



Adarsha Watershed in Kothapally Leads to Inward Migration Flows

One of the main obstacles to combating desertification and drought is the failure to provide local communities with the knowledge they need to improve their lives. The Adarsha Watershed Project in Kothapally village located in an arid area in Range Reddy district, India, shows how cooperation between scientists and local communities transforms lives.

Kathopally village is highly dependent on the monsoon to meet its annual water needs. So prior to 1999, the village women walked several kilometers to fetch water, particularly in the dry season when there is no Monsoon and, and consequently, no rainwater available even for their households.

In 1999, scientists at the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) decided to set up a project to work with farmers from the local community to change the situation. Their collaboration begun right from the beginning, which ensured that the villagers took all the decisions collectively, even on issues as mundane as the choice of the name of the project 'Adarsha', which means "an example worth to be followed."

The key aim of the project is to collect and store rainwater during the wet summer season for use only in the dry winter season. Several water storages have been set up. They take enough water to make agriculture possible almost until the very end of the dry season. A network of pipes has been laid out to channel the water to the village and fields. An additional benefit of the new water supply system is that it could help to check erosion in times of heavy rainfall.

The project has done much more. New measures have been taken to improve soil quality. For example, low shrubs have been planted in the fields to prevent soil erosion and generate nitrogen-rich organic matter to fertilize the soil. The results have been a remarkable increase in productivity. Moreover, alongside cotton, farmers now harvest maize and other crops. Their income has doubled and, instead of people leaving the village because of unemployment and poverty, there is an inward migration instead. People are flowing back to an arid region!



The scientists involved in the project attribute its success to the involvement of the villagers. The villagers did the work themselves, guaranteeing high quality work and sustainability.

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Source: Sreedevi TK, Shiferaw B and Wani SP. 2004. "Adarsha watershed in Kothapally: understanding the drivers of higher impact." Global Theme on Agroecosystems, Report no. 10. Patancheru 502 324, Andhra Pradesh, India: International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics. 24 pp.

Web: www.iwmi.cgiar.org/assessment/files_new/publications/ICRISATRep10_scr.pdf

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