



FES

FOUNDATION FOR ECOLOGICAL SECURITY

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COVER: Anemone Coral (*Goniopora minor*, Crossland, 1952)

Anemone corals are translucent marine invertebrates with their wild hues acquired from the zooxanthellae (algae) hosted by them. Anemone corals are found in sub-tidal reef environments, especially lagoons, generally to a depth of 30 metres. With a hard dome-shaped base from which emerge hundreds of delicate flower-like tentacles, they are the keystone species of the reef ecosystems.

Cover Photo: Arpit Deomurari

Our Mission

“As ‘ecological security’ is the foundation of sustainable and equitable development, the Foundation for Ecological Security (FES) is committed to strengthening, reviving or restoring, where necessary, the process of ecological succession and the conservation of land, forest and water resources in the country.”

To this end FES:

WORKS towards the ecological restoration and conservation of land and water resources in the uplands and other eco-fragile, degraded and marginalised zones of the country; and, to set in place the processes of co-ordinated human effort and governance to this end and provide relief to the poor, in particular;

WORKS either directly, or with and through a range of democratic village institutions, their federal bodies, and civil society organisations, set up through initiatives that are ecologically sustainable, socially and economically equitable;

ENSURES the ecological integrity of all efforts by working, as far as possible, with entire landscapes and with all the inter-related communities within it, through a range of arrangements on their land and aquatic resources, whether Commons, Public or Private;

WORKS for and promotes stability of the ecosystems through the protection and restoration of biological diversity, including the diversity of species, age diversity, genetic variability as well as that of structural composition;

COLLABORATES with Panchayat Raj and other democratic village institutions, as well as appropriate civil society organisations, in their efforts to fulfil the objectives of the society, and to provide technical and financial assistance to them.



Our Organisation

Registered under the Societies Registration Act XXI 1860, the Foundation for Ecological Security was set up in 2001 to reinforce the massive and critical task of ecological restoration in the country.

The Foundation strives for a future that is based on a holistic understanding of the principles that govern the inter-relationships of various life forms and natural systems. Intertwining principles of nature conservation and local self-governance, we work for a future where the local communities determine and move towards desirable land use practices.

Board of Governors

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Amrita Patel

MEMBERS

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A N Yellappa Reddy
Nitin Desai
Deepak Tikku
Mahendra Vyas
Sudarshan Iyengar
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Representatives of

National Dairy Development Board (NDDB)

National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)

Jagdeesh Rao
(Ex-officio Member Secretary)

* *Shri Ramaswamy R Iyer was the Chairman till September 2012.*

The FES Signature

FES is known for its strengths in field level implementation across diverse ecological and social geographies. Our work is spread across six eco-regions of the country, reaching out to 2.89 million people from 5,323 village institutions in 30 districts, across eight States: Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Nagaland, Odisha and Rajasthan.

We bring in an ecological leaning to dominant views on natural resource management where 'nature' and natural processes are often disregarded or unappreciated. Intertwining principles of nature conservation and local self-governance, we work on three systemic drivers that can bring about a multiplier change:

- **The biophysical rural infrastructure** – soil, water, biomass and biodiversity to enhance ecological health.
- **The social infrastructure** – collective action, the positive expression of which tilts governance towards more equitable arrangements as well as energises economic opportunity.
- **Commons as resource systems and property regimes** – these being the only spaces left for the poor to subsist on. And also provide a single platform to restore ecological health, improve governance and alleviate poverty.

The Commons Voice

By assisting village communities and Panchayats manage about half a million hectares of common land, we are probably the only organisation working at scale on common lands in India.

We advocate secure tenure in favour of local communities and decentralised governance of community lands and water bodies to help community institutions manage and govern their natural resources.

We assist village communities to leverage and to effectively use MGNREGS funds (about INR 42.3 million this year) for restoring degraded ecosystems, reviving local democracies and reducing hunger.

Our decades of experience in working with village communities and resource management, have helped set up *Prakriti Karyashala* or Rural Colleges to train village communities and their representatives in stewardship and skills in natural resource management and local self governance.

Democratising Information

With considerable experience in building Biodiversity Portals (www.indianbiodiversity.org), we are evolving an integrated geo-informatics platform, using GIS, Remote Sensing, Big Data and Crowd Sourcing technologies, to democratise access to information, and develop analytical and mapping tools for improving land and water governance and public investment.

Aiding Administrations

Our field offices double up as think tanks, often supporting district and state administrations to design policies and programmes on natural resources, Commons in particular.

We also execute Memoranda of Understanding with District and State Governments aiding them in campaigning for, and in executing, Commons programmes.

Our feet firmly on the ground, we espouse the cause of better governance of nature and natural resources, and aim to open up better economic opportunities for our rural populations.

Awards and Accolades

We accept the awards and accolades bestowed on us in 2012-13 in a spirit of both pride and humility. Pride, since they are recognition of our contributions and efforts towards sustainable management and governance of Commons across the country – and humility, because there are plenty more miles to cover. We share these awards with the several village communities that we are associated with.

Times of India Social Impact Award

We received the prestigious 'Times of India Social Impact Award-2012' in the Environment Category, sharing it with fellow NGO, the Dhan Foundation. The Award commended our efforts on restoring and rejuvenating degraded Commons and forests across seven states of the country.

The award ceremony, held on 28th January 2013 in New Delhi, was attended by the President of India along with senior government officials and prominent figures from civil society. The awards were presented to the Chief Functionary of the winning organisations by those impacted by their work. We received the award from Smt. Sarjubai Meena, popularly known as the 'Woman with the Turban' from our Bhilwara project district in Rajasthan.



Elinor Ostrom International Award on Commons



We were conferred with the first 'Elinor Ostrom International Award on Collective Governance of the Commons' for the year 2013, for our "outstanding contribution to the practice of Commons governance".

Instituted by 15 reputed international organisations, the Award seeks to acknowledge and promote the work of practitioners and young and senior scholars, involved in the field of the Commons. We received the award under the Practitioners Category, for our extensive work with both communities and the government to strengthen the local management of the Commons, and generate supportive policies for equity and sustainability.

UN Land for Life Award

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) presented us with the 'Land for Life Award 2013' in recognition of our work in empowering and mobilising communities to take ownership of local land.

We were placed first from among 137 applicants from 62 countries across the globe. The Award "appreciates the contribution of organisations in the field of sustainable management of natural resources that can bring about solutions to climate change and improve soil quality, thereby enhancing the lives of the marginalised".





Cornerstones

Ecological degradation, as manifest in the rapid loss of biodiversity, disappearing forests, degrading lands and depleting water supplies, is among the most pressing problems confronting the country in present times. This degradation of natural resources has led to adverse economic and ecological consequences in contemporary rural society, where survival, sustenance and growth are intimately linked to the health and productivity of the surrounding natural resources.

We work towards centre staging ecological agenda alongside priorities of economic growth, reorienting progress with conservation and social justice perspective, and presenting local visions and voices at local to global levels. The three fundamental dimensions (and their interfaces) of rural life, that we work on are:

- Ecological Restoration: Conserving nature and restoring and managing natural resources, such as the land, local biodiversity and the hydrological and nutrient cycles.
- Local Governance: Strengthening institutions and enhancing self-governing capacity to promote inclusion and access, and participation in collective decision-making.
- Livelihoods: Securing livelihoods that are more dependent on natural resources and highlighting the threshold limits of the given agro-ecological system so as to assist communities in determining consumption levels within the ecological capacity of the area.



Snehas K D



Above all, we at FES bring an ecological slant to the practice of Natural Resource Management in India – where nature and natural processes are largely disregarded or unappreciated.

We work on 475,000 hectares of common lands including scrublands, grasslands, tidal mudflats and open to dense forests and the adjoining farmlands in improving the soil, nutrients, moisture and biodiversity.

Vishav Bhatia



We help estimate both the availability and use of biomass, water, and biodiversity so as to determine ecological thresholds and bring to the fore discussions on judicious use of resources.

Aripi Deonurari



We highlight the value of birds, insects, amphibians and reptiles in maintaining the robustness of agriculture *vis-a-vis* both pollination and pest control. We build information systems on flora and fauna to make them easily accessible and to create a larger constituency for conservation.

Ecological Restoration

We work in diverse topographies of rainfed regions with preponderance of customarily held common lands to improve the ecological functions and services, which is the backbone of agriculture and livestock-dependent communities. Working on common lands adjacent to reserve forests, reduces the pressure on forests and provides additional habitats for a variety of life forms.

Working in landscapes as diverse as scrublands, tidal mudflats, dense forests, ravines, grasslands, farm fields and water bodies, we assist the communities in designing plans for soil and moisture conservation and assisting natural regeneration to help arrest soil erosion, improve surface and groundwater availability, biodiversity and vegetative growth. Typically, such conservation measures have resulted in marked improvements in soil health, groundwater levels, biomass productivity and biodiversity – leading thereon to increased crop productivity, double cropping, fodder and water availability.



Alongside State and Market-led institutional options, we build in a Commons paradigm in the governance of natural resources so as to improve the entitlements of local communities.



We work with a variety of village-level institutional forms such as the Village Forest Management and Protection Committees, Grazing Land Development Committees, and Tree Growers' Cooperatives, assisting local communities strengthen collective action around natural resources (Common Pool Resources in particular).



We believe that Panchayats are the most appropriate institutions for governance of natural resources. We work to nest the body corporates (listed above) within the fold of Panchayats both to benefit from the constitutional recognition that Panchayats enjoy as well as strengthen their functioning on specific use regimes like pastures or forests and devolving them further to habitation level.

Community Institutions

The crux of our efforts lies in building on the existing norms and wisdom of village life. To foster collective action and develop locally-agreed norms for resource usage, we help bring in robust institutional arrangements for governance of Common Pool Resources. We work at the village level with a diverse range of community institutions to set in process of coordinated action for governance of natural resources. As we work with habitations that lie in contiguity, we see them come together on the basis of natural affiliations, then evolve into larger institutional associations that cut across habitations.

Given the critical dependence of marginalised sections, particularly women, on natural resources for their subsistence, we strive not only for inclusion of all adult members in the village institution but also for an equal access for women and poor in decision-making, thereby reinstating their right over the resources. While we assist the communities in obtaining rights of ownership or use of resources within the available legislative framework, equal emphasis is also laid on improving awareness of attendant rights and responsibilities.

To build a larger stewardship for governance of natural resources, we promote platforms at the landscape level with representatives of communities, government personnel, NGOs, interested citizens and assist them articulate and steer issues related to judicious use of local natural resources.



Courtesy of Swapna Sarangi



Courtesy of Mayadhar Mishra

We believe that institutions play a fundamental role in mediating human-nature interactions, and in shaping coping strategies at household and community levels. Strengthening institutional arrangements can help ameliorate issues of both social and economic justice.



Courtesy of Mark Katzman

We believe that the Right to Employment (as envisaged under MGNREGA) if tied together with Rights over Resources, could have a significant impact in creating durable assets (such as forests, pastures, and water bodies) in addition to democratising Panchayats.

Enhancing Livelihoods

As most of the contemporary initiatives on livelihood promotion do not take into account the threshold limits of ecosystems and instead suggest an exploitative trend that is untenable in the long run, in a search for suitable livelihood initiatives, we strive to highlight the principles and practices of designing natural resource-based livelihood options that are ecologically sound and economically rewarding.

We believe that in rural livelihood systems, infrastructure must first be understood as soil, water, nutrients, biomass and biodiversity as they are fundamental for the viability of farming systems and thereby the rural economy. Understanding that conservation and securing local livelihoods go hand-in-hand and there cannot be any singular prescription that fits all areas uniformly, we address both issues without pitching one against the other and make efforts for approximating natural processes in restoring degraded lands and stressed ecosystems.

Various livelihood interventions are designed and supported on the principles of low external inputs, less intensive extraction of natural resources, recycling of use, and reduction in consumption patterns, while trying to improve productivity levels. Besides activities that strengthen low input agriculture, water use efficiency and energy conservation, we are initiating dialogue on crop water budgeting, conservation of natural species for aiding pollination, and pest control.



Our Approach

In initiating steps for restoration of any degraded area, we develop a deeper understanding of the area and locate our interventions within its socio-ecological systems. We work in areas with a preponderance of Common Pool Resources and Common Property Regimes as they give the rural poor an access to a share in common good.

Besides improving the legal access to such common resources, we also assist local communities in restoring the land and water resources and also help them in crafting rules and regulations that are democratic and tilt in favour of the poor.

We work with village communities and their federating bodies to restore the biomass productivity, improve the moisture regimes and protect biodiversity on forests and other common lands.

We monitor long-term changes in ecological health to build evidence on the changes in the ecosystem and to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our interventions in undertaking restoration measures.

Over the years, we have grown from strength to strength from field implementation to conducting training programmes, undertaking studies, and influencing policy. By running a Campaign and setting up *Prakriti Karyashala* – a Rural College in response to the policy developments on common lands in Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka and the subsequent need for capacitating rural communities, we are reaching out to thousands of Panchayats in claiming and restoring their common lands.

Given our presence at various levels of governance, from villages and districts to the state and national level, we are well poised to feel the pulse on the ground and voice local concerns at regional, national and global platforms. Building on the networks of partners, both in India and internationally, we hope to contribute to a larger constituency for common lands and mainstream it in discourse on governance of nature and natural resources.

The Way Forward

- > Reorient forest policies so that provision of water is the fundamental conservation objective of governance and management of forests.
- > To meet human needs, increase forest cover on non-forest government lands (revenue ‘wastelands’, for instance) so as to take the pressure off existing forests.
- > Support the widespread recognition of community forest rights under the Forest Rights Act. Address next-generation issues of improving the democratic character of Gram Sabhas, restoring degraded forests using MGNREGA, and identifying options for value addition of forest produce. Arrive at regulatory arrangements where collective decisions on optimal land use determine or guide decisions of individual landowners.
- > Conceive a common administrative apparatus, such as a Department of Natural Resources, to bring together development programmes aimed at improved forest cover, viable farming systems and stable groundwater supply.
- > Recognise forums of village communities, civil society groups, academia, government officials and interested citizens to manage landscape-level issues.

Forests in a Landscape

Forests represent the second largest land use in India after agriculture, covering 24% of the overall landmass of 329 million hectares. For about 37% of India’s rural population, forests and common lands are very critical sources of supply for fodder, fuel wood, timber, food, medicine and water.

About 275 million rural people across the country are dependent on forests for collection of Non Timber Forest Produce (NTFP), and an estimated 11.8 million people are involved in head-loading firewood, mainly as a source of daily income.

One of the drawbacks in the practice of forest conservation is in viewing forests in isolation, both from the demands and forces from outside, and the influences that forests in turn make on them. Instead, locating forests within the larger ecological, social and economic landscape, offers scope to institute arrangements, which balance the interests of preservation, conservation and exploitation of natural endowments. While, on the one hand, this could help factor the demands being placed on forests and aim at sustainable management, on the other, forest conservation can be advocated for the positive contribution forests make for providing hydrological supplies to distant cities and as much to the resilience of the adjoining farming systems and local livelihoods.

In every location where we are present, we work with all communities inhabiting contiguous stretches along a watercourse or hill-range. We highlight the importance of systemic drivers such as soil, moisture, nutrients, biomass and biodiversity between forests/other common lands and associated production systems in the landscape (such as agriculture, livestock-keeping and fisheries). By connecting forests through such systemic linkages to other production systems, we aim at connecting those involved in agriculture and livestock-dependent livelihoods with forest conservation, thereby building a larger constituency for conservation.

In order to enable an administrative and planning architecture that fosters such inter-linkages, or at least prevents working at cross-purposes, we foresee a need for umbrella institutional arrangements at the block level that span across administrative and sectoral domains, and build on natural boundaries, customary forms of use and access, and visions and aspirations of the local communities.



The Way Forward

- > Underline the value of forests and Commons in serving ecological functions that sustain agriculture (such as pollination, pest control, fertilisation and water flows).
- > Address the knowledge and information gap on location-specific social, economic, ecological variables to develop appropriate location-specific natural resource conservation and management plans to make the most of public investments.
- > Enlarge focus on livestock from 'milk, cattle and irrigated fodder' to include wool and meat, small ruminants, and agricultural residue and fodder from common lands.
- > Shift the obsession from wheat and paddy to millets, coarse cereals and other local varieties, and promote decentralised collection and distribution of food.
- > Position water as a Common Pool Resource, and devise institutional mechanisms that both check its mindless extraction and provide equal access to it.
- > Adapt to climate change by building on generations of local strategies in coping with droughts, floods, and vagaries of nature.

Farming and Farming Systems

Rainfed agriculture accounts for most part of the cropped area in the country, with the rainfed area alone covering over 200 million hectares and constituting 60 to 70% of the total net sown area. With diverse topographies, agro-climatic conditions, farming systems, cultures and populations, these areas are facing a severe crisis due to widespread ecological degradation – of decreasing soil fertility, depleting water tables, low moisture regimes, loss of floral and faunal biodiversity, and reduced crop yields and incomes.

The need then is to evolve an alternative development narrative based on a better understanding of the dynamics of rainfed production systems, the myriad ecological conditions they represent, and ways in which they contribute to livelihoods and economies of rural households. Challenging conventional mindsets and providing alternatives is critical to effectively utilising the vast opportunities opened up by the increase in public expenditure on rainfed areas, and the growing momentum to devolve planning and administration to block level.

Our efforts therefore focus on strengthening systemic drivers (such as soil, moisture, nutrients, pollinators and biodiversity) and the natural inter-linkages between various elements of the farming system instead of looking at them in isolation. Since natural processes are cyclical in nature, our objective is to strengthen such processes rather than focus on the linear progression of individual elements.

A fundamental part of our strategy is to reposition livestock as a crucial component of the farming system and to strengthen crop-livestock integration. We also work towards reorienting agricultural development, which is based on promoting selected crops and intensification of inputs, to a farming systems approach and diversified cropping, according to land capability, soil health, availability of soil-moisture, and temporal variation in rainfall.

We also develop appropriate climate-resilient development strategies for rainfed areas by building on the logic underpinning local practices, and learning how local communities have learnt over time to exploit the ecological and economic dynamics of their environments.



Courtesy of Mark Katzman

The Way Forward

- > Streamline interaction between Panchayats and village institutions so as to draw up long-term plans for development of natural resources, recognise customary practices of land use, and ensure security of tenure.
- > Strengthen Panchayats, and equip them to make informed decisions based on principles of conservation, equity and economic opportunity.
- > Reinforce overall good governance mechanisms (democratic principles, transparency, accountability, non-partisanship and space for the poor) at the Panchayat level and enable them to utilise public funds responsibly.
- > Work within the legal framework to mainstream natural-resource governance in Panchayats through Natural Resource Management/ Biodiversity Management/Production Committees at the village and Panchayat level.
- > Address the gap in capacities at the village and Panchayat level by developing a cadre of local volunteers to take on stewardship of the area, who will better represent and voice concerns of local communities, and help better implementation of programmes.

Working with Panchayats

Diverse institutional arrangements, decentralisation of development programmes, and increased availability of public funds for village-level development, have created a favourable environment for ecological restoration in the country. With their constitutional backing and democratic mandate, the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) are well positioned to mediate human-nature interactions, and to find locally-appropriate solutions to the complex problem of natural resource governance.

While Panchayats draw their strength from being constitutionally-recognised, local self-governance institutions, they are also rendered ineffective by the reality that more often than not, they are distanced from habitation or village-level settlements (with which rural communities identify) and from habitation-level views on leadership and self-governance. But, by recognising habitation/village-level institutions and nesting them within the fold of Panchayats, it becomes possible to draw on the strengths of both kinds of institutional arrangements, that is, smaller committees and habitation-level institutions for their effective role in executing activities, and the larger Panchayats for self regulation.

We assist Panchayats and habitations in articulating their visions of local development collectively – by drawing up structured action plans, and crafting appropriate institutional arrangements based on customary resource-use regimes and resource boundaries. Besides Panchayats, we work through a variety of habitation-level institutions. Our aim being to address institutional deficiencies at different levels by setting in place robust organisational systems – for governance of natural resources, and for improved programme implementation and outcomes.

Further, we address the gap in capacities at the village and Panchayat level with a concerted focus on training programmes to strengthen stewardship of the area, and to better represent the interests of local communities. We assist in developing a cadre of skilled persons from within the community to better design and implement development programmes.

We promote platforms bringing together representatives of communities, government personnel, NGOs, interested citizens at the level of blocks or Taluks to articulate and steer issues related to judicious use of natural resources and build stewardship of the area.





Vaibhav Bhatia

Tenure over Common Lands

Common lands are repositories of biodiversity, they contribute significantly to water and nutrient flows, and add resilience to farming systems. Secure tenure over Commons is critical to engender collective action and ensure sustained commitment to their conservation. It is integral to the larger process of strengthening the governance regime and building democratic institutions for governance of natural resources.

Over the last half century, common lands have shrunk by as much as 31 to 35%. This drop can be attributed to the absence of or weak tenure arrangements which benefit those better placed to manage owing to their customary use practices, proximity to the resources and ability to exercise peer control. The mainstream view that such common resources are better managed by the State or by individuals instead of a community, has helped shape tenure laws which bestow land ownership on governments or individuals.

The recent recognition of community ownership under the Forest Rights Act as well as the role of local communities in managing forests under Joint Forest Management arrangements is a change for the better. Tenure in favour of the community as a whole proves a stronger force in contesting changes in land use from forests and pastures to other uses.

We continue our efforts to secure rights of use and ownership for the community over Common Pool Resources like forestlands, revenue wastelands and pasture lands. Efforts are underway to suitably implement provisions under the recently-enacted Forest Rights Act (FRA) to secure Community Forest Rights, and to engage with Governments on Joint Forest Management (JFM) arrangements. We assist villages in recording their customary-use practices, mapping their resource boundaries, inventorying forest resources, democratising their functioning and in claiming their rights over land and produce.

Besides forest lands, local communities use about 45 to 60 million hectares of land as Commons. We engage with State Governments to arrange their long-term lease in favour of the local communities, entering such lands in 'Prohibitory Order Books' which restrain diversion to alternate land use. We also assist communities increase the extent of their grazing lands based on current estimates of livestock population.

The Way Forward

- > Influence State Governments to evolve policies for improved governance of Commons with favourable land tenure, institutional design, and programme architecture as key tenets of policy.
- > Secure Community Forest Rights (CFR) on forests through better implementation of provisions under the Forest Rights Act.
- > Campaign for the Commons such that village communities identify, map, restore and manage Commons. Invest in technologies both for mapping and claiming the Commons.
- > Facilitate formation and evolution of village institutions and assist in obtaining rights to own, access, manage, harvest and dispose (produce) to and from Commons.
- > Build up capacity of village institutions to interpret existing policy and procedures. Expand discussions and decision-making to ensure representation of the poor and women.
- > Facilitate efforts of local communities to build local and regional platforms, which bring together members of village institutions, civil society representatives, academia and government functionaries who will assume stewardship of the natural wealth of the area.



Rights to Resources and Employment

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) has opened up livelihood options for rural Indians, by offering the poor much-needed financial assistance through local self-governance institutions to restore degraded natural resources.

Positioned within a ‘rights’ framework, with provisions for minimum wages and equal pay for men and women, MGNREGA is a powerful opportunity to redress rural poverty. By making Panchayats the pivotal institution in implementing the Act, it offers scope to communities to determine their developmental needs and, in the process, revitalise their local decision-making processes. With most funds being channelled for manual activities, degraded landscapes can be restored. MGNREGA offers a unique all-in-one opportunity to take up ecological restoration, strengthen rural livelihoods, and democratise local governance.

MGNREGA funds are largely allocated towards soil and moisture conservation, re-vegetation, and restoration of degraded natural resources, especially land and water. Annually, the country spends around INR 400 thousand million on MGNREGS, of which about INR 250 to 300 thousand million is spent on restoring degraded natural resources on common and public land. It is imperative to back such huge financial investments with appropriate institutional arrangements and secure tenure so that the activities promoted under MGNREGA are linked to the roles and responsibilities of local communities, and rules and regulations on access to benefits from such developed resources.

We assist Panchayats in aligning their visions for development with those of MGNREGA, and collaborate with like-minded organisations and decision-makers for better implementation of the Act. We also help in building a group of local resource-persons in villages who can assume stewardship of the area, assist in planning and implementation processes, and raise awareness of the community to claim its rights under MGNREGA. Through social-audit procedures and vigilance committees, we help establish transparent systems for democratic decision-making and for effective implementation of programmes.

The Way Forward

- > Advocate for investments in appropriate institutions alongside the huge financial investment made under MGNREGS. Combined with rights over common land and produce, the right to employment can create durable assets, both as biophysical resources and as institutional systems.
- > Based on agro-ecological characteristics at district and block levels, prepare a comprehensive land and water-use policy to guide annual action-plans, and improve synergies between different government programmes.
- > Create productive assets and more avenues for sustaining employment opportunities to alleviate poverty and reduce distress migration.
- > Build up capacity of Panchayats and other village institutions to prepare perspective-based plans, provide technical support for participatory and transparent implementation, and introduce monitoring systems for better governance of natural resources.
- > Reinforce village-government interface by involving all concerned agencies, research bodies, civil society organisations and village institutions in collectively planning the management of natural resources.
- > Supplement the Rajiv Gandhi Soochna Kendras with information on subjects like biodiversity, geohydrology and landscape perspectives.



Strategic Overview

Spread across diverse ecological and social geographies, the guiding force of our agenda is to work towards conservation of nature and natural resources through collective action of local communities, and improve the living conditions of the rural poor. The key distinguishing features of our work are:

- > An interdisciplinary approach on landscape management, with equal emphasis on ecological well-being, social justice, and access to economic opportunity – and the unique prospects that such an interconnected world-view opens up.
- > Pursuing greater democratisation of local self-governing institutions, in partnership with a large and robust constituency of village communities that is committed to restoring ecosystems and landscapes, and crafting suitable institutional spaces that safeguard the interests of the poor.
- > Capacitating cadres of volunteers and para-workers; enabling mechanisms such as multi-stakeholder platforms, and Information and Services hubs which are critical to strengthening village institutions and expanding our reach, and maintaining our work quality.
- > Conducting a range of capacity-building programmes for Panchayat representatives, government officials, non-government functionaries and rural communities, so as to strengthen local self-governance and promote ecologically-sound natural resource management.
- > Learning (particularly through exchange with various intra-organisational forums), sharing, nurturing skills and ideas, and promoting new roles; partnering with various national/international universities to add rigour to our work.
- > Building knowledge platforms on issues concerning nature conservation, natural resource management, local self-governance and rural development; encouraging democratisation of knowledge by sharing this information with a range of audiences.
- > Collaborating with civil society, local elected representatives, government functionaries and like-minded organisations so as to build a larger constituency for conservation.
- > Highlighting ‘Commons’ as a critical governance paradigm in the interest of local communities and for the management of natural resources; working in close coordination with the government so as to create a favourable environment for policy and programmatic actions for better governance of Commons.

Prakriti Karyashala – Building Capacities

Prakriti Karyashala (Rural Colleges) have been conceived to meet the learning needs of rural communities, village institutions, Panchayats and government and non-government officials. Also, to help build local stewardship; to promote an analytical outlook for improved natural resource management in general, and the governance of Commons in particular; and lastly, to hone skills for restoring ecosystems, as well as plan and maintain records of such activities.

The *Karyashala* offers large-scale, low-cost and quality-learning opportunities. With a focus on good governance and ecologically-sound natural resource management, its curriculum addresses the need for long-term planning, for combining scientific and informal knowledge, and for making local governance a more inclusive and engaging process. The *Karyashala* favours heuristic learning through problem-solving exercises as its method, and is designed to be a local centre for exchange of ideas and experiences between communities.

The modules are built around subjects like ecological restoration measures, rules and regulations for local self-governance, and measures for natural-resource management. The training enables learners to acquire proficiency and get directly involved in helping village institutions, Panchayats, NGOs, and governments to effectively execute their tasks.

The *Karyashala* is currently conducting training programmes for one, rural volunteers in integrating MGNREGA and managing Commons in Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka; two, for Village Forest Committees along forest fringes in Rajasthan and Odisha; and also for watershed associations planning to monitor hydrological changes and develop water usage regulations in Andhra Pradesh.

By assisting communities in mapping the complexities of natural resource management and in articulating their common concerns, the *Prakriti Karyashala* conducts a range of capacity-building programmes with a focus on local self-governance and ecologically-sound natural resource management, and helps build local stewardship, knowledge and skills.



Experiences on the ground give us valuable insights into the working of the rural mind, their views on conservation and development, and the complexity of conservation action at local and regional levels. Studies are designed to engage local communities in search for appropriate solutions and build on their knowledge and inform community-level action.

Studies and Documentation

We undertake studies to influence policy and galvanise collective action in natural-resource management, institution building, and livelihoods security. These studies facilitate systems-understanding of ground issues and are designed to engage local communities in the process of knowledge-building for informed community-action. Additionally, studies assessing impact and changes in ecological, economic and social factors are impetus to programme improvements and inform new interventions at household, community and landscape levels.

The broad range of thematic areas covered is:

- Assessments of human-nature interaction in diverse social, economic and ecological settings, captured through the Socio-Ecological Systems Framework.
- Identification and analyses of institutional arrangements for local governance of natural resources.
- Consolidation of economic evidence around Common Pool Resources and Common Property Regimes in diverse production systems.
- Measurement of changes in biodiversity, biomass, soil and water resources through the Biophysical Monitoring Framework with view to support communities in ecological-health monitoring and conservation activities.
- Developing spatial and non-spatial databases to capture development trends, and longitudinal surveys to assess ecological, economic and social changes at household, landscape and village levels over time.
- Analysing biophysical processes in areas of ecologically-important areas such as sanctuaries and wildlife habitats and, there from, developing appropriate conservation plans.
- Understanding the implications of climate change on natural and production systems, and community-level institutional adaptations to climate-induced vulnerabilities.



Documentation

- > **Role of Experimental Games in Strengthening Collective Action:** In collaboration with the International Food Policy Research Institute and the Arizona State University, we have initiated a study to assess the utility of experimental games in motivating collective action around Common Pool Resources such as land, water and forests. The first phase of this study, on groundwater as a Common Pool Resource, is presently in progress in Andhra Pradesh.
- > **Socio-Ecological Systems Framework:** Studies using International Forest Resources and Institutions procedures have been initiated in two locations in Rajasthan. We aim to launch more studies in coming years across different socio-ecological contexts so as to develop a better understanding of how communities interact with natural environments, and how different policies and programmes influence community action in different settings and resultant outcomes.
- > **System Dynamics and Village Perspective Planning:** Third year in a row, a 'Winter Institute 2013' was organised in collaboration with Washington University in St. Louis with a view to develop a sourcebook for field teams seeking to integrate System Dynamics in village/watershed planning. Basic and system models that enable ease of integration of system concepts into village perspective plans were prepared.
- > **Study on Poverty, Agricultural Risks and Coping Strategies (SPARCS):** The first phase of a SPARCS study was initiated in 100 villages covering the states of Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh and Odisha, the primary objective being to understand the role of Commons and community institutions in building resilience and adaptation to climate change. The study, undertaken in collaboration with the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (USA), is nearing completion.
- > **Ecological Monitoring in Watershed areas:** In order to attain ecological health and assist communities in developing better conservation action plans, we have undertaken detailed ecological-health monitoring in three watersheds in Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh and Odisha. The study in Rajasthan (Kalyanpura watershed covering an area of 5,175 hectares across 16 revenue villages) showed marked improvements in soil health and fertility, groundwater levels, biomass productivity, increased availability of fodder and water in the watershed following interventions over five years.
- > **The State of Wildlife in North-East India 1996-2011:** In collaboration with Kalpavriksh, we published 'The State of Wildlife in North-East India 1996-2011', an extensive update on the Protected Areas of the North-Eastern region of the country. Spanning a time frame of 15 years, the publication compiles historical accounts of development in the Protected Area networks of eight states of the North-East from 1996 to 2011.
- > **Conservation Across Landscapes: India's Approaches to Biodiversity Governance:** As one of the authors, we contributed to 'Conservation Across Landscapes: India's Approaches to Biodiversity Governance', a publication by the Ministry of Forests and Environment (MoEF), Government of India, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The publication outlines five models of biodiversity governance and explores their effectiveness in conservation of biodiversity.
- > **Community Conserved Areas – Odisha and Madhya Pradesh Directory:** We were one of the lead contributors to the joint MoEF-UNDP publication of a mapping directory on the Community Conserved Areas of Odisha and Madhya Pradesh. Our hope is this pilot initiative will set off larger plans to map community-conserved areas in the entire country.
- > **Implementation of Forest Rights Act:** On request of the Research & Training Institute of the Odisha Government's Scheduled Tribe (ST) and Scheduled Caste (SC) Development Department, we are conducting a joint investigation into the implementation of the Forest Rights Act (FRA) in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Odisha. This exercise is in joint collaboration with the Bhubaneswar-based NGO Vasundhara.

Networking and Collaborations

One of our major strengths lies in the collaborations we have nurtured with several organisations over the years. These various practitioner and academic bodies, engaged in ecological restoration, community institutions and rural livelihoods, share a common view, further our understanding, and expand the horizons of our work:

- > We partner with the Dakshin Foundation to publish *Common Voices*, a newsletter on Commons, and *Current Conservation*, which highlights cutting-edge research and on-the-ground initiatives and experiences relating to the Commons and conservation.
- > With Kalpavriksh, we bring out the *Protected Area Update*, a bi-monthly offering news and information from Protected Areas in India and South Asia; also, *Forest Case Update*, an information dissemination service on forest and wildlife cases in the Supreme Court and the National Green Tribunal.
- > We collaborate with different universities: Washington University in St. Louis, to study subjects related to systems dynamics, energy conservation, and the coupling of human and natural systems; University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and University of Illinois at Urbana - Champaign, and Indiana University Bloomington, on forest resource institutions and climate change.
- > We collaborate with the International Food Policy Research Institute and Arizona State University, USA, to improve our understanding of how experimental games strengthen collective action, as also in designing games-series for different resources and locations.
- > We anchor the Rainfed Livestock Network, a consortium of NGOs which works to highlight issues related to livestock-rearers in rainfed areas of India. We are also a member of the Revitalization of Rainfed Agricultural Network.
- > We are a member of the International Land Coalition as part of our endeavour to promote secure and equitable rights over land for the poor through advocacy, dialogue, knowledge-sharing and capacity-building, and continue to be a member of the UN Economic and Social Council (UNECOSOC).
- > As a member of the consortium on Future of Conservation in India Network, we collaborate with several like-minded organisations, such as Kalpavriksh, Nature Conservation Foundation, Samrakshan Trust, Wildlife Trust of India, and WWF-India. We are also a member of the Indigenous and Community-Conserved Areas Consortium, which seeks to bring to light the criticality of biodiversity-rich natural or modified ecosystems voluntarily conserved by indigenous peoples and local communities.



Spatial Information

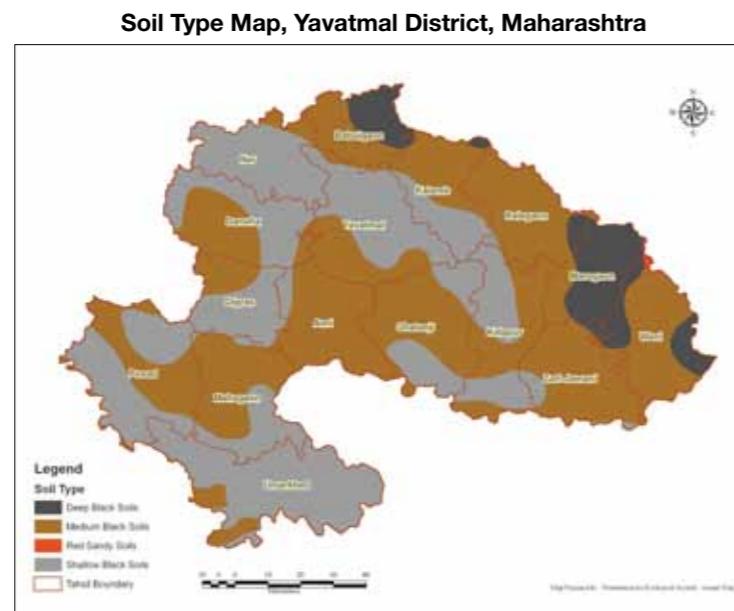
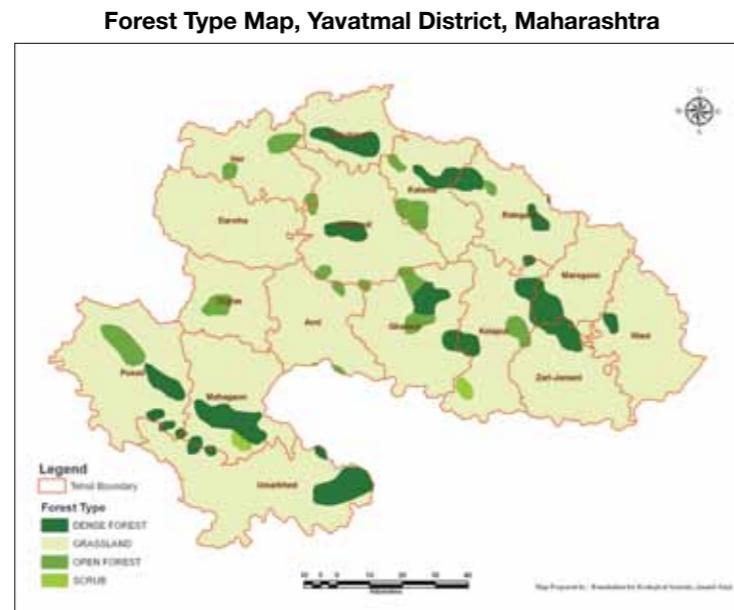
Information needed for designing programmatic interventions is mostly available in a compartmentalised manner and is difficult to access by civil society and development planners alike. Moreover, the information available is neither analysed to provide insights on location-specific ecological and socio economic trends, or on public investments and impact of development interventions. Rural communities are usually seen as recipients of development programmes rather than determinants who diagnose and decide their local development agenda. As a result, by and large, developmental expenditure neither addresses location-specific needs nor helps improve the democratic character of village communities in determining their collective future.

Over the last two decades, we have developed an 'India Database', a compilation of a vast amount of longitudinal data on more than 300 parameters for all the districts of India. This includes spatial information such as river basins, soil, geology, land use and vegetation changes, forest types, eco-regions, flora and fauna, and non-spatial information such as demographic trends, market-potential indices, infrastructure, and availability of amenities.

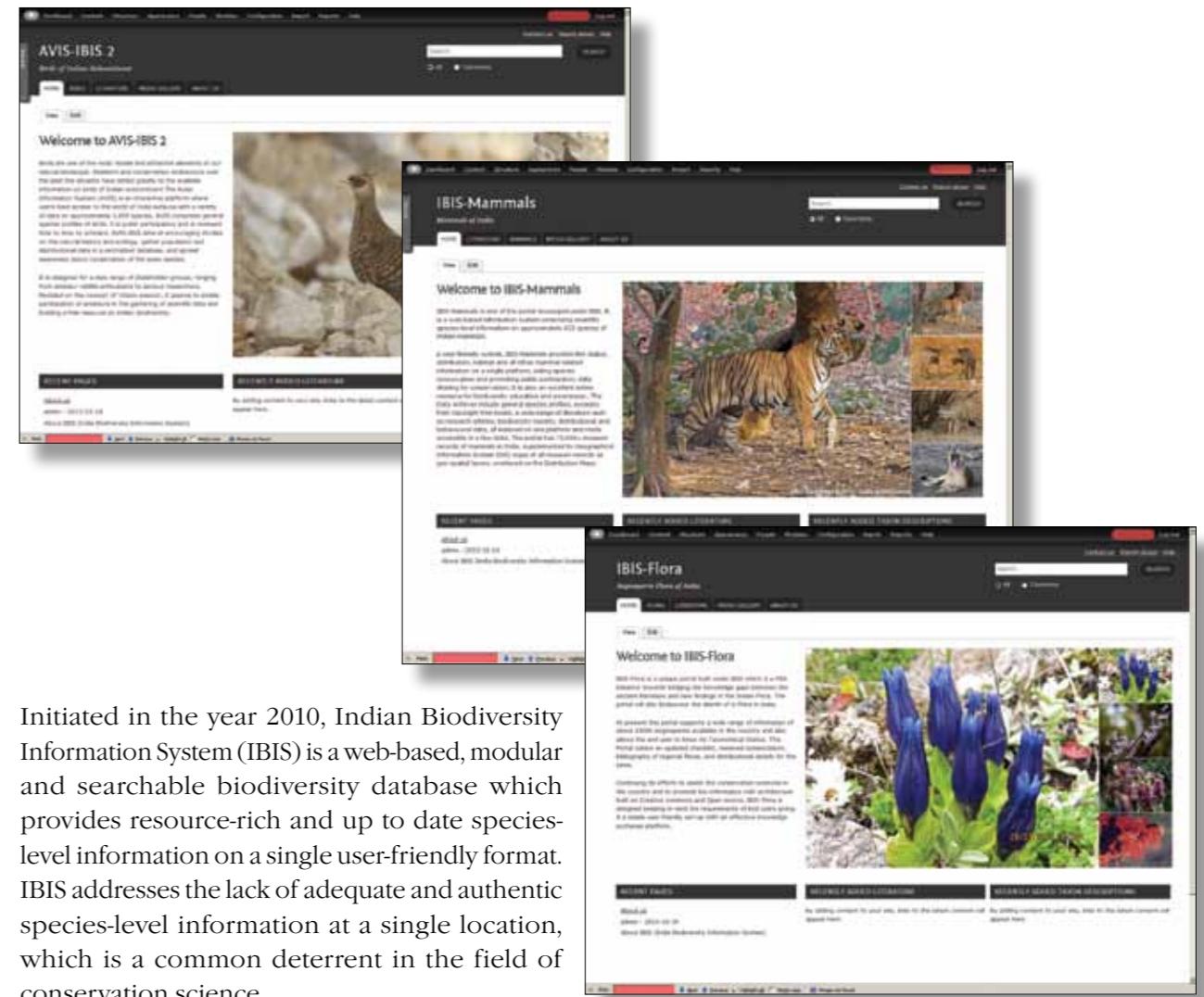
The data has been useful in preparing inter-sectoral analytical products such as atlases for districts and States, in guiding prioritisation of areas for development interventions, and in developing conservation action plans for selected areas including sanctuaries and protected areas.

Considering the opportunities opened up by increased public investments and greater access to information technology, we aim to address the gap in accessing information, energise local visions of development, and assist decision-making on programmes seeking improved management of natural resources and poverty alleviation. We are building an Integrated Geo-informatics Platform using Open Source GIS, Remote Sensing, Big Data and Crowd Sourcing technologies to democratise block (sub-district) planning by improving access to information, by analysing inter-sectoral, temporal and spatial parameters, and by providing mapping tools.

Building on the concepts of 'citizen science' and 'empowerment', we aim to support the larger trend of decentralised planning at block and district levels by making available critical 'local' information to village communities, civil society organisations, technocrats, government officials and development planners, and make them partners in development planning.



Indian Biodiversity Information System (IBIS)



Initiated in the year 2010, Indian Biodiversity Information System (IBIS) is a web-based, modular and searchable biodiversity database which provides resource-rich and up to date species-level information on a single user-friendly format. IBIS addresses the lack of adequate and authentic species-level information at a single location, which is a common deterrent in the field of conservation science.

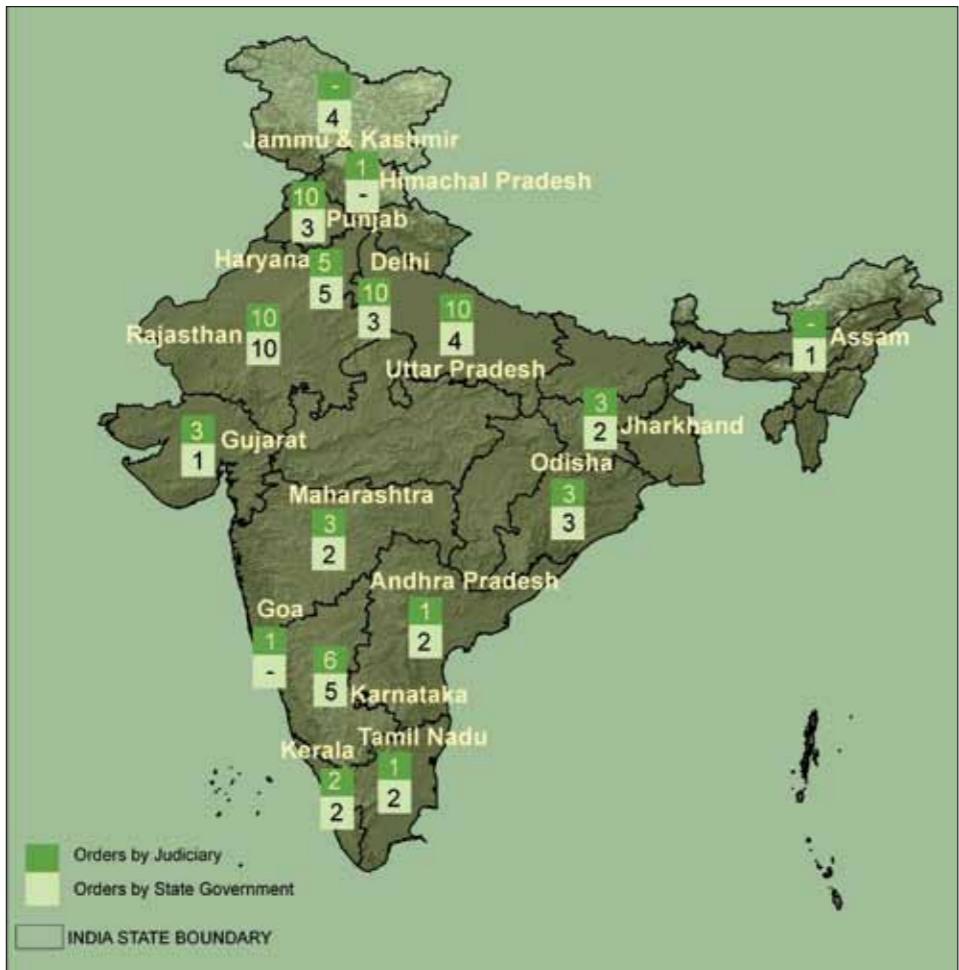
Catering to a wide range of stakeholder groups, ranging from amateur wildlife enthusiasts to serious researchers, conservationists and educationists, IBIS is a crucial tool for achieving conservation goals in the subcontinent. IBIS also promotes Bioinformatics with an architecture built on Creative Commons and Open Source.

AVIS-IBIS was launched in 2010 - an Avian Information System which carries information on thousands of bird species from the Indian region. The IBIS-Mammals portal was launched by Mr Braulio Ferreira De Souza Dias, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, at the Earth Heroes Awards, 2012, during the 11th Conference of Parties, in the presence of some 300 international dignitaries. IBIS-Mammals offers information on 423 species of Indian mammals, and hosts approximately 75,000 museum records of mammals in India, supplemented by maps of all museum records overlaid on Distribution Maps.

The IBIS-Flora portal, to serve a range of users from students to teachers and amateurs to scientists, is scheduled to be launched in 2013. First of its kind in India, this portal on Indian angiosperms will provide inventory of approximately 20,000 flowering plants of India. A bibliography of more than 60,000 published works on regional flora, 160,000 works on various taxonomic and botanical journals as well as field and herbarium images will also be provided.

Continuing to strengthen its collaboration with individuals, organisations, researchers and scholars across India, IBIS (www.indianbiodiversity.org) will soon come up with similar portals on reptiles and amphibians.

Interaction on Policy: The Commons Initiative



Following the apex court's direction, 69 pronouncements and 49 orders on Commons issued by various High Courts and State Governments respectively, as also resultant actions, have been captured on the Claim for Commons blog (<http://claim-for-commons.blogspot.com>).

Though common lands play a vital role in maintaining ecological balance, provide important resources, and foster collective action that does not limit itself to managing natural resources, in India they are projected as 'wastelands' and are diverted for non-communitarian use such as bio-fuel cultivation, corporate contract farming, and industrial zones. To face these growing threats, we launched the 'Commons Initiative' in 2009 – by building strategic collaborations, bringing together practitioners and networks, decision-makers and scholars, and initiating a process for a long-term campaign to highlight the role of the Commons.

Our mission involves influencing conservation policies, the need for greater involvement of self-governing institutions as the foundation of the rural economy, and locating common ground between serving conservation and livelihood objectives.

To bring together ideas and experiences of practical strategies for securing 'Commons and Commoners' rights across the world, during the year, we offered the 'Prof. Elinor Ostrom International Fellowship on Practice and Policy on Commons' in collaboration with the International Association for the Study of the Commons. The Fellowship is a tribute to the late Prof. Elinor Ostrom, Nobel Laureate in Economic Sciences (2009), and was open to practitioners, researchers, and policy-makers from across the world.

As members of the International Land Coalition and of the Indigenous and Community-Conserved Areas Consortium, we strive to promote secure and equitable rights of local communities and indigenous people over forest, land and water resources.

At the national level, we are actively engaging with the Central Government and Planning Commission, to bring to the fore the Commons Agenda and secure financial investments under MGNREGS for developing common land and water bodies. In response to the Supreme Court's January 2011 judgement on the Commons, directing all State Governments to draw up schemes to evict encroachments on common lands and restore them to Panchayats and Gram Sabhas, we have filed an Intervening Application, offering assistance to the Supreme Court and State Governments. As member of the Expert Committee on Access and Benefit Sharing under the National Biodiversity Authority, we are strengthening our drive to get the local communities form Biodiversity Management Committees and prepare Biodiversity registers.

At the State level, we have been engaging with the Governments of Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka for influencing policy and programmatic actions on common lands and water bodies. We worked with the Government of Rajasthan on issuing specific orders for restoring and safeguarding Commons, and integrating restoration of common lands in all Government circulars issued to the Gram Sabhas. To enable action on the ground, the Government orders were followed up with a comprehensive mass media and community-level campaign including letters, SMSes, newspaper and television advertisements. To decentralise the campaign further, facilitate knowledge-sharing, and create an enabling environment for communities to approach the Government for assistance in securing, developing and conserving Commons, we organised divisional, district and block-level workshops for Government and Panchayat functionaries, under the *Shamlat Abhiyan* (the Rajasthan Campaign for Commons).

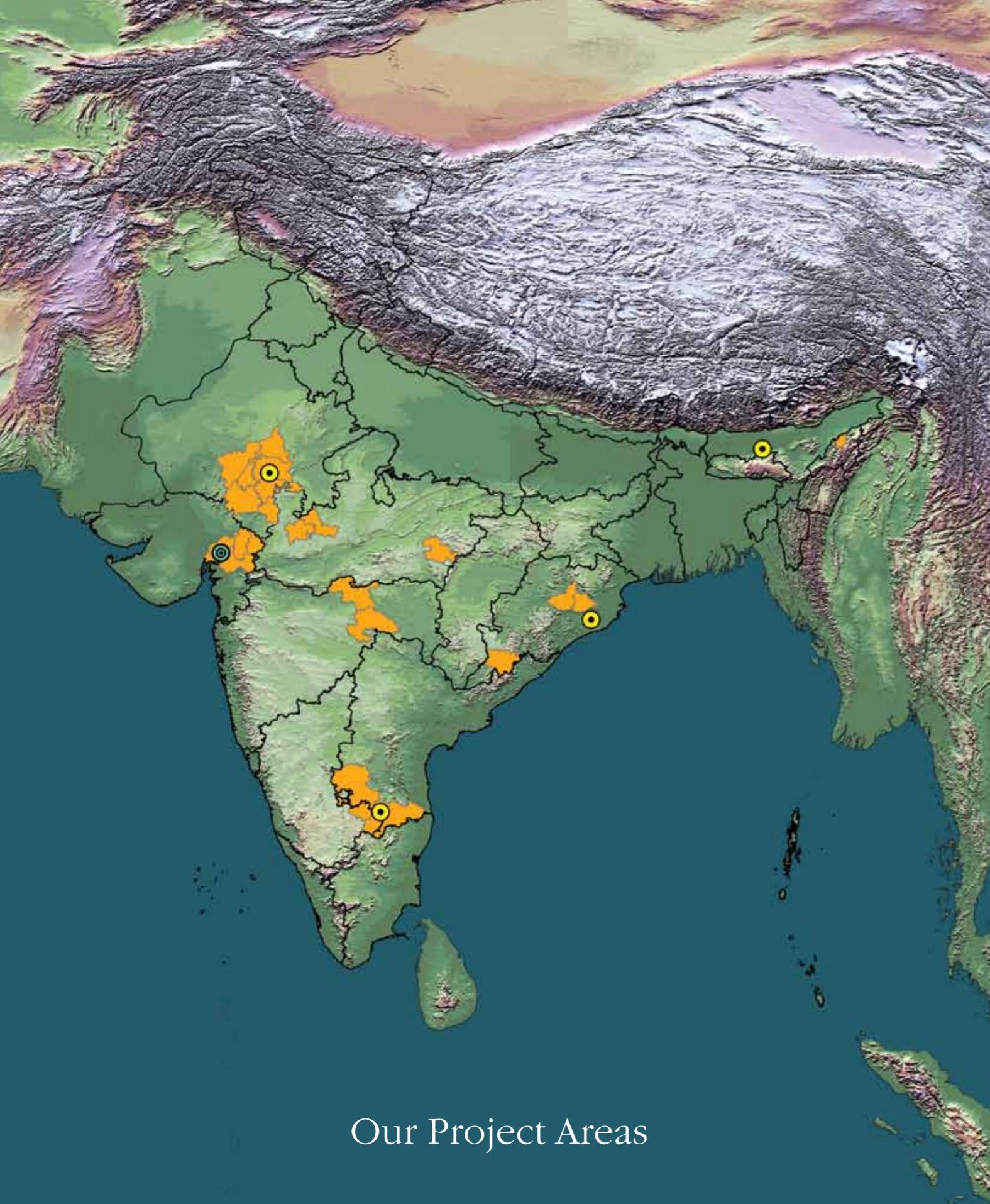
In Andhra Pradesh, the Common Pool Resources (CPR) – National Rural Employment Guarantee (NREG), being implemented by FES and partner NGOs in Chittoor and Anantapur districts, has been extended to 10 additional districts by aligning it with the ongoing Integrated Watershed Management Programmes. On the policy front, a Draft Policy on Common Lands highlighting the need for protecting and conserving Commons, particularly revenue wastelands, has been submitted to the Government of Andhra Pradesh and is under consideration.

In Karnataka, taking forward the discussions with the district administrations of Kolar and Chikkaballapur, we signed Memorandums of Understanding to assist communities in formulating comprehensive plans to conserve, develop and manage the common lands and water bodies across all Gram Panchayats in both districts.



An FES member briefing the government officials on the enabling orders issued by the Government for securing and regenerating Commons, during a Divisional workshop on Commons in Rajasthan.





Our Project Areas

- FES PROJECT DISTRICT
- REGIONAL OFFICE
- ◎ COORDINATION OFFICE

Our Presence

FES is known for its large scale work on common lands and water bodies spanning different socio-cultural and agro-ecological conditions of India. Today (as of March 2013), we are working with 2.89 million people and 5,323 village institutions in 30 districts across seven States. The fruit of our efforts can be seen in improved governance and management of over 475,000 hectares of common lands – which in turn has improved the productivity of the adjacent 400,000 hectares of privately-owned lands.

As for new initiatives, we have recently begun working in Yavatmal and Amravati districts in Vidharba region of Maharashtra. In areas where we already have a presence, we are progressively spreading to adjoining villages, blocks and districts either directly or in collaboration with partners.

While different strategies guide us in bio-geographically and socio-economically distinct locations, the broad organisational strategies are:

- > To revive the criticality of forests and other common lands, and focus on inter-linkages with associated production systems – thereby highlighting the value of forests and the necessity for conservation action.
- > To establish institutional design principles and mechanisms that provide spaces for the poor and enable village communities to access, share and conserve common lands.
- > To develop linkages between village-level institutions and the umbrella institution of the Panchayat, and to integrate their natural resource management plans.
- > To assist Panchayats leverage funds available under the MGNREGA to restore degraded ecosystems and to evolve rules and regulations for governing them.
- > To strengthen platforms for discussion at village and inter-village levels by inviting government functionaries, academia and larger civil society to jointly deliberate on issues of conservation, and use of natural surroundings to meet the consumptive and non-consumptive needs of village communities.
- > To carry out pilot-level land use planning in diverse ecological and socio-economic settings, and tackle biomass and water scarcities so as to guide block and district-level land use planning.
- > To assess impact of climate change on various natural and production systems, and introduce mitigation and adaptation measures in practices underway.

Update 2012-2013

> We helped organise 129 village institutions, bringing an area of 23,870 hectares of common lands under community management, thereby reaching out to local communities across 861 habitations.



> In the second phase of the Rajasthan Forestry & Biodiversity Project, 37 habitations were supported in planning exercises taking into consideration local ecological conditions and resource-use profiles. We organised several capacity building programmes to strengthen village institutions' planning and governance processes.

> In the study to monitor ecological changes and quantify the impact of watershed development activities in Kalyanpura, organic carbon increased from 0.34% to 0.43%, organic matter by 4.57 tonnes per hectare and the presence of soil microbes from an average of 5.33 pkat/g to 7.56 pkat/g over a period of three years, indicating vast improvement in soil health.



> As part of the *Shamlat Abhiyan*, we readied various information materials for dissemination, and launched a media campaign to spread awareness on enabling orders issued by the State Government on conservation and restoration of Commons.

> Under the 'Study of Poverty, Agriculture Risks and Coping Strategies', we completed resource mapping in 30 habitations to better understand the risks faced by rural households in the context of climate change, to highlight the relevance of local coping practices and the role of institutions.

Rajasthan



Fall into Lower & Middle Indus, Ganga Delta & Plain and Narmada-Tapi Fresh Water Eco-region
Situated between 23°31'N to 26°58'N and 72°45'E to 75°49'E
Length of Growing Period (LGP) ranges from 90 days in the north to 150 days in the south
The annual rainfall ranges from 650mm to 850mm and no. of rainy days from 31 to 34

FACT FILE

River Basin: Mej, Menali, Khari, Lilri; Jhakham, Erav of Mahi, Siwna, Gir of Chambal; Mansi, Wakal, Sei; Luni

Forest Types: Tropical Dry Deciduous and Dry Thorn; Tropical Dry Deciduous, Grasslands; Tropical Dry Deciduous; Tropical Dry Deciduous

Threatened Species: Great Indian Bustard, Long-billed Vulture; Rusty-spotted Cat, Four-horned Antelope, Lesser Florican, Fat-tailed Gecko; Aravalli Red Spurfowl, White-naped Tit, *Commiphora wightii*, *Sterculia urens*; White-naped Tit, *Anogeissus sericea*, *Commiphora wightii*

Principal Crops: Jowar, groundnut, pulses, wheat, gram; Maize, sorghum, paddy, cotton, sugarcane; Wheat, maize, barley, sugarcane; Wheat, bajra, jowar, maize

% of Common Lands other than Forestlands: 52.2; 15.02; 64.52; 38.61

% of Forest Cover: 3.42; 29.33; 23.21; 5.34

% of Population Living Below Poverty Line: 32; 39.36; 55; 21

% of Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes: 23; 67.26; 54; 17

Year in which FES Initiated Work: 1995; 2005; 2000; 2012

Total Common Land under Protection (ha): 38,519; 8,080; 11,564

Total Lives Touched: 297,771; 48,218; 111,240; 4,750

Village Institutions Associated with: 377; 178; 306; 3

Funding Agencies: Omidyar Network, Sir Dorabji Tata Trust and the Allied Trusts, NABARD-IGWDP, NABARD-WDF, NABARD-TDF, ITC-Rural Development Trust, ITC-MGNREGS, Sunehra Kal-ITC, Government of Rajasthan, Rajasthan Forestry and Biodiversity Project, UNDP-Small Grants Programme, Grow-Trees, Fondation Ensemble, GIZ India, Washington University in St. Louis



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 together about 780 hectares. Over the years, barren lands have transformed into open forests, improving fodder and water availability and thereby prospects of livestock production.

Update 2012-2013

> During the year, we assisted 91 habitations that are involved in management of 7,725 hectares of common lands. In collaboration with Anantha Paryavarana Parirakshana Samithi, we reached out to local communities across 646 habitations, bringing 1.25 lakh hectares of common land under community management.



> In order to better understand the water use practices of farmers and promote collective action regarding groundwater usage, innovative group exercises were undertaken with village communities in collaboration with the International Food Policy Research Institute and Arizona State University in 29 habitations.

> With assistance from the State Agriculture department and NABARD, we supported villages in promoting 'community seed banks' to ensure availability of locally grown seed of food crops for their agriculture. A total of about 680 farmers made use of locally grown seeds during the last season.



> 45 improved stoves were installed in wayside hotels leading to a reduction in the fuel wood usage by 40% and thereby decreasing the pressure on the nearby forests.

> In collaboration with TERI University (India) and Rutgers University (USA), we undertook a study in watershed areas of Anantapur District to assess the presence or absence of macro-invertebrates in water bodies, specifically dragonflies. Preliminary findings suggest presence of high pollution tolerant organisms indicating widespread deterioration in water quality.

Andhra Pradesh



Our efforts in Andhra Pradesh are concentrated in the southern districts of Chittoor and Anantapur of the Rayalseema region, a unique eco-zone at the tri-junction of the Eastern Ghats, the Western Ghats and the Deccan Plateau. The landscape of broken hill ranges, valleys, and hill slopes covered with scrub jungles is dotted with irrigation tanks and is drained by the River Papagni. Located in the rain shadow of the Deccan Plateau, the region is prone to repeated droughts - compelling communities to either migrate to neighbouring towns or increase their dependency on Commons thus leading to excessive extraction of biomass (especially fuel wood).

Our work in this drought-prone region is primarily aimed at strengthening local village institutions and their conglomerates, securing tenure over common lands, and ecological restoration of the landscape. The efforts of the rural communities have led to a visible increase in fodder availability and improved water flows in streams and therefore, improved resilience of distressed communities and their farming systems. Improvement in biomass and water availability and the opportunity to leverage MGNREGA to restore common lands and water bodies has reduced distress migration to an extent.

The Commons are governed by village institutions such as Van Samrakshana Samitis and Tree Growers' Mutually Aided Cooperative Societies and their local federations which translate discussions on future demands of biomass and water into community action on judicious use of natural resources. A group of trained rural volunteers actively support village communities in their collective action.

Given the positive results of the first phase of the MGNREGA project on Common Pool Resources (being implemented in collaboration with Anantha Paryavarana Parirakshana Samithi), the State government has scaled up the common land restoration programme from the existing two to twelve districts, and advised the agencies working in the Integrated Watershed Management Programme to bring the restoration of common lands under the ambit of community governance. The government has also issued orders for entry of the Commons into the Prohibitory Order Book so as to prevent their diversion to other land use. On request of the government, we submitted a 'Draft Policy on Commons for Andhra Pradesh', which is currently under consideration.



July 1993



July 2002



October 2013

Chennappagaripalle has been managing the Yerrakonda hills for over two decades, by evolving collective rules and regulations for provisioning for 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.

FACT FILE

River Basin: Papagni

Forest Types: Mixed Dry Deciduous, Tropical Thorn, Scrub

Threatened Species: Yellow-throated Bulbul, Starred Tortoise, *Chloroxylon swietenia*, *Anogeissus latifolia*

Principal Crops: Groundnut, paddy, chilies, mango

% of Common Lands other than Forestlands: 30.29

% of Forest Cover: 8.24

% of Population Living Below Poverty Line: 58

% of Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes: 20

Year in which FES Initiated Work: 1991

Total Common Land under Protection (ha): 22,589

Total Lives Touched: 94,401

Village Institutions Associated with: 324

Funding Agencies: Omidyar Network, Sir Dorabji Tata Trust and the Allied Trusts, NABARD (Distress Districts Programme), NABARD RSO Programme, NABARD-TDF, NABARD Community Managed Hydrological Monitoring and Water Management Programme, Government of Andhra Pradesh, Grow-Trees

Update 2012-2013

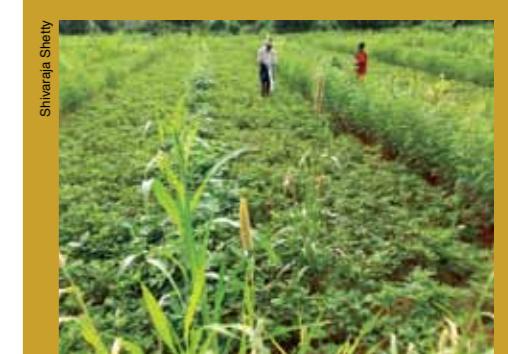
> We continue to assist local communities across 229 habitations in the restoration of 13,803 hectares of community-managed common land in Kolar and Chikkaballapur districts.

> We assisted the Dibburahalli Panchayat in setting up an Information Centre for providing information to villagers on agriculture, education, opportunities, government schemes, etc. The Information Centre is fully managed by the Panchayat, while a committee of the Panchayat oversees and reviews the progress.



> We assisted village communities in undertaking surveys on cropping patterns and use of 141 bore wells in two watersheds. The analysis undertaken on the recharge potential, actual groundwater recharge and use of groundwater is being discussed at Panchayat level to evolve collective norms for regulation of use.

> Utilising the provisions of MGNREGA, a guild of trained rural volunteers facilitated soil and moisture conservation and re-vegetation measures on common lands in about 152 habitations of 14 Gram Panchayats and an amount of INR 4 million was leveraged.



> About 250 farmers were supported to undertake Low External Input Sustainable Agriculture (LEISA) practices in about 100 hectares of groundnut crop and Ragi crops, which not only reduced the risks in production but also resulted in better yields.



Karnataka



Fall into Southern Deccan Plateau & South-eastern Ghats Fresh Water Eco-region
Situated between 12-45°N to 13-57°N and 77-21°E to 78-35°E
Length of Growing Period (LGP) ranges from 120-150 days
The annual rainfall is 711.5mm and no. of rainy days is 47

FACT FILE

River Basin:	Papagni
Forest Types:	Tropical Dry Deciduous, Tropical Thorn, Scrub
Threatened Species:	Yellow-throated Bulbul, Starred Tortoise, Red Sand Boa, Kolar Leaf-nosed Bat, <i>Wrightia tinctoria</i> , <i>Shorea roxburghii</i>
Principal Crops:	Ragi, paddy, maize, oilseeds, pulses
% of Common Lands other than Forestlands:	47.92
% of Forest Cover:	6.18
% of Population Living Below Poverty Line:	23
% of Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes:	29
Year in which FES Initiated Work:	1998
Total Common Land under Protection (ha):	13,803
Total Lives Touched:	102,985
Village Institutions Associated with:	240
Funding Agencies:	Omidyar Network, Sir Dorabji Tata Trust and the Allied Trusts, NABARD-WDF, Arghyam Trust, Grow-Trees

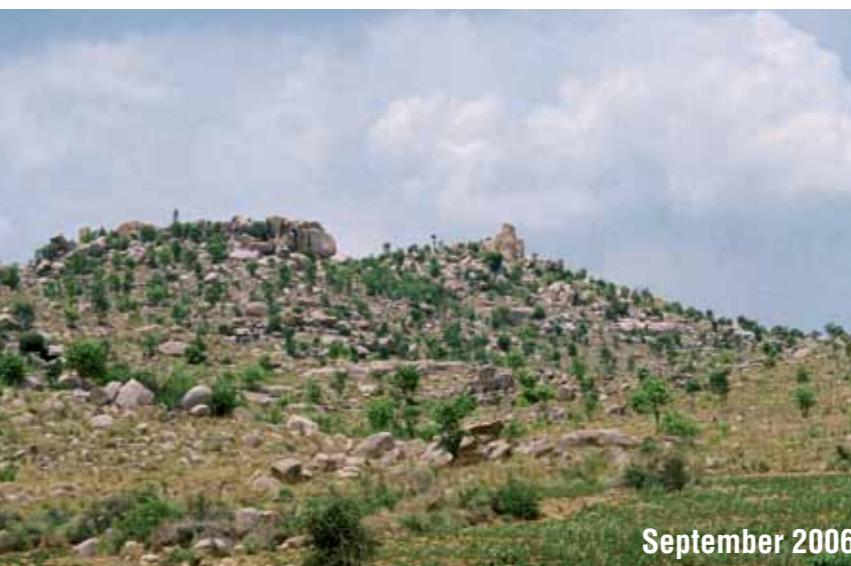
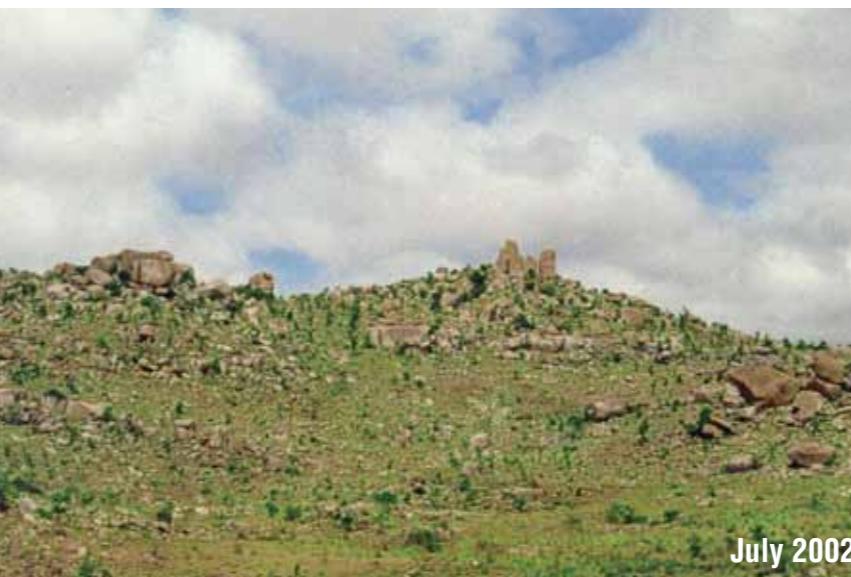
Our activities in Karnataka are spread across the upper catchment region of the Papagni river and two of its feeder streams in the districts of Kolar and Chikkaballapur. The semi-arid boulder-strewn hilly terrain, that was once dotted by collectively managed cascading water bodies and grazing lands is characterised today by silted-up tanks, degraded scrub forests, and encroached grazing lands. Replacing the traditional millets, the farming today largely depends on groundwater extraction for growing water-intensive crops, intended mainly for the nearby urban markets.

In a State known for strengthening decentralisation and the functioning of Panchayats, we work towards strengthening the Panchayat structure and its role in programme implementation, capacitating its functionaries and identifying gaps in delivery mechanisms. We are actively involved in assisting Panchayats which are vested with custodial responsibility to manage common lands and water bodies, to revive customary collective practices of managing natural resources, and to prepare perspective plans to leverage MGNREGS funds.

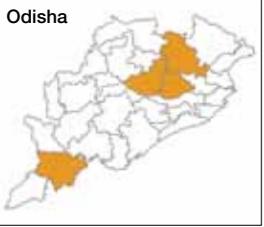
We promote formation of hamlet-level subcommittees and capacitate rural volunteers and para-workers to assist Panchayats in effective implementation of MGNREGS plans to manage and govern their natural resources.

Rampant and unrestrained groundwater extraction has not only aggravated the already grave situation but also resulted in rising inequities. To equip Panchayats with groundwater know-how and options to regulate its use, we undertake hydro-geological studies and water audits and promote agricultural crops and practices that are less water intensive. We also encourage Panchayats to develop institutional mechanisms to regulate and promote judicious use of water and other natural resources.

In a hearing on the affidavit filed by the Kolar district administration, the Karnataka High Court directed the district administration to seek assistance from FES in preparing a comprehensive plan for development of both common lands and water bodies across the district. Subsequently, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the district administrations of Kolar and Chikkaballapur, and are today actively engaged with about 176 Gram Panchayats and their rural volunteers in drawing up conservation plans to restore common grazing lands and water bodies.



Determined efforts by the people of Sajjupalli in preventing forest-fires and protecting the common land, has led to considerable improvement in water levels and vegetative cover of the region. The area is now home to wildlife like sloth bears, deer and jungle cats as well as threatened floral species such as *Chloroxylon swietenia* and *Gloriosa superba*.



FACT FILE

River Basin: Mahanadi, Brahmini; Kolab

Forest Types: Tropical Dry and Moist Deciduous, Bamboo Brakes and Scrub; Tropical Moist Deciduous

Threatened Species: Tiger, Elephant, Gharial, *Barringtonia acutangula* (Hinjal), *Entada phaseoloides* (Gila); Elephant, *Themeda sasicola*, *Strobilanthes jeyporensis*

Principal Crops: Paddy, maize, ragi, gram, oilseeds; Paddy, maize, ragi, wheat, pulses, niger, sugarcane, potato

% of Common Lands other than Forestlands: 19.11; 42.91

% of Forest Cover: 37.06; 19.05

% of Population Living Below Poverty Line: 61; 84

% of Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes: 29; 63

Year in which FES Initiated Work: 1987; 2008

Total Common Land under Protection (ha): 29,489; 14,605

Total Lives Touched: 144,632; 53,791

Village Institutions Associated with: 238; 203

Funding Agencies: Omidyar Network, Sir Dorabji Tata Trust and the Allied Trusts, NABARD-WDF, Grow-Trees, NABARD-Backward Block Development Programme, Concern Worldwide, Government of Odisha

■ Angul ■ Koraput

Odisha

In Central Odisha, we work in the undulating landscapes of Angul and Dhenkanal districts, covered by dense forest and home to a wide diversity of flora and fauna. In Southern Odisha, we work in Koraput district characterised by highland plateaus, the hills of the Eastern Ghats, moist deciduous forests – and tribal communities. The dependence of these communities on forest resources is evident in their strong customary norms of use, regulation and management.

The rise in investments in ‘developmental’ projects in Central Odisha have conversely, led to a rise in economic disparity between the affluent and the poor and alongside, speedier degradation of natural resources in the region. Our efforts here are directed towards making farming an economically rewarding proposition by fortifying linkages between land, water, forests and agriculture and securing rural livelihoods. In this scenario, we encourage communities to actively restore the Commons, through strengthening village institutions and Regional Federations so as to formalise their customary use patterns and assert their rights over such resources.

In Koraput, where a large section of the population is tribal and living below the poverty line, the forest Commons are a vital source of food, fibre and medicines and, more importantly, sustain their subsistence agriculture. Since the region is characterised by rampant soil erosion and water runoff, we assist communities in regenerating the degraded forestlands on the upper reaches and regulating the flow of water and nutrients, and in framing rules and regulations to protect and restore their forest Commons. In the lower reaches of the hills, we provide critical support to rural communities practising subsistence agriculture.

We assist seven partner organisations in five districts in capacitating village institutions and their Panchayats in effectively using provisions of MGNREGA for undertaking eco-restoration activities at a landscape level. Our interactions with the Department of Panchayati Raj and the State Institute of Rural Development, Government of Odisha, helped energise these processes.

We have been encouraging communities to submit community claims under the Forest Rights Act, 2006. During the year, in concert with the Odisha Jungle Manch, we helped file 860 claims in three districts and 161 community claims in Sundargarh district with the help of SEWAK, an NGO working in the region.



May 1998



September 2006



August 2013

Restoration efforts in Nabkishorepur village since 1998 have improved vegetative cover and water availability in the region, leading to an increase in the area under cultivation and improved resilience of their farming systems. Encouraged by the results, the village has brought additional common land available in the village under collective management.

Update 2012-2013

> We work with local communities across 1,939 habitations and have helped restore 186,733 hectares of common land in Angul and Koraput districts.



> Under a ‘Diversion Based Irrigation project’ undertaken with support from NABARD in Angul, 152 households gained access to drinking water and 80 households to irrigate 8 hectares of vegetable crops, which earned them about INR 0.2 million in a year. The village has developed byelaws for protection of 200 hectares of common lands, which is the main source for water.

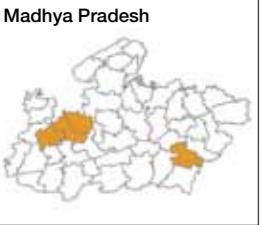
> Charmalik Anchalika Vikas Parishad organised a *Krushak Mela* in Angul which was attended by about 3,000 villagers from 40 villages, officials, social workers and Panchayat representatives. The *Mela* served as a platform to share experiences and exchange ideas pertaining to management of forests, land and water.



> In Koraput, we facilitated Community Forest Rights claims under the Forest Rights Act in 54 habitations of five Panchayats covering an area of 2,672 hectares.

> Under the Odisha Forestry Sector Development Project in Koraput, 315 training programmes were conducted for 8,256 *Van Suraksha Samiti* members on collective management and governance processes, biodiversity monitoring and sustainable harvesting practices.

> Being run for the 17th year in row, two issues of the newsletter *Sabuja Barta*, were published on issues concerning the Forest Rights Act and the Biodiversity Act.



Madhya Pradesh

In Madhya Pradesh, we are spread across the Malwa and Mahakaushal regions in the western and eastern parts of the State. Our Malwa project is located in the catchment area of the rivers Lakhundar and Shipra and defined by small, staggered hillocks and narrow valleys. In Mahakaushal, we work in villages surrounding the Kanha National Park, in the upper catchments of the Gaur and Matiyari rivers, which are characterised by degraded forests and large-scale migration.

Our efforts in the Malwa region have been directed towards improving vegetation on common lands and productivity of farmlands through watershed-development programmes. The numerous water-harvesting structures have increased water availability for human and livestock needs, as well as recharged shallow wells in the downstream, leading to a marked increase of area under double cropping. We engage with communities and their local federations in developing robust and appropriate mechanisms for resource governance.

With 65% tribal population, mostly Gonds and Baigas, the district of Mandla though gifted with abundant natural resources is considered to be one of the most backward districts in Madhya Pradesh. We work towards strengthening community governance and tenurial security on natural resources, and in strengthening farm-based livelihood options that reduce dependency of communities on forest Commons.

In the Malwa region, we are scaling up our work to the neighbouring blocks of Ujjain and Rajgarh districts so as to promote democratic village institutions to undertake watershed development programmes designed to conserve natural resources and fortify agriculture. In the Mahakaushal region, we extended our scope to restore the Kanha-Pench corridor, which links two important source-populations of tigers. While working with villages on conservation and livelihood aspects, we encourage Panchayats to engage with different stakeholders (such as Forest, Animal Husbandry and Agriculture departments) so as to improve their livelihood options, and conserve and manage biodiversity of the region.

In both locations, we closely work with village institutions and their local federations, Panchayats, and various government departments, in restoring common lands and water bodies, and in promoting ecologically-sound livelihood options.



Fall into Northern Deccan Plateau, Ganga Delta & Plain and Narmada - Tapi Fresh Water Eco-region
Situated between 22-12°N to 24-19°N and 75-8°E to 81-11°E
Length of Growing Period (LGP) ranges from 120-210 days
The annual rainfall ranges from 950mm to 1588mm and no. of rainy days from 42 to 75

FACT FILE

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

Forest Types: Tropical Moist Deciduous; Tropical Dry Deciduous, Scrub

Threatened Species: Tiger, Swamp Deer, Green Avadavat, Vultures (*Gyps bengalensis*, *Gyps indicus*, *Neophron percnopterus*), *Sterculia urens*, *Terminalia arjuna*; Indian Wolf, Striped Hyena, *Adina cordifolia*, *Dolichandrone falcata*

Principal Crops: Paddy, minor millets, maize, wheat, red gram, lentil, niger, mustard; Wheat, jowar, bajra, gram, millet, maize, pulses, til, cotton, soybean

% of Common Lands other than Forestlands: 13.40; 33.94

% of Forest Cover: 48.86; 0.48

% of Population Living Below Poverty Line: 56; 42

% of Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes: 66; 30

Year in which FES Initiated Work: 2006; 1996

Total Common Land under Protection (ha): 6,159; 11,758

Total Lives Touched: 20,837; 59,964

Village Institutions Associated with: 186; 79

Funding Agencies: Omidyar Network, Royal Bank of Scotland, ICRISAT, Sunehra Kal-ITC, Grow-Trees, GIZ India, Welthungerhilfe, Government of Madhya Pradesh

■ Mandla ■ Agar



February 2003



September 2006



September 2013

Sustained efforts of the Moya Kheda village community since 2003 has led to considerable improvement in the vegetative cover and the period of water availability in the nearby wells increased from six to eleven months, resulting in doubling of area under Rabi crop.

Update 2012-2013

> A total of 17,917 hectares of common lands have been brought under community protection, reaching out to more than 265 habitations in Agar and Mandla districts. In association with members of Joint Forest Management institutions, a total of 1,630 hectares of forestlands is being protected in the buffer areas of Kanha National Park.



> The Geo-hydrological study undertaken in collaboration with Clemson University, USA, and IIT, Mumbai, to improve our understanding on groundwater recharge found that water-harvesting in Malwa region has good potential of impacting the hydrology by increasing groundwater recharge by about 25%. The study has been translated into vernacular and shared with officials, Panchayats and villages.



> Using co-management approach for greater convergence of local communities and officials, we have undertaken a survey for assessing biodiversity and biotic pressure in the buffer zone of Kanha National Park. Apart from assessing the status of grazing in the area, a total of 87 species of birds were inventoried.

> In about 30 villages on the periphery of Kanha National Park, we assisted village communities in evolving byelaws for governing and managing natural resources, and for inclusion of the poorest of the poor in decision-making processes.

> Four issues of *Neelkanth* were published focusing on different aspects of community conservation of forests, and the need for co-management of the National Park.

> Reaching out to local communities in 539 habitations, we helped bring a total of 17,134 hectares of common land under community management.

> Following a meeting attended by about 1,100 farmers and concerned government officials to deliberate on ways of strengthening the resilience of their farming systems and for claiming community rights over surrounding forestlands, trained rural volunteers started assisting communities in about 70 habitations in filing claims under the Forest Rights Act.



> As a Resource Agency to the Gujarat State Watershed Management Agency, we conducted capacity building programmes for Village Watershed Committees and Self Help Groups of 27 macro watersheds in Anand and Kheda districts on different thematic areas including conservation of common lands and their role in improving resilience of their farming systems.

> Under an initiative titled 'Ensuring Food Security through promoting Rainfed Farming Systems' a total of 937 farmers were supported in adopting improved package of practices and procuring good quality seeds, which resulted in around 30-40% increase in crop production.



> We supported members of the *Dariya Kantha Vikas Manch*, a platform to highlight issues of salinity ingress in the coastal regions of Khamhat taluka and members of the *Mahi Kantha Vikas Manch*, a network to address issues of ravine formation along the banks of River Mahi by leveraging funds from MGNREGS.

Gujarat



Fall into Narmada-Tapi Fresh Water Eco-region
Situated between 21-49°N to 23-27°N and 72-20°E to 74-28°E
Length of Growing Period (LGP) ranges from 120-150 days
The annual rainfall ranges from 870mm to 900mm and no. of rainy days from 33 to 43

FACT FILE

River Basin: Mahi, Sabarmati; Valai, Bhe, Kali, Khan

Forest Types: Tropical Dry Deciduous; Dry Teak, Mixed Dry Deciduous, Grasslands, Scrub

Threatened Species: Sarus Crane, Black-necked Stork, Hyena; Lesser Florican, Sloth Bear, *Dalbergia latifolia*, *Dolichandrone falcata*

Principal Crops: Paddy, wheat, tobacco, jowar, maize, cotton; Maize, paddy, sorghum, pulses

% of Common Lands other than Forestlands: 26; 20.45

% of Forest Cover: 5.15; 14.34

% of Population Living Below Poverty Line: 33; 59

% of Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes: 22; 91

Year in which FES Initiated Work: 1986; 1997

Total Common Land under Protection (ha): 4,274; 12,860

Total Lives Touched: 224,746; 126,440

Village Institutions Associated with: 160; 379

Funding Agencies: Omidyar Network, NABARD-IGWDP, NABARD-WDF, Government of Gujarat, Collectives for Integrated Livelihood Initiatives (Cili), Aga Khan Rural Support Programme - Hilton Foundation, Development Support Agency of Gujarat

■ Anand ■ Dahod

The saline mudflats of Gulf of Khambhat, the wetlands of Anand, the ravines on the bank of the Mahi river and the central highlands of Dahod and Panchmahal, form the backdrop to our work in Gujarat. Spread across five districts, our efforts are concentrated on the widespread ecological degradation and depletion of natural resources there.

With this continuous degradation of natural resources, economic disparity between the haves and the have-nots is on the rise. While some ride a prosperity and development wave, other areas are sunk in acute poverty and marginalisation.

The undulating topography, loose soil structure and absence of vegetative cover have led to formation of severe ravines along the banks of the Mahi river. Working in collaboration with Panchayats, watershed committees, and habitation-level institutions, we assist communities to leverage MGNREGS funds for restoring the vegetative cover in the ravines. Villages affected by the ravines have formed a multi-stakeholder platform – the *Mahi Kantha Vikas Manch* – to address land degradation along the banks of the river and to conduct the *Mahi Mahotsav*, an annual river festival, so as to draw in yet more stakeholders.

In Coastal Khamhat, we continue to address soil and water salinity issues by capacitating communities to create a vegetative barrier on tidal mudflats so as to reduce the effect of salt-laden winds and boost farm productivity of the hinterland.

In the poor and tribal-dominated districts of Dahod and Panchmahal, we support communities in framing rules and regulations that enable judicious use of forest resources and protection from over-exploitation. We also capacitate local communities to submit claims for recognition of their community forests under provisions of the Forest Rights Act.

During the year, we expanded our efforts to develop a trained cadre of tribal youth in Kadana and Santrampur talukas of Panchmahal to Khanpur taluka. This youthful cadre assists communities in effectively leveraging the numerous government programmes directed at poverty alleviation, and provision of agricultural inputs and services.

We strive to build a multi-stakeholder platform which will promote a range of interventions to protect forests, claim community rights, and strengthen local stewardship of a development agenda rooted in conservation practices.



Land degradation on the banks of the River Mahi has not only affected the productivity of adjoining farmlands but even resulted in some communities relocating their villages in the past. Collective efforts of Sarnal village resulted in checking soil erosion, improved vegetation and increased the availability of fodder for the poorer section of the community.



Courtesy of Mark Katzman

NORTH-EASTERN REGION

The North-Eastern region of India houses nearly one-fourth of the country's forest cover and more than a third of its biodiversity – forming a distinctive part of the Indo-Burma Biodiversity Hotspot. The forest system ranges from the tropical ecosystem in the plains to sub-tropical, temperate and alpine forest ecosystems in the hills.

The rich biodiversity of the forests and cultural diversity of the people as also the strong character of local self-governance have given impetus to our efforts in the region. The ownership and governance of natural resources has constitutionally been held by the village councils here. Our exposure to traditional practices and norms has both enriched our experience of working with communities everywhere on Commons, and offered fresh insights on tackling contemporary challenges in the region.

The rise in developmental projects, besides other factors such as hunting, increase in land fragmentation, monoculture plantations, cash crop cultivation, and increasing population, are exerting immense pressure on the fragile ecosystem – making it essential to heighten conservation practices in the balance against unsustainable consumption patterns.

Following in-depth interaction with the Dikhu Green Zone Area, and consultations with various Community Conserved Areas (CCAs), practitioners, researchers, academia and policy-makers, we focused our efforts on developing a framework for evolving 'management plans' for CCAs in the State of Nagaland. We also assisted communities in basing their plans on traditional governance mechanisms, use of resources and land use patterns.

In Meghalaya, we undertook a survey to understand the use and management of natural resources in the State, and to assess opportunities of working on conservation issues in the region. A study of the Land Bank Programme implemented by the Meghalaya Rural Development Society in five districts, helped us understand the relevance of purchasing uncultivated lands from non resident private owners, then vesting village institutions with the authority to restore and govern them as village Commons so as to revive the springs in the area.

In coming years, we envisage working on conservation issues and developing a framework for devising management plans through the collective efforts of communities, collaborating with partner organisations to reach more village communities, and undertaking studies to deepen our understanding of the region.



Courtesy of Mark Katzman



Jideed Rao



Surya Sharma



Akash Malia Baruah



Akash Malia Baruah

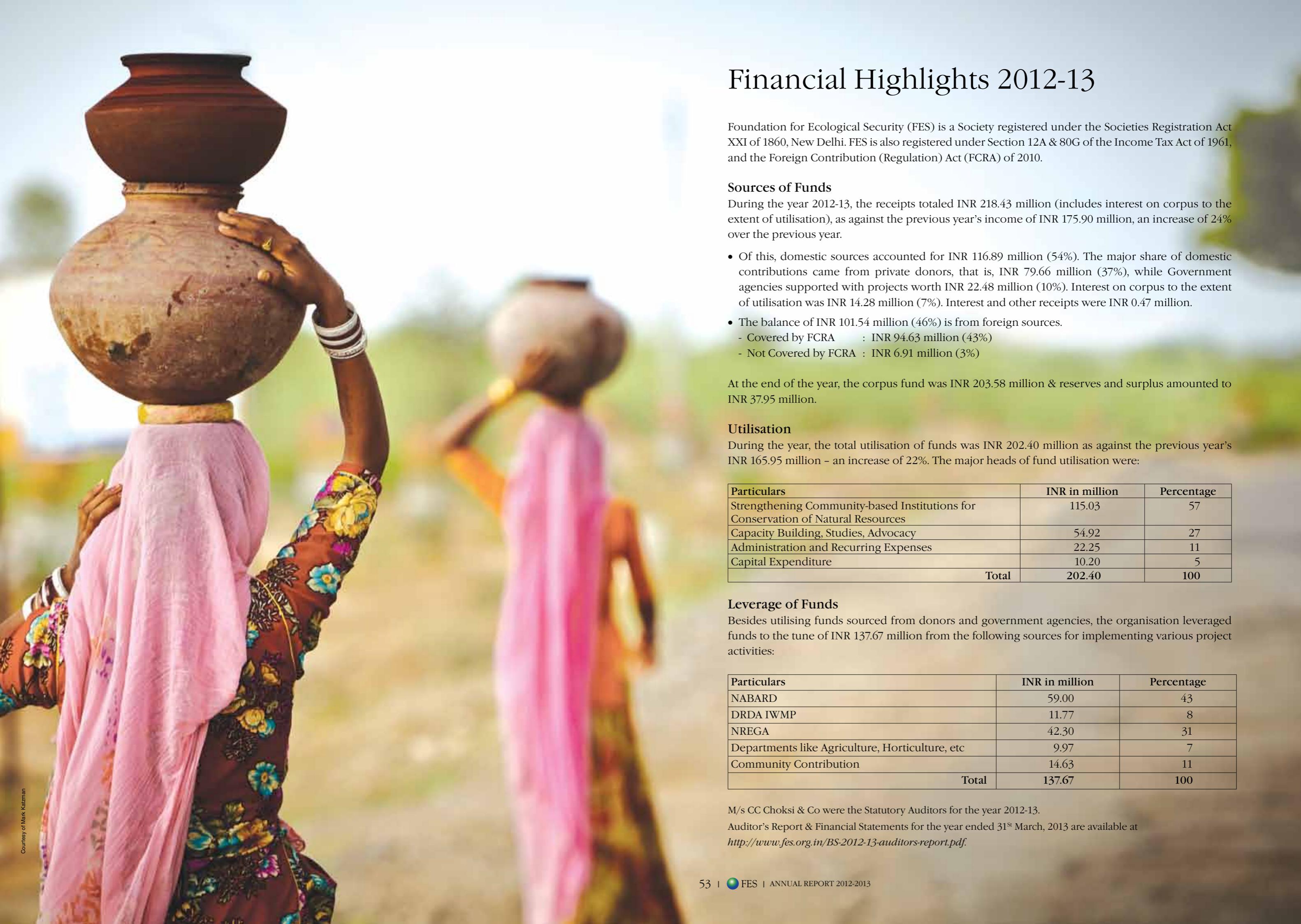
A meeting is in progress between the visiting members of Tzula (Dikhu) Green Zone Community Conserved Area (CCA), Nagaland, and Siju Ecotourism and Conservation Society, Meghalaya. Such exposures help the CCAs envision and plan for various conservation initiatives.

> We were invited by the Nanga/Dikhu Greener Zone Community Conserved Area (CCA) in Zunheboto District of Nagaland, to jointly evolve a management plan for CCAs by building on their governance mechanisms and resource-use patterns, and on insights gained from studies of river ecology and catchment biodiversity.

> We organised a workshop on 'Community Conserved Areas and Framework for Management Plans', bringing together practitioners, researchers, academia and policy-makers from across the country, along with community members from different CCAs of Nagaland, to evolve broad principles in the context of developing a framework for Management Plans for CCAs.

> The second phase of the study on the ecology of Dikhu river, its tributaries and faunal attributes, undertaken by Dr S P Biswas, Dr Santosh A Singh and Mr Dibyajyoti Deuri, looked at the bio-physical attributes of the river comprising its maximum and minimum carrying capacity in different seasons in a year, and prepared plans for conservation of the river ecology including its catchment area.

> A study undertaken in collaboration with Meghalaya Rural Development Society, on the Land Bank Programme in five districts of the State has revealed that the programme has the potential to bring unused lands under the management of local councils and plan larger conservation action such as restoration of springs.



Financial Highlights 2012-13

Foundation for Ecological Security (FES) is a Society registered under the Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860, New Delhi. FES is also registered under Section 12A & 80G of the Income Tax Act of 1961, and the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) of 2010.

Sources of Funds

During the year 2012-13, the receipts totaled INR 218.43 million (includes interest on corpus to the extent of utilisation), as against the previous year's income of INR 175.90 million, an increase of 24% over the previous year.

- Of this, domestic sources accounted for INR 116.89 million (54%). The major share of domestic contributions came from private donors, that is, INR 79.66 million (37%), while Government agencies supported with projects worth INR 22.48 million (10%). Interest on corpus to the extent of utilisation was INR 14.28 million (7%). Interest and other receipts were INR 0.47 million.
- The balance of INR 101.54 million (46%) is from foreign sources.
 - Covered by FCRA : INR 94.63 million (43%)
 - Not Covered by FCRA : INR 6.91 million (3%)

At the end of the year, the corpus fund was INR 203.58 million & reserves and surplus amounted to INR 37.95 million.

Utilisation

During the year, the total utilisation of funds was INR 202.40 million as against the previous year's INR 165.95 million - an increase of 22%. The major heads of fund utilisation were:

Particulars	INR in million	Percentage
Strengthening Community-based Institutions for Conservation of Natural Resources	115.03	57
Capacity Building, Studies, Advocacy	54.92	27
Administration and Recurring Expenses	22.25	11
Capital Expenditure	10.20	5
Total	202.40	100

Leverage of Funds

Besides utilising funds sourced from donors and government agencies, the organisation leveraged funds to the tune of INR 137.67 million from the following sources for implementing various project activities:

Particulars	INR in million	Percentage
NABARD	59.00	43
DRDA IWMP	11.77	8
NREGA	42.30	31
Departments like Agriculture, Horticulture, etc	9.97	7
Community Contribution	14.63	11
Total	137.67	100

M/s CC Choksi & Co were the Statutory Auditors for the year 2012-13.

Auditor's Report & Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March, 2013 are available at <http://www.fes.org.in/BS-2012-13-auditors-report.pdf>.

Acknowledgement

We thank the Government of India, the Department of Land Resources, the Ministry of Rural Development and the Ministry of Environment and Forests, New Delhi. We thank the District Administration of Chittoor, Anantapur, Cuddapah and Vishakhapatnam of Andhra Pradesh; Kolar, Chikkaballapur, Tumkur and Bangalore Rural of Karnataka; Angul, Dhenkanal, Koraput and Keonjhar of Odisha; Mandla, Ujjain, Rajgarh and Shajapur of Madhya Pradesh; Udaipur, Bhilwara, Ajmer, Chittaurgarh, Pratapgarh, Pali and Rajsamand of Rajasthan; Anand, Kheda, Vadodara, Panchmahal, Dahod and Mahisagar of Gujarat; Yavatmal and Amravati of Maharashtra; and Mokokchung and Zunheboto of Nagaland. Our effort would not have been possible without assistance and support from the respective State Governments. We also thank the National Dairy Development Board, Anand, for nurturing and supporting our work over many years.

Kalpavriksh, ACWADAM, Dakshin Foundation, International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) in Hyderabad, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), Collective Action and Property Rights (CAPRI), South Asia Pro-Poor Livestock Policy Programme (SAPLPP), Washington University in St. Louis, University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, University of Illinois at Urbana - Champaign, the University of Iowa, International Forestry Resources & Institutions (IFRI), Indiana University Bloomington, Arizona State University, Universidad de los Andes in Colombia, Worldwide Fund for Nature (India) in New Delhi, Pankaj Sekhsaria, Sanjay Upadhyay, Kanchi Kohli, Shalini Bhutani, Ritwick Dutta and Meenakshi Kapoor, for collaborating with us on various initiatives.

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In addition, we thank many organisations and individuals who have supported us in all our project areas.

In Rajasthan, we thank the Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Finance (Revenue) and the Forest Departments; SLNA (IWMP-Rajasthan), the Institute of Development Studies - Jaipur; RTI Manch - Jaipur and NCPRI - Jaipur; Abhijit Ghosh and R N Mehrotra for their support.

In Bhilwara we would like to thank the Bhilwara Dairy, Mewar Sewa Sansthan, BAIF, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Dryland Farming Research Station, DFRS Arjiya, RUDSETI, One World, Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS), the Forest and the Animal Husbandry Departments, and the District Watershed Management and the MGNREGA units. In Udaipur, we would like to acknowledge the support from the MGNREGA unit, Forest Department, Rajasthan College of Agriculture, College of Home Science, College of Technology and Engineering of MPUAT, Vidya Bhawan, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Gandhi Manav Kalyan Society, Astha Sansthan, Society for Promotion of Wastelands Development, Seva Mandir, Prayatna Samiti, Samarthak Samiti, Jagran Jan Vikas Samiti, Ubeshwar Vikas Mandal, Van Uthan Sangh, BAIF-RRIDMA, Centre for Environment Education, Anita Mathur and B L Paliwal. In Pratapgarh, we would like to thank the support of the MGNREGA unit, the Forest Department, Pratapgarh Agriculture Research Centre, Agriculture and Animal Husbandry Department, Wildlife Division, Prayas, IFFDC, WASCO, WOTR and KVK in Mandsaur, and the Chairman of Pratapgarh Nagarpalika.

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In Madhya Pradesh, we thank the Departments of the Revenue, Agriculture, Panchayat and Rural Development, Animal Husbandry and the Department of Forests for their support. Our work is supported by the CCF and Director, Kanha Tiger Reserve, Rajiv Gandhi Watershed Mission, MGNREGS Parishad, Snake Research Organisation - Ujjain, Lac Vikash Samiti-Janamkhari, Seoni, Forest Department, Agar, Malpani Trust- Nemavar, Jaivik Gram Sansthan - Rangvasa, GN Enterprise - Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh Bio-Diversity Board, Zila Panchayat Mandla, Center for Rural Bio-Technology, State Forestry Research Institute, Tropical Forestry Research Institute and Jawaharlal Nehru Krishi Vishwavidyalaya of Jabalpur, Krishi Vigyan Kendra of Shajapur and Mandla, CARD - Bhopal, Climate Change Cell of EPCO, WWF- India - Mandla, DISHA - Jabalpur, Department of Horticulture and Agriculture - Shajapur, Jan Abhiyan Parishad, Jan Sahas, Samaj Pragati Sahyog (SPS) - Bagli, NIRMAAN, PRADAN and NWCRYED, Mandla.

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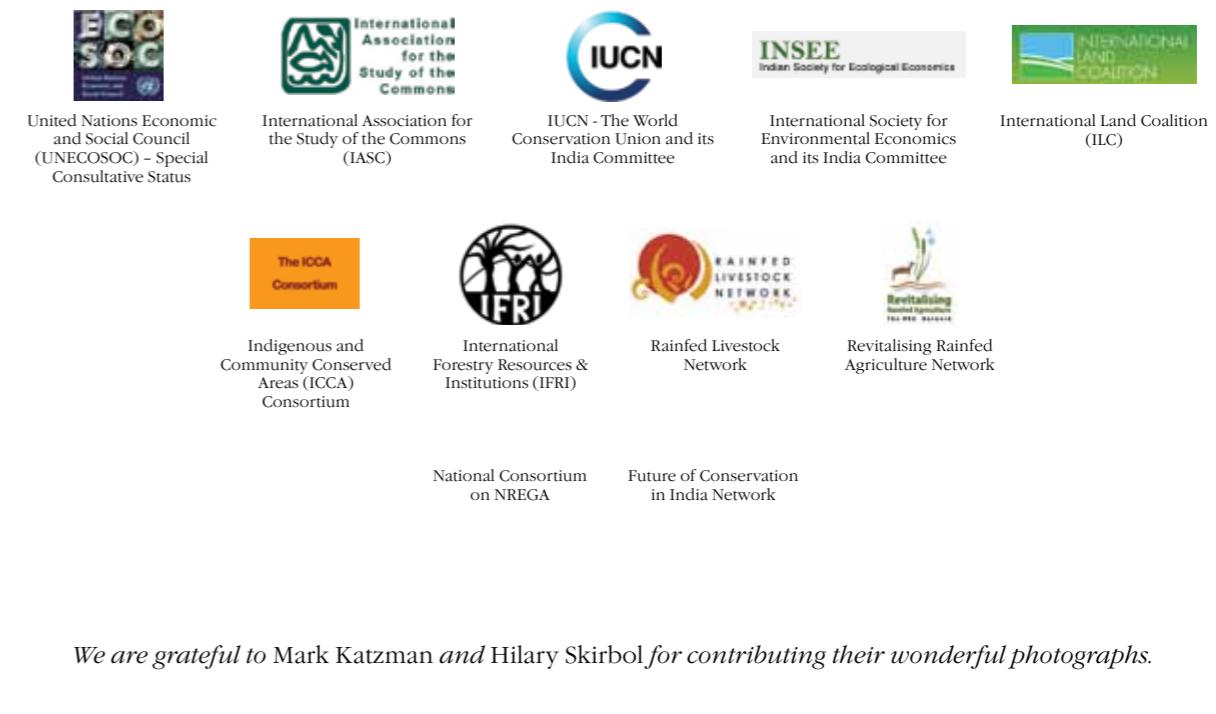
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