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South Rajasthan Development Cluster (SRDC)

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South Rajasthan Development Cluster comprises of five districts - Pratapgarh, Baswara, Udaipur, Dungarpur and Sirohi. The region has a high concentration of poverty. It is predominantly inhabited by Girasia and Bhil tribes living in the hilly villages that remain relatively inaccessible. The developmental challenges in this area are low agriculture productivity, high livestock mortality and landlessness. The average annual rainfall in the region is 600 mm. The rainfall is erratic with long gaps between the spells, and water conservation and groundwater recharge is poor. This results in periodic drought, crop failure and low output causing food insecurity, loss of livelihoods, and distress migration.

OVERVIEW OF PRADAN'S OPERATIONS IN SRDC

Particulars	DC Total	PRADAN Outreach
Districts	5	1
Population	1 million	62,865
Percent of Rural Population	80	100
Percent of ST and SC Population	48	78
Households	201,785	12,573

Particulars	Scale
Number of SHGs	1,076
Number of VOs	86
Households covered under Livelihoods	5,244
PRADAN teams	2

Themes	Community Collectives
Health and Nutrition	200 SHGs
Gender and Governance	464 SHGs
INRM	807 Households

PRADAN has been working in this cluster for the past eight years. Our direct engagement in this area started with natural resource management based livelihood promotion and SHG-based community mobilization.

Of late, we have started working on issues of women empowerment through interventions on gender justice, nutrition, and governance. These develop women's awareness about constitutional rights and entitlements and leadership in agriculture and nutrition to help mitigate abject poverty and exclusion.

Setting Up Lift Irrigation and Drinking Water Facility

This year, PRADAN engaged in detailed planning and setting up of lift irrigation and diversion based irrigation systems with existing water resources. The planning process also included household water

requirements at the doorstep. The community was not only involved in the planning and implementation of the activity but also contributed around 15-20 percent of the installation cost. Over 50 such structures were built this year which worked as a model demonstration. This has helped many families in the hilly and

undulating terrain to intensify their agriculture portfolio and diversify to cash crops like castor, fennel and vegetables for their domestic consumption and selling. The doorstep access to water has ended the women's drudgery to fetch water from distant places every day.



Photo: Rampal Dabi

Water on Tap

For the first time in decades, Indra Bai would not toil on someone else's land as a laborer. Neither would Gauri or others. In a remote corner of Rajasthan, a technological intervention was ushering a new beginning.



Photo: Rampal Dabi

“Pani (Water)” was Indra's prompt reply when asked about the cause of poverty in the village. When probed further she pointed to the network of small canals at a distance. Unfortunately these were relevant for lowlands only. And poor farmers like her did not have land resources in low lying areas.

The Pindwara block in south Rajasthan is arid and dry. Water sources are few and far in between. Access to those by small land holding Garasia tribal farmers like Indra was never a reality. Water scarcity hit them and their children the most, be it for agriculture or for drinking. Many men would simply migrate to Gujarat or Maharashtra to work in stone quarries during non-rainy season leaving behind their families.

When lift irrigation was being planned in her village, it was women like Indra and others from SHGs who were the force behind this change. In a short period, this technological intervention has brought about significant changes. Poor farmers like Indra are now growing three crops a year. Her eyes sparkle as she shows the off-season vegetables to visitors in her village. These families are now food sufficient and Indra has been able to increase her annual income from INR 7,000 (US\$ 108) to INR 46,000 (US\$ 707) from vegetable cultivation, a seven fold jump.



Photo: Rampal Dabi

“Mujhe ab ek kilometer paidal nahi chalna padhta hai pani lane ke liye.”

The other changes are distinctly visible. As Rekha slowly unfurls her face hidden by the loose end of her sari, she emanates a radiating smile.

“I don't have to go a kilometer to fetch drinking water now.” Outlets were provided to households from the pipes fitted for irrigation at their doorsteps. These ensure both drinking water and water for household chores. Twenty-six families in this village and a total of 401 families have benefited from this intervention.

PRADAN has been a co-traveler in this transformative journey of women in this village. As the women of the SHG sit for their weekly meeting, they appear a confident bunch, aspiring for a better life for themselves and their families. Ready to tackle any issue!

ADDRESSING WATER SCARCITY ACROSS PRADAN LOCATIONS

Keeping water availability as the focus, PRADAN engaged with communities to help them access government schemes to create irrigation infrastructure and domestic water supply systems in their villages. Most of the resources were mobilized

from MGNREGS and other schemes of the state departments. These efforts helped create 20,359 irrigation infrastructures and 9,524 hectare irrigated command area. It also helped 43,552 families avail water at their doorstep.