara**: Bada Bhilwara is a hamlet of Bichhiwara in Jhadol Block located about 80 Kms South of Udaipur. Bichhiwara has a total of 712 has of Forest land, of which 350 has is protected of which 150 has was done by Aravali Afoestation project, 150 by Territorial division and 50 has by Seva Mandir. There are 172 families in Bada Bhilwara, of which 161 are Bhils, 6 are Meghwals and 5 Muslims.

The situation 50 years back, was that the area was well forested. A large number of wild animals used to inhabit these forests. There were a number of incidents of forest fires, due to friction between bamboo. The forests were the property of the Rao Sahib of Jhadol, but people enjoyed usufructry rights. They even practised slash and burn in these forests. NTFPs were freely collected, for which a token revenue was paid to the Rao Sahib in kind.

After Independence, the forests were handed over to the forest department. In the late 60s, the forest were deamrcated into coupes and leased out to Katha contractors. In 1970, coupes of bamboo were felled in an unscientific manner. Later some more coupes were leased to charcoal makers. Bamboo, Dhaoda and Kahir started to vanish from the forest.

The people of Tunder, Semla, Thadiveri also met their fodder, fuelwood and small timber needs from the forest. Gradually many patches were cleared and agriculture also began to be practised. Many tribal people resented this illicit grabbing of common property. They protested against the encroachers and also demolished the structures on the encroached land. The encroachers lodged a complaint at the police station, the matter was taken to court and settled in favour of the encroachers. The Forest Department, played a passive role in the whole process. A new hamlet, Pipla Phala was created as a result. The turn of events demotivated the rest and further protests against encroachers was stopped.

The people of Tunder also started encroaching. This motivated the people of Bada Bhilwara, to encroach in Tunder after first giving an ultimatum to the DFO to do something about it. The Forest department, was compelled to intervene. A compromise was reached between the people of Tunder and Bada Bhilwara, that no further encroachments would take place. The need to protect the forests, was felt.

In 1984-85, a system of community protection called Soya, was put in place. 5 people would take turns to patrol the forest everyday. The system worked satisfactorily for 2 years. A dispute between the cattle guard and the a Patel, led to discontinuation of the system. The Patel, tried to graze his cattle in the forest. This was objected to by the cattle guard. The Patel reminded the cattle guard of his inferior status. This infuriated the guard who beat up the Patel. The Patels retaliated by assaulting the guard. This resulted in a police case. Bribes were taken from both parties by the police. The tribals decided to support the guard,
they imposed a fine of Rs 501/- on the Patel. This resulted in the breaking of ties between the two communities. In 1992 Kesar Chidkao, was tried. This did not last long.

The repeated atmosphere of confrontation, led the people to seriously think about Joint Forest management. This was inspired by the experience of the neighbouring Shyampura village. After detailed consultation and preparation of microplan in consultation with Seva Mandir, the proposal was submitted to the forest department. The FPC was registered in February 1992.

The executive committee has been imposing fines for violations, the committee has to be quite flexible other wise the opposition to the system imposed might increased. For example in 1999, 6 bullocks of Pitha S/o Kala were caught at the site. He was fined only Rs 100/- since he appealed for leniency. He also happens to be the ward panch. It is mostly the people from Panidari fala who break the rules. This is because they happen to be closest to the forest. This is ironic, because they happen to gain maximum from the protection of the forest. The people held a meeting next to an anicut near the phala, now the people are more disciplined.

Occurrence of three consecutive years of dorught, has put tremendous pressure on the community. The people of Pipla have started harvesting bundles of wood, this has compelled people of other villages to follow suit. The committee is also lenient towards fodder harvesting due to the three years of consecutive drought.

Some reasons for the violations

1. No open forest left. The available forests are far away with no proper route to them
2. Violations by those close to the site, which prompts others in turn
3. The route to Pipla, passes through the JFM site. Its also the route for open grazing
4. The people of Bida fala, feel neglected

At present, 172 families take about 500 kgs of grass each from the site. The number of cows and goats have come down over the years. The Kumahrs have also been severely affected as their source of fuelwood has now been restricted. Meghwals have also abandoned their traditional occupation of tanning due to lack of tanning material (Cassia fistula, Terminalia embellica and Acacia nilotica).
### Annexure B

**Community Pastureland Development Program**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Number of sites</th>
<th>Total Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'A' Category</td>
<td>32 (54.2%)</td>
<td>503.09 (48.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'B' Category</td>
<td>15 (25.4%)</td>
<td>251.47 (24.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'C' Category</td>
<td>12 (20.3%)</td>
<td>283.45 (27.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>59 (100%)</td>
<td>1038.01 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Sites developed up to 1995</th>
<th>Sites developed after 1996</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of sites</td>
<td>Total Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'A' Category</td>
<td>14 (48.3%)</td>
<td>219.16 (37.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'B' Category</td>
<td>8 (27.6%)</td>
<td>182.20 (31.1%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>'C' Category</td>
<td>7 (24.1%)</td>
<td>184.50 (31.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>29 (100%)</td>
<td>585.86 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Annexure C

**Yield of Grass from PSPA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Area Protected</th>
<th>Initial Status</th>
<th>Current Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Barawa</td>
<td>29 has</td>
<td></td>
<td>25 tons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Selu</td>
<td>46 has</td>
<td></td>
<td>36 tons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Salukhera</td>
<td>300 has</td>
<td>19.6 tons</td>
<td>168.5 tons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Suali</td>
<td>300 has</td>
<td></td>
<td>Grass reduced due to increase in canopy cover, but leaf litter increased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Bada Bhilwara</td>
<td>350 has</td>
<td></td>
<td>100 tons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Annexure D**

**Changes in livestock pattern**

Note – Overall trends are being noted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Impact on Livestock</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Barawa</td>
<td>The Rebaris have reduced their bullock population due to male migration. The Bhils have however increased their population as they now hire out to the Rebaris. The number buffaloes have increased, these belong to Rebaris and Rajputs. The goat population of the Bhils has declined considerably due to lack of grazing area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Selu</td>
<td>Cow, bullock, buffalo and goat populations have increased, sheep population has decreased drastically to 1/8th of the 1991 figure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Bada Bhilwara</td>
<td>There has been a general decline in the number of cows and buffaloes kept by each household in general. The number of goats have also reduced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Salukhera</td>
<td>Buffalo population of all communities has increased. There has been a decline in the cow, bull sheep and goat populations of all communities. The bull population of the Nal tirabls and the Gayris has slightly increased. The decline in the shhep and goat populations of the Gayris is considerable as also the goat population of the tribals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Suali</td>
<td>The number of cow and goat have declined while bullocks have increased dramatically. The number of buffaloes has remained more or less the same.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PS:** Salukehera has been developed by the forest department, while Suali is self initiated protection.
Annexure - E

List of Documents supplied to the Team by Seva Mandir

1. 1st Comprehensive Plan 1990-94
2. 2nd Comprehensive Plan 1994-99
3. 3rd Comprehensive Plan 1999-2002
5. A Study of Rural Indebtedness : Sweta Jha, IIRM, July – 2000
17. Seva Mandir : An Assessment, Sector / Theme Reports.

Annexure - F

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RAJASTHAN & SEVA MANDIR PROJECT AREA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MF RATIO</th>
<th>POPULATION (Lakhs)</th>
<th>LITERACY RATE IN %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>922</td>
<td>565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Udaipur</td>
<td>972</td>
<td>26.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajasmand</td>
<td>1002</td>
<td>9.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Area

Rajasthan 342,239 Sq. Km.
Udaipur 12,500  Sq. Km.

Note: Male Female Ratio & Literacy Rates have shown enhancing trends since 1991 which were earlier 956 and 35% respectively in Udaipur and 991 and 33.09% for Rajsamand.
III. Comparative assessment of Accion Fraterna and Seva Mandir and scope for joint learning

The prime purpose of comparison is to facilitate clarity on the specific role of each organisation and the possibilities of mutual learning.

Leading question 1. Optimal interventions to support the rural poor

The rural economy of Anantpur is characterised by a predominance of cash crop cultivation. Groundnut cultivation is taken up on over 70% of the agricultural land. In Udaipur, the prime crops are Maize and wheat. Animal Husbandry, particularly buffaloes and goats also constitute a significant share in the livelihood pattern.

In Anantpur, the intervention on private land and improvement of water availability, has contributed significantly to enhancing the livelihoods in the region. Annexure 1 examines the specific role of groundnut in the livelihood system of Anantpur and the options explored by Accion Fraterna to improve livelihood systems in the region.

Private land is relevant for Udaipur as well, the role of the common lands which constitute over 70% of the land however cannot be ignored. The pastureland development programme, comparatively has acquired more importance as a result. Annexure 2 examines the livelihood system in Udaipur district and Seva Mandir’s strategy to deal with it.

Anantpur also has landless labourers. While the rural population of Udaipur also depends a great deal on wage labour, there is little or no landlessness per se. This aspect is reflected in the work of Accion Fraterna, which has organised the labour separately, particularly in the watershed work. They are however made accountable to the committee as a whole. Seva Mandir has however relied more on the concept of Gram Kosh inorder to build collectivity. Money collected from the contribution of people is deposited in the gram Kosh.

The support programmes of Housing, health education done by RDT a sister concern of Accion Fraterna have considerably helped to uplift the weaker sections. This has facilitated greater discussion and dialogue while implementing the watershed programme, which is necessarily with the entire village. In Seva Mandir, area, rapport building has been done by the Adult Education programme and health programme. This has helped to identify leadership among the weaker sections and train them for larger issues related to NRM. Capacity building taken up in the early phases has then provided the social cohesion to organise more complex work of pastureland development, lift irrigation, VFPCs and watershed development. The organising of the drought relief programme on the scale and with the criteria for benefitting the most needy was possible because of the consistent orientation of Seva Mandir towards community activity and particularly the weaker sections.

In both regions however one cannot say that migration has been eliminated. The limitations of agriculture per se and dryland agriculture in particular put limits on the extent that the rural community can earn its livelihood from this source. Aiming for total stoppage of migration, is therefore unrealistic. In Anantpur, the market forces have a much greater role to play vis a vis stability. Accion Fraterna is therefore has therefore felt it necessary to intervene at the policy level in this regard to provide protection to the local groundnut producers. The major role of Seva Mandir vis a vis policy has been on access to common lands through community activities. This is reflected in one way or the other in a number of documents produced by Seva Mandir.

As far as the drought goes, both regions have faced the acute consequences of drought. While irrigation facilities in Udaipur is comparatively larger proportion of the agricultural land cultivated, in both regions well irrigation has been the major source of irrigation. The availability of water in these wells had considerably reduced as a result of the drought. The interventions in waterharvesting structures and soil and moisture conservation have considerably helped to recharge these wells. However experience so far shows
that one cannot say that the regions are self sufficient as far as the water balance is concerned. Indiscriminate usage of water and unplanned development processes are hampering development of rational water usage. Watershed development will bring to the forefront the need for equity in usage of water, however it is the water usage of larger water bodies that have significant impact on productivity in both the farm and of farm sector (in some cases even affecting the groundwater tables of large regions). More thought is needed as to how to go forward on these issues given the powerful lobbies involved and the need to generate more off farm employment for even the rural communities.

With respect to harnessing government resources for watershed development, this has been done at both locations. Problems of timely release of money and dealing with a number of cumbersome procedures exist at both places. Accion Fraterna however has comparatively more flexibility due to the large resources of its sister organisation RDT (though there are some limitations as to use of those funds, being linked to child sponsorship). The scale at which Accion Fraterna is able to operate is therefore much higher. Accion Fraterna also has the ears of the Government and is able to make critical suggestions on a number of issues like drought, protection to groundnut farmers etc.

Seva Mandir is also participating in the Government watershed programme being implemented by the District DRDA. The total number of watersheds sanctioned to NGOs in Udaipur is much lower than in Anantpur. The visibility of Seva Mandir is felt in quality documentation and through the interventions of the persons trained by Seva Mandir at the village level. Except for Barawa, where the people rejected the world bank watershed programme (due to fearing of possible malpractices), the rest of the villages have participated in both government and Seva Mandir programmes. The leadership training provided by Seva Mandir, has come in useful to put pressure on better performance of the government programme.

Leading Question 2: Optimal role in building civil society

The role of strengthening the position of the poor has been taken up by both Accion Fraterna and Seva Mandir, albeit in different ways. Accion Fraterna works with the SCs and STs separately, in addition to the programme of watershed which is with the entire community. Seva Mandir has followed the route of building up of small groups at the hamlet level for various activities. Regular training programmes are organised. The capacity of the women has gradually been built up.

The social mobilisation of the community at Accion Fraterna has taken place at different levels
1. Organisation of the Scheduled Castes and tribes
2. Organisation of women groups
3. Organisation of user groups
4. Creation of self help groups
5. Creation of watershed advisory committee
6. Organisation of labour group

A number of committees are formed as mentioned above. They help in overseeing the activities to be implemented at the village level. This includes the process of decision making which is made in meetings held at the appropriate level, disbursement of funds, monitoring of programme implementation etc. Accion Fraterna believes in working by consensus. No work is undertaken without the village coming to an agreement.

A number of funds have been set up to facilitate the process of collective action

1. Watershed development fund – for facilitating maintenance work in future
2. Drought fund
3. Handicapped fund
4. Support to children to facilitate their education
Through the process of consensus building, Accion Fraterna has been able to keep dissensions at bay. However Government work in the same village may be affected, though Accion Fraterna does try to facilitate work done by government as in the case of the loaning scheme for milch animals etc.

The watershed work has resulted in recharging the downstream wells. In most cases, farmers have begun to invest in pumps to harvest the water. Some of these wells were dry for a number of years. The benefit of water harvesting is however mostly at the individual level or of a group of farmers who commonly own the well.

A number of these downstream farmers have also decided to improve their incomes by raising horticultural plantations like mango, papaya, tamrind etc. The initial plantations, used pot irrigation (pots provided near the plant). However with the improvement of water resources, pump sets have been purchased to harvest water from wells. Farmers in the upper reaches who have opted for horticulture plantations, have however still to depend on pot irrigation. The plantation of the SC farmer in the upper reaches of Hanumanreddyppalli visited by us was one such. Some amount of mortality to the horticultural plantation, has taken place as a result of the adverse conditions. In Hanumanreddyppalli, a group of farmers had got bore wells from the AP wells scheme supported by DFID. Of the 23 applications, 4 bores were done after geological survey. The water from these bores is shared by the neighbouring farmers. Since the bores have been given after proper survey, the danger of mutual interference between the bores has been minimised.

In Mallapuram, there is 29 acres of temple land. The temple gives this land out for cultivation on auction. An amount of Rs 2,25,000 has been collected by the temple, which now uses this money to lend to anybody who asks at 2% pm interest. The temple land is managed by a committee from the village. The committee involves the village in the transactions, so that the dealings are transparent. The members were interested in a community irrigation source for this land.

The above reveal that the institutions created have helped to improve land productivity in different ways. The capacity developed for dialogue and consensus building has been used to work out different logistical requirements. This capacity can be further enhanced through working on collective activities in the villages and in interaction with the government.

In Seva Mandir the organisation of communities has been primarily around the gram Kosh described in greater detail in Annexure 2. Women and men SHG groups are also part of the founding blocks of community mobilisation. Repeated training programmes by Seva Mandir and the informal discussions in the NFE programme have created leaderships cadres that sometime even deal with the government/ market forces independent of Seva Mandir. This was observed in Naya kheda, Delwada and Karavadi for instance. The federation of VFPCs in Jhadol, is also a ground for discussing larger issues related to JFM.

The complexities of the land issue in Udaipur has meant that the work of watershed development is a more long drawn out process. Seva Mandir has invested in a lot of time in building up collective activities through a number of strategies which include the Gram Vikas Kosh (Village Development Fund), strengthening of civil society institutions by building small groups through collective activity etc. This has created a leadership in the village, which is keen on consensus building and collective activity. The peneness and transparency adopted, is then transferred to other activities as these leaders take up the issues in Government implemented work as well. The villages visited had demonstrated how collective action has facilitated the provision of drinking water, the removal of encroachments, reduction of corrupt practises etc. A number of other organisations in the region who are spin offs from Seva Mandir have used lessons learnt in Seva mandir to facilitate community activity. This investment in software so to speak is slow time consuming process and has been made possible because of the commitment and dedication reflected by Seva Mandir staff.

Collaboration with the government:
In relation to Accion Fraterna, since the Government has allotted 17 watersheds to Accion Fraterna, corresponding to a budget of about 5 crores. The approach of Accion Fraterna has been to ensure consensus in the village, before undertaking any work. In the context of the politically
charged climate in Anantpur which also has the effect of impeding the progress of work, Accion Fraterna role has been to demonstrate the value of good mobilisation and implementation. In Total Accion Fraterna has plans to complete 100 watersheds to generate visibility. The work is slowly becoming a demonstration for the government implemented watersheds as well. The philosophy of Accion Fraterna of concern for others, work beyond duty and pursuit of excellence in work has been the cornerstone driving the organisation, monitoring and implementation of the work.

In Rajasthan Seva Mandir is represented on a number of committees (given in detail in the main chapter on Seva Mandir). However the work of direct collaboration in terms of handing over funds for implementation as in watershed development or in terms of land in the case of JFM has been rather slow. This reflects the government desire to implement the work plans directly. The experience of and demonstration by Seva Mandir has however been used by the government in formulating a number of its programmes.

Panchayati Raj:
With respect to Panchayati Raj, both organisations do not seem to be dealing directly with the panchayats, though indirectly the leaders trained by them exert considerable amount of influence in pockets. In Andhra Pradesh, the government seems to be moving away from Panchayats and working more with user groups etc. In Rajasthan the government has formally granted more powers to the panchayat with transfer of the responsibility of a number of line departments to the Panchayat. In actual terms, this has not amounted to much, but in future a considerable budget is to be handled directly by the Panchayats. Seva Mandir could use this opportunity to strengthen its village groups to be more effective participants in the gram sabhas. The training programmes organized by them for the women leaders in the panchayats could incorporate these new developments.

transforming the State they feel that the institutions of civil society must transform themselves. Their thrust is on the institutions of civil society, both at the level of NGOs and people’s organization reducing their dependency, on the state to do development. Their emphasis is on civil society building the capacity to contribute to development. It is felt that this strategy besides reducing dependency, improves efficiency, as the local associations are better informed about local conditions and also have a greater stake in positive outcomes. Also, this strategy can create a social and institutional base among the poor that can challenge the present patron-client model of development. The experience of Seva Mandir in many villages suggests that the social, institutional and structural barriers to development can be overcome. The critical issue for an NGO is to set in motion process that will over time counteract its own inner tendency to become self-serving. The institution of Gram Vikas Kosh, autonomous village associations offer one such strategy.
IV. Evaluation and Suggestions

Accion Fraterna

With respect to NRM, Accion Fraterna has initiated work in 48 watersheds of the District of which 17 are supported from government funds. Accion Fraterna has shown its ability (recognised by the Government as well) to be able to mobilise the local community and organise the implementation by the beneficiaries themselves. The proceedings are very transparent with a record of the activities painted on the walls of the community building.

The work has benefitted both the landed and the landless. The landed can be divided into 2 main categories – upper catchment area and lower catchment area. In the case of those having land in the lower reaches, they have the benefit of improved groundwater recharge as well. This has prompted many of them to invest in pumps to harvest water from wells which were previously dry. The landless have got the benefit of assured wage and timely payments. This has prompted many of them to make savings, send their children to school etc. The other programmes of Accion Fraterna/RDT have provided useful synergies in this respect. The increased productivity of the agricultural lands will also provide additional wage earning opportunities in the future.

Despite this, there will be a problem of adequate livelihoods. The analysis of the revenues from groundnut and the three year cycle, reveal that some gaps will prevail vis a vis fulfilling the livelihood and cash needs. Questions also remain with respect to sustainable harvesting and utilisation of water.

Accion Fraterna has rightly pointed out the need to shift from a conservation to livelihood strategy. Limitations as to how this to be done, have been mentioned above. However the following areas can be considered by Accion Fraterna

1. Community Lift irrigation schemes to benefit farmers in the middle and upper reaches (collective right to water could be built into the agreement arrived at with new watershed villages, based on an understanding of the additional water harvested as a result of watershed treatment)
2. Utilisation of collective pools of land like the temple land to build collective income generation options.
3. Utilisation of bamboo, agave etc for further downstream processing

Agencies that could be visited to develop more understanding on these issues

1. Sadguru Foundation – Panchmahals Gujarat
2. Wotr – Ahmednagar
3. Soppecom – Pune

Accion Fraterna while giving emphasis to the SCs and STs, basically believe in an approach of consensus building. This approach can continue to be followed. Accion Fraterna is now in position to make more detailed assessments of the nature of benefits. These can be discussed upfront so as to facilitate options that favour the weaker and marginal sections. The relationship between the investment in collective structures like anicuts etc and the individual benefit stream need to be studied more closely to arrive at options which will benefit a larger segment of the community. Impact monitoring of quantum of benefits and its distribution within the community will be helpful in this respect.

In relation to post programme benefits, the committees formed, maintain the structures and meet from time to time when required. In Kadiridevapally, Accion Fraterna has used the opportunity provided by the creation of chilling centres to initiate a dialogue with the dairy, banks and with local community to provide loans to farmers for milch cattle. This has rejuvenated their association in the village. Other aspects like collective marketing of produce can be considered. The option of federating the village committees around issues like drought, Joint forest management, marketing (including policy lobbying like adverse impact of palmolien imports etc), may be considered.
The above have implications for the nature of interaction between the social and technical wings within the organisation. Socio-Technical monitoring involves incorporating the equity aspect into the technical design and generating more technical options that could facilitate community organisation. The book watershed based development by BGVS provides a good overview of how the two can be combined. However as the solutions have to be locally generated, this approach should be woven into the existing approach, which is itself very pro poor.

**Seva Mandir**

The approach of Seva Mandir has the twin objective of trying to uplift the weaker sections through the process of community building. The work taken up on natural resources reflects this approach. The nature of activities taken up is with the idea of benefitting the weaker sections. On the other hand creation of groups at hamlet level, contribution and the development of gram kosh has been with the idea of developing a collective action mindset. The activities in health and education have contributed greatly in building up a core of committed leadership at the village level.

The benefits of enhanced productivity and increased availability of foodgrain, fodder, water has considerably enhanced the livelihoods of the region bridging the shortfall in availability of basic necessities. It however cannot be said that the rural economy will be self-sustained (with no need for migration). The work of Seva Mandir has reduced to a great extent forced migration, dryland agriculture in this region cannot support the current population levels and the need for additional sources of non-farm income exist. The work done has considerably mitigated the impact of drought, the experience of three years of back to back droughts have revealed that this cannot entirely eliminate the problems being faced by nature. Seva mandir has however shown the nature of relief works that could be undertaken which would greatly mitigate the problems being faced and help people to bounce back with vigour in a period of good rainfall. In the absence of wage labour at the critical time, people fall into a vicious debt trap, having to give up land and animals, which reduced their income earning capacity in a good year.

The self help groups, have considerably reduced the dependence on money lenders. Short term credit and small amounts are now borrowed from the self help groups. However larger amounts at the time of marriage are still needed. The regular meeting and involvement of women has facilitated their participation in common meeting on the chabutar, reduced some of the vices like drinking, wife beating etc.

The leadership created by Seva Mandir, has emboldened some of these groups to take active part in the affairs of the village. In Karawadi, the former women sarpanch, had prevented corruption in the construction of the community centre. They were also active in removing an encroachment facilitated by the new sarpanch.

With respect to common lands, in some of the villages, the leadership has taken up issue with the Panchayat in order to facilitate the development of common lands (Barawa). In Nayakheda, the statemenship of the former sarpanch helped to create a model of development where the individual villages could look after their own affairs. Nayakheda is also an example of consensus building in elections and also to resolve affairs with the panchayat.

The possibility of enhancing the leadership abilities to deal with the issues at block level exist. Seva mandir has facilitated the formation of a federation for VFPCs in Jhadol. The experiences here could be used to create leadership on broad based NRM issues like water for instance.
Annexure 1.

Examining Livelihoods and contribution of Accion Fraterna

It is worthwhile, to examine the contribution of groundnut to the life support system

1. Average production of groundnut in a good year 8-12 bags (40 kg per bag)/acre.
2. Average value of one bag Rs 500.
3. Estimated revenue per acre – Rs 5,000
4. Average cost per acre – Rs 2,000
5. Average revenue per acre Rs 3,000
6. Average land holding 5-6 acres per family
7. Average income per family in good year Rs 15,000

One year in 3 is a good year. The second year is about 40% production while the third is 25% or less. Average income from groundnut is therefore about Rs 8-10,000.

(Source: Discussions with Accion Fraterna)

The impact of the change in prices due to the excess supply of palm oil will acutely affect the livelihood of persons living in the district. Accion Fraterna has therefore rightly taken up the issue of protection to the groundnut farmers.

In addition to this Accion Fraterna has also been exploring options to improve the livelihood of people and reduce the dependence of the people on groundnut by the following means:

1. Introduction of other crops like castor and red gram
2. Introduction of horticulture and vegetable gardening
3. Reduction of problems faced by groundnut crop
4. Liaisoning with banks and milk cooperative to provide loans for milch cattle
5. Introduction of Giriraja chicks and ram lambs

With respect to castor, it has been found that it is not as drought tolerant as groundnut. Red gram is cultivated after every 7th row (as compared to groundnut crop row to row distance). Its introduction provides the following benefits:

1. Break in groundnut crop reducing its susceptibility to pests
2. Provides some security in a year when no groundnut crop is possible.

In horticulture mango and papaya are doing well (it must be mentioned that papaya was introduced by the farmers themselves). Ber cultivation was also tried, but could not succeed due to pest problems (it was economically viable to deal with the pest attacks). Tamrind cultivation has also been promoted on a limited scale. In the District, there is the practise of having tamrind orchards on common lands, the produce of which is auctioned by the village. Vegetable gardening tried out mostly as kitchen gardens, is improving the nutrition content of the farmers.

Accion Fraterna has close contacts with the University and the State Agricultural Department. When the groundnut crop faced a severe pest attack, cooperation was sought from the these sources. The problem was initially identified as bud necrosis, but after study it was found to be stem necrosis which had attacked the crop for the first time in the district.

In order to reduce the dependence on groundnut, a search for alternatives was made. It was found that other crops could not match groundnut in terms of drought tolerance and market value. There is a need to
research on the productivity of bajra which was the initial food grain crop in the region. Accion Fraterna has moved some of the research universities, but without much result.

The Cooperative Dairy has set up chilling plants in some of the towns far away from Anantpur. Accion Fraterna has facilitated the giving of loans to farmers so that they can purchase milch cattle. The loans were provided by the banks in a tie up with the milk cooperative. In most of the cases, women have taken the loans.

Good quality ram lambs have been introduced in the village, in order to improve the overall breed of sheep. The number of people who can benefit from this programme is limited, others benefit indirectly by improvement of the breed. Poultry has been promoted by the supply of 8 week old birds at no profit no loss basis.
Annexure 2

Livelihoods of the region and contribution of Seva Mandir

Seva Mandir is working 6 Blocks of Udaipur District vis Badagaon, Girva, Jahdol, Kherwara, Kotra and Gogunda. These Blocks have 72% of common lands (Forest, Charagah and others). The region is primarily undulating, with a comparatively small portion of prime agricultural land in the valley bottoms. Animal Husbandry is as important as agriculture and supplementary to agriculture. Forests provide a number of NTFPs like gum, honey, Tendu patta, Safed Mosli etc. The major agricultural produce is Maize, Wheat, Mustard, pulses like udad and tur. Cash crops like chillies, ginger, vegetables etc are also taken in pockets.

The weaker sections who constitute the majority of the rural population, are able to produce about 6-12 months of their grain requirement. Marginal farmers produce 6-9 months of their grain. To meet cash requirements, and the shortfall in their grain produce, the marginal farmers have to go for some amount of wage labour. Sometimes the wage labour may be the specialisation of one or more brothers while one person is engaged full time in agriculture. The brothers who are more involved in wage labour provide hard labour like ploughing and at the time of harvesting. Their wives would however do the remaining agricultural work, while they go out in search of wage labour.

The prime source of irrigation is through open dug wells. The ownership is generally private, over the years, the distribution of the shares among the children mean that there are many claimants for the water. A system of warabandi (allotment of time in which to irrigate) exists to provide their respective shares of water. The rabi cropping pattern revolves around this (provided water is available). The major option is between wheat and Mustard (Mustard being taken if water availability is less). If a well happens to have 12 months availability, Rajka (Lucern) is taken as a year round crop. Alternatively MP Chari (a variety of Jowar) or Sudan grass can be grown in summer. Families who have this benefit of year round water, have opted for milk cattle like buffaloes. The reason being that in remote villages milk is converted into ghee and marketed.

The pressure of increasing population, has led to a need for further development of agriculture. Converting sloping lands and land in valley bottoms into agricultural fields has been going on over the decades. In addition, private pastures are being formed by encroaching on common revenue, Charagah and forest land. This has put pressure on the animal husbandry systems. Those with extremely marginal agriculture have had to reduce their cattle, a section has reduced their cattle, but trying to maintain the more productive ones like bullocks and milch cattle. Purchase of animals is increasingly being resorted to, to reduce the requirement of maintaining cows for breeding purposes.

Seva Mandir has realised that the poorer sections cannot survive without some form of collective approach. They have tried to bring about collectivity in the following way.

In the case of forestry, the promotion of individual plantation, to mini chaks to charagahs. In the last 5 years the amount of land developed under charagah is almost equal to that developed in the previous 10 years. 29 sites protecting 585.6 has upto 1995 and 30 sites protecting 452.15 has after 1996 (Statistics supplied by Seva Mandir). In a number of villages, like Karawadi and Selu people have removed encroachments. In Selu this was because these have been occupied by a few people (30 as compared to total population of 170 families living in the village – village discussions). Judging from this trend, Seva Mandir expects to be doing more of common land work in the future. Seva Mandir puts a lot of weight behind common land activities because of its understanding that the majority, particularly the weaker sections will benefit more out of common activity.

This approach can also be seen in the scheme to provide community lift irrigation schemes, which benefit a group of farmers. Deepings of community wells for drinking water has also been done. In the drought period, individual wells have also been dug for community drinking water, after taking the commitment of
the individual farmer that he will indeed provide the same on stamp paper. In Naya Kheda, an attempt has been made at providing irrigation facilities to the entire population by providing 2 community lift irrigation schemes by first digging 2 community wells. This work has been done after completion of soil and water conservation activities to improve moisture retention.

The benefits of this programme could not materialise as yet because the three years of successive drought has meant that there is no water in the wells. This is nevertheless the direction in which the provision of ensuring a minimum amount of irrigation water for all (subject to its availability). In Karawadi, people prevented one person from directly harvesting water from the  anal bed. This was because the nala was the only source of water. A ban has been put on lifting water directly from the river due the current scarcity of water as a result of the drought. In the context of the declining water tables, the need for collective control on water will be increasingly felt.

Seva Mandir has also facilitated the growing of vegetables and also training for better land use management as result of increased water availability. With respect to marketing of the produce, Seva Mandir has limited itself to a dialogue with the farmers as to the practises in the mandi, prices of produce at different levels etc. This will help the farmers to work out ways in which they can realise a better price subject to the concrete conditions in which they are in.

On the institutional front, Seva Mandir has evolved the concept of gram kosh. The contributions from people is put in this fund. In 1999, there were 355 villages, with Rs. 4,510,793 (Third comprehensive plan 1999-2000). The amount in the fund varies from village to village, being less than Rs 5,000 in 148 villages with 3 GVKs having funds over Rs 1,00,000 (Annual report 1999-2000). In some of the villages, the gram kosh has been used for community activity like channel lining in Selu, anicut desiltation in Dalvaton ka guda and well reinforcement in Gairiyo ka guda (Process documentation of gram vikas kosh projects). In a number of places however the village is not able to figure out a good activity to use it for. The then prefer to deposit it in an FD, so that the principal grows (field visits and discussions with Seva Mandir). More thought is needed on collective options in the village, which are unfortunately quite few. Some options are collective horticulture, animal husbandry etc. The concept of gram kosh, provides one more opportunity to the people for collective activity. During the drought, a number of villages visited during the field visit had used the money for collective purchases of grain to reduce the cost of purchase. In Delwada, the womens' group involved in Cloth Handicraft, used the money to deliver on an order for embroidered cushions and pillow-covers to Seva Mandir. The group aspires to open a boutique in the future as this area has sufficient marketing potential in view of increased tourist traffic.