

FES

FOUNDATION FOR ECOLOGICAL SECURITY

# *Landscapes*

*Restoration of Commons*



## *Prelude*

Across the world there is growing evidence that indigenous and other local communities have various community institutional arrangements for management and governance of shared natural resources such as forests, pastures and water bodies. The Foundation for Ecological Security (FES), set up in 2001 in India, embedding three fundamental tenets in its approach to sustainably manage natural resources (nature's potential to heal itself, secure tenure over shared resources, and community institutions for self-regulation), is assisting communities in restoring common pool resources.

By building on their existing norms and wisdom, creating space for women and the marginalised, mapping and inventorying resources, weighing extraction practices while considering threshold limits of ecosystems, claiming rights over land and produce, and surfacing attendant duties and responsibilities, the communities across contiguous villages come together on the basis of natural affiliations for collectively managing shared natural resources.

Furthermore, the increased availability of public funds for village-level development through innovative schemes such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, have helped create an environment favourable to improve the democratic functioning of village federations (Panchayats) and channel funds towards ecological restoration. With its constitutional backing and democratic mandate, village federations are finding locally-suited solutions to the complex problems of natural resource governance, and optimise opportunities for rural livelihoods.

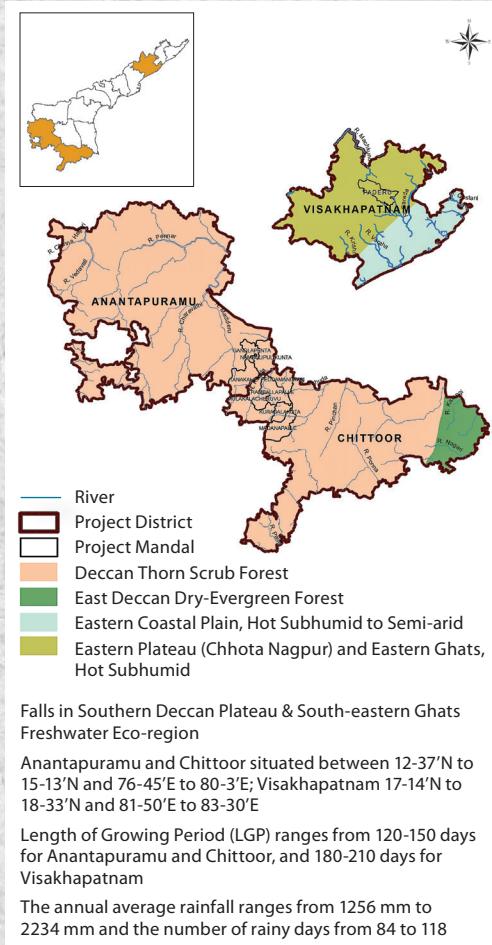
This photo catalog is a visual depiction of such efforts of communities over two decades, who have come together for restoring and managing their common lands.



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# Project Areas in Andhra Pradesh



# FACT FILE

**From intervention districts of Chittoor, Anantapuramu, and Paderu**

## River Basin: Papagni; Papagni; Machkund

**% of Common Lands other than Forestlands: 33.36; 19.64; 18.26**

% of Forest Cover: 16.97; 3.59; 30.81

**% of Population Living Below Poverty Line: 36; 22; 80**

% of Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes: 22.63; 18.06; 82

Year in which FES Initiated Work: 1991; 2000; 2015

**FOREST TYPES:** Tropical Dry and Moist Deciduous, Tropical Thorn, Scrub

**THREATENED SPECIES:** Yellow-throated Bulbul, Starred Tortoise, Indian Black Turtle, Woolly-necked stork, *Gyps bengalensis*, *Gyps indicus*, *Bridellia retusa*, *Chloroxylon swietenia*, *Anogeissus latifolia*

**PRINCIPAL CROPS:** Groundnut, paddy, tomato, redgram, millets, ragi, bajra, jowar, cotton

**FUNDING AGENCIES:** Omidyar Network, Sir Dorabji Tata Trust & Allied Trusts, RBS Foundation, NABARD-ITDP, NABARD-KFW, NABARD-WDP, NABARD (Distress Districts Programme), NABARD RSO Programme, Various Programmes of Andhra Pradesh Government, Grow-Trees.com, Hindustan Unilever Foundation, International Food Policy Research Institute, Washington University in St. Louis, National Remote Sensing Centre, HCL Foundation

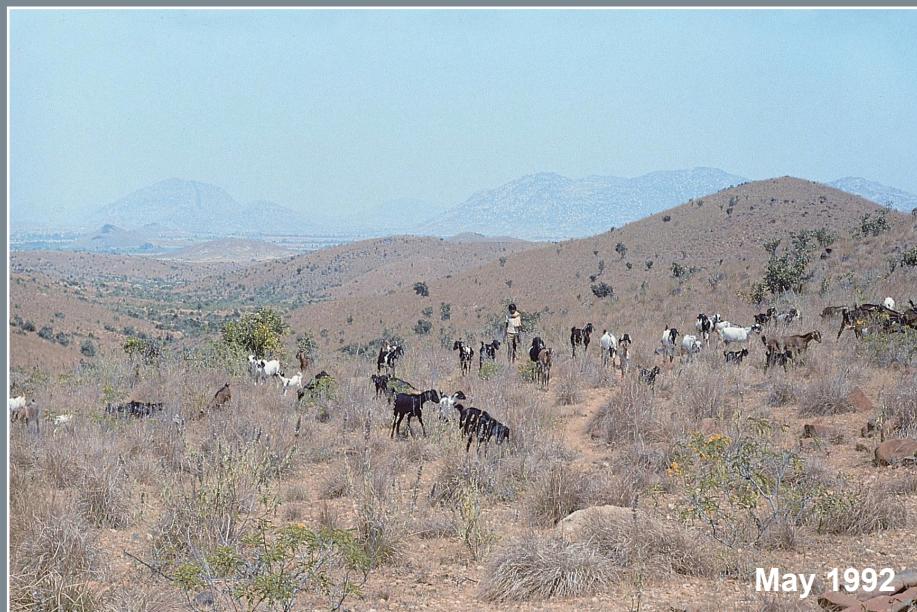
As of March 2017

**850** thousand  
acres of common land  
were brought under  
community management

**1.9** million lives  
were touched upon  
through community  
institutions

**2,300** habitations  
have been assisted in  
restoring and managing  
their Commons

## Bathinagaripalle (Chittoor District)



Sustained efforts of communities from two tribal hamlets in Bathinagaripalle towards protecting their common resources have inspired many forest-dependent communities from neighbouring villages to protect their common lands. Collectively-evolved rules and regulations for governing Commons have helped other communities replicate them, with necessary modifications, for forest governance.



## Chennappagaripalle (Chittoor District)



Chennappagaripalle has been managing the Yerrakonda hills for over two decades, through collectively evolved rules and regulations for provisioning and appropriating from the common resources. Inspired by their efforts, about 40 neighbouring habitations have initiated similar eco-restoration measures on their common lands, bringing about 2,000 hectares under collective management.

## Gudlavaripalle (Chittoor District)



August 2002



July 2009

Gudlavaripalle and Yeddulavarikota villages of Chitoor district have restored 300 acres of common land, overcoming challenges from within their villages as well as neighbouring villages, when the setting up of a stone quarry on the common land seemed to be a lucrative alternative. The area now supports rich avian diversity and a highly endangered plant species *Dolichandrone crispa*.



October 2017

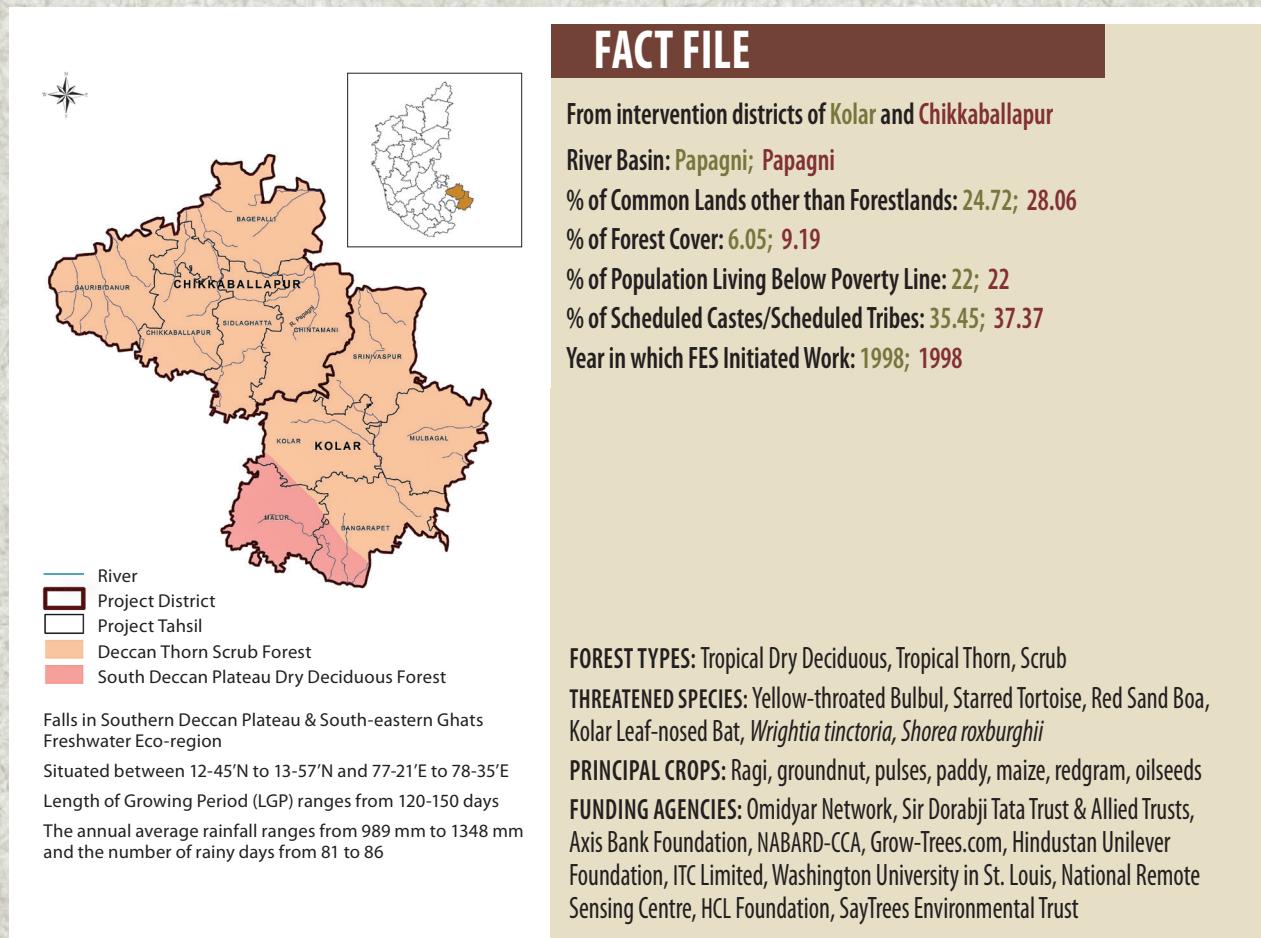
## Turakapalle (Chittoor District)



When Turakapalle village obtained lease for protecting and restoring 100 acres of common land, they prevented the land from being taken over by mining groups. Their collective efforts in restoring their land, inspired neighbouring villages to protect an additional 700 acres of the same hill range, a grazing ground for livestock of 10 habitations.



# Project Areas in Karnataka



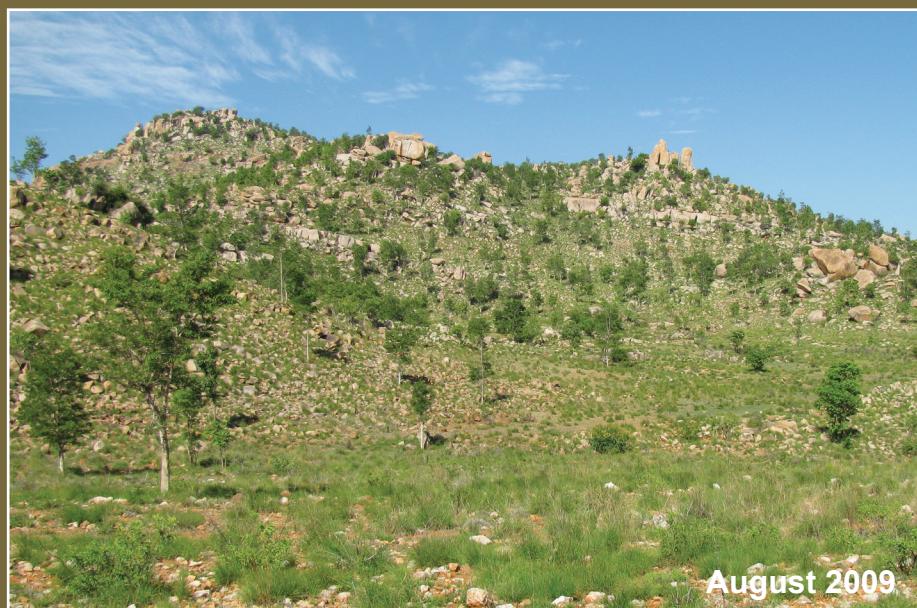
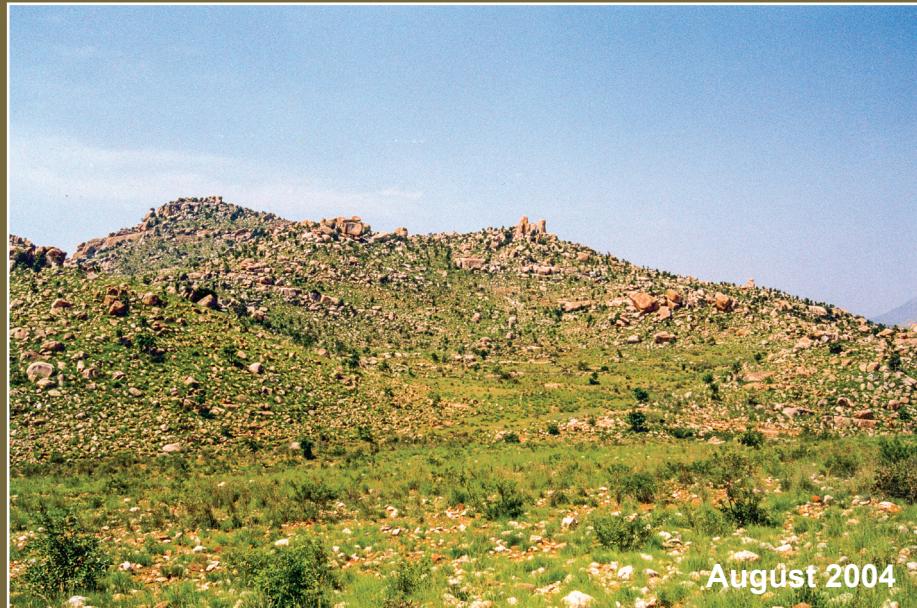
**95** thousand acres  
of common land  
were brought under  
community management

**237** thousand lives  
were touched upon  
through community  
institutions

**504** habitations  
have been assisted in  
restoring and managing  
their Commons

As of March 2017

## Sajjupalli (Chikkaballapur District)



Sajjupalli, along with three other adjoining villages, has been managing about 500 acres of common land in the Yerrakonda hill range for over a decade, through collectively evolved rules and regulations for provisioning and appropriating from the common resources. The area is now home to rich wildlife and also records the presence of threatened floral species and medicinal plants.



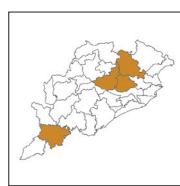
## Srirampura (Chikkaballapur District)



In the drought-prone area of Bagepalli taluk, Chikkaballapur district, four villages have been protecting 500 acres of common pasture lands and water bodies that cater to the fodder and drinking water needs for livestock of 12 surrounding villages. This has proved to be a starting point for all the neighbouring villages to come together to protect and manage adjoining forestlands against forest fires.



# Project Areas in Odisha



- River
- Project District
- Project Block
- Wildlife Sanctuary
- Chhota-Nagpur Dry Deciduous Forest
- Eastern Highlands Moist Deciduous Forest
- Northern Dry Deciduous Forest
- Odisha Semi-Evergreen Forest

Falls in Northern Deccan Plateau Freshwater Eco-region  
Situated between 18-14'N to 22-11'N and 82-5'E to 86-25'E  
Length of Growing Period (LGP) ranges from 180-210 days  
The annual average rainfall ranges from 1386 mm to 1602 mm and the number of rainy days from 95 to 98

## FACT FILE

From intervention districts of **Angul**, **Koraput**, **Dhenkanal**, and **Keonjhar**

River Basin: **Mahanadi**, **Brahmani**; **Kolab**; **Brahmani**; **Baitarni**

% of Common Lands other than Forestlands: **30.52**; **37.81**; **24.38**; **43.36**

% of Forest Cover: **42.38**; **21.89**; **31.42**; **38.67**

% of Population Living Below Poverty Line: **48**; **80**; **48**; **63**

% of Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes: **32.90**; **64.80**; **33.21**; **57.06**

Year in which FES Initiated Work: **1987**; **2008**; **1987**; **2013**

**FOREST TYPES:** Tropical Dry and Moist Deciduous, Bamboo Brakes and Scrub, Northern Tropical Semi-evergreen

**THREATENED SPECIES:** Tiger, Elephant, Gharial, Hyena, Barking Deer, Pangolin, Porcupine, Monitor Lizard, *Barringtonia acutangula*, *Diospyros candolleana*, *Strobilanthes jeyporensis*, *Gloriosa superba*

**PRINCIPAL CROPS:** Paddy, pulses, oilseeds, maize, mustard, millets

**FUNDING AGENCIES:** Omidyar Network, Sir Dorabji Tata Trust & Allied Trusts, RBS Foundation, NABARD-WDF, NABARD-ITDP, NABARD-WDP, Grow-Trees.com, Various Departments of Government of Odisha, International Land Coalition, UNDP, The Energy and Resources Institute, Bharat Rural Livelihoods Foundation, National Remote Sensing Centre, HCL Foundation

As of March 2017

**1.6** million  
acres of common land  
were brought under  
community management

**2** million lives  
were touched upon  
through community  
institutions

**5,073** habitations  
have been assisted in  
restoring and managing  
their Commons

## Nabkishorepur (Dhenkanal District)



May 1998



September 2006

Rules and regulations developed by the village institution of Nabkishorepur village, Angul district, for managing their forests and other Commons like water, have created a substantial resource base. The village now has a well-developed system for sharing forest and water resources, that takes into account both the availability and consumption of resources.



September 2017

## Thenga (Dhenkanal District)



Restoration efforts by the local community of Thenga village on about 100 acres of common land has resulted in improving water-retention period of seven ponds downstream by over a month, which has increased moisture content in the foothills where crop growth was reported for about 30 to 40 acres of adjoining land, thereby enabling a much-needed debate in the village on the linkages between the various components of the landscape.



## Paik Purunakote (Dhenkanal District)



November 1999



November 2004

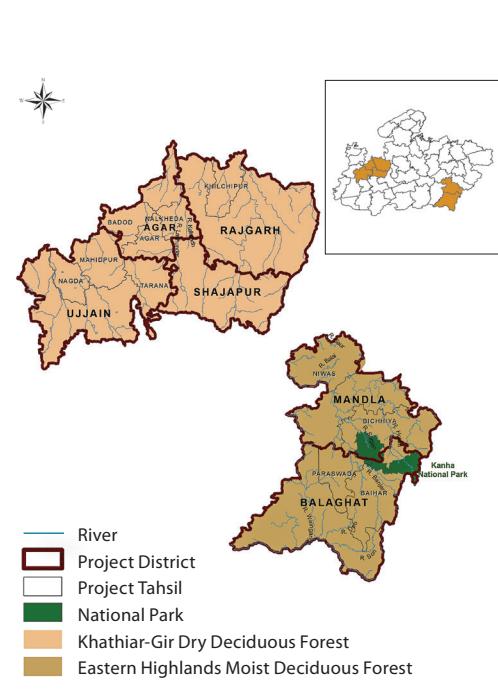
Overcoming initial internal conflicts, two habitations of Paik Purunakote started protecting 240 acres of revenue forestland. Benefits, of increased fuelwood and fodder, accrued over the years inspired them to collectively manage common water bodies and pasture lands, which improved water availability for 250 acres of farmland downstream.



September 2017



# Project Areas in Madhya Pradesh



Falls in Northern Deccan Plateau, Ganga Delta & Plain Freshwater Eco-region

Situated between 21-03'N to 24-32'N and 75-8'E to 81-17'E

Length of Growing Period (LGP) ranges from 120-210 days

The annual average rainfall ranges from 967 mm to 1259 mm and the number of rainy days from 66 to 74

## FACT FILE

From intervention districts of Mandla, Balaghat, and Agar

River Basin: Gaur, Balai, Banjar of Narmada; Banjar of Narmada; Lakhundar, Garhganga, Kalisindh

% of Common Lands other than Forestlands: 19.95; 25.95; 28.45

% of Forest Cover: 48.88; 53.94; 0.47

% of Population Living Below Poverty Line: 60; 60; 26

% of Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes: 62.46; 29.87; 26.22

Year in which FES Initiated Work: 2006; 2016; 1996

**FOREST TYPES:** Tropical Dry and Moist Deciduous

**THREATENED SPECIES:** Tiger, Swamp Deer, Green Avadavat, Barasingha, Vultures (*Gyps bengalensis*, *Gyps indicus*, *Neophron percnopterus*), Indian Wolf, Striped Hyena, *Sterculia urens*, *Pterocarpus marsupium*, *Terminalia arjuna*, *Adina cordifolia*, *Dolichandrone falcata*

**PRINCIPAL CROPS:** Wheat, soybean, redgram, minor millets, paddy, maize, jowar, bajra, mustard, pulses, cotton

**FUNDING AGENCIES:** Omidyar Network, RBS Foundation, ITC Limited, GIZ-Germany, GIZ-India, Grow-Trees.com, Hindustan Unilever Foundation, Sir Dorabji Tata Trust & Allied Trusts, Transform Rural India, New York University, Bharat Rural Livelihoods Foundation, Defries Bajpai Foundation, Columbia University, NABARD-WDF, Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies, National Remote Sensing Centre

As of March 2017

**80** thousand  
acres of common land  
were brought under  
community management

**126** thousand lives  
were touched upon  
through community  
institutions

**393** habitations  
have been assisted in  
restoring and managing  
their Commons

## Moyakheda (Shajapur District)

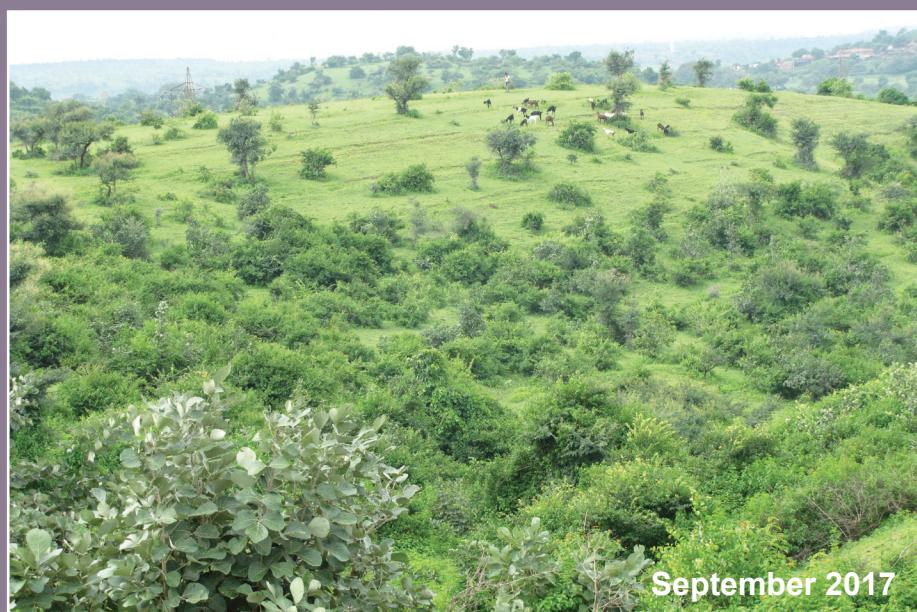


February 2003



September 2006

Initiated in 2003, the unrelenting efforts of communities of Moya Kheda have led to a considerable improvement in vegetation cover and increase in the water availability period from six to eleven months, resulting in the doubling of area under Rabi crop. A few species of reptiles have also been observed besides frequent sightings of wild animals and migratory birds in the area.



September 2017

## Madhopur (Agar District)



March 1999



September 2006

Madhopur village in Agar district has been protecting their common pastures and have, over the years, evolved collective rules and regulations to share fodder and water resources.

While the village has been able to secure tenure for 126 acres, it protects and manages an entire stretch of 274 acres of common land, warding off encroachments as well as restoring the habitat.



August 2016

## Nepania (Shajapur District)



May 2003



September 2009

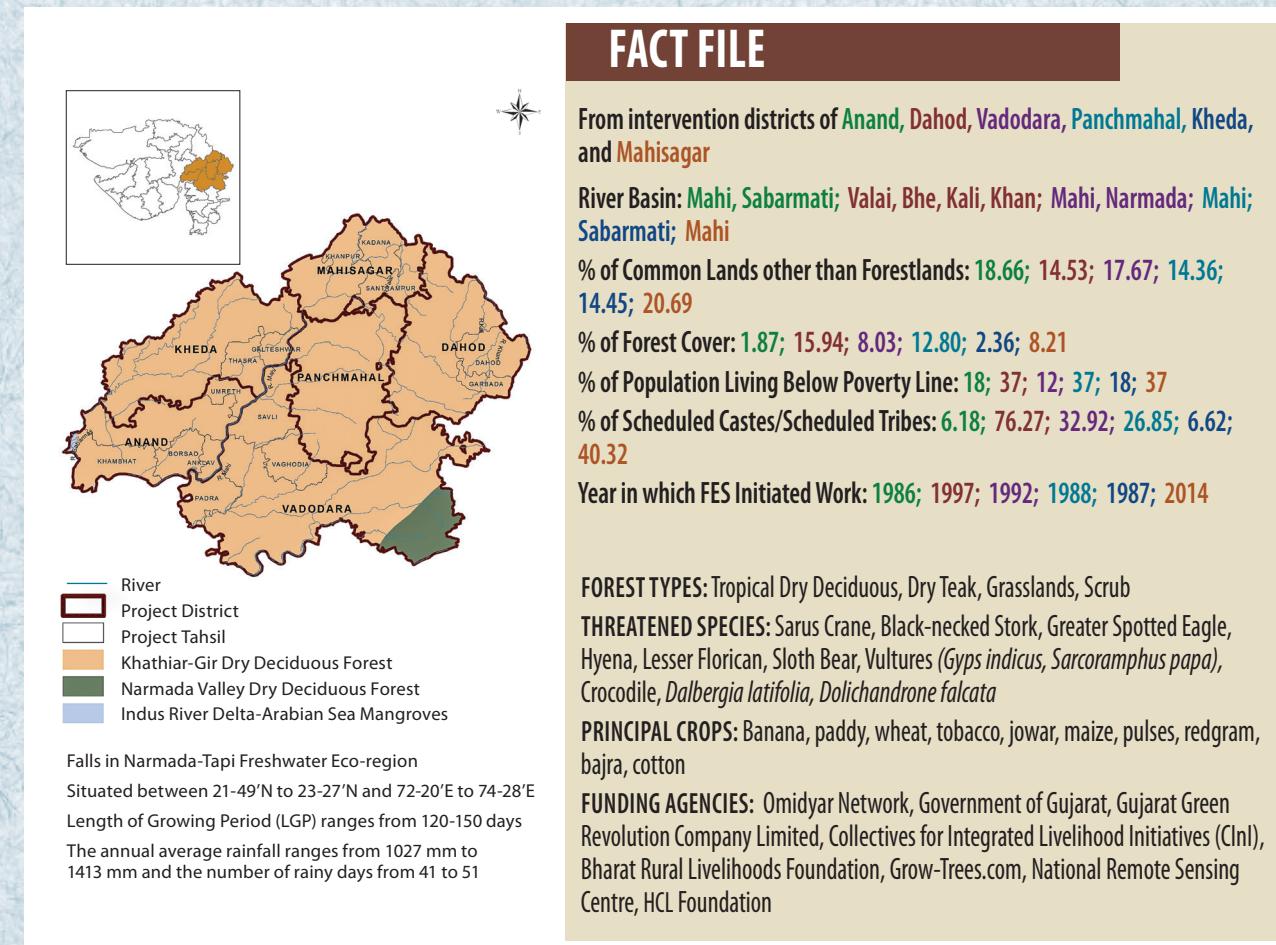
Undertaking restoration efforts in a region that lost most of its forest cover decades ago poses many challenges. While it may take several years of sustained protection before the people of Nipania see the lost forest cover return, protection of common lands has already led to improved recharge in the downstream wells.



October 2016



# Project Areas in Gujarat



**67** thousand  
acres of common land  
were brought under  
community management

**518** thousand lives  
were touched upon  
through community  
institutions

**754** habitations  
have been assisted in  
restoring and managing  
their Commons

As of March 2017

## Charangam (Mahisagar District)



November 1987



September 2007



August 2017

Sustained conservation efforts by communities in Charangam village, on the banks of River Mahi, have led to the successful regeneration of 197 acres of common land. It has also inspired the Panchayat to take up similar large-scale activities under the Right to Employment Act and Sardar Patel Sahbhagi Jal Sinchai Yojna.

## Sarnal (Kheda District)



Land degradation on the banks of River Mahi has not only affected the productivity of adjoining farmlands but also forced some communities to relocate their villages in the past. To prevent this, the collective efforts of Sarnal village have resulted in checking soil erosion, improved vegetation and increased the availability of fodder for the poorer section of the community.



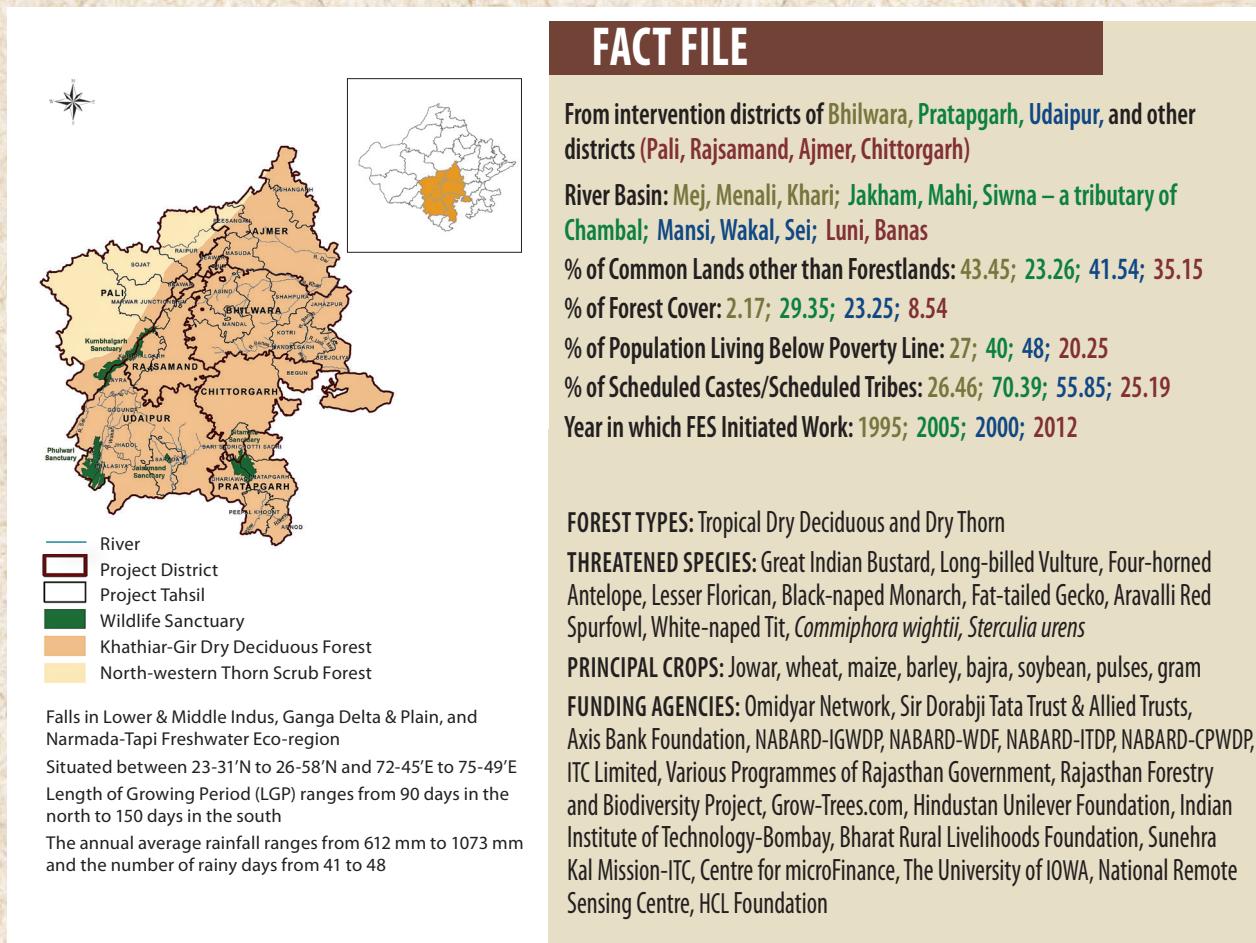
## Khorwad (Anand District)



The mixed-caste society of Khorwad village, Anand district, overcame initial hurdles to restore 100 acres of common land, which now has 72 floral species, an increase from the six species that existed prior. Recognising their efforts, the government has not only renewed the lease for another 15 years but also granted tenure in favour of the village for an additional 40 acres.



# Project Areas in Rajasthan



**901** thousand  
acres of common land  
were brought under  
community management

**2.6** million lives  
were touched upon  
through community  
institutions

**3,055** habitations  
have been assisted in  
restoring and managing  
their Commons

As of March 2017

## Chitrawas (Udaipur District)



Several protracted discussions on inclusion of constituent hamlets, sharing responsibilities of management and concessions for access benefits in a complex user regime, and the eventual recognition by the Forest Department, were key design principles that laid the foundation for the protection of the forest in Chitrawas.



## Chota nala (Udaipur District)



By forming a forest protection and management committee, *Bhil Gameti*, the tribal communities from Chota Nala protected forest land dominated by Mahua trees, spread over 173 acres. These communities have undertaken soil and water conservation measures, and regeneration activities that have helped them supplement their incomes by collecting Mahua flower produce.

## Karech (Udaipur District)



The key principles of inclusion, sharing responsibilities of management and concessions for access benefits in a complex user regime, as well as the eventual recognition by the Forest Department, led to the protection of the forest in Karech by the local communities living in contiguous hamlets.



## Piparna (Udaipur District)

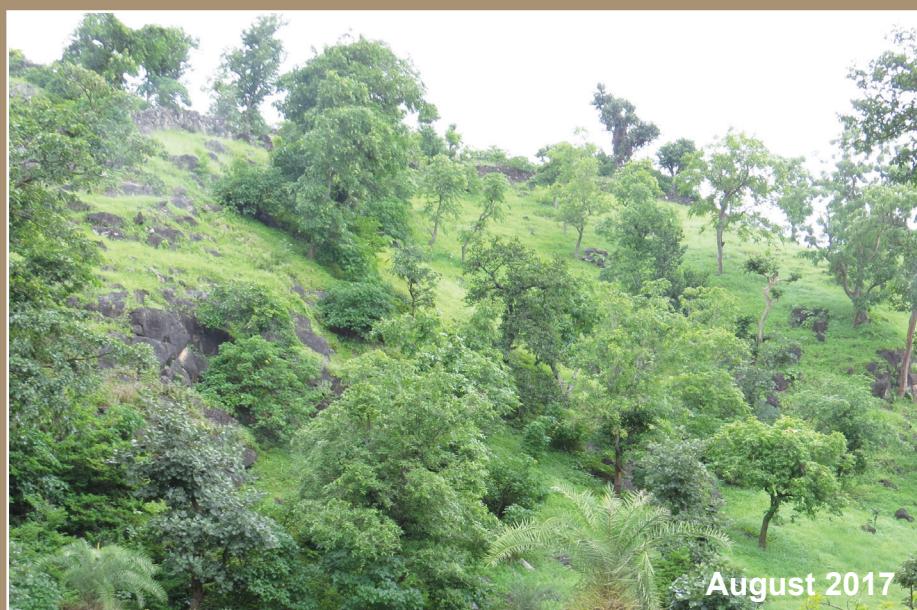


May 2003



August 2009

Protection, soil and water conservation, and regeneration measures undertaken by Piparna Charagah Vikas Samiti under Chitrawas Gram Panchayat, comprising Garasiya and Bhil Gameti tribal communities, have helped the communities in not only restoring the common land but also by increasing fodder production from 0.5 tons/ha to 4.5 tons/ha.



August 2017

## Lubia bavasi (Udaipur District)



The forest commons spread over 148 acres and dominated by Teak trees are being protected and restored by *Bhil Gameti* tribal communities of Upli Sigri village in Nichli Sigri Gram Panchayat. The communities have undertaken various soil and water conservation measures, and regeneration activities for restoring the forests.



## **Barundini (Bhilwara District)**



Starting with the regeneration of degraded forestlands under Joint Forest Management Programme in one of its villages, the Barundini Panchayat has now seven more village institutions protecting about 1,927 acres. Over the years, barren lands have transformed into open forests, improving fodder and water availability and thereby prospects of livestock production.



## Dhamangatti (Bhilwara District)



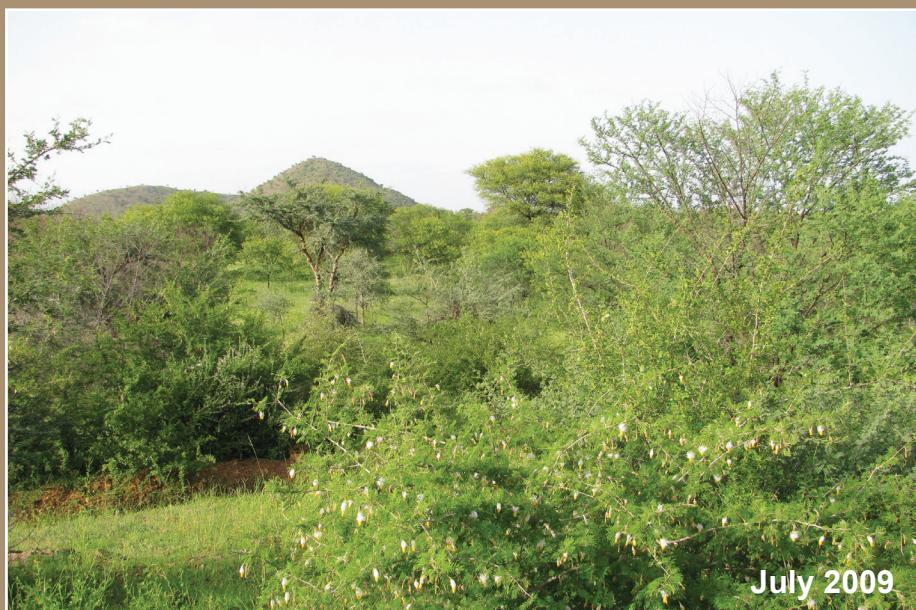
Protecting their common land over the years, Dhamangatti village has been a source of inspiration to neighbouring villages in accessing tenurial arrangements for their forest commons. Sustained village-specific robust mechanisms have resulted in significant improvement in production systems with increased availability of fodder, fuelwood and improved water regime, thereby strengthening their livelihoods.



## Gyangarh (Bhilwara District)



February 2004



July 2009

Collective efforts of the local communities of Gyangarh village have addressed serious issues like restoration of grazing lands, reduction in local desertification and improved rainwater penetration within its boundaries. Over the years, grass production has increased from 1.1 tonne/ha to 2 tonne/ha with an increase in vegetation diversity.



August 2014

## Meena Ki Jhopadia (Bhilwara District)



Sustained efforts by the people of Meena Ki Jhopadia, a habitation in Barundani village, Bhilwara district, in protecting 123 acres of degraded forests inspired seven neighbouring habitations to join them for the restoration of an additional 1,827 acres of forestland, under Joint Forest Management arrangements. Now, barren lands have transformed into open forests, improving water regime and increasing fodder availability.

## Dindorkheda (Pratapgarh District)



The construction of structures to harvest the surface flow of water has created opportunities for assured critical irrigation on erstwhile marginal lands. More significantly, Dindorkheda and its surrounding villages are perceiving the water so harvested as common property where water for animals round the year is a first order priority.



## Johda mauda (Pratapgarh District)



Studies have revealed that soil and water conservation undertaken on the ridges have checked the erosion of around 99,000 cubic feet of top soil from about 2,471 acres of common and agricultural land. Protection of common lands has ensured fodder for small livestock holders from a group of villages for the two most critical months in the year.



FOUNDATION FOR ECOLOGICAL SECURITY

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