



COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT OF COMMONS IN SAGATADI VILLAGE, INDIA

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Country: India Principal Organisation: Prayatna Samiti

ABSTRACT

This good practice illustrates that locally-managed ecosystems are derived from the principles of natural resource conservation. In the Sagatadi village, located towards the south east of Udaipur District in the Rajasthan State of India, community members have set up an

integrated system for the management of common pasture land. The community has established control over 75-hectares of pasture land for fodder, with its village-based personnel ensuring security over the land.

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**LAND CONFLICT RESOLUTION
LAND POLICY AND
MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE
MAPPING AND LAND REGISTRATION
KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION
MANAGEMENT**

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BACKGROUND

Over the years, commons have been protected by residents of Panchayats Village, who have been responsible for securing and managing pastures for sustainable fodder growth, as well as the proper use of natural resources. The good practice reflects

community management of commons which resulted in pasture regeneration. The pasture lands provides fodder for animals, and wood for shelter, fuel, and artefacts to the people of Sagatadi.

THE CHALLENGE

In Sagatadi village, community members and their livestock have been affected by an acute reduction of fodder: private pasture lands and commons were either degraded or small in size. While a village is dependent on agriculture, it faces external challenges including weather conditions and undulating

terrain that is not conducive to farming. Internal difficulties were also noted, wherein community farmers lack new farming skills and technologies to increase their farming production, and climate conditions have forced farmers to migrate.



OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGE

In 1991, with the support of Prayatna Samiti, a local NGO based at Udaipur, the community initiated a discussion on community led pasture land management and formed a pasture land management committee, consisting of all of the village households, whose task was to facilitate the restoration of the commons. In 1994, the community and partners, with the support of the Forest Department, delineated 40 hectares of commons, constructed a boundary wall and

revegetated the area with indigenous grasses. Land development took the form of watershed development and community management of pasture lands. Decisions on management and security measures were stipulated by the community: after 25 years the condition of the commons reflects the appropriateness of its management by the committee. Fodder growth and watersheds have been restored, and people have equal access to both, water and fodder.

MOVING TOWARDS PEOPLE-CENTRED LAND GOVERNANCE

Some of results of the programme include:

- 1** Out of 75 hectares, 40 hectares were protected and rejuvenated, while the remaining 35 hectares were left for open grazing.
- 2** Community members are involved in the management of the commons. Threats are addressed by the local security guards appointed by the committee.
- 3** Managerial decisions are made by the committee.
- 4** Community members are satisfied with the closure of commons as it has increased fodder production and vegetative cover, enabling them to meet grazing demands. Ground water levels have increased considerably.
- 5** A common understanding among the locals has led to the steadfast practice of watershed management approaches.
- 6** Equal access to fodder has benefitted all of the families, ensuring their stake in decisions made towards the maintenance of the pasture.
- 7** Dialogue with Panchayat helped in the delineation of the commons' boundary.



THE GOOD PRACTICE IN FIVE SIMPLE STEPS

1

Study area identification. The study area was identified based on the need of conservation of commons. Commons are important because they sustain the livelihoods of community members and maintain various natural resources that are vital for socio-economic development. In the present case, the area was suffering from acute degradation as it was neglected by the village Panchayat. The study area further exemplifies the role of community-based local institutions such as the pasture land management committee, in community development. Through the Committee's work, the community has secured water, strengthened fodder production, and security measures around their commons.

2

Formation of a local institution for decision-making and management of commons. Prayatna Samiti coined the idea to form the Pasture Land Management Committee with family representatives from 85 households in the village. The immediate need of the committee was to initiate the growth of fodder grass. The committee was effective in developing a plan to rehabilitate the commons. The committee drew a layout of the area that would undergo the treatment and reforestation measures. They also ensured equal access to fodder during the collection time for 2 months, after monsoon. The shared pasture has been divided into 85 imaginary partitions for 85 families. Rules and regulations were developed to prevent theft inside the protected area. A village security guard was also appointed to ensure security. Monetary fines ranging from INR 200 to 2000 are collected by the committee from people who breach the community rules of use of the commons. The committee was also involved in resolving the cases of land grab by the adjacent village.

3

Maintaining dialogue between the village and the Panchayat Raj. Prayatna Samiti encouraged the pasture land management committee to meet the Panchayat at Bori, and discuss the need to recognise commons. As the pasture land treatment work commenced, with the support of the Forest Department and other developmental agencies, the Panchayat extended its support by providing 5 *Anikuts* (water harvesting and recharge structures) in Sagatadi.



4

Enhancement of fodder for increasing milk production. As stipulated under the rules, the commons are opened for two months for fodder collection by the 85 families who co-own the pasture land. In this way, the committee ensures equal access to fodder, averting any disputes on harvest. Today each family is able to harvest 2.1 q of fodder consisting of *kali laap*, *rohida* and *heran* grasses. They no longer have to purchase fodder from outside suppliers, saving them between ₹ 5000 and ₹ 20000 per annum. Due to increased fodder production, animal milk production has increased by 51% per animal resulting in family incomes increasing by an average of ₹ 300 per day.

5

Implementing soil and water conservation (SWC) measures. In 1994, with the support of the Forest Department, 40 hectares of commons were enclosed by a stone boundary wall. In addition, continuous contour trenches were installed in the entire 40 hectare pasture land, to enhance water harvesting. Land development took the form of watershed development, with the support of Society for Promotion of Wasteland Development. During this phase, 150 gully plugs, three (3) *Nadi*, and six (6) *Anikut* were constructed (4 *Anikuts* were developed by Panchayat). A total of 50% in-kind community contributions were leveraged during the soil treatment. The growth of native grasses indicated improved soil fertility and moisture holding capacity.

5



KEY FACTORS OF SUCCESS FOR REPLICABILITY AND ADAPTABILITY PURPOSES

6

One of the key factors for replicability is the formation of a pastureland management committee, and the development of rules for community use of the commons. The pastureland management committee is all-inclusive as it consists of representatives of 85 families from the village. The committee was created when the community perceived the need to rehabilitate pasturelands and increase fodder production. It was an attempt to introduce an institutional setup which was necessary for the sustainable management of the pasturelands.

LESSONS LEARNED

- 1** The solution to the degradation of commons was developed through community discussions on a common platform. The community, through an inclusive process led by the pastureland management committee, devised a community-led plan for the management of commons. They agreed that all the families of the village would take an active role in rejuvenating the commons and increasing ground level water. Through community agreements, all community members have committed to partake in the programme.
- 2** Being a good source of water and fodder, pasturelands provide livelihood opportunities: by rejuvenating pasturelands, vegetative cover and ground water, community members have better lives.
- 3** Community ownership is achieved by involving community members in decision-making. The community's intimate knowledge of the land and its resources, bolsters a collective sense of responsibility.



FIND OUT MORE

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