

INTERNAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

PROJECT: Improvement of Livelihood through sustainable management of Natural Resources in southern Karnataka

1. FORMAL DETAILS

- **Name of the NGO:** DISHA Trust®
- **Address:** V.V Compound, Salmara, Kaikamba, Kinnikambala Post - 574151, Mangalore Taluk, Dakshina Kannada District, Karnataka, India. Ph:08242259057
- **Person in charge:** Mrs Irene Veigas, Managing Trustee.
- **Title of the project:** Improvement of Livelihood through sustainable management of Natural Resources in Southern Karnataka
- **Project Number:** I-574-07/18
- **State /District:** Karnataka/Dakshina Kannada
- **Duration of the project:** 01-07-2018 to 31-12-2021 (Extended up to 31 December 2022)
- **Project villages**

Panchayaths	Villages
1.Sangabettu	Sangabettu, Karpe
2.Kukkipady	Kukkipady, Yeliyanadugodu
3.Chennaithodi	Chennaithodi, Ajjibettu, Pilimogaru, Kodambettu
4.Panjikallu	Budoli, Modanadugodu, Panjikallu
5.Rayee	Rayee, Koila
6.Arala	Arala
7.Amtadi	Amtadi, Kuriyala
8.Badagabellur	Badagabellur, Thenkabellur
9.Ammunje	Ammunje
10.Kariyangala	Kariyangala

PROJECT GOAL, OBJECTIVES

Goal (Impact):

1. Livelihood improvement of marginal farmers, landless and women through the protection of natural resources in West Ghats / Karnataka.

Objectives (Outcome)

- The productivity of 2000 marginal farmer households has increased through resource protection measures, resulting in the yields meeting the livelihood needs of the majority of families who own a respective piece of land.
- The supply of agricultural products (esp. fresh vegetables and fruits) at local markets in the project region has improved.
- The target group will be involved in decision-making processes by the government regarding the development of the project region (In the management of natural resources and beyond)

Sub-Objectives:

- The self-help structures of small farmers work independently
- The agricultural yields in 20 project villages are increased through erosion control and water protection measures.
- The groundwater level in 20 project villages, where it has distinctly decreased before, has increased and the soil erosion is reduced.
- A minimum of 500 small farmers conduct ecological agriculture. As a result, the groundwater is kept clean and the quality of agricultural products increases.
- 60 families reduce their logging and thus protect the vegetation through the use of biogas plants.

Internal Assessment Objectives:

1. To assess the functioning of FDGs and the Federation of FDGs in the project villages
2. To assess the improvement in agricultural yields after adopting soil and water conservation measures by the small and marginal farmers
3. To estimate the improvement in vegetable production among the marginal and farmers
4. To observe the increase in water level after adopting water conservation practices by the small and marginal farmers
5. To confirm the usefulness of various soil and water conservation measures adopted by the farmers on their land

Assessment Methodology

- Interview members of the FDGs and Federation of FDGs (FFDGs) with the predesigned questionnaire in the meetings.
- Field visit to the houses of the selected participants of various project interventions for observation and verification.
- Interview stakeholders of specific water and soil conservation interventions in their respective locations in the project villages.
- Verification of meeting registers/reports, and bank passbooks of each FDG and FFDG.
- Verification of records kept by farmers regarding water level and paddy cultivation.

To ensure objectivity of findings, DISHA interchanged the field staff working in project villages while doing the assessment.

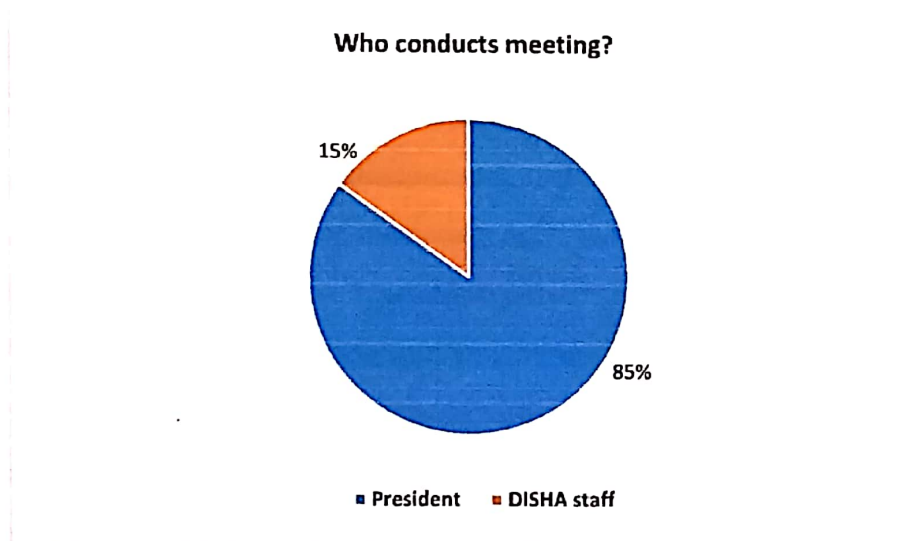
Main findings of the assessment

Under this project DISHA has promoted 40 FDGs in 20 villages. Each FDG is consisting of the small and marginal farmers with representation by both men and women.

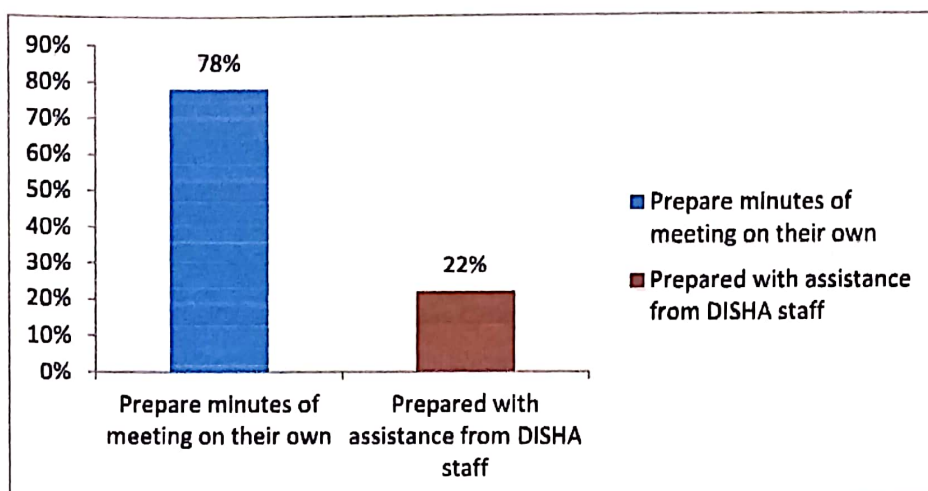
Of these FDGs, 18 are 6 years old, eight of them completed 5 years, 12 completed 4 years and two FDGs completed three years of formation.

Assessment was done by taking responses from the office bearers and members of all 40 FDGs.

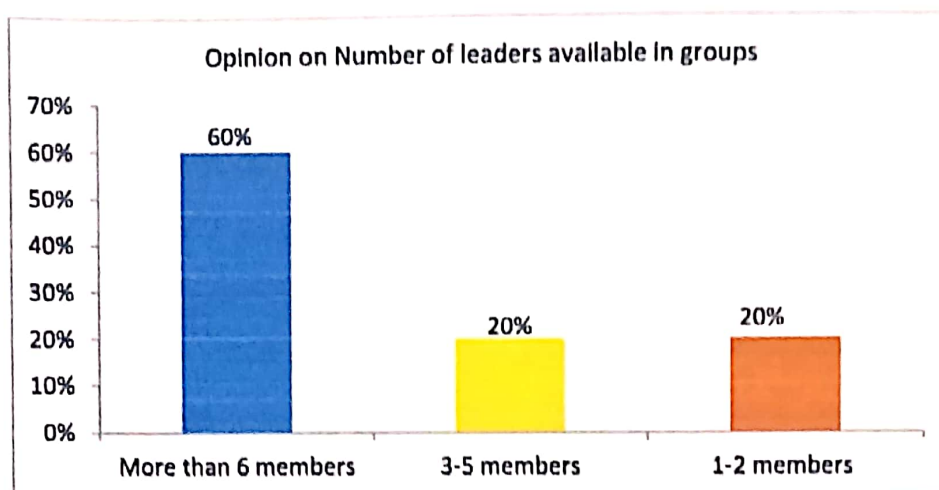
1. Assessment of the functioning of FDGs



- In 34 FDGs, meetings are conducted by the Presidents independently while in 6 FDGs Field Staff of Disha help in conduct of the proceedings.
- In 29 FDGs (72.5%), the agendas of the meetings were decided by the Office bearers respectively while in 11 FDGs, DISHA staff helped them.
- Out of a total of 40 FDGs, 32 FDGs conduct meetings regularly.
- Out of a total of 40 FDGs, 36 FDGs hold meetings in a fixed place.
- According to the responses collected from 39 FDGs, the decisions on holding meetings are taken based on the consensus of all members.
- Data shows in 23 FDGs, agendas is prepared on the day of the meeting, in 9 FDGs it is proposed in the previous meeting and in 8 FDGs agendas is prepared one week before the meeting.



- According to data collected from 40 FDGs, 31 (78%) FDGs are able to prepare minutes on their own while 9 FDGs (22%) seek DISHA staff assistance for the same.
- In 38 FDGs, the Secretary/members present minutes of the meetings while in 2 FDGs, DISHA staff render assistance.
- In 25 FDGs, the treasurer of the respective FDG presents the accounts in the meeting while this practice is not found in the remaining 15 FDGs.
- In 22 FDGs, Office bearers of the respective FDGs inform the meeting date to all members and while in 18 FDGs it is both the Office bearers and DISHA staff who jointly do this task.
- In the meetings, decisions are taken generally based on the consensus of members present during the meeting while in 4 FDGs this practice is not followed.
- According to the assessment, in 22 FDGs the practice of ensuring quorum before starting meetings is found.



- In 24 FDGs (60%) more than six members, 3 to 5 members in 8 FDGs (20%) and 1 to 2 members in 8 FDGs (20%) are ready for taking leadership.
- All 40 FDGs reported that the formation of FDGs benefitted them to express solidarity, learning and working together on water and soil conservation activities.
- According to 28 FDGs, there is clarity about the objectives of FDGs among members while 12 FDGs reported it as part.
- 22 FDGs reported that they are able to manage the group independently while 18 FDGs sought help from DISHA staff for group management.
- Attendance of members during meetings of FDGs is found good in 28 FDGs, satisfactory in 10 FDGs and poor in 2 FDGs.
- The practice preparation of a yearly action plan is found in 26 FDGs.
- Participation of members in the training programs conducted in the FDGs was found good in 36 FDGs and satisfactory in 4 FDGs.
- 36 FDGs reported training conducted in FDGs benefitted their members while 4 FDGs reported part benefit.
- Almost all the FDGs showed interest and made efforts to advocate the needs and demands of farmers in the local level rural governance bodies and respective departments of the Government.
- Almost all the FDGs took an active role in identifying and following up with partners for the implementation of proposed soil and water conservation measures.
- It was observed that almost all the FDGs worked closely with DISHA to implement interventions.

Specific benefits did members receive after joining FDGs? (Main responses)

- Members developed the courage to represent their needs in the Grama panchayaths.
- Got an opportunity to come together to share opinions and express solidarity.
- Got lot of information and knowledge about water and soil conservation methods.
- Members are able to implement organic farming methods on their farm.
- Members are able to see the soil and conservation activities conducted by farmers in other areas.
- Members got the opportunity to improve their crop production.
- Started growing vegetables and supply to the market.
- Started mulching practice in their farms and maintained vermicompost pits.
- Able to install gobar gas units and started using gobar gas slurry as manure for crops.
- Members are convinced about water and soil conservation methods and started practicing on their land.
- Able to form a cooperative society to meet credit needs.
- Got benefits under the NREGA program of the panchayat to improve their agricultural production.
- Got identity cards as construction workers from the Department of Labour which benefitted them.
- Members got benefits under various programs of the government.

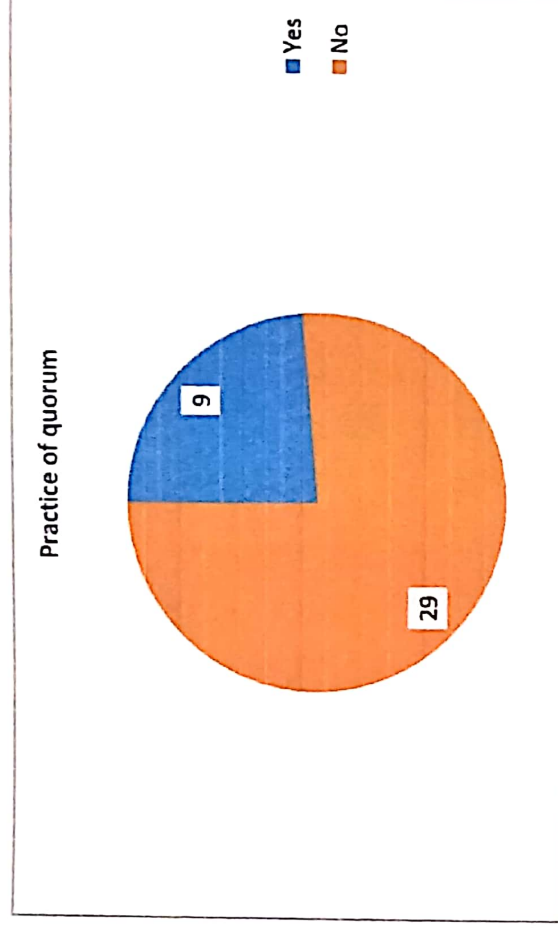
2. Assessment of the functioning of the Federation of FDGs (Nethravathi Federation of FDGs):

Nethravathi Federation is an apex body of 40 FDGs promoted as part of the project process. This was promoted in the year 2019 (June). This was formed by the representation of the President and Secretary of 40 FDGs, that is a total of 80 members from FDGs and one representation from DISHA (Project Director).

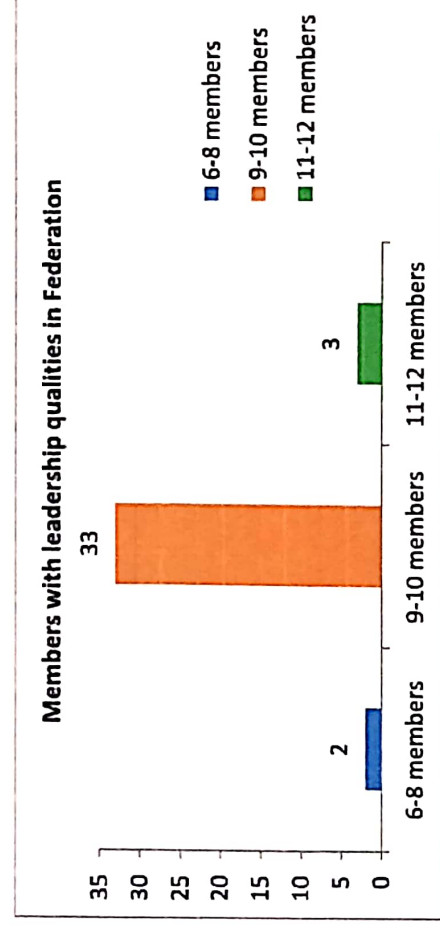
- 38 members participated during the assessment.
- Meetings are held once in three months (The third Tuesday of the month) and attendance is always more than 60%.
- There is an executive committee of 13 members, which meets monthly. On average 10 members attend the meetings.
- According to the responses collected from members, the decisions on holding meetings are taken based on the consensus of all members. Generally, it is decided well in advance.
- Meetings are conducted by the President or vice president, guided by DISHA staff.
- Preparation of the agenda is prepared by the Office bearers of the Federation in consultation with the Project staff.
- The Secretary of the Federation prepares the minutes and if required assistance is sought from the Project Staff.



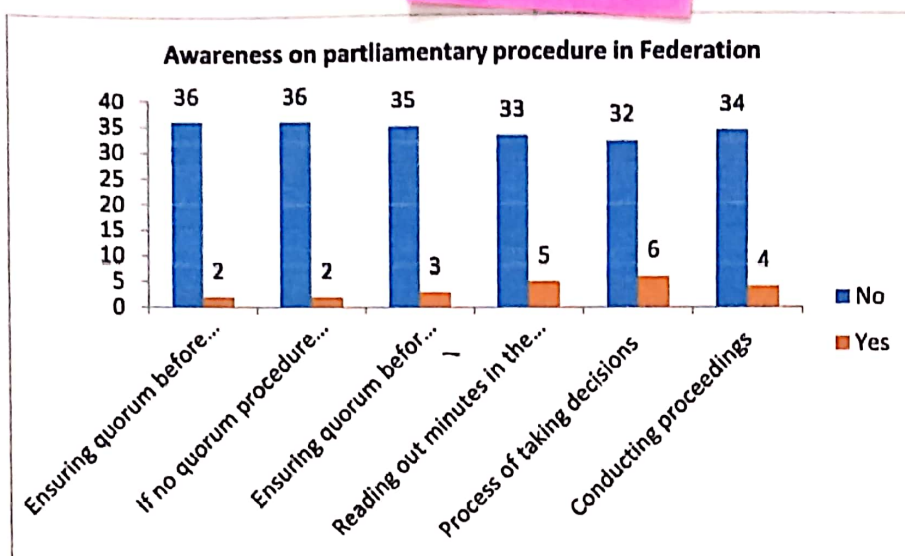
- In the meetings, decisions are generally taken based on the consensus of members present.



- According to the assessment, the practice of ensuring quorum before starting meetings is not followed in majority of groups.



- According to the opinion of 33 members of federation, 9-10 members are ready for taking leadership in the Federation. According to 3 there are 11-12 members to take leadership.
- All the members opined that the formation of the Federation has helped them to express solidarity, monitor the functioning of FDGs and represent their issues at the respective platforms.
- It was observed more than 50% have clarity about the purpose of the Federation.
- It was observed that most of them have no clarity on all the parliamentary procedures of the meetings.



- A majority of the members have participated in various capacity-building training sessions conducted by DISHA.
- Nearly 25% of the members reported that they can manage the Federation activities independently. But they expressed the support from DISHA is required in making the Federation self-reliant.
- A majority of the members expressed that they need support of DISHA for training, extension of FDG activities to uncovered areas, and sustaining the function of the Federation and the Cooperative society.
- It was observed that the Federation has made efforts to represent members' issues with the local-level rural governance bodies and respective departments of the Government.
- Federation works in close coordination with DISHA and seeks DISHA support in strengthening and stabilising the function of the Federation.

3. Food security (Meeting livelihood needs among families owning agricultural land (2.5 to 5.0 acres))

The responses were elicited from 96 families. The quantification level was fixed by DISHA and the subjects marked 1 as for their achievement. Hence it is considered an approximate level.

Among the 96 families, 60 families (62.5%) indicated that they have adequate food security supplemented through project interventions. 20 (20.8%) expressed moderate food security, 5 (5.2%) are having somewhat adequate food security, 11 families (11.5%) said they are having poor level of food security (below 25% level).

When the sampled families were asked if the agricultural produce that they cultivate meets the livelihood needs of the families, out of 96 families 52 (54.2%) said 'Yes'. Of those who

said partial fulfilment (36 families), 13(13.5%) families it is below 25%, 26(27.1%) between 26-50%, 11(11.5%) between 51-75% and 2(2.1%) it is more than 76%.

3.1. Food security among families owning agricultural land (0.5 acres to 2.5 acres)

The responses were elicited from 483 families. The quantification level was fixed by DISHA and the subjects ticked the level which is appropriate to each of them. Hence it is considered an approximate level.

- Among the 483 families 156 families (32.3%) indicated there is adequate food security (Above 75%).
- Among the 327 families who replied partial food security, 172 families (53%) said they are having poor level of food security (less than 25% level) and 155(47%) reported moderate level (between 26 to 50% food security).

When the sampled families were asked if the agricultural produce that they cultivate meets the livelihood needs of the families, out of 483 families, 162(34%) said 'Yes'. Of those who said partial fulfilment, for 184(57.3%) families it is below 25% and the remaining 137 families (42.7%) it is between 26-50%

4. Assessment of the improvement in agricultural yields after adopting soil and water conservation measures by the small and marginal farmers

A total of 229 stakeholders were covered for data collection. A majority of them confirmed that they could see improvement in their agricultural production after being members of FDGs. Their responses are summarised below.

4.1.1. Increase in crop production after joining FDG

Out of a total of 229 respondents covered, 209 admitted that there is an increase in crop production after joining FDGs. 28.4% of them had two crops, 22.7% had more than 8 crops, 14.8% had three crops, 12.2% had four crops, 6.1% had five crops, 3.9% had seven crops and 3.0% had six crops respectively.

4.1.2. Subsidiary income after joining FDG

Out of a total of 229 respondents, 160(70%) of them agreed that they are engaged in one or more than one subsidiary income source after being a member of FDGs.

4.1.3. Improvement in vegetable cultivation after joining FDG

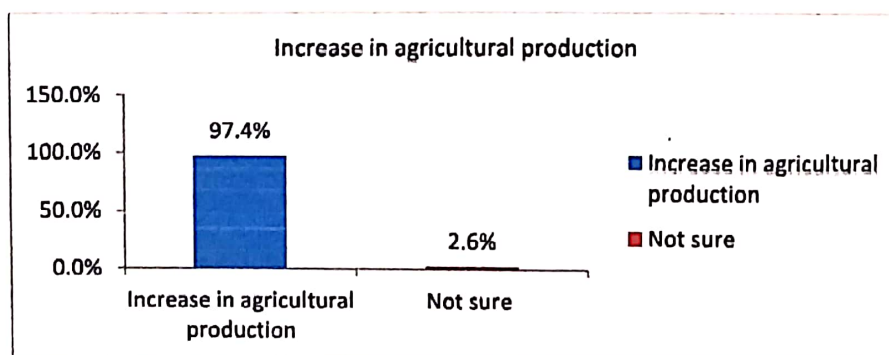
- Out of a total of 229 respondents, the majority of them (57.6%) reported that there is an improvement in vegetable cultivation after joining FDG.
- Out of a total of 132 respondents who were involved in vegetable cultivation, 57.5% reported home use and 42.5% used it for both home purposes and sale in the local market.
- Out of a total of 132 respondents who cultivate vegetables, 47% agreed that there is an increase in vegetable consumption in families after being members of FDGs.
- When respondents were asked to assess the level of increase in vegetable consumption in families it was observed that out of a total of 132 respondents, 18% said such consumption was fairly high and whereas 29% assessed it as a moderate increase.
- While verifying the sale of vegetables in the local market(shops), in three villages the shopkeepers confirmed that there is an increase in vegetable supply. But they were not able to quantify the increase.

5. Soil and water conservation measures- Assessment of the interventions in the stakeholders' families

During the assessment, we collected data from 39 farmers who constructed stone bunds, 45 farmers who were part of the construction of the vented dam, 21 farmers who did Masonry Gully Plug (MGP), 26 farmers who were involved in Staggered trenches, 30 farmers who were involved in the renovation of farm ponds, 45 families who renovated drinking water wells, 24 farmers maintained vermicompost units and 202 farmers who involved in plantation of fruit-bearing plants on their land. Responses are detailed below.

5.1. Stone bunds

- All the 39 stakeholders whom we met during the assessment, expressed it was their feltneed to construct stone bunds on their land to prevent soil erosion, which is fulfilled.
- Out of the 39 stakeholders, 34 (87.2%) confirmed that through the soil erosion structures, they can prevent soil erosion on their land to a greater extent.
- Regarding the increase in crop production, 38 (97.4%) indicated there is increase in agricultural production after implementing soil protection measures.

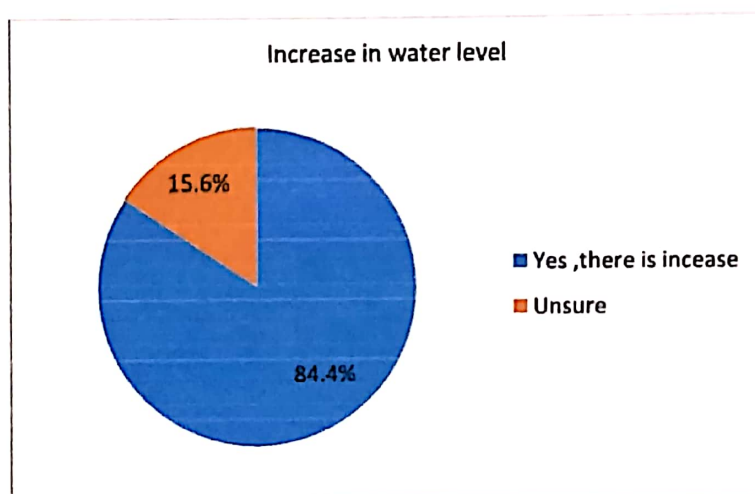


However, they were not able to estimate the quantity of such an increase. They were able to identify the following when asked to explain:

- The trees (Areca & Coconut) look greener than last year.
- The yield increased when you consider the numbers. For e.g. 25 to 50 areca nuts more and 5-10 coconuts more compared to last year's yield.
- Used maximum farm yard manure, and vermicompost manure to the plants.
- Dependence on chemical fertiliser was greatly reduced.
- Paddy yield is also increased (0.10 to 0.25 quintals)
- Other farmers who visit us also remarked the quality of plants is good.

5.2. Assessment of the usefulness of vented dams

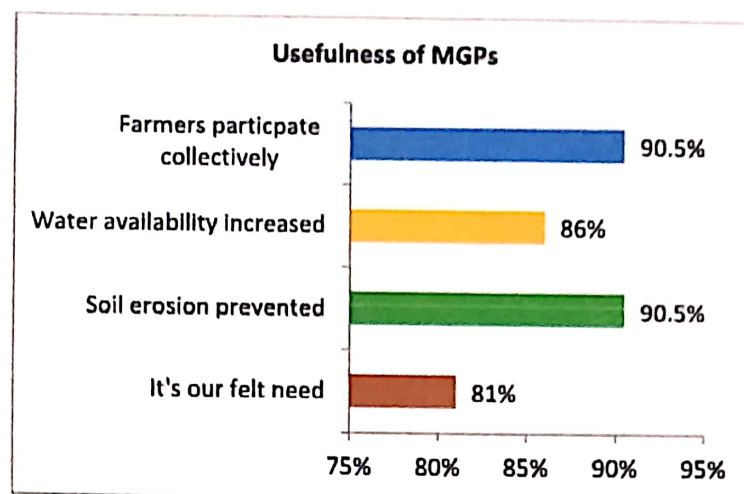
- All 45 stakeholders confirmed the construction vented dam was a felt need in the project villages.
- As regards improvement in water level in the local water sources, out of 45 farmers, a sizable majority (84.4%) estimated that there is two feet increase in the water level in the wells and farm ponds.
- 34 farmers (75.6%) are found ready to contribute to the repair and maintenance of the vented dams constructed.



5.3. Assessment of the usefulness of Masonry Gully Plugs (MGPs)

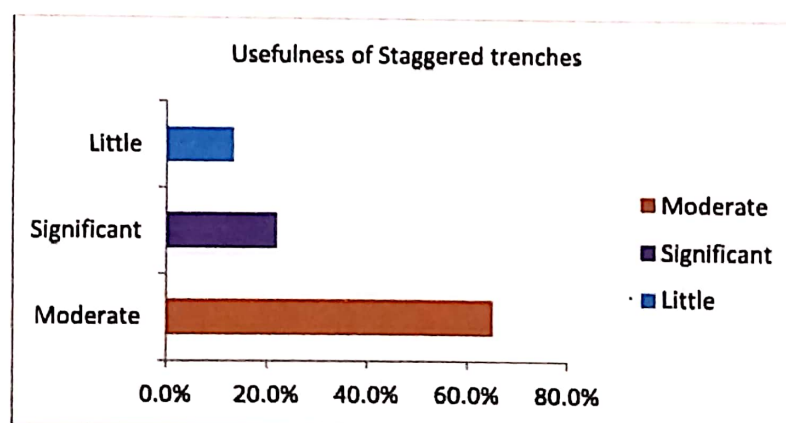
- Out of the 21 farmers who implemented MGPs, 17 (81%) confirmed that it was their felt need.
- 19 stakeholders (90.5%) reported that water erosion is prevented through these MGPs.
- 19 stakeholders (90.5%) responded that they participate in fixing of iron gates to store water in the MGP structures.
- Out of 21 stakeholders, 18 (86%) confirmed that water availability increased on their land.

- All 21 stakeholders are found ready to contribute towards the maintenance of MGPs.



5.4. Assessment of the usefulness of Staggered trenches

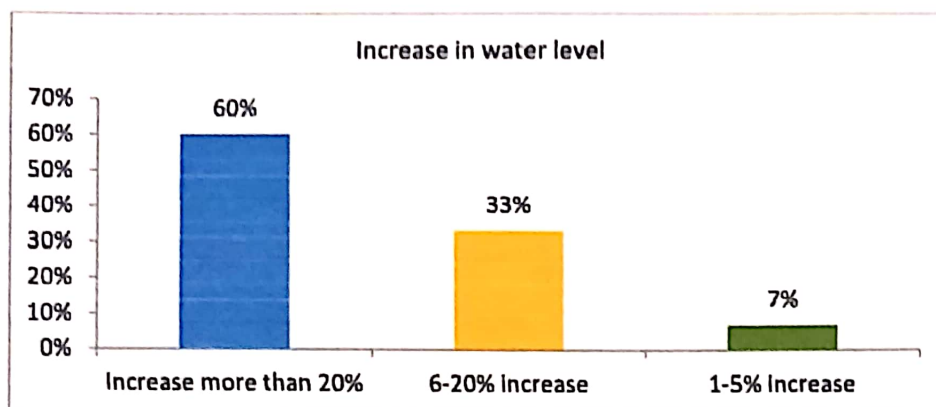
- Out of the 26 farmers 23(88.5%) reported washed-off soil is collected in the staggered trenches.
- 23 farmers were able to estimate the quantity of washed-off soil collected in the trenches. They laid tarpaulin sheets in these trenches to measure the quantity of soil collected during rains. According to 15 (65.2%) farmers, the quantity of soil collected in the trenches was moderate, 5(22%) farmers it is significant and 3(13.3%) farmers each said such quantity is little.



- 12 farmers use the soil collected in the trenches for their crops.
- All the farmers confirmed that water percolation is happening in the staggered trenches.
- All of them showed interest to maintain the staggered trenches with their sources.

5.5. Assessment of the usefulness of renovation of farm ponds

- 30 farmers who were involved in the renovation of farm ponds were contacted for their assessment. 18(60%) farmers responded that after renovation the quantity of water available is more than 20% compared to the previous, 10 (33%) said it is between 6-20% and whereas two farmers said the quantity is 1-5%.



Note: Quantity of water is as perceived by the members

- All of them expressed support for the project together with their resources has helped to rejuvenate their water sources.
- The farmers who are involved in farm pond development said the water level has increased in the wells in the neighbourhood. According to them, such an increase is more than 20% (23 farmers) and the remaining said it is between 6-20%.
- According to 28(93%) farmers, renovation of farm ponds contributed to their crop production.
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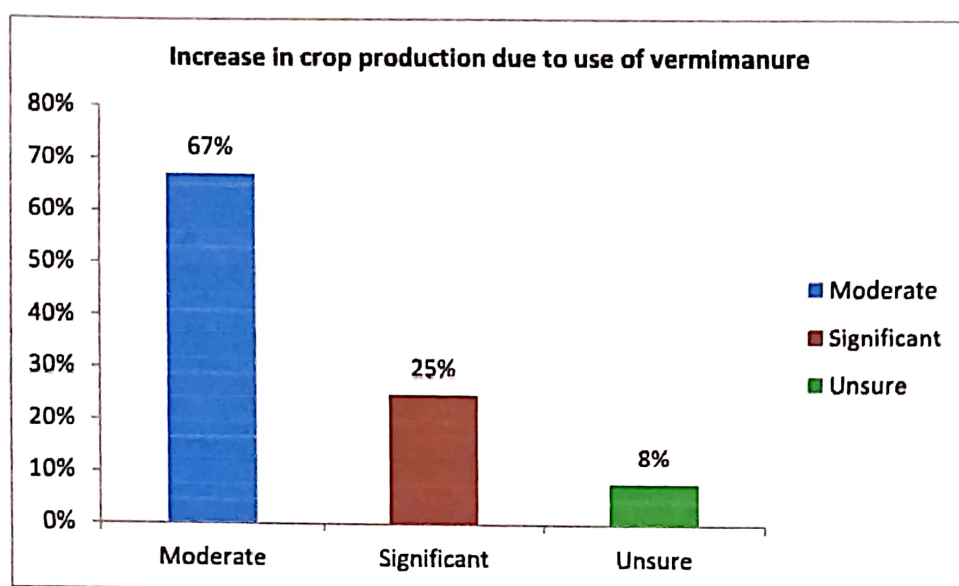
5.6. Assessment of the usefulness of renovation of drinking water wells

- Out of the 45 families that implemented this activity 42(93%) confirmed that they can get clean drinking water. But they agreed that the quality of water is not tested.
- Almost all the families agreed that they get water sources to water their plants and vegetables (97%).
- 39 families (87%) indicated that they also get water for irrigation to their crops.

5.7. Assessment of the usefulness of Vermicompost pits

- 24 farmers who are involved in vermicomposting agreed that vermicomposting is their first experience which befitted them.
- All the farmers produced vermicompost manure more than one time. 12 of them (50%) produced vermicompost manure three times, 3 farmers four times, 7 farmers twice and 2 of them only once.

- As regards the quantity of vermicompost produced, 17 farmers said adequate quantity, 5 farmers moderate quantity and 2 farmers little quantity.
- Farmers used Vermi manure for a variety of crops they have grown like areca plants, coconut pants, paddy, vegetables and fruit plants. Farmers responded positively and said they were able to see the benefits of Vermi manure after using it for these purposes. According to them, the usage of vermi manure has contributed to the increase in crop production. Such an increase in crop production is moderate for 16(67%) farmers, 6(25%) farmers said significant and 2(8%) farmers responded as insignificant.



Note: The increase in production of crops is an estimate as perceived by the members

5.8. Assessment of the usefulness of plantation of fruit-bearing plants by farmers

- A total of 202 farmers were contacted during the assessment. According to the survival rate is more than 90%.
- According to them more than 35% of plants started yielding.
- Farmers expressed that DISHA provided them with the plants/saplings of their requirement. Pit making, planting, manuring and watering are done by the farmers.
- They say that once all the plants start yielding, they could use the fruits for their home needs and excess would be sold in the local market.

Summary of points that emerged during our discussion with our project staff:

- As proposed in the project 40 farmer groups (FDGs) and a federation (Netravathy Federation of FDGs) are formed.
- A Souharda Multi-purpose Cooperative Society) is promoted jointly by Netravathi Federation, Spandana SHG Federation and Nesara Central Committee to meet the

financial needs of the farmers. This society is in its infancy and needs support for ensuring sustainability.

- Capacity-building training for improving the functioning of the FDGs and Netravathy Farmers Federation has been in progress. The FDGs are in various stages of functioning which was evident during interaction with them during the assessment.
- Various Training, Field demonstrations and structures like stone bunding, vented dams, MGP, Staggered trenches, Plantations, Farm Ponds, Renovation of Wells, Vermicompost Units, Biogas Units etc have been carried out. These actions helped to increase agricultural production in the households. Through these actions and enlightenment farmer members have put in their efforts and improved their yields.
- In almost all the interventions, indicators are set to verify the effectiveness and impact. Staff and stakeholders have been jointly engaged in taking measurements/quantifying to assess the impact. Average paddy and Coconut yields have shown significant improvements. Also, the water level in wells.
- In almost all the project activities/interventions, the stakeholders contributed financially to the tune of 15% (in some interventions more than that) and accounted systematically by depositing in a local contribution account maintained in the bank and reusing it in the construction of soil and water harvesting structures.
- According to the stakeholders the quality of construction of structures especially MGP, Vented dam, Gobar gas, vermicompost units and well construction is good.
- FDGs, Federation and DISHA worked together in availing the government benefits to the stakeholder families in a very significant way. Agricultural and horticulture improvement through NREGA, scholarships to children, social security measures, housing and other similar benefits are mobilised. This has benefitted both the farmers and non-farming families.
- Efforts have been made to fulfil the objectives stated in the project.
- Almost all the structures/interventions proposed in the project villages have been implemented.
- Active participation by the stakeholders is very well evident in almost all the project activities.
- The process followed in the implementation of the project interventions is participatory and almost in all the activities stakeholders' participation is excellent.
- The productivity of farmer households has increased through soil and water protection measures, with the result that the yields meet the livelihood needs of more than 50% of the families covered in the project.
- Farmers are giving importance to growing vegetables and utilising them for both house consumption and sale of the surplus quantity in the local markets. There is a lack of data regarding the exact quantity grown, utilised and sold in the market by the households.
- Already more than 600 farmers have given up usage of chemical fertilizers and switched to organic farming methods.
- Tangible results that have been observed in crop production, vegetables grown, vermicompost use, protection of soil erosion and water run-off, subsidiary income generation, sustainable agricultural practices, increase in water level in wells and

ponds, reduction of fuel wood by households by adopting gobar gas units and usage of clean drinking water for domestic use and irrigation by the farmers.

Needs /Expectations of the stakeholders and people's groups for future interventions

- Extension of the soil and water harvesting programme to the villages in the neighbourhood.
- Formation of Saving and Credit Groups in the project villages to strengthen the Multipurpose Cooperative society promoted by the Federation.
- FDGs and Netravathy FDG Federation are in various stages of functioning. Support is required to build capacities and stabilization of the functioning of these.
- Support to market agricultural produces in a more organised way by the farmers.
- Streamline the systems to enable the stakeholders to avail various benefits from government departments.

Dr.Irene Velgas
Managing Trustee
25.11.2022

To,

02.02.2023

The Director

DISHA Trust

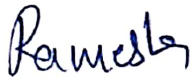
V V Compound, Salmara, Kaikamba

Mangalore

Sir/Madam,

I herewith attached the report of the internal assessment of the project 'Improvement of Livelihood through sustainable management of Natural Resources in southern Karnataka' conducted by me for the period from 6th to 8th December 2022. Hope you will find it in order. Sorry for the delay in sending it to you.

With thanks and regards,



Mr. Ramesha

Project Field Associate

ODP - Mysuru



DISHA Trust , Kaikamba-Mangaluru
Internal Assessment Report of the project implemented with the
funding support from BMZ-AHB

Report by: Mr Ramesh Maddur, ODP, Mysore

Title of the project

Livelihood improvement of marginal farmers, landless and women through protection of natural resources in West Ghats / Karnataka

Project No. I-574-07/18

Background information of the project-DISHA profile, work in the NRM field, target etc

DISHA, is a not-for-profit, non-governmental organization committed to the empowerment of the disadvantaged population in society. DISHA works with disadvantaged sections of society especially women, tribals, dalits, landless poor, marginal and small farmers in Dakshina Kannada District, Karnataka-South India. DISHA firmly believes that every individual is responsible for his/her own destiny and therefore shall strive for attaining good quality of life. DISHA, since its inception, has been making every effort to build the capacities of the poor and disadvantaged through development education, training and livelihood enhancement programmes. DISHA uses a participatory development approach wherein every stakeholder is free and independent to make choices and decisions for his/her own empowerment. DISHA mainly works in the areas of social development, women empowerment, tribal development, rural governance, entrepreneurship development, natural resources management, sustainable agriculture and livelihood enhancement.

DISHA has implemented a four-year project titled 'Improvement of Livelihood through sustainable management of Natural Resources in southern Karnataka' with financial support from BMZ Germany from 2018 to December 2022

Implemented NRM Project objectives and outcome

PROJECT GOAL, OBJECTIVES

Goal (Impact):

1. Livelihood improvement of marginal farmers, landless and women through the protection of natural resources in West Ghats / Karnataka.

Objectives (Outcome)

- The productivity of 2000 marginal farmer households has increased through resource protection measures, resulting in the yields meeting the livelihood needs of the majority of families who own a respective piece of land.
- The supply of agricultural products (esp. fresh vegetables and fruits) at local markets in the project region has improved.
- The target group will be involved in decision-making processes by the government regarding the development of the project region (In the management of natural resources and beyond)

Sub-Objectives:

- The self-help structures of small farmers work independently
- The agricultural yields in 20 project villages are increased through erosion control and water protection measures.
- The groundwater level in 20 project villages, where it has distinctly decreased before, has increased and the soil erosion is reduced.
- A minimum of 500 small farmers conduct ecological agriculture. As a result, the groundwater is kept clean and the quality of agricultural products increases.
- 60 families reduce their logging and thus protect the vegetation through the use of biogas plants.

Internal assessment objectives

- To assess the functioning of FDGs and the Federation of FDGs in the project villages
- To assess the improvement in agricultural yields after adopting soil and water conservation measures by the small and marginal farmers
- To estimate the improvement in vegetable production among the marginal and farmers

- To observe the increase in water level after adopting water conservation practices by the small and marginal farmers
- To confirm the usefulness of various soil and water conservation measures adopted by the farmers on their land

Assessment methodology

- Interaction with the management and staff team of the NGO- pre and after assessment.
- The facilitator interviewed selected members/beneficiaries in their locations for observation and verification of work done by them.
- Attended the meeting of the FDGs and Federation of FDGs (FFDGs) for observation and interaction.
- Verification of meeting registers/reports, and bank passbooks of each FDG and FFDG.
- Verification of records kept by farmers regarding water level and paddy cultivation.

Main findings

Under this project, DISHA has promoted 40 FDGs in 20 villages. Each FDG is consisting of small and marginal farmers with representation by both men and women. Of these FDGs, 18 are 6 years old, eight of them completed 5 years, 12 completed 4 years and two FDGs completed three years of formation.

FDG Visited: Panjikallu

No.of members present:41

- Members' participation was found good.
- Attendance in the meeting was found good.
- A majority of the members were vocal and quite interactive. It was learnt that there was good participation in the meetings conducted by them.
- A majority of them were able to enumerate the purpose of the FDG and were found to have clarity on the functioning of the FDGs.
- Members shared the activities they have done through the FDGs and expressed that they have benefitted from the FDG.
- FDG has built up a good relationship with the local panchayath and is making efforts to obtain facilities for farmers.
- Though they were able to talk about sustainability yet expect support from DISHA in streamlining the process.



- The FDG successfully organized a big conference of farmers and was able to sensitize the problems and demands of farmers with the government functionaries and elected people representatives. One of the member is leading the federation also.

Meeting with the Executive Committee of Netravathy Federation of FDGs

- **Place: Annalike** **Total No.of members participated:13**

Initially, the president shared the history and activities conducted by the federation. After interaction with the members, the following observations are made:

- All members' committee meetings are held once in three months (The third Tuesday of every month) and attendance is always more than 65%.
- There is an executive committee consisting of 13 members, which meets once a month. On average 10 members attend the meetings.
- According to the members, more than 12 members are ready for taking leadership in the Federation
- A majority of the members have participated in various capacity-building training sessions conducted by DISHA
- More than 50% actively took part in the discussion.
- It was learnt that the Federation took a key role in the Identification, implementation and monitoring of social and water conservation activities.
- A majority of the members had clarity about the purpose and role of the federation.
- Record maintenance was good.
- Members shared their views regarding the problems faced during the marketing the agricultural produce and look for alternatives to address this issue.
- Regarding the benefits of soil and water conservation all of them unanimously agreed that there is an improvement in water level in the wells, an increase in crop production and control of soil erosion.



Project stakeholders -Individual visits:

Mr Janardhan-Staggered trenches and Vermicompost:

A marginal farmer in Karpe was involved in soil and water harvesting measures on his small farm. Through the project, he has constructed staggered trenches, and vermicompost pit, planted fruit-bearing plants and follow sustainable agricultural practices. In his free time he goes for construction work as a labourer. He proudly says through his hard work and guidance from DISHA, he could improve his land fertility, water availability and crop production. He also mentioned that before his encounter with DISHA staff, he planned to quit agriculture and devote his time fully to construction work. He endorsed that the construction of staggered trenches contributed to the improvement of water availability in his well which is located on the lower level of his farm. According to him soil fertility also improved through the application of vermicompost.

Mrs.Saroja-MGP

She is a marginal farmer involved in agriculture. She planted areca nut and coconut plants. And also,her family grows vegetables. There is a stream beside her farm and she always felt to store water through a bund. It materialized when she became a member of FDG. She was exposed to the idea of water harvesting techniques. DISHA staff and the Technical Assistant guided them to construct a masonry gully plug (MGP).

Now the MGP was built and water is stored. She was happy to share that this water availability contributes greatly to watering the plants and yield is also getting improved.



Mrs Sunita-Gobar gas unit

At Rayee the facilitator visited the house of Sunita and observed the gohar gas unit and learned about the experience of the family. The family grows vegetables using the slurry of gohar gas which is pumped to the growing sites. The family is involved in agriculture for many years. Areca and coconut are the main agricultural products and use only farmyard manure. According to Sunita, she mainly uses gohar gas for cooking and by doing so she saves 5 LPG cylinders which work out to Rs 5000/- per year. The slurry is extensively used as farmyard manure and the cost is assessed as Rs 6000/ per year. She proudly said that the family finds the gohar gas unit as a productive unit.

Field visits to observe soil and water conservation structures:

Pond Renovation:

The facilitator visited Pilimogaru village along with DISHA staff and verified Koppala Kere renovation of the pond. Farmers discussed in Sri Vishnu Murthy Krishikara Development group (FDG) and decided to do the renovation of the pond. Members agreed to pay the local contribution and identified workers from the group. After those members monitored construction work on a daily basis.



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Impact: Work completed on 26-10-2022, from May 2022 members monitored the bore well water level and recorded the water level. The farmers with whom the facilitator interacted, shared that the water level is measured on monthly basis and it shows there is a steady increase in the level. This helped them to boost their morale and now agriculture activities are conducted with much ease. They are planning to extend the pond for more

water storage.

MGP (Masonry Gully Plug) This activity is mainly planned in the ridge area to collect water, and control soil erosion.

Impact: Soil erosion has been reduced and farmers collected water to farm pond /tank. Farmers are using water for agricultural activities through the pump. There was evidence of increase in water level increase of the open well.

Vermi Compost: Farmers are preparing vermicompost in secured pits. Generally, they are collecting 3-4 times a year and collect 4 tons of compost and use it for different crops. The discussions revealed that, and farmers reduced the usage of chemical fertilizers and started organic farming. Also



reduced the cost of cultivation. According to the farmers, there is an increase in crop production and areca plants look very healthy as they started using vermin-compost.

Open well: Farmers/members of FDGs are using safe and clean drinking water by constructing protection walls around wells. Water pollution is thus prevented and water is also used for irrigation purposes. According to beneficiaries they are getting clean water for human use and animals.

Fruits Plants: Farmers planted fruit-bearing plants like cashew, guava and mango, which started bearing fruits. According to them, they need to wait two more years to get the full crop. All the plants/saplings are well taken care of by the farmers.

Staggered trenches: Farmers were able to control water runoff and control soil erosion through staggered trenches. In trenches, eroded soil is collected by laying plastic sheets. Farmers weigh the quantity of soil settled in the trenches. They use this soil for agricultural purposes.

Impact: Interactions with the farmers showed there is improved soil health and plant health. Further, these trenches helped to control soil and water erosion. Farmers gained knowledge about soil erosion and they know the importance of soil protection activities.

Vented Dam: Visited two vented dams in Arbi and Thimarodi. A good interaction was held with the stakeholders. The construction work of these dams was found good. Water storage in one dam was good and, in another dam, work was in progress to put the shutters. In one dam (Thimarodi) the local grama panchayath also contributed funds under NREGA. The farmers/stakeholders were found very satisfied with the construction and the benefit they get from these vented dams. The idea of forming user groups was also discussed with the farmers. They showed interest to initiate the process of user group formation for sustaining and future management.



Vegetable growing: Farmers are growing vegetables in kitchen gardens and backyards. Mostly use these for their home consumption and the quantity they sell is not adequate. They use farmyard manure for the plants. But everyone showed interest to increase production for gainful income generation.



Impact: Farmers are

getting organic green

leaves and fresh vegetables . Some of the farmers are selling vegetables in the nearby local markets and earning money from vegetables. But .

Gram panchayath Visits:

The facilitator along with the DISHA Team visited Rayee and Panjikallu panchayats. Discussions were held with the President, PDO and Panchayat members. The following points emerged during the discussions:



- DISHA built a good relationship with the panchayats.
- Panchayat's participation in supporting the NRM activities was found good.
- DISHA successfully utilised the help of the panchayaths by way of availing benefits under various government programmes for the farmers.
- The attendance of members in the grama sabhas has increased.
- FDGs started voicing their concerns and asserting their rights.

Observations and Recommendations for future work- sustainability of the existing work and future concerns

- Though DISHA's watershed project is small in size, one it has been well executed
- The people's committees are well formed and are involved in the entire project works, including – planning of components, implementation of components and maintenance of components – along with financial knowledge and expenditure.
- DISHA has learnt a lot of all this from their visits to ODP – from the quality of our components, the user groups formed for maintenance, local contribution collected for components/continuity, etc.

- Though it was not possible to look into the details of quality and quantity aspects of all the interventions/activities, the three days of visits/interactions with the project stakeholders, confirmed that the NGO has made sincere efforts in realising the project objectives through a people-centred approach.
- The team is quite competent to promote similar NRM projects in other areas.

Recommendations:

- In view of the good impact of project interventions on soil and water conservation, the programme may be extended to the villages in the neighbourhood for benefiting the farmers.
- FDGs and Netravathy FDG Federation are in various stages of functioning. Some FDGs can lead in future in strengthening the other FDGs. The findings show that there is a need to build the capacities of members for effective and sustainable functioning.
- Farmers are interested to explore the marketing avenues for their agricultural produce in order to augment income. The feasibility of such intervention needs to be tested prior implementation of any such proposal.
- Streamline the systems to enable the stakeholders to avail of various benefits from government departments
- Multipurpose Cooperative society promoted by the Federation is in the stage of infancy. The formation of savings and credit groups in the project villages to strengthen the society has been proposed. Practical aspects of such a proposal may be looked into by the Co-operative society.
- There is scope for documenting some specific case studies, especially to document the impact of activities particularly vermicompost, go-bar gas, vegetable growing and food security aspects vis-a-vis project objectives.

Conclusion:

People-centered soil and water conservation activities are the need of the hour to contain the depletion and destruction of natural resources. The present assessment of the project was an enriching experience for the facilitator who worked in the Mysore region with a different agro climatic situation.

Mr.Ramesh Maddur

02.02.2023