

# Call of the wild

**SK Mitra and GS Sohani spotlight the *Wadi* programme that ushers a new hope for tribal communities by providing a sustainable livelihood and better quality of life**

**W***adi* is not all about planting trees and harvesting fruits by people. It is more about planting hopes in the minds of people and harvesting all round prosperity'. A unique *Adivasi* (local term for tribals) Development Programme is under implementation since 1995 in Dharampur and Kaprada talukas of Valsad district in Gujarat. BAIF (Bharatiya Agro Industries Foundation Development and Research Foundation) is the main programme-implementing agency, which facilitates and executes the entire process of implementation with people's participation. Under the bilateral cooperation between the Government of Germany and the Government of India, the Development Bank of Germany has committed funding support by way of grants for a period of 10 years with effect from 1994-95 (Rs 550 million). Nabard, as the project holder on behalf of the Government of India, channels the fund for the programme, monitors the project implementation and provides steering and policy support.

The programme objectives include:

- ◆ Support for at least 10,000 tribal families (8000 land holders + 2000 landless) through sustainable agri-horti-silvicultural production
- ◆ Crossing the poverty line over a period of 11 years. [The unit of agri-silvicultural plot / orchard owned by the tribal family is locally called as *Wadi*

and thus the programme is commonly known as the 'Wadi Programme']

◆ Demonstrating the potential of tribal people to take charge of different stages of commodity processing in a decentralised way through

appropriate people's organisations. [Processed agricultural commodities under the *Wadi* programme are 'Mango' and 'Cashew' for making different types of pickles, pulp and salted cashew-nuts, among others]



## ASSESSING PROGRAMME SETTING

The tribal situation is characterised by subsistence agriculture, degradation of natural resources, deterioration of traditional resource base, poor health and non-accessibility of services. Thus most of them prefer to migrate to neighbouring cities for earning their livelihood. The migration for survival creates a crisis of confidence in themselves and the development programme. This further leads to a lack of clarity for future direction.

## REHABILITATION AGENDA

To encourage the development of tribals in the country, what needs to be done is to grant remunerative self-employment to prevent

migration, develop sustainable livelihood opportunities and improve the overall quality of life.

The tribal rehabilitation approach should holistically include everything from rehabilitation in their own environment, people's participation starting with programme development, application of science and technology, to a demystified focus on livelihood and quality of life.

#### PROGRAMME CRYSTALLISATION

The core *Wadi* concept of agri-horti-forestry (40 cashew plants + 20 mango plants in 1 acre with 600/1,000 forestry plants in the periphery) enables soil conservation, water resource development, improved farming and community health.

**WADI, A UNIQUE ADIVASI DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME IS UNDER IMPLEMENTATION IN DHARAMPUR AND KAPRADA TALUKAS OF GUJARAT. BAIF DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH FOUNDATION IS THE MAIN PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTING AGENCY**

The expanded concept and other interventions include integrated measures such as income generation activities through the formation of women's self-help groups, availability of micro finance, establishment of village institutions, people's institutions and processing facilities made available through cooperatives.

#### INNOVATIVE EDGE

Various activities have been initiated that have made a significant improvement at different levels. The programme level includes holistic central core concept, tailor-made components such as homestead activities, service enterprises, women's savings and credit groups and flexibility to define and refine the programme.

It also takes into account remunerative professions linked to natural resources, value-

addition to the produce and organised efforts in providing adequate market linkages:

The community empowerment level consists of building upon traditional practices. For instance, *Wavli* – the unique tribal tradition that gives a woman the sovereign right over her earnings – is woven in to the concept of women credit groups.

The level also includes the transfer of new knowledge skills and cadre of 'barefoot technicians' involved in agric-horticulture, soil and water conservation, rural engineering skills, masonry, carpentry, community health and book keeping.

The leadership development through village level institutions is another feature of this level. Lastly, the implementation level includes production by the masses and community-based financial management.

#### INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEMS

The essence of the programme entails promoting people's institutions through self-help groups such as *Gram Vikas Mandals*, *Ayojan Samiti* and cooperatives. The process is further strengthened through transparency and capacity building through interactions between people's institutions.

#### RIVETING INSIGHTS

*Wadi* is a major programme that engenders socio-economic rehabilitation of the tribals and other backward sections of the society. It demonstrates ecological restoration with poverty eradication and is a shift from a sectoral to a holistic approach.

It is a strong foundation to build flexibility for tailor-made interventions apart from the well-defined central theme.

Clearly, the demystification of technological interventions and capacity building should go hand in hand. The total impact of this programme can be gauged and measured in terms of the establishment of diversified and sus-





tainable livelihoods.

### PROGRAMME IMPLICATIONS

On one hand, the progress of the programme can be evidenced by the benefits

harvested in the first three years of the programme. In effect it yielded 190 MT of cashew and 500 MT of mangoes produced during the year 2003. As against a target of 10,000 tribal families, nearly 12,827 families have been rehabilitated covering 11,897 acres under its development agenda.

On the other hand, its impact can be assessed in terms of reduction in migration through better food security, increase in the cropped area and cropping intensity, better income, improved health and change in the quality of living, skills training leading to self employment and vibrant people's organisation.

### WADI ORGANISATION

After the plantation and production process of mango and cashew have been organised synergistically with the people's involvement and creation of people's organisation, the programme has been trying to ensure assured market and remunerative prices for the farm produce / commodities produced by the tribals.

Decentralised procurement and processing facilities for cashew and mango are being established under the cooperative fold at two levels – the village level and the cooperative / central level to give control of post-harvest stages of the value chain to tribals / people's organisation.

The Wadi farmers are organised as *Gram Vikas Mandals* run by their own *Ayojan Samitis* at the village level and as cooperative societies formed at a cluster of villages. In order to take up effective procurement, processing and marketing with an aim to ensure best economic returns to the *Wadi* farmers, a lot many organisational arrangements have been put in place.

A typical cooperative society unit comprises cashew processing, mango pickling and mango pulp activities carried out by three sub units with the partial processing support from five village level processing centres. Two such typical cooperative society level units and one central marketing unit have been established under the project.

In the 143 programme villages, the master plan for setting up of processing units over a period of 10 years envisages 45 village and nine cooperative level units of cashew, 35 villages and seven cooperative level units for mango pickle and two for pulp units, besides one central marketing unit.

The commodity processing achievements range from 170-village level planning committees to 10 cooperatives while the operational processing units comprise:

- ◆ 20 village brining units
- ◆ 10 village cashew processing units
- ◆ 1 central pickling unit

**THE TRIBAL REHABILITATION APPROACH SHOULD INCLUDE REHABILITATION IN INDIVIDUAL ENVIRONMENTS, PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION AND APPLICATION OF FIELD-TESTED TECHNOLOGIES TO BETTER THE QUALITY OF LIFE**

- ◆ 1 central pulping unit
- ◆ 1 central cashew processing unit

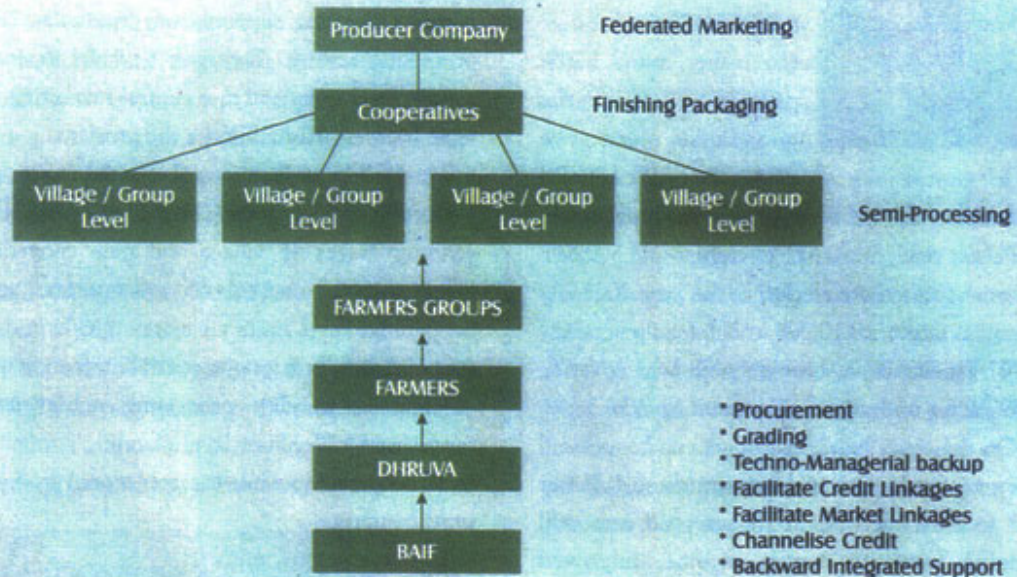
### PROCESSING LEVEL (2003)

◆ Raw cashewnut	:	200 tons
◆ Pickles	:	500 tons
◆ Mango pulp	:	50 tons
◆ Total annual turnover	:	About Rs 20 Million

### EMPLOYMENT GENERATION

Being a programme demonstrating the feasibility of ecological restoration with upliftment of the downtrodden, it has increased employment opportunities that means empowering 216 persons

**Organisation Of Producer-Based Commodity Processing**



for 10 months and 440 persons for two months, totalling to over 90,000 persons per year.

**PRODUCER BENEFITS**

*Wadi* is not only a programme for providing food security and ecological restoration, but it is also a strong foundation to generate economic development such as 20 per cent higher returns, reduced transportation costs, savings on commissions paid, assured payment and weighing accuracy attributes.

**COMMODITY PROCESSING LEARNINGS**

In the process of harnessing the benefits of the programme, the various problems also need to be addressed to ensure its fruition. The participatory organisations of *Wadi* farmers are required to

effectively reap the economic benefits of *Wadis*. Professional management has to be inculcated to procure, process and market the products successfully. The value-addition is the key to the success of the *Wadi* farmer's

enterprise. The village level activities and the cooperative level activities need to be properly planned so that the marketing channel serves the *Wadi* farmers best. The primary processing of pickle and steaming, cutting and peeling of the cashew nuts is best carried out at the village level. Pickle manufacturing and packaging as well as cashew grading and packaging need to be centralised at cooperative level to ensure quality and effective use of the infrastructure. The apex marketing society covering all *Wadi* project areas should be able to maintain a high quality marketing setup. The development of the brand and maintenance of the quality of products needs to be envisioned right from the beginning of the programme.

The current scenario relating to producers also merits considerable attention: from dispersed producers, small / tiny scale production, poor holding capacity, high seasonality, fluctuations in production and unprocessable varieties to poor quality of produce.

What's more, as far as the policy measures are concerned, the regulated market regime is primarily trader controlled. There is an inadequate post-





harvest infrastructure and hence there's very little value-addition at the primary trader level. The policy support for jaggery, edible oil and cotton is not encouraging either. The

existing laws seem to favour the sale of raw material. The result: little participation by farmers in the value-addition chain activities, especially at the producer household level.

### POLICY WATCH

The Government of India has brought in several policy changes to encourage the development of tribals in the country. While contract farming has been institutionalised, the standardisation, grading and quality certification for all produce has been brought into practice. E-trading in all markets has also been implemented. Future trading is now allowed in 92 commodities and commodity exchanges have been established.

The diverse needs of successful commodity processing include market information, access to market of choice, storage, warehousing facilities, appropriate processing technology, technology transfer at producer level with strong professional inputs, investment finance, working capital and appropriate market payment systems.

### ROLE OF CREDIT

Amidst the diverse support needs, credit is in the nature of infrastructure component for value-addition, and not the only actual process of value-addition. The many attributes of credit range from quantum availability, quality, all-purpose cover, timely availability, appropriate terms, reasonable cost, modality, procedures, eligibility, ease of availability / repayment, delivery mechanism to integrating with other support needs.

### PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT


Commodity processing can be done in a

decentralised manner through people's participation. In designing value addition through such commodity processing, the sequence of Markets>Production>Training /Capacity building need to be kept in view. The appropriate market payment systems are crucial to the two or three stages that are entailed in the disbursement of proceeds.

Professional knowledge and competence need to be integrated for market development, brand positioning and packaging and research /development of new products. The process of science and technology can be demystified through the stages of hands-on capacity building in a gradual manner.

Building people's organisation for various stages of commodity processing is also an essential requirement. If the production process of commodities is facilitated with people's

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participation and capacity building, the subsequent stages of procurement, processing and marketing gets organised in a seamless way. Efforts need to be made for inducing efficient operations and building capacity for fund management. Financial services need to be appropriate on all attributes such as quantity, quality, modality or integration. The credit support should be organically linked with other technical and managerial services, and all support needs to converge at the level where interaction with the producers begins. 

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