

KHOJ

Report 2015-17



**Trees and forests are our treasure for
future generation**

Acknowledgement

This year KHOJ completed two decades of its formation as a charitable organization. This has been a long journey that began in 1994-95 from the College of Social Work, Mumbai, gained its roots in Melghat since 1996 and formally registered in 1997.

We take this opportunity to thank each one of you who have trusted and believed in us, made investments and encouraged us to take on the challenges to bring about sustainable meaningful change in the lives of the people of Melghat. We would like to assure you that we shall strive to bring justice to the people who are still far away from the centre of power, although they hold the key to the future strategies of India's development

This is a stock taking review of last two year 2015-16 and 2016-17, a period that has shaped many of our livelihood and conservation driven interventions. We look forward to your comments and feedback.

Livelihoods, Conservation and Governance = Empowerment

Forest Rights Act 2006 brought great hopes for the tribal's and forest dwelling communities of Melghat. Over 100 villages have their rights over community forest resources recognized. However, FRA did not merely stop at recognition of rights, it went ahead in many ways when it provided for the powers of the Gram Sabha in the preparation of their conservation and management plans, in allowing the Gram Sabha or their collectives all the rights for sustainable management of the forest resources and in ensuring the protection of their forests and watersheds as a treasure for the coming generations.

In the last two years, we have put these legal provisions to field with the communities in melghat and the results we have seen are amazing not just in terms of forest conservation but in terms of ensuring livelihoods to the communities that were once migrants and also contributed a great value to the process of Governance.

With Support of UNDP, we were able to initiate the process of Formation of the Community



Forest Rights Management Committees at the village level that would manage their CFR rights. Training workshops for capacity building of these committees were held that allowed detailed discussions on the provisions of the law and its application in the field. Together with the Gram Sabha's we prepared conservation and management

plans of over 50 villages of districts of Vidarbha region. While KHOJ led the process, other organization like VNCS, GSMT and YRA were our field partners. While planning various activities, we also worked upon many areas of little victories that enabled us to weave hope in the longer results. This process has now been upscaled by the Tribal Development Department of the State of Maharashtra through support for such processes across various tribal districts of the State.

Today, we work with over 40 villages in Melghat on convergence of laws like FRA, PESA, BDA and MGNREGA. The results are very inspiring and bring a lot of positive results in terms of conserving the forests and its resources, in providing better livelihoods to the local communities and also allows greater space for decision making at the level of the village, creating space for more discussion, participation and accountability. Some of the key areas of our focus have been as below:

Management of Minor Forest Produce:

Management of Tendu leaves: In the last two years, over 29 villages have participated in management of tendu leaves. This process was helpful in not just allowing communities to manage their own tendu harvest, but through the process, it brought the youths together for community action. It created ecological values in the harvesting process by not allowing either fire or pruning of the trees. This led to growth of trees, fruiting of the tembhru tree and also brought livelihoods to the people. In the last two years, it has brought approximately 1.5 crore rupees to the villages who were part of the process. More than 80 percent went to the Collectors, 15% to the Gram Sabha and 5% on the management of the process collectively.



Bamboo Management: The village of Rahu has been managing over 4500 ha of the forest resource. A Bamboo rich forests, the Gram Sabha has been managing its harvests for last two years and also the post harvest protection and conservation processes. In the first year, Rahu earned approximately 19 lakhs and in the year 2016-17, it brought a sum of Rs 86 lakhs of which over 50% is spent in the harvesting process and 50% is saved for the village development and future works and harvesting processes. The village used its funds for bringing drinking water connection to the households trying to



reduce drudgery of women. They also spent funds on ensuring protection of the forests from grazing and theft.

Management of Custard Apple-Five villages of Achalpur block have created a process of



harvesting custard apple and its collective marketing. **Melghat Natural's** is the brand that has been developed. They marketed custard apple last year in many places including Nagpur, Yavatmal, Wardha and Mumbai.

Fisheries Management: Fisheries – a rich source of nutrition has a huge potential for diversifying livelihoods in Melghat. Three villages of Upatkheda, Ghota and Jaitadehi are managing their water bodies. There are many challenges like availability of good quality seeds and other training and capacity building support from the department, but people are slowly taking this into their hands.

Soil Moisture Conservation works: Soil water run off is a big concern in Melghat with mud flowing away with the first rains. Through NREGA we have been able to undertake many soil moisture conservation works like CCT, Water Absorption Trenches, Stone bunds, Farm Ponds, Van Talav, Nala Deepening, Cement Bandhara's, Compartment bunding, TCM, Internal roads, Fodder Plantation and Plantation of trees. In the last two years, the villages where we actively engage have undertaken works of more than 5 crores.



Kitchen Gardens: Promoting growth of vegetables as a source of nutrition in their own backyard or farm land has been a very meaningful programme as it not only bring some rich food sources but it also contributing to re generation of the seeds of local variety that were lost in the last decade in the wake of seeds being dumped by the government departments that destroyed the local seeds and brought in poor quality seeds. Slowly, the kitchen garden will bring back the traditional seeds back into circulation. Many families used it not only for their own consumption but were also able to sell excess vegetables in the village or in the nearby markets.



Greening our villages: Melghat villages, somehow have tended to be tree less villages. While we



are all busy protecting our forests, our discussion with the people stressed on the fact that the villages also needed to have some good trees not just for shade and aesthetic value but some that also had nutritional value and income. People identified the saplings they wanted and we helped them procure these. In many villages for last two years, people are planting trees in backyard or in the courtyard. Most of the varieties include Drumstick, lemon, guvava, papaya, mango, neem, jackfruit. In the years to come, this will add to the family income while providing the much needed shade and comfort.

Opening of Bank Accounts – The NREGA wages of the people of 5villags of Khadimal gram panchayat are sent through post office and there are several operational difficulties and delays. They had their account in Bank of Allahabad at Churni, which is overloaded and has

fewer access points. Hence after discussion with people it was decided to shift their account to State Bank of India at Semadoh. Accordingly, over 608 accounts have been opened and are ready for operations.

People's Biodiversity Registers: Initiation of the Peoples Biodiversity Register processes on the ground so that people are aware of the kind of biodiversity in their vicinity and its uses. This register records all kinds of crop and animal biodiversity that people know within their village and forest area. This register is to be updated periodically to keep up with the latest developments on the ground.



Environment Education: With support of Rajiv Gandhi Science and Technology Commission, we are working on the Maharashtra Gene Bank Programme. Under the theme of Eco forest restoration we work on the regeneration of the lost forests and biodiversity. As a part of this process, we also undertake a programme of Environment Education with children in almost 7 schools and children of these villages. This programme gives us a great opportunity to engage with the future generation. Through small activities in schools, nature trails in the forests, seed collection, seed plantation, these children are also the part of our conservation efforts.



Madizadap goes solar: Madizadap, a village in the core of the Melghat Tiger Sanctuary is a small village beautifully nested in the forests at the top with the river flowing along the boundaries on the four sides.



Since the village is in the core, there are restrictions on its use and access to the forests. In order to diversify their sources of livelihoods and reduce their dependence on forests, we have introduced solar pumps that can help them take a low water intense second crop and also take vegetable cultivation round the year. This process was completed towards the end of summer, so this year we shall see the change this brings about in the lives of the people. Sabulal, a villager demonstrated its potential when he planted Moong and Rajgira last year, he earned more than 5000Rs from the sale of the Rajgira. The pumps were supported by Tata Trusts and Caring Friends, Mumbai. Madizadap, also now gets its drinking water using solar pump supported by Grundfos Foundation.

Improving access to health and nutrition services through Community based monitoring

Under-nutrition and health challenges continue to impact the development of mother and children in the villages of Melghat. Though there are interventions evolved by the State, yet they still are far from impacting the numbers and lives in a meaningful way. One of the reasons is lack of information about government programmes and services. Community based monitoring of health and nutrition is an intervention that brings to people information about the schemes, finances and creates a mechanism that seeks accountability from the Service Providers.

Through this programme, we have also been able to impart Counseling support to women and families in the villages enabling them to access, hospital services as required and following up on regular interventions.

Through our interventions in core committee at the State and the District level NAvsanjivani Yojana, we have been able to ensure funds for the operation of Village Child Development Centres and Child Treatment Centres at a time, when NRHM withdrew its funds. Amravati

was the only district that not just continued with the VCDC but also ensured that even severely underweight children were admitted to VCDC.

Our work and follow up with the Counselors placed in all the PHC's and Referral institutions in Melghat helps in ensuring that those who are in need of support – counseling, medical assistance, transportation or any other need do not go unattended.

**Tendu Collection 2017 Amravati Group of Gram
Sabha Report**

Village	Total Tendu Bags	Rate	Total Income	Collection charges paid to Pluckers	Group Gram Sabha collective costs	Total Exp	Balance with Gram Sabha
Khadimal	123.611	5511	681220	309028	34061	343089	338132
Chunkhadi	45.74	5511	252073	114350	12604	126954	125119
Bicchukheda	26.499	5511	146036	66248	7302	73549	72487
Menghat	73.779	5511	406596	184448	20330	204777	201819
Khatkali	68.531	5511	377674	171328	18884	190211	187463
Nawalgaon	31.049	5511	171111	77623	8556	86178	84933
Butida	37.664	5511	207566	94160	10378	104538	103028
Payvihir	27.703	5511	152671	69258	7634	76891	75780
Ghana	39.359	5511	216907	98398	10845	109243	107665
Ahad	133.423	5511	735294	333558	36765	370322	364972
Bodhu	30.394	5511	167501	75985	8375	84360	83141
Upatkhe da	No collection						
Ranamalur	54.648	5511	301165	136620	15058	151678	149487
Ghota	7.28	5511	40120	18200	2006	20206	19914
Rahu	115.4	5511	635969	288500	31798	320298	315671
Jhingapur	55.95	5511	308340	139875	15417	155292	153048
Hatru	139.136	5511	766778	347840	38339	386179	380600

chilathi	117.274	5511	646297	293185	32315	325500	320797
shimori	141.064	5511	777404	352660	38870	391530	385874
Ruipathar	92.552	5511	510054	231380	25503	256883	253171
Gangarkheda	54.75	5511	301727	136875	15086	151961	149766
Jamli R	108.679	5511	598930	271698	29946	301644	297286
Ambapati	34.405	5511	189606	86013	9480	95493	94113
Girguti	75.974	5511	418693	189935	20935	210870	207823
khongda	8.837	5511	48701	22093	2435	24528	24173
Hilda	112.95	5511	622467	282375	31123	313498	308969
piplya	171.29	5511	943979	428225	47199	475424	468555
Borda	150.51	5511	829461	376275	41473	417748	411713
Total	2078.451	5511	11454343	5196128	572717	5768845	5685499

List of Trustees

Sr No	Name & Contact Nos.	Gender	Nationality	Occupation	Office held in the association
1	Bandu Sane	Male	Indian	Social worker	President
2	Dr. Jagdish Jadhav	Male	Indian	Asst Professor	Secretary
3	Purnima Upadhyay	Female	Indian	Social Worker	Treasurer
4	Kishore Talmale	Male	Indian	Civil Engineer	Member
5	Aruna Shete	Female	Indian	Self Employed	Member
6	Vijay Jawlekar	Male	Indian	Medical Social Worker	Member
7	Roopasri Sinha	Female	Indian	Health Rights Activist	Member

*1 & 3 are related as Husband and Wife

List of Field Team Members

No	Name	Gender	Programme
1	Bandu Sane	M	Community Based Monitoring of Health Programme and Nutrition Rights Nutrition Rights Programme
2	Dasrath Bawankar	M	
3	Nandkishor Lende	M	
4	Sunil KAsdekar		
5	Sachin Shejao	M	
5	Pratibah Ahake	F	
6	Rambabau Dahikar	M	
7	Anil Rajne	M	
8	Lalita Bethekar	F	
9	Shahdev Dahikar	M	
10	Khushal Gayan	M	
11	Ravi Tayade	M	Strengthening NRM based Livelihoods using FRA, PESA, NREGA and BDA
12	Purnima Upadhyay	F	
13	Mahadeo Gillurkar	M	
14	Shivram Kasdekar	M	
15	Vijay Ghuguskar	M	
16	Ramdas Bhilawekar	M	
17	Bhanu Bethekar	M	
18	Sudhir Jamunkar	M	
19	Jyoti Belsare	f	
20	Sagar Shelke	M	
21	Dharmendra Sherekar	M	

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