

research studies

AUGUST 2007

**Sustainability of Village
Institutions Promoted by NGOs**
Case Study on the Gram Vikas Mandal Promoted by
AKRSP(I), Netrang, South Gujarat
Forestry & Livelihoods

Geevan C.P.
&
Satyasiba Bedamatta

A K R S P - I

AKRSP(I) *a profile*



PROGRAMME AREAS OF AKRSP (INDIA)

Bharuch, Surat and Narmada districts are some of the poorest areas in the state of Gujarat. A very poor tribal community live on undulating and degraded land that was once heavily forested.

Junagadh district on coastal Kathiawar Peninsula faces a problem of salinity due to overexploitation of groundwater. Natural resource are either degraded (like the dry Meghal River) or out of bounds for the tribals and other disadvantaged people (such as around the Gir Protected Area).

Surendranagar district is one of the most drought-prone districts of Gujarat. Most villages in this district face an acute shortage of water.

In MP, AKRSP(I) has begun work in Khandwa and Burhanpur districts which are home to marginalized tribal populations who live in poverty despite the rich natural resources base.

Kutch district is extremely drought prone, AKRSP (India) provides training to organisations coping with drought in the district. It works in collaboration with other AKDN agencies to drought proof several villages.

**Sustainability of Village Institutions
Promoted by NGOs**
**Case Study on the Gram Vikas Mandal Promoted by
AKRSP(I), Netrang, South Gujarat**
Forestry & Livelihoods

Geevan C.P.
&
Satyasiba Bedamatta

Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (India)

FOREWORD

The question of institutional sustainability of diverse institutional arrangements promoted as part of village development initiatives is of enormous significance from both theoretical and practical perspectives. Almost all rural development programmes in India mandate the promotion/capacity building of village organisations as a key component of their intervention. The experience of civil society initiatives on this question in the development sector in the last few decades is also much debated. However, there have been very few attempts to document the emerging practices and to reflect on the experiences in varied contexts.

Aga Khan Rural Support Program (India) initiated a discussion forum on this issue with NGO practitioners and academicians. The deliberations culminated in a decision to sponsor some focussed studies on the accumulated experiences of NGOs and community institutions promoted in the last few decades. The consultations among various NGOs wholeheartedly supported the idea and it was agreed to promote the effort as a combined initiative involving several NGOs (BSC, DSC, FES, MYRADA, PRADAN, SEWA MANDIR) who will facilitate the field studies.

The study itself is envisaged as a participative process that provides space for the field staff and community leadership to reflect on institution building experience. This document is one of the first in the set of case studies in this series. It covers a wide canvass spanning the early phase of some of the oldest village organisations promoted by the AKRSP.

I am happy to note that the study has been able to stimulate a wholesome debate and reflection at various levels, more so within the AKRSP, as the document brought to life many little known facets of the people's institutions and the complex landscape of institution building. I am sure this document is a useful step forward in coming to terms with some of the broader issues of the institutional sustainability question. Let me also acknowledge the support of the Aga Khan Foundation, Ford Foundation and the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust in this effort.



Apoorva Oza
Chief Executive Officer
AKRSP (India)

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Geevan C.P. obtained doctorate from the School of Environmental Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and has about 25 years of work experience on different aspects of environment and development. He currently heads the Centre for Environment and Social Concerns (CESC), Ahmedabad – a resource centre for interdisciplinary work in environment and development. Email: cpgeevan@cesc-india.org

Satyasiba Bedamatta worked as a researcher in this study and is currently at the Centre for Inter-disciplinary Studies in Environment and Development (CISED), Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bangalore. Email: satyasiba_b@yahoo.co.in

Mailing Address:

Centre for Environment & Social Concerns [CESC]
R-1, Sagar Apartments (Opp. Sarthi Hotel), Bodakdev
Ahmedabad 380054 (Gujarat, INDIA)
web: www.cesc-india.org
Tel/Fax: +91-79-26853297; Mobile: 9824283954
email (Office): cpgeevan@cesc-india.org

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We acknowledge the initiatives of the Village Institution Task Force constituted by the AKRSP (I) and the various discussions within the Task Force that prepared the grounds for this study. This work forms part of a larger multi-location research initiated by the Task Force partnered by several NGOs and supported by the AKRSP (I).

Dr Somnath Bandyopadhyay has the ingenuity of posing well nigh impossible as “do-able”! Once again, he dared us to delve into the rather difficult waters of institutional analysis. We embarked on this with considerable trepidation. We wish to thank him for encouraging us to undertake this stupendous task. As we took the first hesitant steps into the fuzzy space of institutional sustainability, Apoorva Oza had the foresight of insisting on enunciating a theoretical edifice for the study. With hindsight, we thank him for asking us to prepare a working paper on the subject and getting it circulated. This also helped to buy in other NGO partners into this study.

We are grateful to the different NGO partners who organised team meetings to listen to our approach and contributed proactively to improving it. The suggestions from these meetings have shaped and strengthened the study framework. In particular, we wish to thank Dinesh Parmar and Gita Oza of BSC; Sachin Oza of DSC; Jagadeesh Rao and Subrat Singh of FES; Yashmin Mistry, Lathamala and Vidya Ramachandran of MYRADA; D Narendranath and Achintya Ghosh of PRADAN and Neelima Khetan and Hemang Bhati of Seva Mandir for their encouragement and support.

This work is enriched by the wholehearted participation by the AKRSP (I) Netrang Spear Head Team (SHT) who shared their insights, field experiences and perceptions. The team contributed immensely by organising two workshops involving the SHT leadership and the cluster-level leadership besides several rounds of discussions in which the entire SHT leadership participated. In particular, we record the appreciation of inputs provided by Suneel Padale, Natwarsinh Gohil, Thakarshi Darva and Mahendra Patel. The village community has supported the fieldwork and provided insights.

We are thankful to Christopher Gibbs, K.V. Raju, Tushar Shah, Ram Prasad and Ali Shariff for the critical comments and suggestions. We thank Niraj Joshi for the logistical support provided during the study. Jyotirmayee Acharya has shouldered the responsibilities of bringing this into print. The work has benefited greatly from several discussions, comments received through email and the review workshop in early March 2006 attended by the NGO partners of the larger study.

CONTENTS

<i>Foreword</i>	<i>iii</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>v</i>
<i>Abbreviations</i>	<i>viii</i>
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 Objectives	1
1.3 Interventions by AKRSP	2
1.4 Gram Vikas Mandal (GVM) – The VI in Focus.....	2
2 Method/ Approach	3
2.1 Defining Sustainability.....	4
2.2 Framework for investigation.....	4
2.3 Selection of Study Villages.....	5
3 Natural Resources & Environment – Netrang Region	6
3.1 Forest Resources.....	6
3.2 Succession of Forestry Efforts	8
3.3 Land Resources	10
4 Group Characteristics	12
4.1 Background.....	12
4.2 Leadership and Collective Action	14
4.3 Inter-Village Conflict Scenarios	18
5 Institutional Arrangements	20
5.1 Introduction	20
5.2 Relations with Other Organisations	22
5.3 Rules/Norms for Resource Use and Benefit Sharing	22
5.4 Forest Resources – Rules and Norms	23
5.5 Summary of Institutional Arrangements.....	26
5.6 Relation with External Factors	26
6 Organisational Development	28
6.1 Introduction	28
6.2 Key Features	28
6.3 Member Centrality, Savings and Livelihood Security.....	29

6.4	Building Social Capital – a Multi-Layer approach.....	30
6.5	Gender Concerns.....	30
6.6	Restructuring the GVM.....	30
6.7	Silent Advocacy.....	31
6.8	Close Monitoring.....	32
6.9	Emerging Thinking.....	32
7	Concluding Discussion.....	33
7.1	Resources, Rights, AKRSP & Forest Department.....	34
7.2	Livelihood Enhancement & Institutional Stability.....	34
7.3	Inclusive Approach to Non-Members.....	35
7.4	Success of GVM as a Pan Village Model.....	35
7.5	Exit Strategy & Post-Exit Role.....	36
7.6	Issues for Further Probe.....	36
8	References.....	38

ABBREVIATIONS

AKRSP	Aga Khan Rural Support Program (India)
CFM	Community (based/ managed) forest management
CPR	Common Property Resource
DFO	Divisional Forest Officer
FD	Forest Department
FDL	Forest Department Land/ Forestland
FPC	Forest Protection Committee
GVM	Gram Vikas Mandal
GW	Group Wells
JFM	Joint Forest Management
MVM	Mahila Vikas Mandal
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NRM	Natural Resources Management
NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Products (includes firewood)
PIM	Participatory Irrigation Management
SHG	Self-Help Groups
SHT	Spear Head Team
VKS	Van Kalyan Samiti
WSD	Watershed Development

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

There is currently an overriding emphasis on the need for achieving institutional sustainability as a normative principle in development action, particularly in the planning and implementation of medium to long-term projects (Chambers, 1983; Shah, 2003). Institutions are humanly devised constraints that structure political, economic and social interaction. They consist of both formal rules and informal constraints (North, 1990). Village Institutions (VI) work as mechanisms to ensure norms to govern or regulate the access of villagers or outsiders to resources and specify relations among them. Often the norms – formal or informal - are well understood, respected and observed by the villagers. From a development perspective, VI's are crucial vehicles through which development initiatives by Non-Government Organisations (NGO) are endorsed, empowered and implemented.

The challenge of sustainability is to ensure perpetuation of appropriate institutional arrangements. The experience of civil society initiatives in the development sector in the last few decades has underlined the importance of the sustainability of village institutions and the need for a better understanding of the sustainability question in the context of Village Institutions (VI) and Village Level Organisations (VLO). As a follow-up to the discussions on this question, Aga Khan Rural Support Program (India) [AKRSP] constituted a Village Institution Task Force and subsequently initiated studies on sustainability in the context of natural resources management.

This research forms a part of the larger effort initiated by the Task Force and is envisaged as a partnership involving several NGOs. Seven NGO partners¹ with a credible track record in development work spanning more than a decade have agreed to participate in this study. This report emerges from the first case study carried out to develop and test the investigation framework as well as to establish the feasibility and utility of the outputs from such an effort. This preliminary effort has given valuable insights into the post-exit functioning of the Gram Vikas Mandal, a VI model promoted by the AKRSP in the tribal areas in Gujarat falling under the aegis of the AKRSP's Netrang Spear Head Team² (SHT).

1.2 Objectives

The focus of this study is on the factors favouring for the sustainability of the Village Institutions promoted by NGOs. Related to this inquiry are a gamut of questions on the policies and practices of stakeholders that affect the sustainability. The prime difficulty in this investigation is the lack of an unambiguous understanding or definition of sustainability and universally agreed measures for institutional sustainability. In particular, we have seen that given the multiplicity of visions and diverse approaches to development, different NGO who promote the VI have their own views on sustainability. Therefore, in this study we have adopted an approach that tries to examine institutional sustainability within a logical framework that incorporates the vision of the NGO. The objectives of the study are:

1. Prepare a status report on the interventions and institutional issues that appear to be

¹ 1) Aga Khan Rural Support Program (India) – AKRSP, 2) Behavioural Science Centre (BSC), 3) Development Support Centre (DSC), 4) Foundation for Ecological Security (FES), 5) Mysore Relief & Development Agency (MYRADA), 6) Seva Mandir and 7) Professional Assistance for Development Action (PRADAN)

² The team of professional supervising programmes implemented through several cluster-level offices of the AKRSP.

- ‘special’ or ‘specific’ to the Village Level Institutions that have exhibited potential for long-term sustainability
2. Analyse and critically review the sustainability question, exit strategies of the promoting NGO and post-exit support needs of the village level institution
 3. Examine the capabilities of VIs for adapting to new challenges under changing development scenarios
 4. Examine the merits of community-based institutional approaches in natural resource management to effect livelihoods enhancement

1.3 Interventions by AKRSP

The interventions by AKRSP since 1985 in the program areas serviced by the Netrang SHT include enhancing the productivity of land owned by the poor tribal communities, development of water resources, community initiatives in agricultural input supply and marketing, several micro finance, credit and savings initiatives, empowerment of women, forestry activities leading to the protection and regeneration of large tracts of degraded forest land, overall increase in the quality of life, incomes, livelihood diversification and significant capacity building of the communities

The early phase of AKRSP’s efforts in the program area under Netrang SHT was conditioned by the need for better natural resource management given the high level of forest degradation and the dire need for soil-moisture conservation measures in these hill tracts. The initiatives by the AKRSP in the region preceded the official recognition accorded to community-based forestry, land

regeneration or irrigation management. These efforts, thus, happen to be precursors to the mainstream approaches such as Joint Forest Management, Watershed Development Program and Participatory Irrigation Management. The community efforts for protection of forest (on land owned by the State Forest Department) as well as regeneration of forests on revenue land (the land owned by the State Revenue Department) were part of the early efforts in the region. When these initiatives were started there was no enabling policy environment to support such efforts and the AKRSP had to undertake considerable lobbying to ensure that these efforts are not choked by the local administration. As of now, the activities in the 225 villages span several sectors such as: Forestry, Soil and Water Conservation (SWC), Irrigation and Participatory Irrigation Management (PIM), Watershed Development, Joint Forest Management, Micro Credit, Energy (Biogas), Agriculture and Animal husbandry. The data gathered from the case study villages during this study show that the interventions have resulted in significant positive changes in the livelihood patterns in different villages.

1.4 Gram Vikas Mandal (GVM) – The VI in Focus

The pan-village organisation – Gram Vikas Mandal (GVM) – was the main vehicle for entry-level activities as well as later interventions in forestry and soil-water conservation. The GVM is primarily envisaged as a multi-stakeholder, membership-based organisation that will bring about wise use of the natural resources thereby helping to enhance livelihood systems. The GVM model and shaping it to meet the institutional needs of managing common property resources³

³ Common Property Resource - a form of property rights regime in which certain degree of controls and regulation are enforced through mutual agreement among the users of the resource, without anyone exercising individual ownership right. The forest land in this specific context is *de facto* CPR as it is legally under the ownership of the State Forest Department.

(CPR) such as forests and village land marks a phenomenal effort on the part of the AKRSP in attempting to develop sustainable village institutions. As of now, many of the GVMs promoted in the early phase are neither supported directly nor monitored by AKRSP. During the consultations with the Netrang SHT, the consensus was that, although, the strategy now lays greater emphasis on leaner organisations with narrow interests, the question of whether GVMs have survived and how the institutional arrangements for resources sharing and management have evolved autonomously of AKRSP is of considerable interest from the point view of understanding the sustainability of village institutions.

The Mahila Vikas Mandal (MVM) was promoted to facilitate the participation and empowerment of women, since within GVM, despite representation, women were relegated to a marginal role in the decision-making. Right from the beginning, these organisational models emphasised savings as a key element. GVM complemented by MVM was the main vehicle of community mobilization in the early phase when community forestry and land regeneration was the focus. However, this is not the case now. At present, the organisational development favours the formation of interest groups and subsequently federating the interest groups to take advantage of the economies of scale and improving functional efficiency. However, in the context of managing natural resources requiring collective efforts and self-regulation, such as in the case of forest conservation, irrigation and land management, the evidence from this and other studies show that GVM has proved to be very successful.

GVM – The VI in Focus

- Promoted as a representative institution of the whole village
- Multi-purpose institution - social transformation, NRM, savings, credit, marketing, etc
- Not an adaptation or strengthening of traditional tribal institutions/ organisations
- Doubling up as project vehicles requiring conformity with project and legal requirements such as JFM, WSD, etc
- Subject to vigorous and disciplined organizational development efforts – more of design and crafting than evolution
- Persistent efforts by AKRSP to ensure that it is relevant and meaningful to the needs of the community and NRM

Model appears to be well rooted in the community, almost as if VI evolved from within

Method/ Approach

The theoretical framework for the study of sustainability relies considerably on the large body of literature on institutional analysis (Ostrom 1990; Wade 1988; Uphoff 1982; North 1990). A major challenge in the Netrang programme area is that of managing Common Property and Open Access Resources. The parameters for the study are drawn from the major studies on institutional arrangements for the management of the commons and a series of working papers on the concept of social capital and its measurement. A systematic checklist was prepared based on these theoretical literature and empirical studies. This framework was then applied to analyse the empirical observations and relate them to the design principles⁴ that impact sustainability of the GVM promoted by the AKRSP in the Netrang programme area.

⁴ Ostrom (1990) defines 'Design principles' as essential elements, or conditions that help to account for institutional sustainability in CPR's.

1.5 Defining Sustainability

According to Honadle and VanSant (1985), sustainable institutions are those that survive over time as identifiable units, recover some or even all their costs, and supply a continuing stream of benefits. Multiple criteria must be satisfied as longevity, cost recovery or benefit flows by themselves are just not enough. The meaning of institutional sustainability, as expressed here, is analytic, not normative and intends to capture why institutions tend to persist or perish; not to ascertain whether they ought to sustain. Dietz *et al* (2002) believe institutional sustainability to be the continued use of an institution over time with adaptation occurring in day-to-day rules within the broad framework of stable institutional arrangements.

Measurement of sustainability is widely recognised as an immensely difficult problem, as conventional monitoring and evaluation methods, mostly using economic analysis, are considered insufficient to detect or quantify sustainability (Brown *et al.*, 1987; Carpenter, 1993; Chopra, 2001; Landell-Mills, 1998). The sustainability question, therefore, poses a huge dilemma on one hand of whether a particular definition ought to be adopted and used in a normative sense and on the other, having adopted one definition or another, whether adequate and agreed measures or evaluation frameworks are, indeed, available to test it.

In the absence of a universally accepted definition, we have adopted an eclectic approach that lays emphasis on the following:

- Survival or durability of village level organisations over a long period or what Ostrom calls the long endurance of self-governing CPR institutions as one key aspect

(i.e., the village level organisation continues to be fostered by the village community even after the NGO has ceased to directly support or guide it and enjoys considerable legitimacy in the village)

- The VI has a significant role in the NRM activities with the sanction of the community
- Norms and practices evolved through the village level organisation persist and is perceived as beneficial by the village community

The current capabilities of the VI in these different aspects may vary. Also, the VI may not exist in the same form as it was in its earlier phase when it was supported directly by the promoting NGO. The factors that appear to strengthen or weaken the sustainability on various counts are examined using a framework developed from a review of the writings of the leading thinkers on the subject.

1.6 Framework for investigation

Wade (1988), Ostrom (1990) and Baland and Platteau (1996) identify specific conditions that are most likely to promote local institutions to manage CPR's⁵. Their research represents diverse approaches to empirical comparative research, and relies on different datasets. Wade collected data from 31 villages in a single district in South India; Ostrom focuses primarily on specifics of institutional arrangements in accounting for successful governance of CPR. Baland and Platteau used wide-ranging cases and economic literature on property rights (Agarwal, 2002). There is considerable convergence in these studies.

Their investigations are focussed on four themes: 1) Resource characteristics, 2) Group characteristics, 3) Institutional Arrangements and 4) Relationships between group and external

⁵ For some other frameworks to analyse CPR's, see Oakerson (1992) and Edwards and Stein (1998)

forces and authorities such as markets, state and technology (Fig. 2-1). Taken together, the work presented here uses the common elements drawn from such studies as the basis for analysis sustainability of institutional arrangements to manage the 'Commons' in order to ascertain those design principles that have affected, either positively or negatively, the sustainability of the VI being studied. The conceptual framework for examining local organisations in natural resources management has been presented in a concise review by Rasmussen and Meinzen-Dick (1995) of the theoretical and empirical literature on the institutional sustainability by Ostrom (1990, 1992), Wade (1988), Burdhan (1993), Bromley and Cernea (1989).

The institutional changes brought about through the GVM was studied through a multi-track approach that involved discussions with the AKRSP team, interactions with the villagers and field studies to ascertain the functioning of village level institutions. These changes were mapped across the periods when AKRSP was actively guiding the GVM and after its exit through interviews and focussed group discussions conducted with the members of the VI, office bearers of the VI, non-members, NGO staff, and NGO leadership.

1.7 Selection of Study Villages

The six villages included in this study are chosen from the 225 villages under the Netrang SHT. The interventions include forestry, watershed development and irrigation management. During the consultations with the SHT it was decided to include only forestry and soil-water-conservation (SWC) in this set of studies. The selection criteria implied that only those VI from which AKRSP has exited qualify. This meant that only about 25 to 30 villages would be the candidates for the study. Since the lessons of the study must benefit the long-term interests of the SHT, the investigators requested the SHT leadership to short list about ten candidate villages. Out of these, six were chosen representing different situations – more general cases, as well those with specific features: social heterogeneity, special role of women's mobilization, remoteness of the village, final harvest problem, forestry, forestry + SWC and/or watershed (Table 2-1). They could be considered as a 20 to 25% statistical sample. However, these are considered here only as illustrative cases of the working of the GVM model under a very wide spectrum of the village level situations. The fieldwork was carried out in August – September 2005.

Figure 1-1: Analytical framework used to study the sustainability of village organisations

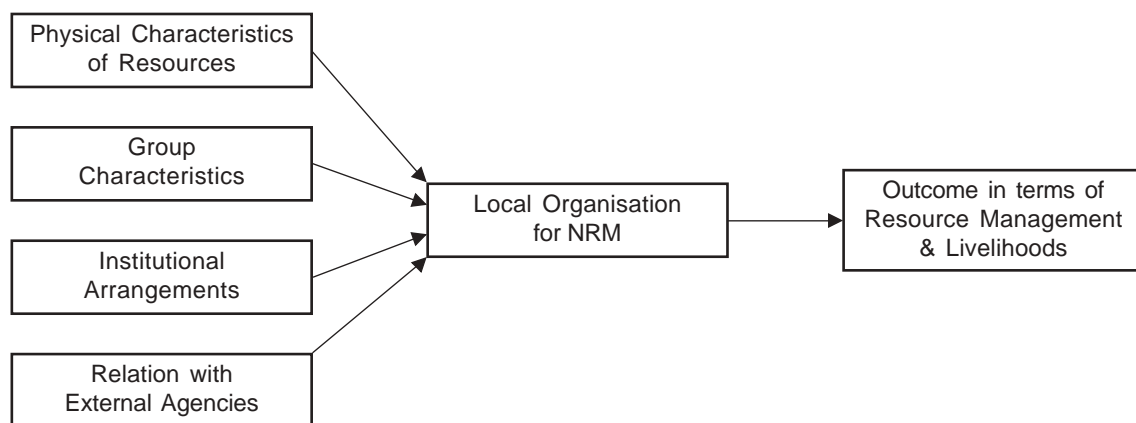


Table 1-1: Glimpse of the 6 Villages Studied

AKRSP Cluster Office	Village	Start of Intervention	HH	Remarks	Forest Prot. (Ha)	SWC (Ha)
Netrang	1. Bharada	1994	90	Chaudhury 1, rest Vasava	190	185
	2. Rajvadi	1995	300	Vasava (91), Chaudhury (105), Gamit (104)	296	50
	3. Sakva	1989	88	Vasava 82, Tadbi 2, Patel 4	72	200
Dediapada	4. Kanjay	1995	58	Vasava 57, Gauda (grazier) 1	51	58
	5. Mulkapada	1991	250	Kotwalia (65), rest Vasava	30	148
Sagbara	6. Moti Nal	1996	386	Marwadi 1	50	500

2 Natural Resources & Environment – Netrang Region

The region receives high rainfall (more than 1200 mm per annum) and is part of the humid part of the Gujarat State. In ecological terms, the forests in the region consist of mixed moist-deciduous and dry-deciduous types. Large parts of the forests were transformed into teak forests during the British rule for production forestry. The region belongs to the talukas affected by high levels of soil erosion (Geevan et al, 2002) and the districts of Bharuch and Surat are part of a region that has witnessed a general decline in dense forest category during the last three decades (Dixit et al, 2001). The forest degradation and soil erosion has adversely affected the agricultural productivity of the hill tracts of the region. The early 1980's had also saw the state government allowing the conversion of forestlands into agricultural land on large-scale. The massive tree felling by the paper and pulp industry denuded large tracts of bamboo forests. The forest dwelling tribal communities dependent heavily on forest resources were mute spectators to the large-scale forest loss and had no role or say in the management of the resources, until the adoption of the JFM policy.

2.1 Forest Resources

The AKRSP began working in the region at a time when the forest resources had been degraded and the communities dependent on the forest resources had little incentive or options for helping

in the regeneration or conservation. The conditions were such that there was near complete alienation of the local communities from the management of forests, huge uncertainty associated with the future flow of benefits, lack of properly defined boundaries over which any form of resource regulation could be attempted and the difficulties in limiting benefits only to those who help in the regeneration (i.e., difficulties of excludability). Against this background, the AKRSP attempted to encourage community initiatives to conserve forests in the self-interest of the community. Forestry was initiated 'informally' on forestland under forest department without any explicit agreement as well as on common land of the village and revenue land belonging to the revenue department. The flow of benefits was to be ensured in different forms, over different community managed patches and over various time frames. There is need for more reflection and analysis on the related strategic aspects, which is not attempted here.

The tree species such as teak, shisam, etc can fetch very high market value in mature form. Even the timber of younger trees is highly valued. The harvest of mature trees in certain cases can be obtained only after about 10 to 15 years. Mature bamboo can harvested in a growth cycle of about 5 to 7 years. Grass is available in the first five years of the plantation phase, and it gradually decreases as the canopy cover thickens inhibiting

undergrowth. Year-round supply of small timber, dry wood, etc is possible. Pruning and lopping is done once in a year. Thus, the resource availability and benefit flows vary both over time and in quality, as well as its end uses. Fodder too is available from some of the trees. Sound management entails judicious scheduling of the extraction, choice of species mix, tree density, etc.

Table 3-1 presents rich detail of the forestry efforts in the region. The area under CFM varies a lot from village to village and is somewhat unrelated to the demography of the village. Bharada has over 2 ha of CFM area per HH, while a very large village like Moti Nal (4.3 times the number of HH in Bharada) has only 0.1 ha per HH (i.e., 1/20th of Bharada). In the case of Rajwadi too, a village with more than 3 times the number of households

than Bharada, the CFM area available per HH is half that of Bharada. It is possible that with certain approaches to livelihood improvements and resources management, the communities could significantly reduce their dependence on forest resources. Even in the best cases, this would be a very gradual process and in the short to medium term, a community traditionally dependent on forest would continue to have fairly high levels of such dependence. Therefore, it is necessary not to underestimate the need for CFM efforts and appropriate village institutions under such conditions.

Our field observations and careful synthesis of the qualitative and quantitative information shows that among the six villages, in terms of forest resources Bharada is the best, followed by

Table 2-1: Characteristics of the Forest Areas associated with GVM

Villages	Community Forestry Area (*) (ha)	Area Per HH (ha)	CFM Plots (!) Ha added & (Year)	Fuel Wood	Green Fodder	Grass	Grazing	Small Timber	NTFP (@)	Final Harvest
Bharada	190	2.1	50 (1994) 30 (1995) 20 (1996) 45 (1997) 30 (1998) 15 (2005)	H	M	H	H	H	L	Due
Rajwadi	296	1.0	55 (1995) 30 (1996) 61(1999) 50 (2001) 40 (2002) 50 (2003) 10 (2005)	H	L	H	M	H	L	Due
Sakva	72	0.8	45 (1989) 27 (1995)	H	L	L	H	M	L	Due
Kanjay	51	0.9	20 (1995) 31 (2003)	H	M	H	H	H	L	Due
Mulkapada#	0	0.0	30 (1992)	L	L	L	H	M	L	Denied
Moti Nal	50	0.1	20 (1998) 30 (2004)	H	M	M	H	M	L	Not due

(*) Area under JFM or Community Forestry with or without AKRSP support; # No CFM now

(!)CFM (community forestry management) plots added in different years: CFM plots started in different years result in diversity of age and species; includes JFM areas with *Adikar Patra* and community forestry areas without formal permissions

(@) NTFP – Fruits, berries, honey, herbs, etc. There are no commercially important NTFP in these forests and there is not much demand for the available items

H: High, M: Moderate, L: Low (based on the qualitative and quantitative data collected during fieldwork)

Rajwadi and Kanjay. Despite the enormous enhancements in agriculture-based livelihoods and improvements of land resources, these villages show considerable interest in CFM, indicating their huge stake in forest resources, not withstanding livelihood diversification and the consequent expected decline in their dependence on forest. In the context of sustainability, the actual degree of dependence needs to be properly assessed, as institutional arrangements are closely linked to the resource management challenges.

2.2 Succession of Forestry Efforts

The community forestry efforts in the region were initiated by the AKRSP in the mid 1980's. Among the study villages, the earliest CFM effort is of 1989 in Sakva village followed by Mulkapada in 1992 (Table 3-1). The six villages studied exhibit much variation in the progress of CFM. The CFM effort in Mulkapada village, one of the earliest to join the effort, however, was limited to just one. Sakva, Kanjay and Moti Nal villages had two, while Bharada and Rajwadi had 7 and 6 efforts, respectively. In terms of resource availability, a succession of CFM, even if they are in small patches, has major implications.

As one forest patch on which regeneration work has been successfully carried out gets older, the flow of benefits undergoes major changes. In terms of the NGO support, the early phase involves plantation and other forestry efforts that provide employment and wage labour to the community. All rules/ norms are also strictly enforced in this period. As the trees grow and the canopy thickens, undergrowth of grass is inhibited, reducing the abundance of grass and shrubs. Before the trees mature, there is plenty of green fodder available from the trees that are not too tall. However, once the trees become very tall, these are beyond the reach of both people and grazing animals. Some of the trees also serve as sources of fuel wood. The forest department,

which regulates the access rights, permits certain types of activities depending on the status of the regenerated forest. When there is no succession of CFM efforts, only the old mature trees that do not provide a mix of benefits are left.

Another important aspect of the CFM is that the effort acts as a pivot around which village level social mobilization activity gets organized. There is a flurry of activity involving the GVM once a CFM is started. When there is a succession of CFM, with or without the formal permission or *adhikar patra*, there are various stages of social capital development and the same VLO goes through various levels of capacity building. Also, the VLO has many, many opportunities to develop its negotiation capabilities vis-à-vis external agents and agencies. However, delays and non-issuance of permissions (*adhikar patra*) is a factor that de-motivates the village organisations (Gupta and Joshi, 2004). When there is a succession of forestry efforts it results in several forestry plots of varying age, possibly with greater vegetation diversity mix as well. So long as there are forest tracts to regenerate and a proper schedule is followed, there will be community managed forest patches at different stages of growth. Once a patch is cleared for final harvest of timber, the cycle could start all over again. A series of CFM efforts provides the opportunity to alter the tree species mix to suit the ecological needs and match community's changing requirements.

The forest resources as a renewable and managed resource must be understood in terms of the species diversity, the flow of benefits that could be realized, the mix of forest resources that the community associated with its management actually need, and the possible harvesting cycles. We have not been able to examine these aspects in sufficient detail and to discuss how far the forestry efforts have incorporated such considerations into the resource management

regimes or into the norms adopted by the village institutions. We do feel that the subject merits a detailed probe in the long-term interest of the JFM program. However, our observation is that these are important combination of factors having a bearing on the sustainability of village institutions involved in forestry management.

The CFM is an experience that transports the group involved in it through a huge learning process encompassing experimentation in social mobilization and institutional changes. Therefore, the net outcome from a series of such efforts would be very different from a single effort, even if the single effort happened to be a great success. In resource terms, a single JFM would inevitably tend to over-emphasise the final harvest, as there are no dynamic changes in the resource characteristics after the even age stand in the forestry tract under the single effort has matured. In the absence of any other managed forest resource, all hopes are pinned on the final harvest. The final harvest, however, is qualitatively very different from the regular and periodic resource flows. It is the long-term asset accrued from the CFM after testing the patience of the VLO for more than a decade. Despite a sea change in policy environment, there is absolutely no certainty that the community will be accorded full rights to the final harvest. When a series of CFM is undertaken, one after another, with a gap of one or two years in between, not only is the Village Level Organization very active in the CFM, but also there are multiple layers of benefits including the wage labour opportunity available from the plantation and the soil/water conservation activities being carried out in a project mode. When we look at the data on these six villages all these aspects need to be kept in mind.

For example, if we take the case of Rajwadi with a new forestry effort every year from 1999 to

2005, except 2000 and 2004, it is quite evident that a succession of CFM has yielded a rich stream of benefits. The community needs a mix of resources and if multi-layer forest stands of uneven age classes are under community management, diverse flows could be realized. Additionally, when a new CFM activity is started, the group also gets employment for about a month. Once a decade or so has elapsed, the question of final harvest no longer remains a hypothetical one. It becomes a 'live' issue with the FD very reluctant to keep its word or honour the terms of the contract and pass on the benefits of final harvest due to the community. The FD is in no hurry to resolve the question of final harvest. Instead, the community becomes party to adding more area under CFM (informal JFM). In fact, if the benefits from final harvest is allowed, and the timber or bamboo, as the case may be, is harvested, then the CFM cycle can re-start by re-planting the area from where the final harvest would be taken. Without allowing final harvest due in 2003-2004, another 60 ha was added to the informal JFM of Rajwadi. At the same time, many villages with active VLO have no new JFM, neither formal nor informal. The Rajwadi village continues to work with the FD despite the reluctance of the department to grant the group the benefits of final harvest. Our field level discussions indicate that the series of forestry efforts inhibits them from embarking on a confrontation with the FD. After all, the lesson of Mulkapada is all too evident: better accept the unfair arrangements with FD, than risk the closure of the CFM option altogether. The informal and formal CFM arrangements thus provide opportunities for the communities to engage in a dialogue with the FD, irrespective of the ambiguities regarding the fate of final harvest.

The discussions with the villagers also point to another aspect of resource flows: the mere existence of a CFM plot does not imply that all

the forestry resource needs are fully met from the CFM areas. In fact, while varying degrees of community protection is accorded to the CFM areas, large forest tracts exist, *de facto*, in a state of open access. The field discussions clearly show that the actual dependence of different villages on forest resources has not dramatically reduced. The gap between the supply from CFM areas and the actual demand appear to be met from the open access forests under the *de jure* control of the forest department.

2.3 Land Resources

AKRSP was quick to realize that as important as forestry was the need for soil moisture conservation measures since the small and

fragmented agricultural land on hill slopes suffered from low productivity and faced varying degrees of soil erosion. The importance of agriculture had gradually increased in the livelihoods of the communities with the 1980's marking a major shift in the livelihood systems. One part of the AKRSP's strategy was of making the agriculture more productive and agriculture-based livelihoods more secure. The soil and water conservation (SWC) activities covering both common and private land resulted in large-scale improvements in the land resources, reducing soil erosion by treating vast areas of the hill slopes and helping the tribal farmers to protect each plot with farm-bunds⁶. Both physical barriers using stones and live fencing with certain species of

Table 2-2: Land resource characteristics in the study villages

Villages	Agric. Land - AGL (Ha)	Irrig. Area (Ha)	% HH with 2 crops/Year	Irrig. Sources	Major Crop	Pasture (ha)	SWC & Farm Bunds (Year)	SWC Area (ha)	SWC to AGL (%)
Bharada	216	10 (14%)	22	Wells: 1 common (FD); Check dams: 1 (FD)	Tuar, juar, paddy	3	1997	185	86
Rajvadi*	415	10 (2%)	> 17	Wells: > 30 (Pvt.); 2 Common (FD); Diesel Pumps: > 25	Cotton, Paddy, juar, tuar, wheat, makfali	0	1997	50	12
Sakva#	220	40 (18%)	28	Wells: 5(Pvt); GW: 1 (CA-12 Ha; 20 HH); Bore-wells: 15 (1 HH)	Pulse, juar, paddy, tuar, Sugarcane, cotton	0	1990	200	91
Kanjay	125\$	(!)	17	River – 1; Wells: 6 (Pvt.); 1 Panchayat	Paddy, tuar, Juar, cotton	0	1996	58	46
Mulkapada	158	(!)	2	Wells: Private 3	Paddy, cotton, tuar, juar, makfali	1	1994	148	94
Moti Nal	357	> 60 Ha	> 13	River; CD 2 (FD), 1 AKRSP; GW 3; Pvt Wells: 6; Diesel pumps: 33	Cotton, paddy, tuar, juar, Wheat, makfali	0.5	1996	500	98

* In Rajvadi, there are more than 30 wells in the agricultural land indicating that there must be more irrigated land than is recorded. We met few elder farmers having 20 years of experience who said that production has increased. 15 HH have encroached 25 Ha of forestland for agriculture.

One HH has around 100 Ha land with 15 bore wells, so irrigated land must be more.

\$ Officially reported agricultural area is 92 ha; Report from field studies is 125 ha; some forestland has been encroached for agriculture

(!) Not enough information

CA – Command Area; CD: Check Dam; GW – Group Well

⁶ Village like Munkapada, has a long history of making farm-bunds. During 1970's one Christian missionary organisation (Adibasi Samajik Kendra, Nibalda), had promoted SWC activities.

plants were undertaken as project-based activities. SWC measures have been carried out on 85% to nearly 100% of the land in Bharada, Sakva, Mulkapada and Moti Nal. In the case of Kanjay it is about 45% while in Rajwadi the SWC is considerably low (Table 3-2).

The agricultural land is private⁷ and the individual land-owning households quickly adopted the SWC measures. Where it was necessary, the GVMs stepped in to mobilize collective efforts even to help out in the land improvements on private land. The interventions initiated by AKRSP covered almost all aspects of improving the land resources and these changes in turn, as the field observations show, have resulted in huge spin-offs and multiplier effects through an overall increase in the number of labour-days per year in the agricultural sector. The interventions include enhancing the irrigation facilities as well. Additionally, in some villages the livelihood patterns have changed due to significant increase in the share of incomes from livestock sector. Certain villages today have large income flows from livestock-based economic activity, particularly due to the emergence of milk production for the market and tie-ups with marketing arrangements.

The NRM strategy envisaged by the AKRSP appears to have struck a meaningful balance between forestry and productivity increase from land resources. There are, however, difficulties in quantifying the status of the land resources before intervention and now, as detailed technical information is not available. The only data we can present is that of land use pattern, agriculture, etc (Table 3-2), which will help to get a better picture of the land resources. The data

represents the current status. The changes in farming practices have resulted in considerable diversification of the cropping pattern in Rajwadi, Moti Nal and Sakva.

The perceptions and accounts by villagers indicate that they do recognize a significant change in the land productivity and quality. There are, of course, many other equally or more important factors such as the capacity building efforts undertaken to enhance the skill levels of the communities in intensive agriculture and other such activities, which would explain the perceived change. Notwithstanding such factors, while we discuss the resource characteristics, it is important to note that the village institutions promoted by AKRSP were engaged in a combination of forestry and improvements in land resources, even though the relative emphasis on forestry, land and water would vary from village to village. This combination and the end results of a somewhat holistic approach involving forest, land and water resources development has its implications on institutional development and the discussion on institutional sustainability.

Bharada, Rajwadi, Sakva, Kanjay and Moti Nal are well endowed with irrigation sources (Table 3-2). Although data on irrigated area available to us do not give an unambiguous picture, the irrigation sources observed during the field visits and the proportion of households cultivating more than one crop in a year clearly point to the large extent of irrigated land in these villages. Thus, Mulkapada is the only village in the case studies that lacks significantly large extent of irrigation facilities. In all five villages excluding Mulkapada there has been several efforts to enhance the irrigation systems. Apart from

⁷ Some of the farmland may include encroachments on forestland. The property rights are subject to certain limitations in forest villages. Besides, there are also encroachments on forestland that are regularised for agricultural use. In such land parcels, too, property rights are subject to certain limitations.

AKRSP, the State Forest Department too has helped in enhancing irrigation facilities. AKRSP has helped in creating Group Wells that acts as an irrigation source to multiple farmers, as opposed to private wells for the benefit of a single farmer who owns it. The group wells also demand collective action and cooperation among the users. In institutional terms, the changes in irrigation management and corresponding group efforts mark a major forward step, following in the footsteps of collective action to manage common resources such as forests or pasturelands.

3 Group Characteristics

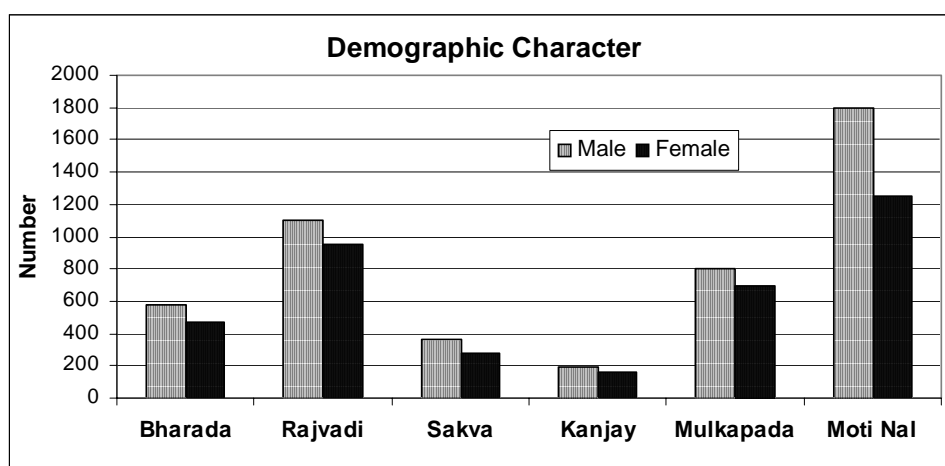
3.1 Background

This area has tribal population exceeding 90%, consisting primarily of the *Vasava*, *Chaudhary*, *Kotwalia*, *Dhadia*, *Tadvi* and *Gamit* communities of the *Bhil* tribe. The population characteristic varies from village to village (see Fig 4-1). The *Vasava* tribe dominates all these villages, except in *Rajvadi* where three tribes – *Vasava*, *Chaudhary*, and *Gamit* are present in almost

equal proportions. In *Mulkapada*, a quarter of the households are *Kotwalia*, which is accorded a lower social status among the tribal communities in the region. The *Kotwalias* have very little dependence on agriculture and are known for their skills in the craft of making baskets and other such items from bamboo. The inadequate cooperation between *Kotwalias* and *Vasavas* creates some difficulties in *Mulkapada*. Among the study villages, *Rajvadi*, *Mulkapada* and *Moti Nal* are large villages in terms of number of households while *Kanjay*, *Sakva* and *Bharada* are very small. *Kanjay* is a remote village located deep inside the forest and is not connected by proper road. It is almost completely inaccessible during monsoon. *Bharada*, *Rajvadi* and *Knajay* are the so-called Forest Villages⁸ and are administratively under the Forest Department with limitations on property rights over the land.

All these tribal communities are relatively new to agriculture with many being third generation agriculturalists. However, agriculture is at present the dominant livelihood option for a large number of households. The AKRSP's interven-

Figure 3-1



⁸ Forest Settlement Village comprising of forest areas deemed to be villages, but the property rights are subject to several restrictions, preventing any transfers of the property

tions in all these villages used the GVM model as the entry level organizational model and went on to develop this Village Level Organization (VLO) as a pan-village organization. Except for the two villages – Mulkapada and Moti Nal, which has GVM membership of less than 50% of the households, the other four villages have nearly 100% membership (Table 4-1). In the case of Kanjay, all households, including new households in village, are allowed to be members. Also, in Kanjay, both husband and wife are considered as members of the GVM.

When we analyze the sustainability of the GVM, i.e., the group we are concerned with, we need to clearly understand the group characteristics. The group characteristics are summarized in Table 4-1. Since detailed profiles of the membership of the GVM are not available, in most cases, the features of the group presented in the Table 4-1 relate to that of the village under the assumption that the GVM is truly representative of all sections of the village. In cases such as that of Moti Nal, where the membership is less than 50%, the non-members actively participate in the functioning of GVM, almost completely blurring the distinction between members and non-members. In the other village with less than 50%

membership, i.e., Mulkapada, the GVM is hardly functioning at present. However, in the past when it did function, the GVM did carry the whole village with it.

Bharada, Sakva and Mulkapada have very large proportion of landless households (Fig. 4-2). The interventions in three villages – Bharada, Rajvadi and Kanjay – appear to have radically lowered seasonal out migration from very high levels to very low levels (Fig. 4-3). The interventions seem to have made very little impact on out-migration in Mulkapada with the seasonal migration level remaining high. In terms of forest resources under the guardianship of the community, Rajvadi village possess the largest area in absolute terms (296 ha) followed by Bharada with 190 ha. However, per household availability of community managed forest area is very high for Bharada. Unlike other four villages, these two villages had a succession of forestry efforts initiated either by AKRSP or by the FD between 1994 and 2005. The interventions promoted by the AKRSP have also resulted in the creation of a large number of organizations within these two villages (Table 4-1). In addition to the organizations promoted by the AKRSP, at present, the Van Kalyan Samitis (VKS, equivalent

Figure 3-2

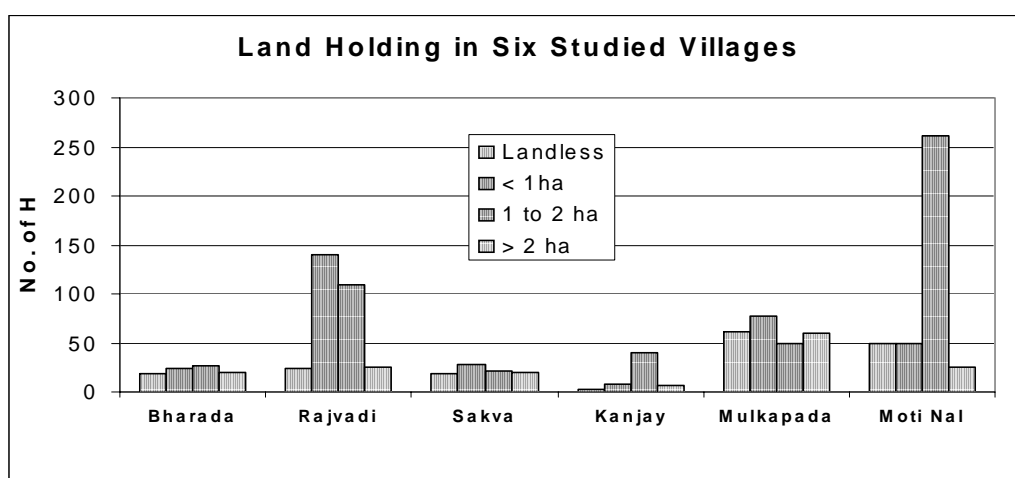
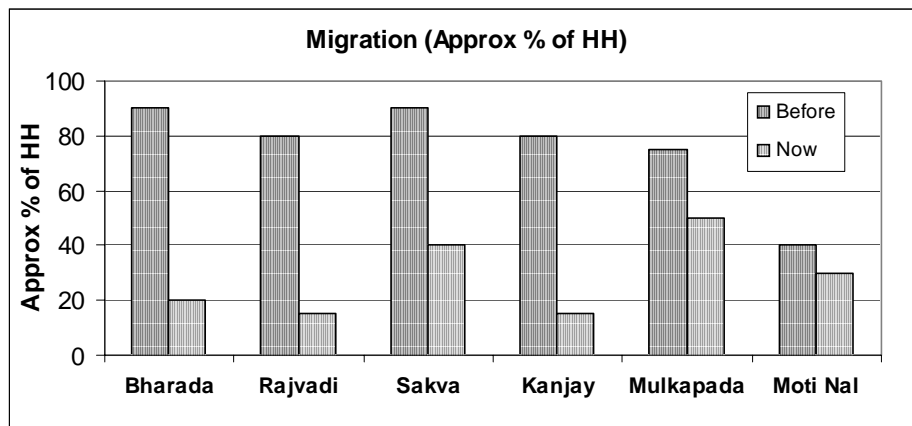


Figure 3-3



of the Forest Protection Committee – FPC – constituted under the JFM guidelines) promoted by the FD are also functioning in Bharada, Rajvadi and Moti Nal. In Bharada and Rajvadi the GVM and VKS are effectively the same, while in Moti Nal these are quite separate, but work together.

The interventions have resulted in considerable improvements in the status of women and their role in the village life. Unlike in the past, the women’s role is not confined to the house, but they now have a leading role in many of the village level activities and in economic activities. The dramatic change in gender equations at the village level has been brought about through the work of women’s organizations, spearheaded by the MVM, with a savings and self-help approach. An eloquent testimony to this change is the allotment of 31 ha of forestland under JFM as a special case to the MVM by the FD and the efficiency with which MVM have been managing the forestry activity. The CFM in Rajvadi also presents a fine example of excellent coordination and cooperation between the GVM and the MVM. Interestingly, at present, in the organizational statistics of AKRSP, the functioning GVM of Rajvadi do not find a place and all the CFM activities are attributed to the MVM.

3.2 Leadership and Collective Action

Collective action is used to describe the process and consequences of individual decisions to voluntary co-ordinated behaviour (Deshpande and Narayanmoorthy, 2003). The circumstances favouring collective action are much debated. Undoubtedly, one of the most important roles played by the VI promoted by any NGO is to catalyse or initiate collective action, even bringing together sections of the village community that may not be traditionally inclined to work together for various reasons. Many NGOs consider such an inclusive approach as the hallmark of their interventions. AKRSP has tried to promote wider village level unity and collective action through the VLO such as GVM. Exposure visits and training programmes are an important component of the leadership development efforts. The exposure trips included visits to Orissa, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh.

Leadership and collective action are very important factors in the sustainability of village level organizations. The six villages exhibit considerable variation in the leadership levels and experience in collective action. We have examined these two aspects by looking at the history of the village institutions in each of the study villages. We have also examined major

Table 3-1: Group Characteristics

Village	Village Type	Village Composition	HH	Village Level Organisations in Forestry	GVM Memb. (%)	VLOs	Leadership (LD) & Collective Action (CA)		Other Villages with conflicts over Forest Res.	Community Managed Forest.	Agric. Land	Livelihood Pattern (2)	Migration	
							LD	CA					Area	Avail/HH
Bharada	RV & FSV (1)	Dominant – Vasava (~100%)	90	GVM (1994) VKS (1998)	100	12	G	G	Khabji, Tabda	H	VH	AGR; FLB; LSK; SM	VH	VL
Rajwadi	FSV	3 tribes: Chowdhary, Gamit & Vasava; Almost in equal proportions	300	GVM (1995) VKS (2003)	87	11	G	G	Puniamba & Pat-Khuda	VH	M	AGR; SKL; LSK; SM	VH	VL
Sakva	RV	Dominant – Vasava	88	Only GVM (1989)	93	9	M	P	Motia	L	M	LSK; AGR; FLB; SKL; SM; DM	VH	L
Kanjay	FSV	Dominant – Vasava (~100%)	58	Only GVM (1995)	100	5	G	M	Belda	L	M	LSK; AGR; FLB, SM	VH	VL
Mulkapada	RV	Dominant – Vasava 25% Kotwalia	250	GVM – 1991 (now – defunct)	44	8	P	P	Chamba, Babda & Badwa	No	No	FLB; AGR; DM, SM	VH	H
Moti Nal	RV	Dominant – Vasava (~100%)	386	GVM (1995) VKS (1998)	47	10	G	G	Khopi, Kakarpada & Holihamli	L	VL	LSK; AGR; SM	M	L

Notes:

BI – Before Intervention; G – Good; H – High; L – Low; M – Medium; Now – Current/ Without AKRSP support; P – Poor; VH – Very High; VL – Very Low
 FSV: Forest Settlement Village comprising of forest areas deemed to be villages, but the property rights are subject to several restrictions, preventing any transfers of the property.

SM- Seasonal Migration

(1) This village has two *fallas* (streets or hamlets) – one supposed to be under Revenue Department and the other under the Forest Department as a Forest Settlement Village
 (2) Livelihood pattern refers to the current status

FOR – Forestry; AGR - Agri; FLB - Farm Labor; LSK – Livestock; SM – Seasonal Migration; SKL - Skill labor; DM – Dail Migration to towns (daily work)

instances collective action vis-à-vis the role of GVM, response of the VI at the time of unforeseen events and the role of the GVM leadership. We have examined the leadership quality after looking into few factors like day-to-day functioning of the GVM, conflict management ability, utilization of funds and saved money and ability to cooperate with other organization. The collective action have been examined by discussing with the villagers factors like conflict management, response to crisis situations, or external threats, etc.

Among the six villages, there are quite a bit of evidence of collective action in Bharada, Rajvadi and Moti Nal. A few instances are discussed here briefly. All these tribal villages have a strong sense of customary 'territoriality' of forest areas by each village. However, inter-village conflicts over forest resources are common (see snapshot of these conflicts given in the following sub-section). In the 1990's the FD assigned to the Tabda village, a forestland customarily 'owned' by Bharada. This is an example of how the state alters inter-village relations ignoring the traditional rights or the customary norms. This fuelled the simmering conflicts between the villages. The conflict reached a high point in 1999 when Tabda villagers beat up a member of the GVM of Bharada. The GVM discussed this issue with the FD. After discussion with FD many times, the Bharada villagers realised they will not get any help from FD. The resentment slowly but surely built up against forest department also. In 2000, the villagers started agitation against FD for the restoration of their traditional entitlement over the forest assigned to Tabda. Since a series of meetings with the FD turned out to be futile, village meeting convened by the GVM of Bharada decided to resort to indefinite hunger strike. After

this, the Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), *Mamlatdar*⁹ and police intervened to solve the problem by restoring customary rights of the Bharada village. After this the GVM enforced 100% benefits to the Bharada and put an end to any resource sharing between Bharada and Tabda village. It was agreed that Tabda villagers would not graze their cattle in that forest area. The GVM of Bharada thus led a protracted social mobilization to protect their traditional rights/entitlements over resources.

The leadership and collective action of GVM and MVM of Rajvadi have additional significance because of the socio-cultural heterogeneity. The village is large (300 HH) and comprises of three different tribal communities having nearly equal proportion of households. The GVM membership consists of 87% of the households. The households are distributed in 8 *falias* (hamlets) and each *falia* elects its representative in the GVM committee, ensuring democratic representation of each hamlet in the GVM committee. The village has a functioning GVM and MVM as well as a VKS promoted by the FD. The discussions with the villagers indicated that they adopted the system of elected *falia* representative to strengthen the GVM and its collective capabilities. It may be noted that MVM in Rajvadi also has the unique distinction of being awarded forestland under JFM. The Rajvadi village presents excellent cooperation and coordination between GVM and MVM. Women also take up the responsibilities of patrolling. The AKRSP does not directly support the GVM and in almost all reporting, AKRSP takes note of the work of MVM only, whereas both GVM and MVM are active and functioning VLOs. Between 1995 and 2005, the GVM and MVM have carried out a series of seven CFM activities covering 296 ha and evidently all

⁹ A state government official responsible for revenue and administrative matters covering several villages in a block (*taluka*)

this has led to considerable strengthening of the VLOs and the capabilities for collective action. For all practical purposes, the VKS and the leadership of GVM are the same. This has also helped to maintain good relations with the FD.

In Moti Nal in spite of a majority of the village being non-members of the GVM, both members and non-members work collectively to ensure proper distribution of benefits from forest resources and ensure harmony of the village community life. The non-members also share responsibilities and contribute to costs of resource management. The non-members, too, have access to credit (*dhiran*) from the GVM. Apparently, the village level socio-cultural and community values are strengthening collective action and the group characteristics. In particular, the whole village accepts the leadership of GVM despite the membership being a minority. To strengthen the collective action and the legitimacy of decisions, the GVM committee involves *sarpanch*, the traditional chief and 5 elders (traditional leadership) in the decision making process. The GVM leadership maintains good relations with the AKRSP. In Moti Nal, too, there is good cooperation and coordination between GVM and MVM. When required, even the GVM *mantry* (secretary) attends MVM meetings. There are 10 VLOs promoted by the AKRSP in the village, including 5 SHGs.

In Kanjay, while the leadership quality appears to be fairly good, no outstanding instances of collective action are reported. The GVM of Sakva, a village with nearly as many HH as Bharada (Table 4-1), is beset with serious leadership problems with members not heeding the current GVM leadership. There are also instances where the leadership seems to have been beaten up by

the members. There is very little cooperation between GVM and MVM. The GVM is associated with an apex organisation called KVS and gets benefits from the activities of the KVS.

On the face of it, the conditions in Mulkapada would not appear to be very different from others. However, it represents a case where a properly functioning organisation and institutional arrangements have undergone a near total breakdown. It is a large village with 250 HH. Apart from the inherent problems of coordination and cooperation between the Vasava and Kotwalia communities, many external factors have affected the functioning of GVM. The proportion of landless households is very high, there is very little decline in migration and the irrigation facilities have not improved much. At present Mulkapada presents a dismal picture with regard to the status of GVM and collective action. Some of the problems relating to the management of savings fund remain a difficult theme and bitterness about having lost their savings lingers.

The crisis of leadership, collective action and institutional arrangements in Mulkapada revolves around the denial of final harvest rights over mature bamboo and handing over of the bamboo at a highly discounted price¹⁰ to a paper manufacturing company. Additionally, the AKRSP, which played a key role in promoting and strengthening the GVM, appear to have been caught on the wrong foot when the final harvest problem exploded into a crisis. The complexities of the situation are noted in an internal review by the AKRSP (Gupta and Joshi, 2004). The external elements and the issue of usufruct rights, that is central to the co-management of forests owned by the State to be managed by the

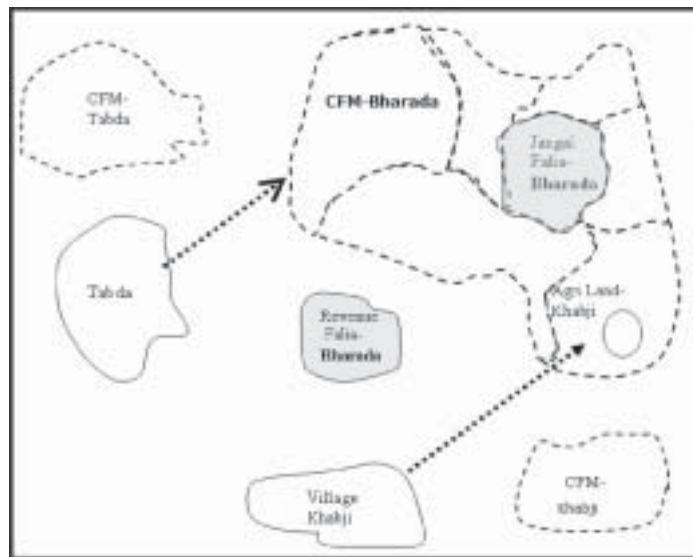
¹⁰ The contract between the company and the Gujarat State Forest Department granted exclusive harvest rights to the company over the bamboo resources in Dangs, Surat and Rajpila forest divisions at a nominal rate of Rs.5/- per ton for 40 years from 1960-61.

community, has clearly played havoc with the group and the institutional arrangements. This happened despite the fact that the Mulkapada GVM was considered to be functioning very well before this crisis. Also, unlike Bharada or Rajvadi, which had a series of forestry programmes, Mulkapada had just one – the single JFM initiated in 1992. The roots of the crisis of collective action in Mulkapada seem to lie in the external legal framework and do not point to any intrinsic design flaws of the GVM model. In fact, during the fieldwork, a cross section of villagers emphasised that they would like the GVM to be revived and CFM restarted, as the village seem to have lost all the gains it had earlier made through the GVM.

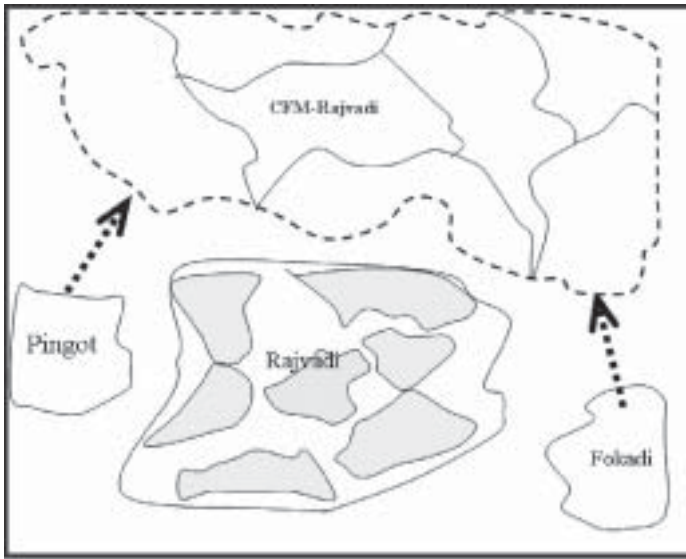
The crisis also brings out the sustainability question of an organisation promoted by an NGO

very sharply. Among the villagers, there is a tremendous feeling of helplessness, and there is a widely pervasive understanding that the response from AKRSP to the crisis is far below what the villagers expected. However, according to the AKRSP Netrang SHT, there has been a huge effort from their side in response to the crisis. Surely AKRSP team has no doubt responded to the crisis in the best way it can and lobbied to work out a solution. However, over the years, the AKRSP's overall approach to organisation development shifted away from the GVM model and this has contributed to the strengthening of the villager's perception that GVM is not being supported. This feeling is very strong in Mulkapada, where three new SHGs have been created, which is perceived by many of villagers as the undermining of the GVM.

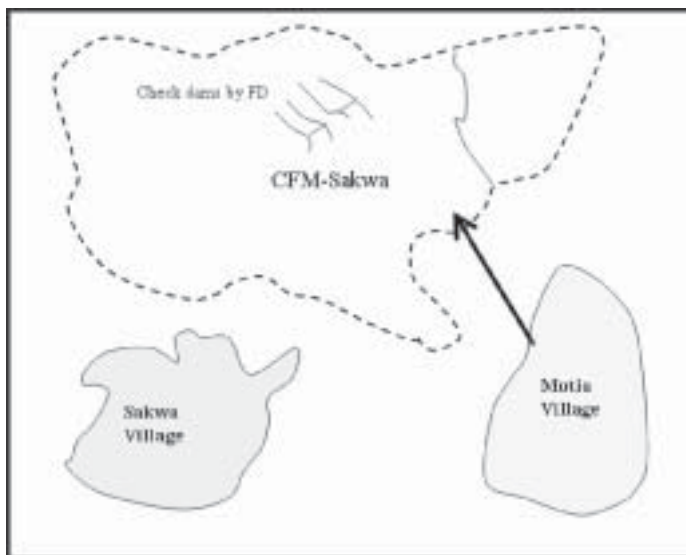
3.3 Inter-Village Conflict Scenarios



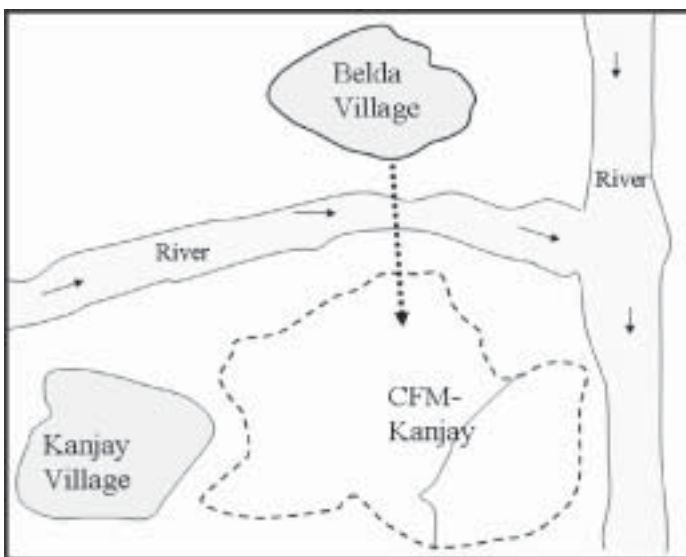
In the 1990's the FD gave JFM rights to Tabda village over 110 ha of the forest area customarily considered as belonging to Bharada village. This intensified the conflict between the two villages. The conflict became a crisis in 1999 when Tabda villagers attacked a member of the Bharada GVM. The GVM then led a prolonged agitation that ended with the granting of JFM rights over these forests to Bharada after the intervention of the DFO, Mamlatdar and police. The other inter-village conflict involves Khabji, an adjacent village, whose agricultural lands is almost surrounded by the JFM of Bharada.



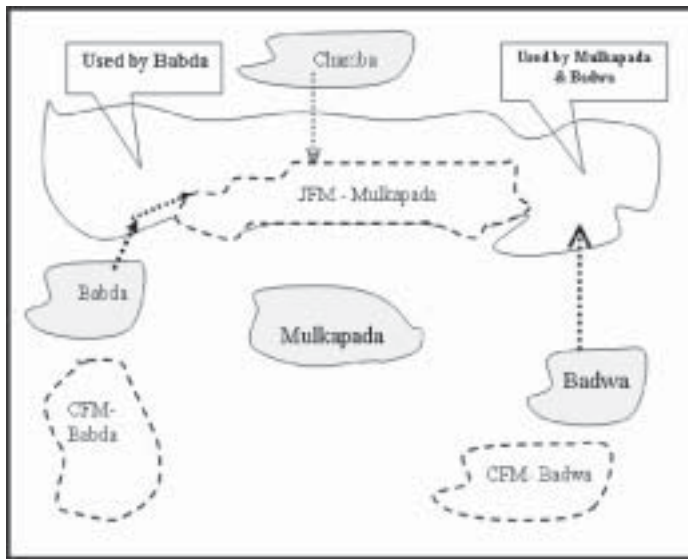
There are conflicts with other villages regarding the forest resource use. The adjacent villages, namely, Pingot, Fokadi, Pat-Kheda, Khokada, Kabchia violate the CFM norms of Rajvadi, leading to conflicts over grazing and fuel-wood collection.



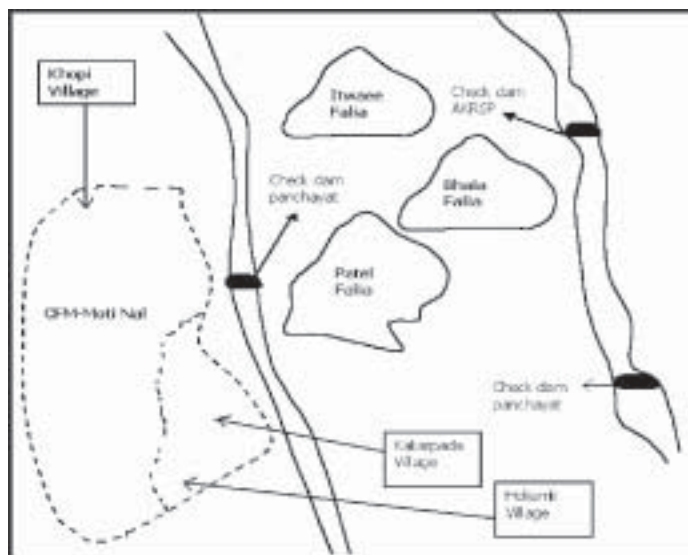
Sakva village has conflicts with adjacent villages over resource use. In 1998, one man from Motia village cut sugarcane for fodder from a private land of Sakva. This eventually led to a violent incident resulting in one death.



The village is situated inside the forest (forest village) and the competing claims of different villages are indicated in. There are no other village except Belda village, around Kanjay village. Hence there are not many inter-village conflicts, barring occasional violations of norms by Belda villagers, which are often penalised. For example, in 2004, the Kanjay GVM confiscated the buffalo of a woman from Belda village who violated the norms set by the GVM, which was released only after she paid the penalty.



In 1999, the Babda villagers burned down bamboo in the JFM area of Mulkapada. The forest protected by Mulkapada village was encroached by Babda, Chamba and Badwa villages. It is very difficult for Mulkapada village to stop such encroachments due to the proximity and the traditional entitlement of other villages to the same forest resources. Now the FD has started re-forestation in the area earlier allotted to Mulkapada under JFM and denying JFM option to Mulkapada.



The disputes between Moti Nal and Khopi villages are very old. It covers socio-cultural issues and claims over forest resources. The Khopi and Kakarpada villages often violate the grazing norms set by the GVM of Moti Nal.

4 Institutional Arrangements

4.1 Introduction

Before we discuss the institutional arrangements, which are at the core of the sustainability puzzle, it is necessary to understand the different interests the main actors have in the making or breaking institutional arrangements. One of the key concepts embodied in the membership-based organisations is that the institutional arrangements must address the core interest of the members. There is always a lurking danger that when an outsider is the architect of the

institution building, the institution may not actually address the interest of the members; instead it may be addressing issues as perceived by the designer (i.e., the NGO or another agency). For example, to the Forest Department, the institutional arrangements of JFM are primarily for the protection and conservation of the forest, while the community participating in the co-management regime is in search for a mechanism that would provide the requisite flow of forest resources, and allow them to manage the forest in order to realise those flows. On the other hand, sometimes it may happen that the involvement

of a NGO in institution building may be in pursuit of project goal or a donor given objective such as equitable or sustainable use of natural resources.

The sustainability question with the predominance of forestry, as is the case in Netrang is embedded within a triangle with the community, NGO and the FD at each of the vertices. In a long-term perspective, the FD is averse to amending the rights regime, while the community is keen to redefine the rights to usufruct and final harvest. The NGO is placed in a somewhat ambivalent position between FD and the community, and has only the option of working as an intermediary to mediate. Thus, in Netrang, the denial of rights to final harvest and the absence of formal contracts covering the JFM is a matter of concern to the AKRSP. However, in the face of the intransigence of the FD, the NGOs tend to adopt a strategy that minimises the importance and significance of the final harvest. The development, design and evolution of institutional arrangements are to a great extent shaped by these differing interests of the key stakeholders.

The other aspect of NRM related institutional arrangements concern land and water resources. The water resources management relates mostly to irrigation and has been discussed in a companion study¹¹ (Shariff, 2005). It will suffice to mention here that this is a very different problem from that of forest management. In the case of land resources, there are both common and private lands. While direct benefits are derived from both, the excludability is not an issue on the private land. On the other hand, it is a major concern on the common land resources and proper institutional arrangements are needed to control open access. In the case of private land

resources, therefore, the challenge of institutional arrangements is less complex. AKRSP has gone on to promote narrow interest, membership-based small organisations to address the needs of particular user groups such as farmers and lift irrigation users. The pan-village institutions have only a very limited role in such contexts. However, given the fact that people have dependence on multiple resources derived from forest, common land and private land, the pan-village institutional arrangements do have an important role and relevance.

There is also another transient feature to the process of developing institutional arrangements: those driven by projects. Some of the institutional initiatives are at times modified to suit project needs such as the GVM committee doubling up as a Forest Protection Committee to function in accordance with the JFM norms or a GVM committee taking on the role of the Watershed Development Committee in keeping with the needs of a watershed development project. These are essentially transient phases and in the long run, the institutional arrangements are structured with the core interests of the members/ users as the pivot.

During the field studies, we have examined the institutional arrangements in community forestry on the basis of a checklist covering the following themes:

- a) Members vs Non-Members; Access rules for benefits, input rules for members to contribute
- b) Monitoring, sanction and allocation rules
- c) Conflict resolution
- d) Access rights to forest resources with the FD and community as unequal partners in co-management

¹¹ Submitted as a M.S. dissertation to the London School of Economics and Political Science. An abridged version has been published by AKRSP.

4.2 Relations with Other Organisations

In Bharada, Rajvadi and Moti Nal, there is good cooperation between GVM and MVM. The MVM and GVM work together to manage the community managed forestland. In Moti Nal, the GVM *mantri* (secretary) attends the MVM meetings when necessary. There is not much coordination between GVM and MVM in Sakva, while MVM does not exist in Kanjay and Mulkapada.

As a result of the VI policy followed by AKRSP, many smaller groups such as SHGs and user groups were formed. In all the villages we studied, the GVM members interviewed felt that there is a shift in the AKRSP's policy in favour of smaller organisations and a large majority of the respondents from GVM membership were not very clear about the emerging role of GVM vis-à-vis these smaller interest groups and user groups. It remains a grey area. The field-level discussions during this study indicate that it would have perhaps helped the functioning of GVM and the smaller groups if the transfer of certain functions of the GVM to the smaller organisations were discussed in greater detail with the GVM through a more informed process.

The formation of large number of small focussed interest groups was followed by the creation of apex organisations bringing these different groups informally under a federated structure. These apex organisations are expected to play an important role by gradually providing the larger support to smaller organisations such as market linkages, and capacity building. However, the results are rather mixed with many of the villages studied having very weak or no links with the apex organisations. In some cases, the apex organisations have weakened. Three villages – Bharada, Rajvadi and Sakva – have functional links with federations to achieve economies of scale in matters such the procurement of seeds,

use of tractors, purchase of fertilizers, marketing of certain products, etc.

Discussions with the GVMs studied underscored the village level impression of a clear preference from the side of AKRSP towards smaller organisations. In Bharada, the shift does not appear to have had much adverse impact on the functioning of the GVM, while in the case of Kanjay, it is difficult to hazard a guess since the smaller organisations are rather new. However, in Mulkapada this has added to the crisis that the GVM has undergone following the denial of final harvest rights. In fact, in Mulkapada there is strong desire for the revival of the GVM. In Moti Nal, the impact on GVM from the formation of many smaller groups is somewhat ambiguous.

4.3 Rules/Norms for Resource Use and Benefit Sharing

In six villages GVMs have adopted their own rules and norms for the resource use and sharing the benefits. Some of these are somewhat 'standard' norms for fodder and fuel wood sharing. The GVM developed the *Chitti* system (lottery) to ensure unbiased distribution of the nearly equal shares. As far as the present status is concerned, the GVM has modified the norms according to changed circumstances and requirements by considering issues like resource availability, role of non-members, need to protect the vulnerable individuals or groups (widow, poor HH, single senior citizen HH) in the community. For example, in *Moti Nal*, the GVM has compromised with the non-members in sharing of the benefits from the JFM. The existing norm is that non-members should participate in the protection/patrolling activities. Table 5-1 gives the details of the rule/norm for resource use and benefit sharing. In all villages, the rules and norms have been evolved after the formation of GVM, covering sharing of costs and benefits, rules relating to contribution, sharing of fodder and

Table 4-1: Norms for Resource and Benefit Sharing

Villages	Grass		Final Harvest		Members	
	Members	Pruning Non-Members	Members	Non-Members	Members	Non-Members
Bharada	Equal share (heap) <i>Chitti</i> (lots) system	*	Equal share Plus provision for GVM	*	Equal share. But not yet	*
Rajvadi	Earlier equal share by <i>Chitti</i> (lots) system Presently, the norms are diluted From MVM plots, restricted only to members	Earlier, no share Now, non-members allowed	Equal share	Only fuel wood	Equal share	Not allowed
Sakva	First year equal share; followed by free grazing to the villagers	Not allowed in the 1 st year; followed by free grazing	1995-98 pruning, equal share <i>Chitti</i> (lots) system	Not allowed	Equal share	Not allowed
Kanjay	Equal share- <i>Chitti</i> (lots) system	*	Equal share	*	Equal share	*
Mulkapada	Earlier equal share Now no CFM	Earlier, not allowed	First few years equal share norms; Now no norms.	Not allowed	2001-02: Denial of full rights by FD, followed by breakdown of agreed norms; Each member managed to get approx. 100 mature bamboos each	As per agreed norms not allowed After breakdown, non members got benefits
Moti Nal	Norms set in GVM meetings (vary from time to time)	Allowed	Each HH can use 15 days to collect	Same norms as members	Equal share	No clarity

* All households are GVM members

grass, sharing fuel wood and small timber for housing.

4.4 Forest Resources – Rules and Norms

The norms and rules for the sharing of forest resources and benefits vary across the villages (Table 5-1). In most cases, the principle used is of ensuring equal share to all members. However, in many instances, the non-members too are allowed to share certain benefits. The norms also vary depending on the type of resource or benefit. In the case of grass and fodder, relaxation is

allowed for non-members in many cases. In the early phase of community forestry, grazing ban is strictly enforced and this is relaxed in the later phase. The sharing norms on grass collection and grazing are imposed as per decisions of the GVM. In Bharada and Kanjay, the GVM has 100% HH as members and the exclusion of non-members is of little practical relevance.

In the case of pruning, non-members are not allowed any share in all villages except Moti Nal, with the Rajvadi allowing non-members to collect fuel wood. Although there are norms adopted

for the final harvest, the enforcing of this remain hypothetical since forest department has so far not permitted full rights to final harvest in any of the JFM plots. Given the experience of Mulkapada, where the denial of such rights created a crisis situation, how effectively the norms regarding sharing of final harvest could be enforced would depend on the forest department. The norms – whether strong or weak and the diversity of it – show the vitality and creativity present in the GVM. Even the worst case shows that as VI model, the GVM has been quite a success in institutional sustainability. The inclusive norms covering non-members such as that adopted by Moti Nal appear to run counter to some of the theoretical positions on member

centrality in the defining of norms. However, this may have been forced by the role of the forest department and the uncertainty associated with the rights to final harvest of high value mature timber.

4.4.1 Cost Sharing in Community Forestry

There is a huge cost associated with the protection of the JFM (Shah, A. 2003), which is often not documented in the discussion on JFM. The costs include wages to watchmen, various labour costs (paid and unpaid), patrolling costs (on wages basis or by volunteers), etc. A major component of the protection activity is patrolling. The accompanying table (Table 5-2) gives the details of the protection/patrolling cost across the villages.

Table 4-2: Protection/ patrolling costs in community forestry

Villages	Patrolling Norms
Bharada	Earlier phase, GVM employed two watchmen (during 1996-2003), Rs. 800.00 per watchman per month Cost sharing norms: If members not patrolling has to give Rs. 20.00 as fine; Now the GVM rule is 6 members team for patrolling. 2005, FD provided one watchman
Rajvadi	8-male and 2 women member team; Additionally, at present, 4 watchman paid by FD- Rs 2100.00/month each
Sakva	10 members team (<i>now patrolling not working effectively</i>) One watchman paid by GVM for 6 years; Rs 700.00/month Initial 2 years one watchman: Rs 300.00/per month paid by AKRSP
Kanjay	3-member team (male) per day
Mulkapada	3-member team (earlier) per day; Now no patrolling
Moti Nal	From 1999- voluntary patrolling- 5 people team (even non-members also); Initial 2 years, 6 watchmen paid by GVM (villagers) at Rs 20.00/ HH/month; From 2004, one watchman paid by FD, Rs 2000.00 per month

Note: Patrolling is round the year (365 days almost); the FD has provided watchmen wherever there is a Van Kalyan Samiti promoted by it.

Table 4-3: Penalties for Violation of Community Forestry Norms

	Timber one tree	Fuel wood (one bhar)	Bamboo	Grass	Grazing buffalo	Grazing cow/ bullock	Grazing goat
Bharada	500 (500)	500(500)	500(500)	51 (51)	51 (51)	51 (51)	51 (51)
Rajvadi	70 (125)	20 (50)	25 (80)	—	30 (40)	25 (30)	20 (25)
Sakva	151 (151)	Confiscate	Confiscate	Confiscate	Trapping the animal (<i>dhor dabba</i>)	Trapping the animal (<i>dhor dabba</i>)	Trapping the animal (<i>dhor dabba</i>)
Kanjay	1001(1001)	500 (500)	500(500)	51 (51)	51 (51)	51 (51)	25 (25)
Mulkapada [#]	101(101)	51 (51)	101(101)	51 (51)	51 (51)	51 (51)	51 (51)
Moti Nal	501(551)	551 (551)	101(101)	22 (22)	51 (51)	51 (51)	51 (51)

Note: The figures in parenthesis are for other villagers

[#] At present, norms are not working, as GVM itself is not functioning

4.4.2 Penalties for Violation of Community Forestry Norms

The graded sanctions and penalties are imposed by the GVM in different villages. Penalties are levied from other villagers who break the norms adopted by the GVM. In villages such as Sakva, which has a leadership crisis, the old norms have ceased to work and villagers have resorted to confiscation as the penal measure. This very often aggravates conflicts, as there is little room for amicable settlement or negotiation. There is not much variation in the penalties across villages (Table 5-3)

4.4.3 Norms for Vulnerables

During the implementation period, the GVM took care to ensure that all labour from poor HH are employed in the SWC and JFM activities. During the work on farm bunding almost all the labourers were from the poor households. At present, the GVM norms in the new schemes also favour the poor. The GVM also helps widows, single senior citizen HH, poor HH by giving extra share. In Bharada, the fuel wood and share given to the GVM is used to support such vulnerable persons or groups. Thus, the VI has maintained certain social welfare measures to support the weaker

Table 4-4: Institutional Arrangements

Villages	% Members	Members & Access Rules	Monitoring & Sanction Rules	Allocation Rules	Input Rules Member's Contribution	Conflict Resolution Role	Access Rights	Overall Rating*
Bharada	100	Equal access	Shift from watchman to voluntary patrolling & graded penalties	Equal share Lottery system	Labour, patrolling. Labour contribution for cutting and sharing	H	Adhikar Patra (42% of CFM) Pruning allowed	H
Rajvadi	87	Only members have share of pruning & timber; At present, non-members allowed benefits of grass & fuel wood	Watchman to voluntary patrolling. Working.; Penalty for violating norms; Removal from membership for not attending meetings or patrolling 3 times consecutively	Earlier equal share by Lottery system Now open to non-members too; Dilution of norms.	Labour, patrolling	M.	Adhikar patra (30% of CFM) Pruning. Allowed	M
Sakva	93	Only to the members Dilution of norms New families excluded	Watchman to voluntary patrolling Not effective Dilution of penalty system	Earlier equal share.	Labour. Patrolling. Now not very effective	L	Adhikar Patr (62% CFM)	L
Kanjay	100	Equal access	Voluntary patrolling (effective) Strict penalties for violating norms	Equal share (Lottery system)	Labour. Patrolling Effective	H	No Adhikar patra (0%)	H
Mulkapada	44	Breakdown	Breakdown	Earlier equal share; Now, Breakdown	Earlier patrolling Now, Breakdown	L	No JFM now (0%)	L
Moti Nal	47	Equal access to the members. Non-members sharing protection responsibilities & getting benefits	FD watchman & Voluntary patrolling	Equal share Non-members allowed	Labour, patrolling. (Non-members also)	H	Adhikar patra (40%)	H

sections of the village. In some cases, the GVM is also providing credit to poorer households from its fund (e.g., Sakva and Moti Nal). In Kanjay, disadvantaged individuals such as widows are exempted from patrolling duties.

4.5 Summary of Institutional Arrangements

The overall findings on the functioning of institutional arrangements facilitated by the GVM are summarised here. The access and allocation norms adopted by the different GVMs have tried to ensure equal rights to all members through different means. In the absence of formal agreements, some of the norms enforced by the GVMs are subject to the supporting role of the FD. The formal access rights to forestland or *adhikar patra* has been provided only to less than 50% of the area under different levels of community forestry (Table 5-4). In all cases, the community has ensured proper patrolling of the CFM area and is even paying wages to watchmen. In the case of Moti Nal the non-members, too, are almost equally responsible for patrolling. The GVMs have acquired a high degree of legitimacy in the village, giving it a big role in conflict resolution within and between villages. Overall, among the villages studied, Bharada and Kanjay perform well, while Rajwadi and Moti Nal are moderate, Sakwa is low and Mulkapada represents a case of institutional breakdown triggered by factors external to the group, rather than any inherent deficiency of the GVM model

4.6 Relation with External Factors

The most important external 'drivers' of the GVM are the AKRSP and the Forest Department. Others, such as the markets, panchayat, etc do not play such a crucial role in the functioning of

the GVM. While AKRSP proactively tries to help and sustain the GVM, the Forest Department does not have any long-term view of the role of the GVM, as they are only keen to promote pliable FPCs. To the FD, the GVM brings in larger democratic system with accountability to the community, which they find rather uncomfortable to deal with, unlike the FPC. The GVM model promoted by the AKRSP creates an empowered pan village organisation and institutional framework that has considerable capabilities. The relations of GVM with external agencies must be seen within the framework of NGO as an external agency trying to empower communities and enhance livelihoods, the community being placed in a situation of heavy dependency on forest resources¹² bereft of any usufruct rights over these resources owned by the State and the Forest Department being reluctant to implement co-management options conceding formal usufruct rights to the community. All other external actors, though important, are not as central to the institutional sustainability of the village institutions promoted by the NGO for NRM in the context of forestry, agriculture and livestock.

The AKRSP strategy has been two pronged: a) develop institutional framework for the better management of forest resources through the co-management regimes partnering the community and the forest department and b) concurrently develop community capabilities and institutions for livelihood enhancement with agriculture as a major livelihood source, gradually reducing the dependence on forest resources as well. This is, indeed, a sound approach given the fact that the tribal community had already made a qualitative shift to settled agriculture. The AKRSP's role as

¹² The decline in the dependence of the communities on forest resources is a rather gradual process, and does not seem to become an insignificant factor in the near to medium term.

an external interlocutor helping to develop sustainable village institutions must be seen in terms of the strategies adopted. The major strategic shift, if one may call it that, is of focussing on narrow interest groups to enhance livelihoods and incomes from private efforts, as opposed to collective action for resource management linked to livelihoods. This and the confusion in the minds of the GVM members on the future of GVM was a recurring theme in the discussions at all levels during this study. There is some ambiguity whether this strategy is tantamount to negating the need for GVM or is it merely one of a greater emphasis on promoting small, narrow interest groups. A clear understanding on the conditions under which GVM or a pan-village institution is relevant and where the smaller narrow interest groups can work either in tandem with a pan-VLO or fully autonomously of it is, perhaps, very crucial in determining the exit strategy and sustainability of GVM like VLOs. In fact, this brings up the question of exit strategy, a critical aspect of the

institutional sustainability of a VI promoted by an NGO.

The discussions with GVM members, leadership and with the staff of the AKRSP SHT show that the 'exit' or 'withdrawal' or the "role shift" of the AKRSP, of when and how it did happen, is open to many interpretations. The exit strategy seem more a case of gradual diminishing of the importance assigned to the relations with GVM by the SHT, than one of a long process of dialogue involving the GVM itself, which is, perhaps, the reason for the confusion on the perceived 'undermining' of the GVM by many in the GVM, and assertion by many in the SHT that, on the contrary, they have not attempted to deliberately reduce the importance of GVM. This confusion or differences in perceptions or approach takes the attention away from the *raison être* of the GVM model, embedded in institutional needs of co-management for resource regeneration under unequal terms with the powerless community on one side and all powerful exclusive owner of the

Table 4-5: GVM and Forest Department

Villages	Forest Department
Bharada	Better relations after VKS; New CFM activity - 2005 Neglect of customary norms by FD created conflicts Agitation against FD leading to intervention by local admin, police etc for dispute settlement and enforcing new norms in 1999 Ambiguity reg. Long-term rights on CFM assets in the absence of <i>adhikar patra</i> and legal deeds Very Good working relationship, regular meetings FD help in irrigation facilities – diesel pump, main storage, distribution pipes & tanks GVM collects water charges Rs.5/- per hour of pumping
Rajvadi	Better relations after VKS New CFM activity - 2005 Conflicts over encroachment of forestland for agriculture 31 ha of JFM with MVM; Regular meetings with FD
Sakva	Poor coordination and cooperation No VKS; GVM plays the role of VKS
Kanjay	No VKS; GVM plays the role of VKS Periodic meetings with FD for pruning permission CFM activity from 2003
Mulkapada	Denial of rights to final harvest of bamboo from JFM; overlapping rights to Central Paper Mills No GVM or VKS; No forestry or forest protection activity at present
Moti Nal	VKS exists along with GVM committee New CFM activity - 2004

resource on the other. The institutional failure in Mulkapada needs to be seen against the difficulties posed by the inflexibilities ingrained in the approach of the FD and the role that an NGO can play in negotiating with the FD to ensure a fair deal to the community. The Mulkapada and Rajvadi present sharp contrasts. However, they are nothing but two sides of the same coin. In both cases, the external factors are playing a key role in bringing about either institutional breakdown or sustainability. The variety of experiences involving FD in the six villages (Table 5-5) clearly emphasise the significance of these external influences on the institutional sustainability. In all the villages, AKRSP has exited from GVM, but it is still present in the villages through the support provided to SHGs, user groups, federations, *manch* etc. These organisations are working with the direct support and guidance of AKRSP. The relations with AKRSP are shaped by how the GVM coordinates or cooperates with the other organisations promoted by the AKRSP.

5 Organisational Development

5.1 Introduction

One of the most significant aspects of a VI promoted by an NGO is the organizational development (OD) effort that goes into the crafting of the VI, as distinct from what could be called self-evolved institutional arrangements. The OD effort is linked to the perspective that the NGO has of how it envisages the future role and functionality of the VI. Here we have provided an overview of the OD efforts that created and nurtured these village level organizations since 1985. The OD efforts and the development of VIs as more or less autonomous entities in many cases are, unfortunately, insufficiently documented. What we have is rather generalized picture of the OD efforts, without too much specifics of the particular

inputs that has gone into the development of each VI.

5.2 Key Features

In the early phase, the social mobilization was heavily “process” oriented with very few “project mode” features such as targets and/or rigid time frames. The field staff enjoyed considerable freedom to determine the progress of a “process” and choose the path needed for a particular VI to reach a certain stage. Moreover, in those early days there was almost ten staff to cover just six villages, which is unthinkable today. There were huge uncertainties about which VI model can work in the given context and what kind of capacity building is needed. Neither blue print nor design for the proposed “social engineering” existed. Much of these efforts were trial and error experiments in social mobilization, which by itself was an effective process that taught the local community as well as the AKRSP team quite a lot from the positive and negative outcomes. This is a rich experience with unique narratives for each village and the special relationship the NGO staff tended to develop with what were seen as the villages for which a particular staff was considered primarily responsible. In the early phase the scale of operations were very small in all aspects with very large staff to village ratios that are simply unthinkable as per current norms. Additionally, there was not too much pressure from the donors for implementation of strict time-bound work-progress norms and activities in most instances tended to follow the edict - slow and steady shall win the race!

Although the process-oriented approach was not particularly amenable to the many variants of structured performance monitoring frameworks that are in vogue today, this approach combined with a very large staff to village ratio did entail a very close and well-informed engagement with the community life by the AKRSP team. It also

meant that each staff was, in a sense, more accountable to the organisation building process in the villages under their ambit both in technical as well as moral terms. There are instances in which individual staff wanted to or actually took full responsibility for what certain individuals strongly rued as avoidable errors. There are instances of the NGO team going as far as to share monetary losses incurred as a manifestation of a deep sense of accountability to the work and community.

Without necessarily having a well-structured monitoring framework, an effective system of close monitoring of the OD and social mobilization processes arose, buttressed by the personal commitment to villages under the charge of an individual staff and a strongly cohesive team spirit that emerged from a shared excitement in being engaged in the pioneering and challenging work in the remote area. The scale of operations and the high staff to village ratio also meant that the top levels of the NGO were even directly involved in village level work and monitoring of the OD process. From the discussions, it can be concluded that the process oriented work was very closely monitored and evaluated through micro-level approaches as the NGO leadership from top to bottom there were closely aware of grassroots situations and challenges.

5.3 Member Centrality, Savings and Livelihood Security

In the case of AKRSP, the reflection sessions with older field staff clearly point to the change brought about by the infusion of professional leadership into the NGO and its impact on the situation analysis, the NGO team structure, the reorientation of the work at grassroots and the approach to problem solving. In their view, the professionals helped to transform their field work and the technical capabilities, reorienting the trial

and error approach into a team effort that was informed by some clear thinking on the OD strategies supported by guidelines for situation assessments. What could be discerned from the discussions is a clear shift in the OD strategy towards emphasising the membership-centrality principle and the conscious efforts to reinforce the idea of VI as a membership-based organisation. The OD strategy began to focus on realising the concept with clear entitlements and incentives to members. The concept of a membership-based community organisation was “drilled into” the VI of a tribal community to whom such an idea was almost completely alien. The OD process willy-nilly taught such a community to comprehend and enforce the “member centrality principle” so that the benefit sharing sharply differentiates between members and non-members. It could also be surmised that this also constituted a departure in the approach to community mobilization as it was practiced by the field staff initially.

Two new significant elements were added to the repertoire of OD strategy:

- a) Centre-staging of savings as the pivot in the crafting of the GVM
- b) Diversifying from forestry to livelihood security as a well-defined goal for the basket of interventions and mobilization efforts

These two elements, undoubtedly, qualify to be described as the “defining characteristic” or the hallmark of the AKRSP effort in the Netrang, which, going by the trends of that period, could very well have been structured similar to the community forestry model that was then emerging in many parts of the country. Most of the community forestry models of that period tended to see forest regeneration as an end in itself and made very little or no effort to re-shape the structural aspects of the livelihood security of the communities associated with the forestry effort.

The insistence on savings almost as a prerequisite for the formation of the VI and the huge capacity building in the non-forestry sectors seem to have brought about a synergistic effect in strengthening the community's livelihood security. The AKRSP effort thus incorporated important departures and complex OD challenges ensued from this. A brief discussion is called for on this rich experience, which is neither well undocumented nor figures in the discourse on JFM experiences in the country.

5.4 Building Social Capital – a Multi-Layer approach

The changes in overall OD strategies were partly a reflection of the change in the villages and to an extent the shift in professional management ushered in by successive CEOs and other development professionals associated with these efforts. For example, during his association with AKRSP, Anil Shah who served as the CEO for about a decade emphasized the concept of "Self-Reliant Communities". The shift to savings and thrift in the building of the GVM evolved from this overriding stress on promoting self-reliance and the Herculean OD effort to craft the community organisations that can achieve this goal. This effort also laid considerable emphasis on going beyond forestry and promoting the savings habit, albeit by compulsion – the so-called compulsory savings approach, which entailed all those who worked on project activities as wage labour to deposit a part of their wages as savings that was kept aside in the GVM fund.

The professional skills of CEOs such as Barry Underwood and Apoorva Oza infused a more structured approach to the OD, based on well-defined evaluation and monitoring systems and performance benchmarks, while retaining close links with the field-level situations. Two important layers that were added to the strengthening of social capital were:

- a) Stress on gender equity and promoting the income generating and financial management capabilities of women
- b) Institutional diversification to leverage the strength of narrow interest groups naturally inclined to the membership centrality principle

5.5 Gender Concerns

While the GVMs developed and occupied a prominent place within and outside the village, the AKRSP devoted attention to remedy some of the glaring infirmities in the functioning of the GVM. A major concern was that despite persistent efforts to ensure that women do not remain marginalised in the decision-making within the GVM, there was no significant change. Autonomous women's organisations, the Mahila Vikas Mandal (MVM) were promoted. This meant that in many villages with a GVM also had a MVM, which facilitated women to not only influence decision-making of the GVM, but also address a whole lot of issues of gender and empowerment in a larger context, in the private, family and public domains. The functioning of women's organisations ushered in a new dynamics into the institutional development, which became further reinforced with the formation of women's SHGs at a later stage.

5.6 Restructuring the GVM

The promotion of narrow interest groups necessarily involved a restructuring of the GVMs that had become overloaded with multiple roles and responsibilities. With the accumulation of savings, the GVM had begun to disburse loans, some of which proved very difficult to recover, as in many cases the social and kinship relations influenced this, making the proper fund management very difficult. In fact, it became clear that the GVM was not designed for such a role and was unable to transform itself to play such a role. The AKRSP team began to realise that the

size of funds was beginning to have rather unsavoury consequences on the GVM itself, as this was increasingly playing a role in shaping the power and influence of the VI leadership. Eventually, with good intentions, a re-structuring process was started around 1997 aimed at ending the role of GVM in managing the savings fund.

The task of restructuring GVM proved to be a very difficult one involving the promotion of SHG groups and micro-finance institutions, which was looked upon with suspicion by many in the GVM leadership. Since a few of the GVMs had begun to develop as “power centres” and as the cloud of elite capture loomed large over many GVMs, the AKRSP team placed the re-structuring of the GVM on a fast track mode, in contrast to the early phase when it was built patiently brick-by-brick through a highly process-oriented approach. Starting from a very open and transparent process-oriented phase, the restructuring became a somewhat painful and hurried exercise fraught with misgivings. It is evident that GVMs paid a heavy price as some of the gains in social capital formation accrued over a decade was jeopardized in a quite a few cases partly due to the pace at which this exercise was executed and to a degree due to the time tables set for the formation of new SHGs that were to fill in the vacant institutional gap.

However, on the whole it stands as an eloquent testimony to the robustness of the GVM model that it refused to fade away and continued to occupy a legitimate place, despite the proliferation of other narrow interest institutions. This was, perhaps, not entirely anticipated and after it became evident that GVMs are not redundant in the institutional map, a better understanding is emerging on how to bring about a better balance among the different village institutions. Objectively, the GVMs together with a variety of other village level organisations – SHGs, user

groups, interest groups, federations, etc – dramatically transformed the institutional landscape in the region, building resource management capabilities and increasing livelihood security.

5.7 Silent Advocacy

While considering the OD efforts associated with the GVM, it must be kept in mind that since many of the initiatives by AKRSP in the region were pioneering efforts which lacked any firm policy and legal enabling environment, considerable effort had to be put into prolonged dialogue with the government to ensure some degree of legitimacy to the institutional arrangements that were emerging. This was the difficult terrain on which the institutional development was progressing. It can be said that one of the supporting strategies which the AKRSP used to overcome the policy and legal barriers was to effectively bank on the abilities of successive CEOs and the clout of some of the well-intentioned government functionaries (serving and retired) to silently lobby for creating an enabling environment or obtain tacit approval. However, these efforts did not result in the establishing lasting and reliable paths for the village institutions to traverse over the highly perilous terrain of the co-management of state owned forest. Much of the negotiated arrangements depended on individuals within and outside the government. It also critically hinged on the attitude of middle and lower functionaries. These constraints continue to plague the institutional space in forestry, despite policy and legal support. The OD efforts in a crucial phase of the establishment of the GVMs were unfolding against the backdrop of action on three tracks: a) intense grassroots involvement b) middle-level engagement with the Govt Officials and c) top-level lobbying, mostly as silent efforts (in contrast to open “advocacy”).

5.8 Close Monitoring

The whole approach to crafting of village institutions gradually changed from a rather amorphous early stage to a highly structured one as it is today. The inputs from professionals as well as field staff have gone into this. The process of initiating a community-based organisation to steering it to a stage where it can function autonomous of the NGO involves considerable designing, close monitoring and perhaps even what could be construed as excessively “tight” management¹³. The important milestones in this endeavour are the development of tools for helping this process such as a) Institutional Maturity Index – IMI and b) Logical Framework for Organisation Development – Log-FID, an extension of the LFA (Logical Framework Analysis) used in project planning and implementation to the realm of OD.

5.9 Emerging Thinking

Some of the reviews and assessments carried out by the AKRSP of the program impacts have led to a special focus on the poorest, as it was seen that often the poorest seem to be marginalised even within development interventions. There is recognition that institutions of the poor must be promoted as basic building blocks of a larger network which could work in coordination with the larger cluster or area programs. As result of such an approach, several new institutional approaches have emerged. The separate organisations for the most marginalised and socially excluded communities such as that of the Kotwalia in Netrang is an example. Since the poor have diverse livelihoods, the initial work with them may be as individual households rather than through group formation and this is an approach

which AKRSP(India) has been trying out. Also, in order to derive benefits of aggregation for agri-input supply and marketing, as also negotiate with the government agencies, farmer group federations and women’s group federations have also been promoted in the last 5-8 years which have changed the institutional landscape and reduced AKRSP(India)’s staff’s direct role and interaction with older village organizations.

It is seen that only when these organisations begin to function with some degree of autonomy and confidence, the other institutions begin to concede ground and space to the hitherto excluded communities, eventually leading to more balanced albeit negotiated partnerships between them. These more recent developments are not captured in this study. However, there is scope for reflecting on the experience of the GVM in the cases where a more simplistic social inclusion approach was attempted, as documented here, by allowing the marginalised group to be formally recognised as equal members of the village institution, whereas *de facto* this was not the case. Presently, within AKRSP, there is a recognition that the task of crafting sustainable institutional frameworks and scaling them up would of necessity be a far more complex and diverse task than that envisaged in some of the models that are currently favoured in the development discourse as universal solutions. Based on the experiences from a variety of contexts and institutional models, AKRSP appear to be re-assessing the design principles and organisational development strategies employed to promote sustainable village institutions and evaluating the possibilities for strengthening them through appropriate aggregation mechanisms.

¹³ See for e.g., the observation made in the Report on JFM prepared by Manish for AKRSP

7. Concluding Discussion

The discussion in the preceding chapters of this report provides an analytical exploration of the GVM functioning against the background of the AKRSP's exit from providing direct guidance and support. The village level organisations such as the GVM and MVM appear in most cases to be well rooted in the community as functional entities barring the rare exceptions. The studies point to the close linkages among the different factors considered causing one factor to respond to the changes in the other.

Among the study villages, the earliest CFM effort is of 1989 in Sakva village followed by Mulkapada in 1992. The six villages studied exhibit much variation in the progress of CFM. The CFM effort in Mulkapada village, one of the earliest to join the effort, however, was limited to just one. Sakva, Kanjay and Moti Nal villages had two, while Bharada and Rajwadi had 7 and 6 efforts, respectively. In terms of both resource availability and institutional functioning, a succession of CFM, even in small patches, has major implications. Overall, among the villages studied, Bharada and Kanjay perform well, while Rajwadi and Moti Nal are moderate, Sakva is low and Mulkapada represents a case of institutional breakdown triggered by factors external to the group. The crisis of leadership, collective action and institutional arrangements in Mulkapada revolves around the denial of final harvest rights over mature bamboo and handing over of the bamboo at a highly discounted price to a paper manufacturing company by the Forest Department.

At a general level, the following observations are valid for most of the GVMs, including the one case of institutional breakdown discussed in this study.

- Appear to be well rooted in the community as functional entities with some exceptions
- Displays considerable adaptability to different situations
- Resource management challenges are specific to the JFM framework of co-management model and the implications of this on VI cannot be minimised for short or long-term benefits or usufruct rights
- More active and functional when there are a series of forestry efforts that ensures diverse resource flows/ benefits
- Impact of the presence of a multiplicity of organisations (SHGs, Federations, etc) is ambiguous with respect to GVM (both positive and negative)

The study shows that the GVM model presents a case where a high degree of institutional sustainability has been achieved through the systematic efforts in organisational development and capacity building of local communities. It has also shown the enormous creativeness of the community to innovate and adapt to the need for change in the institutional space. This study suggests that the type of pan-village VLO promoted by AKRSP was an institutional need that got readily adopted and adapted to the community needs in conformity with the diversity of group characteristics and therefore became easily amenable to adaptation and change in the hands of the community. However, the uncertainties in usufruct rights, central to the co-management of state owned forests by the community disturb the institutional arrangements. The fact that final harvest cycles could vary between 5 to 15 years or more necessitates the village institutions in JFM to outlast these cycles so that they are in a position to assert their rights over the final harvest. It follows that once the uncertainties in rights to the timber and non-timber produce are ensured, many possibilities open up for the VIs involved

in JFM to embark upon sustainable livelihood strategies under a production forestry model.

5.10 Resources, Rights, AKRSP & Forest Department

It is all too evident that both the usufruct rights and ownership rights are affecting the modes of collective functioning, individual behaviour towards resource management, the role of external agencies such as the NGO and the resource itself. All these are important for institutional sustainability. The functioning of GVM in Bharada and Rajvadi clearly illustrates the case where the relative abundance of resources makes a positive influence on group cohesion, while the Moti Nal shows how the GVM has been able to bring members and non-members together for resource management despite the extremely small area assigned to the group for forest protection. At the same time Bharada and Rajvadi has also been fortunate to receive continuous cooperation from either AKRSP and/ or Forest Department, resulting in diverse flow of resources through a series of JFM efforts spread almost evenly over the last one decade. The scheduling of a series of forestry efforts emerges as an important insight.

The experience from soil and moisture conservation shows how the GVM has been able to successfully adopt ways of catering to the needs of both common and private land. With land resources, village level collective action is important in the overall SWC; but is less important subsequently. After the initial SWC activities, small user groups are more crucial for land resources management on private farmland. However, across the study villages we have examples of meaningful coordination between the GVM and other organisations, despite the lack of clarity on the future of GVM vis-à-vis land resources management as illustrated by the

examples of GVM helping to organise SWC work on private land.

The sustainability of the GVM is delicately poised between the support it can get from an NGO and the unequal relations with the FD. The formal access rights to forestland or *adhikar patra* has been provided only to less than 50% of the area under different levels of community forestry. The fact that major issues remain unresolved in this sphere is fully recognised by the AKRSP and has also been pointed out in other studies commissioned by the AKRSP. However, this is the Achilles heel of the GVM and the least developed aspect of its development. It is a grey area that calls for more thought and action. The GVM's capacities in the complex terrain of property rights, enforceability of contracts, negotiations with the state (represented by the Forest Dept.), etc are hardly sustainable given the internal deficiencies in technical and knowledge capacities of the GVM. The relevance of GVM is two fold: firstly, as a pan village institution for sustainable resource management, and secondly, to ensure that a capable VI is present to leverage necessary arrangements with external agents, other villages, the NGO and the State.

5.11 Livelihood Enhancement & Institutional Stability

The interventions covered almost all aspects of improving the land resources and these changes in turn have resulted in huge spin-offs and multiplier effects through an overall increase in the number of labour-days per year in the agricultural sector. The interventions include enhancing the irrigation facilities as well. Additionally, in some villages the livelihood patterns have changed due to significant increase in the share of incomes from livestock sector. Certain villages today have large income flows from livestock-based economic activity,

particularly due to the emergence of milk production for the market and tie-ups for marketing arrangements. The increase in availability of grass and fodder from the community-managed forests has helped to improve livestock-based livelihood options and positively affected the GVM by enhancing the institutional legitimacy. This has also strengthened or contributed to external linkages such as the relations with milk marketing cooperatives. The reduction in distress migration and increase in livelihood options made possible with greater resource security appear to have enhanced the institutional stability, partly by increasing the stakes in the GVM of those who have managed to benefit from the new institutional arrangements.

5.12 Inclusive Approach to Non-Members

The functioning of GVM model in Moti Nal makes a very interesting case from the point of view of institutional sustainability because it is functioning with a new community forestry effort starting in 2004 without the active guidance of AKSRP after a gap of six years since the first forestry effort supported by AKRSP. This case also presents an unusual case of an inclusive arrangement in NRM where the leadership provided by the member-based organisation, accommodates non-members as well in all aspects, blurring the distinction between members and non-members with respect to decision-making, resource management responsibilities and benefit sharing. In addition, the Van Kalyan Samiti promoted by the Forest Department, too, is functioning in tandem with GVM committee. Many of these are institutional changes that have emerged autonomous of AKRSP after the exit bereft of any guidance from AKRSP even though the organisation has a presence in the village through other activities. The inclusive arrangements, we suspect, is perhaps influenced

by the uncertainties associated with the rights to final harvest and the reluctance of the forest department to concede these rights even in a single case.

5.13 Success of GVM as a Pan Village Model

Although GVM is a membership-based organisation, being pan-village in character it incorporates considerable heterogeneity of interests, although there is convergence when it comes to the needs for forest resources. In other words, despite diverse interests, the common interest in forest resources or rather resource security provides a sufficiently strong basis for collective action and adoption of norms that sacrifice individual interests substantially. We have seen that, starting with more or less the same prescription and approach for development of village institution provided by the AKRSP, a variety of institutional arrangements have emerged demonstrating the vitality of the model and its sustainability. The concepts introduced from outside has been gradually altered to a great extent in many instances to bring them closer to traditional practices. The GVM developed as a pan-village institution without conflicting with indigenous institutions, more by 'evolution' than by design.

While the sustainability of the GVM model is demonstrated by its functioning in different villages after the exit of the NGO, the implications of a shift in the NGO's perception of the VI also appears to be a factor having a bearing on the institutional sustainability, as such a shift has the potential to inhibit the functioning of the VI, particularly when uncertainties surface regarding the post-exit roles and relations. It seems quite evident that the GVM model has not only been appropriate to the NRM and socio-cultural context, but it has also been able to effectively absorb the capacity building inputs from the AKRSP. The degree of development

achieved, even in the worst case considered in the study – the Mulkapada GVM and the institutional issues associated with it – demonstrate that while the GVM has great strengths in terms of its role as a pan village institution, the issues of external linkages are far too complex in so far as JFM is concerned.

The fact that pan-village institutional forms have sustained despite alternatives that have been promoted by the AKRSP itself in these villages shows that are strong motivations for pan-village norms and inter-village negotiating arrangements dictated by the specific resources management challenges. The most critical aspect of institutional sustainability is the need for creating mechanisms necessary to mediate the linkages with external agencies. Clearly, the village level institutions by themselves cannot address this as it involves larger actors external to the village and policy environment. Neither does the current JFM framework addresses these issues. The institutional sustainability of GVM as an instrument for community-based forestry in a co-management context is not one that involves the VI alone, but also of redrawing institutional space involving external actors and the VI.

5.14 Exit Strategy & Post-Exit Role

The exit or withdrawal strategy of the NGO can be very challenging in such a complex context, where the community is not entirely 'free' to make its own decisions on NRM and its decisions are subject to various limitations imposed by legal or policy frameworks. The field studies indicated that there is widespread confusion regarding what the 'exit' or 'withdrawal' meant to the GVM. The organisational development approaches articulated in documents of the AKRSP do not dwell sufficiently on the difficulties inherent in the JFM framework or the forestry resources management, particularly when the villages have a high dependency on forest

resources. It appears that so long as villages have a significant dependence on forest resources, a rethink is perhaps called for in the exit strategy.

The challenge of promoting institutional arrangements and building capacities to facilitate JFM as a just and fair system, perhaps, needs to find a place in the exit plan. What could be termed second-generation issues in JFM, now pose major challenges and remain as un-addressed issues in the context of institutional sustainability. It appears that exit process in Netrang was somewhat, ambiguous and at this stage it is difficult to assert what would have been the implications of a more structured exit. The inference is that exit process to facilitate sustainability, ought to be informed by a clear understanding of the different phases of institutional development. The exit process needs to be supported by better tools kits than are available today to the field staff.

Another important issue that emerges from the study is that of the post-exit role of the AKRSP, which is also not a well-defined area either in the organisational development guidelines or in the field-level practice. This assumes added significance when the NGO continues to have presence in the village, and yet maintains a rather ambivalent attitude to the VI (GVM) from which it has exited. The situation leads to considerable uncertainties as well as provide fertile ground for misunderstandings when other forms of village organisations are encouraged by the NGO. There are also unresolved issues of post-exit role of the NGO in the VI's relationship with other external agencies particularly in terms of the VI's expectations as well as felt needs.

5.15 Issues for Further Probe

The case studies from Netrang have helped to sharpen the study and better define the lines for further probing. In the end, this study has to

discuss in concrete terms factors that seem to facilitate sustainability of village institutions promoted by NGOs. The case study on Netrang provides some clues facilitating discussion on what could be considered as “good” practices favouring sustainability. But these are limited to one VI model and certain situational peculiarities. This study, however, has helped to develop a well-structured study framework for investigating the sustainability question in concrete terms. To sum up, some of the questions that must be incorporated in the studies to follow are stated here for discussion:

- Significance of village cohesion, leadership and traditions of collective action
- Aspects of institutional arrangements in reducing uncertainty (time, quantity, location, quality, etc) felt in flow of benefits/ resources
- Sensitivity of the NGO’s VI development strategy to the characteristics of the resource, property and access rights regime and negotiating arrangements
- Importance of exit strategy and the process: scheduling, phasing, measuring, role of the VI, etc
- Post-exit role and relationship of the NGO vis-à-vis the VI
- Role of NGO in re-drawing the institutional space for VI to negotiate with external agencies

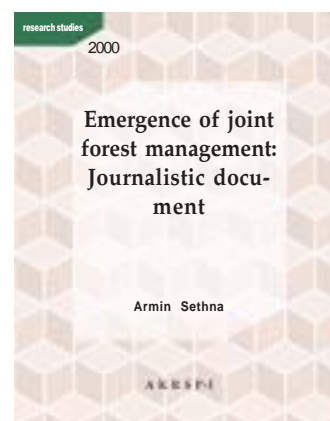
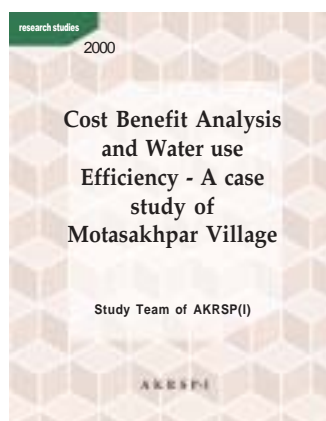
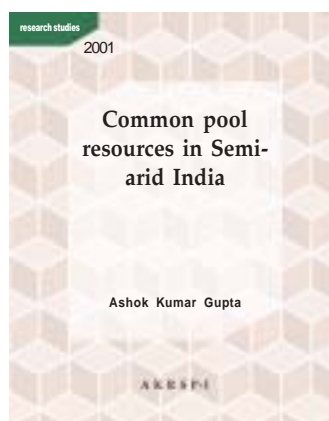
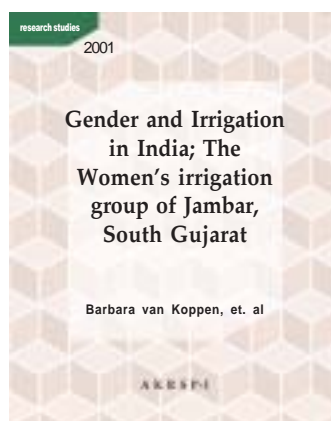
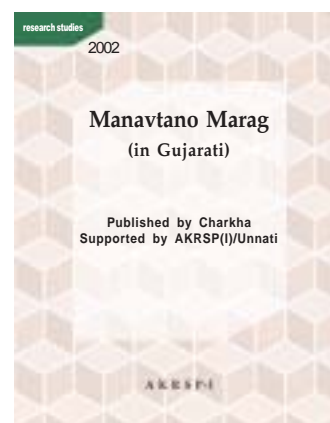
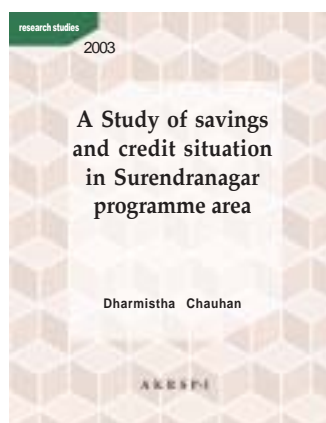
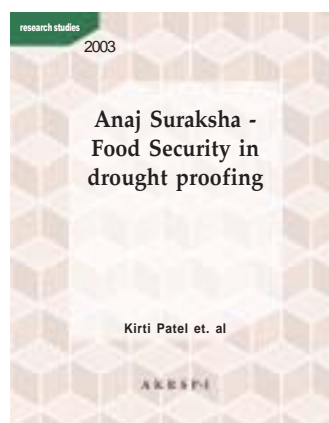
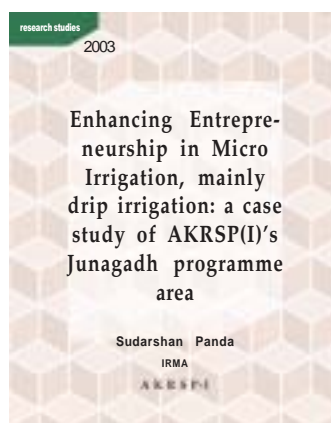
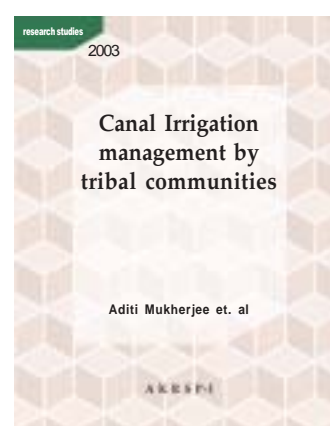
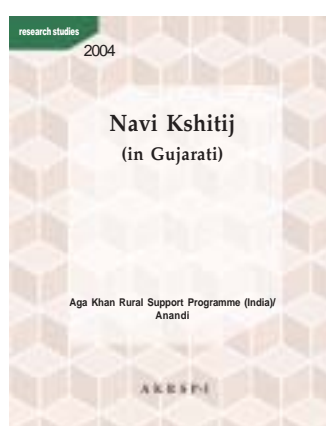
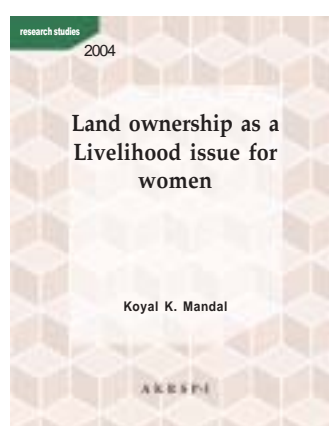
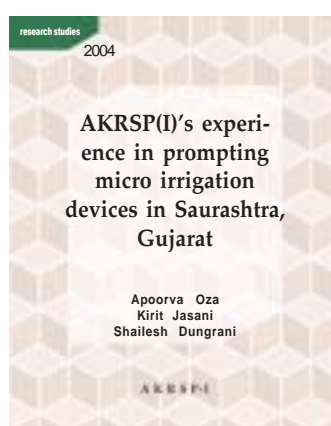
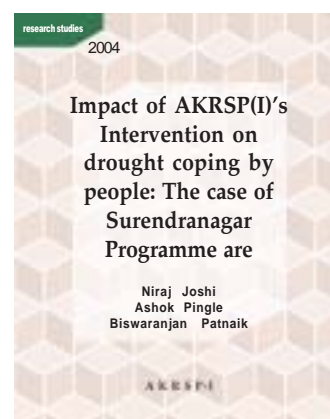
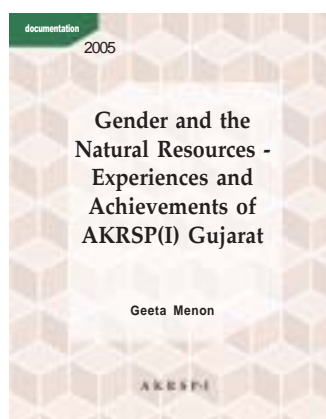
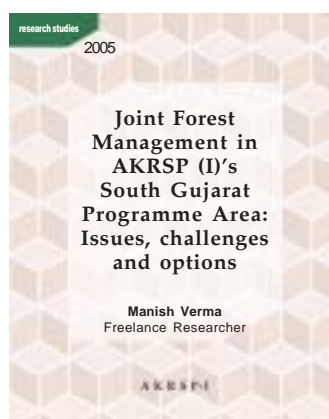
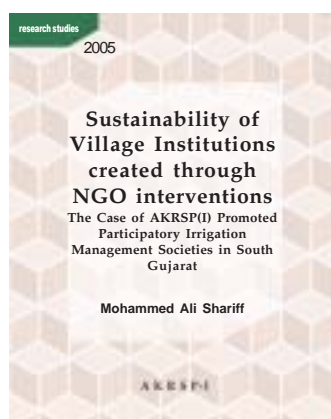
A synthesis of the experiences from different contexts and approaches will help to draw general conclusions on the issues that are central to the study.

7. References

- Agarwal A (2002), “Common Resources and Institutional Sustainability”, In *The Drama of the Commons*, Committee on the Human Dimensions of Global change. E. Ostrom. T. Dietz, N. Dolsak, P.C. Stern, S. Stovich and E.U. Weber (Eds) Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, National Academy Press, Washington DC.
- Baland J.M. and J.P. Platteau (1996), *Halting Degradation of Natural Resources: Is there a Role for Rural Communities?*, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and Clarendon Press, Oxford.
- Bromley, D.V., (1992) *Making the commons work: Theory, Practice and Policy*. Institute of Contemporary Studies Press, San Francisco.
- Brown, B., Hanson M., Liverman D., and Meredith R. (1987), “Global Sustainability: Toward Definition.”, *Environmental Management*, Vol. 1, No. 6: pages 713-719
- Carpenter, Richard A. (1993). “Can Sustainability be Measured?” *Environmental Strategy* 5, (February): 13-16.
- Chambers, R. (1983). *Rural Development: Putting the Last First*, Longman: London.
- Chopra, K, and S.C.Gualati. (2001). *Migration, Common Property Resources and Environmental Degradation: Inter-linkages in India’s Arid and Semi-arid Regions*, Sage Publications, New Delhi.
- Deshpande R.S. and Narayanamoorthy A., (2004), “Irrigation Institutions in India With Special Reference to Maharashtra State”, Paper for presentation at the 18th European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies (SASNET), Lund, Sweden 6-9 July 2004.
- Dietz T., N. Dolsak, E. Ostrom, P.C. Stern (2002), “The drama of the commons”, in *The Drama of the Commons*, Committee on the Human Dimensions of Global change. E. Ostrom. T. Dietz, N. Dolsak, P.C. Stern, S. Stovich and E.U. Weber (Eds) Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, National Academy Press, Washington DC.
- Dixit, A.M., Geevan, C.P., and Silori, C.S. (2001) “Status of natural terrestrial vegetation in Gujarat: A reassessment”, *Indian Forester* 127(5): 533-546
- Geevan C.P., Dixit, A.M. and Silori, C.S. (2002), *Land Degradation in Gujarat: Problems, Challenges & Actions*, Gujarat Ecology Commission, Vadodara.
- Gupta, A.K and Joshi, N. (2004), *Emergence of Second Generation Issues in Operationalising JFM: AKRSP(I)’s Experiences in South Gujarat*, AKRSP internal discussion paper.

- Honadle, G., and J. VanSant (1985), *Implementation for Sustainability: Lessons from Integrated Rural Development*, Kumarian, West Hartford.
- Landell-Mills, N. (1998), *Cost-Benefit Analysis: A useful tool for evaluating watershed Development Projects?* Paper prepared for National Workshop on Watershed approaches to wasteland development, New Delhi, 27-29 April 1998.
- North, D.C. (1990), *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*, Political Economy of Institutions and Decision Series, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Ostrom, E. (1990), *Governing the Commons: the Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*, Political economy of Institutions and Decision series, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Ostrom, E. (1992), *Crafting Institutions for Self-Governing Irrigation Systems*. Institute for Contemporary Studies Press, San Francisco.
- Rasmussen L and Ruth Meinzen-Dick (1995), "Local Organizations for Natural Resource Management: Lesson from Theoretical and Empirical Literature, EPTD Discussion Paper No 11, IFPRI, Washington DC.
- Shah, A. (2003) *Minimising costs, Maximising Benefits*, Development Support Centre, Ahmedabad and SPWD, New Delhi
- Shah, T. (2003), *Management of Natural Resources*, Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, Bombay.
- Shariff, M.A. (2005), *Sustainability of Village Institutions Created Through NGO Interventions*. M.S. dissertation to the London School of Economics & Political Science (unpublished)
- Uphoff, N.T. (ed.) (1982), *Rural Development and Local Organisations in Asia*, vols. 1 & 2. Macmillian India, Delhi
- Wade, R. (1988), *Village republics: economic conditions for collective action in South India*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

AKRSP(I):Recent Publications



Sustainability of Village Institutions Promoted by NGOs

Case Study on the Gram Vikas Mandal Promoted by AKRSP (I), Netrang, South Gujarat

Forestry & Livelihoods

This research is part of a series of case studies on the sustainability of village institutions promoted by NGOs in the context of natural resource management and livelihood improvement. It is envisaged as a partnership involving several NGOs with a credible track record in development work spanning more than a decade. This report emerges from the first set of studies. It focuses on the autonomous functioning of the Gram Vikas Mandal – a village institution promoted by the AKRSP in the forested tribal areas of South Gujarat, after the AKRSP stopped actively guiding or supporting it. The study is based on intensive field investigations, focussed group discussions with community as well as in-depth dialogue with the NGO team and leadership. The vitality of the village institutions working autonomously of the NGO and the conditions under which that happens are documented in this work. This study also point to the constraints of the institutional space encountered by village-level organisations working under a co-management framework for forest resources.

AGA KHAN RURAL SUPPORT PROGRAMME (INDIA)

central office

9/10th floor, corporate house
opp. dinesh hall, ashram road
ahmedabad 380 009

Tel: +91-79-66312451/61

Fax: +91-79-66312471

Email: mail.akrsp.org

registered office

sorijini house, 2nd floor
6, bhagwandas marg
new delhi 110 001