

My Words.....

The response to the inaugural issue of our newsletter has been overwhelming. It is our endeavour to improve both its contents as well as style to elicit your continued interest. While presenting field stories and cases that reflect our project activities, the idea would be to seek your valued insights on the challenges we are confronting. Through such interactive exchange can we meet the common goal of creating better living conditions for the poor.

We are aiming at engaging with as many donors and stakeholders to further our outreach and impact. There are interesting lessons to be learnt and shared. In these pages you will notice announcement on our recent publications. Please feel free to seek a copy for yourself and reciprocate. In months ahead, we plan to issue printed version of this newsletter. Keep writing to us, your suggestions will help us improve as we go along.

Dr. K. G. Wankhede
Chief Executive

MISSION

“To enhance ecological resilience through dignified collective action to combat poverty in its diverse manifestations ”

Your Words.....

Thank you for sending the news letter. It is very interesting.

Dr.P.V.K.Sasidhar, Associate Professor,
IGNOU, New Delhi

I congratulate the IFFDC team for doing a wonderful job.

Rasool, AWC, Afghanistan

Great work by IFFDC Team, the splendid work has been nicely presented.

Pradeep Ghosal, CSR Manager, ACC Ltd

The team behind 'Reflections' deserves compliments.

Dr. J.P Yadavendra, former Professor and Head, Gujarat Agricultural University

Before registration of IFFDC, IFFCO had initiated a pilot project on Farm Forestry during 1987-88 in the states of U.P., M.P. & Rajasthan. Good work in the pilot project gave birth to IFFDC.

Dr. Virendra Kumar, Ex-Chairman, IFFDC

Reflections

GREEN CUSHION

Woods are lovely, dark and green.....

With full moon on the horizon, the illuminated night was dead silent. Occasional shriek of the jackals would break the eerie silence. The dense forest developed along village Jaswant Nagar had become a night shelter for some wildlife. Only six years ago, this 70 hectare patch of revenue land was an open grazing field for cattle.



.....rejuvenated green

The stillness of the night was shattered as many an axe fell on the woodlot. With no one to worry about, a group of people were felling the trees indiscriminately. It was later learnt that about hundred people had indulged in the felony. By morning, the wood had disappeared to the hiding in the cowsheds and rooftops. Life was back on track during the day.

Jaswant Nagar is a village in district Tikamgarh, Madhya Pradesh. It has a 92-member Primary Farm Forestry Cooperative Society (PFFCS) that has been allotted, on lease, 314 hectare of barren land. Over the years, with technical support from IFFDC, over 2.04 lakh trees of diverse species have converted the abandoned land into dense forest.

The power tussle between two factions in the village had triggered the large-scale felling of trees. Though everyone in the village knew who were behind it, no one would utter a word for fear of retribution. It would seem that the hard work of the past six years was going down the drain. The members of the cooperative society were a scared lot, lacking courage to bell the cat.

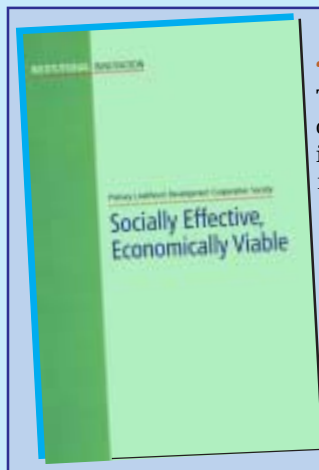
At this point, IFFDC intervened and mobilised women members to take the bull by the horn. Some 80 women members complained the matter to the district administration and the police. A detailed inquiry was conducted, all the offenders were caught and the entire lot of wood was recovered. The wood was sold in the open by members of the cooperative and the money generated has been spent on re-planting the destroyed site. The bad dream of that dreadful night has long been forgotten. The woods are lovely, dark and green yet again!

NEW RELEASE

..... from the Report

The PLDCS as an institutional innovation has clearly caught on with the villages. There are clear indications that these cooperatives serve the interests of social groups in the village. Though the activities centre around trading on agro-chemicals and on profits from service provisions, the members have begun to divert some savings toward more productive activities. Although represented on the Executive Committee, the women still feel slightly marginalised: although they are benefiting, this is not fully perceived and greater efforts are required to involve them fully.

* For a copy of the publication write to us at the address given in this newsletter



A Moment of glory

One fine evening a few months ago, a village in Bilaspur district of Chhattisgarh was re-born. Towards late afternoon on July 24, 2010, an enthusiastic group of 500 women drawn from as many as 14 villages planted 2,205 *Mango* and *Aonla* plants in the village. This was done in one stroke, with the blowing of a whistle. A sort of record was created for not only for the village but for the entire state.



Plantation in progress

Planting fruit saplings has never been a big deal but such a moment has symbolic significance. Symbolism is still a potent force in public life. Saying the

right thing, doing a right thing, can still be hugely transformative in ways we seem to have completely forgotten. The social engineering of collective action was accomplished by IFFDC under a NABARD-supported 'wadi' project.

Over the years 'wadi' has become synonym to backyard garden, a flagship scheme of the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD). Across 4 states, IFFDC is implementing as many as 6 wadi projects in which over 5,500 households are being engaged in planting a future full of nutritious juices.

**NEST stands for Nutritional and Economic Security for Tribal & Marginalized Communities.*

Sharing thoughts



During the recently concluded Asian Agri-History Conference in Udaipur, Chief Executive Dr K G Wankhede (centre) appraised the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Rajasthan

Sh Ashok Gehlot on IFFDC's work on improving the livelihoods of the Kanjar tribe. Intrigued by the initiative, the Chief Minister advised scaling up of the livelihood improvement activities amongst the tribe to bring the stigmatised communities in the socio-economic mainstream.

(detailed report on Kanjar project can be seen in the August issue of this newsletter)

Utilising the unutilised

The mineral-rich state of Jharkhand, carved out from Bihar in the year 2000, is agriculturally poor on account of erratic rainfall that is often wasted on account of poor conservation practices. Water is




Lift Irrigation with dug well on the left

available but in small streams that run dry during summer. Farmers suffer on account of it and lack wherewithal to pull out of the situation.

Jaruadeeh is a typical tribal village in the state that has 87 households with 414 inhabitants. Expectedly, the village lacks in basic amenities like drinking water, health and education. A handpump and a dug well are the only sources of drinking water. The village has only 11 ha of irrigated area out of a total cultivable area of 121 ha.

IFFDC mobilized the scattered community of the village to set up a lift irrigation system, by pulling water from a seasonal stream. Initially, the community had several fears and doubts in their mind about such arrangements. However, a series of interactions helped in clearing their doubts and misconceptions.

A dug well, 15 feet deep, was constructed on the bank of the seasonal rivulet. Lateral percolation of water was trapped in the well, that was lifted using a diesel pump. An underground pipeline could ferry the pumped water for irrigating as much as 58 acres. The beneficiary households contributed towards developing the outlets.

The community was organized into a Water Users Committee (WUC) for water-sharing and for managing the lift irrigation in the village. Farmers pay Rs 10 per acre to WUC for maintenance of the systems. The lift irrigation unit is now being successfully run in the village and farmers have doubled cropping intensity in 58 ha. Many farmers now grow vegetable crops also in the command area towards better livelihoods. As a result of the lift irrigation, the irrigated area in the village has increased from 8.50 to 44.90% (5 times), utilizing the unutilized water resource flowing through the village. It has become a turning point in the lives of the poor farmers. 



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