

Bundelkhand Rural Poverty Alleviation Program (BRPAP), Tikamgarh

Annual Report: 2012- 2013

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1. Summary

SDTT has embarked on a Bundelkhand Initiative to address poverty and inequity in the region through multi-sectoral civil society projects based on a clear strategy. The Initiative is being rolled out through projects in two contiguous districts – Lalitpur in UP and Tikamgarh in MP.

Under the initiative, ABSSS, headquartered in Chitrakoot, UP, is running a project, entitled Bundelkhand Poverty Alleviation Program, in 40 villages of Tikamgarh block of Tikamgarh district.

Of the 40 villages, 20 villages are selected for core intervention, while the remaining 20 are extension villages. The duration of the project is 3 years.

The main objectives of the ABSSS project are as follows:

- To form and build capacity of community organizations especially of women and marginalized social groups for democratic realization of entitlements.
- To enhance participation, savings, role and decision-making power of women in household and community development.
- To enhance income & living standards of the people of target group from land and agriculture through scientific natural resource management and improved agricultural practices & animal husbandry.
- To strengthen capacity of NGO and community in MGNREGA, RTF, etc
- To leverage available public funding (government) resources for optimum realization of above objectives

The major activities of the project are:

- Establishing community based organizations (CBOs) on common platform with focus on women
- Watershed development
- Agriculture development
- Horticulture, forestation, other new livelihood opportunities
- Improve livestock productivity
- Build target group capacity to claim entitlements
- Capacity building of NGO and community

A total of 2565 households (HHs) live in the 20 villages/hamlets covered intensively by the Project. Of these 30% belong to SC groups, 14% belong to ST groups and 56% belong to OBC groups.

An in-depth socio-economic survey of 95 target group HHs in 20 project villages revealed that agriculture and wage labour are the main sources of livelihood, engaging over four-fifths of the HHs. Around a third of HHs have at least one member who migrates to distant locations for 3-9 months. Significantly, around half the HHs get income from fruit and forest species trees, growing on their own lands or in forestlands,

but quantum of income from this source is low. Only a fourth of HHs get income from animal husbandry.

Barring 6% of the total families, all families own some agricultural land. However, 44% of the total families own less than 2.5 acres (1 ha) and another 38% own between 2.5 to 5 acres (1 to 2 ha). Of the total 6823 acres of cultivable land, around 60% (4037 acres) is irrigated, and of this, around 67% is irrigated by dug wells. Nearly two-thirds of farmers, cultivating around 40% of the cultivated land, do not have wells.

Wheat, soyabean, and urad are the major crops, accounting for 60% of the total cropped area, with wheat occupying 26% of the area, followed by soyabean (19%) and urad (17%).

2012-12 was the 2ⁿ3 year of the project, and ABSSS was implementing it in an area where the organisation had only one year's work experience or even contacts. Hence,

2. Background of Project

SDTT has embarked on a Bundelkhand Initiative to address poverty and inequity in the region through multi-sectoral civil society projects based on a clear strategy.

The Initiative is being rolled out through projects in two contiguous districts – Lalitpur in UP and Tikamgarh in MP—which will be in the form of demonstration models that can be scaled or replicated in the rest of the region. The civil society organizations invited to work in these two districts are reputed CSOs of the region that have worked with SDTT in the past. ABSSS is one of the invitees and has responded positively to the opportunity offered by SDTT.

The ABSSS project, entitled Bundelkhand Poverty Alleviation Program, is being implemented in 40 villages of Tikamgarh block of Tikamgarh district, MP. Of the 40 villages, 20 villages are selected for core intervention, while the remaining 20 are extension villages. The duration of the project is 3 years.

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2a. Baseline information on project area

Geographical profile

The 20 project villages are located in Tikamgarh block of Tikamgarh district, MP, at a distance of 20 to 40 km from Tikamgarh town, which is the headquarters of the district. Tikamgarh district lies in the northern part of MP, and is bounded by of Sagar district in the south, Chhattarpur district in the east, Lalitpur district of UP in the east and Jhansi district of UP in the north.

Tikamgarh is situated on the Bundelkhand plateau between Jamuni, a tributary of Betwa, and Dhasan rivers. It extends between the north latitude 24°26' to 25°34' and east longitude 78°26' to 79°21'. The northern part of the district is at height of about 200m above the mean sea level (amsl), while the southern part is at a height of around 300m. Thus, the district's topography is marked by a gentle slope from south towards north.

According to geological formations, the district can be classified into two broad regions:

- Hill ranges rising to height of 200-400m amsl.
- Inter-hill valleys.

The hill ranges are made up of hard compact and resistant granite masses intruded by quartz reef. The valleys are covered by colluvial and detrital of parent rock along with organic material. The thickness of alluvial fill varies from 10-16 meters.

. Soils derived from parent rocks are of four types:

- Coarse-grained reddish brown soils known locally as Rakar
- Coarse-grained grey to greyish brown soils known as Parua
- Clay loam black soils known as Kabar
- Clayey-black soils known as Mar

Table 2.1: Soil status

Parameter	Value	Rating
pH	7-7.6	Normal
EC	0.10-0.20	Normal
Organic carbon	0.27-0.70%	Low to Medium
Available phosphorous	2-12kg/ha	Low
Available potash	50 to 200kg/ha	Low to Medium

Soil parameters, as obtained from soil tests conducted in the project villages, are generally as shown in Table 2.1

Climate and rainfall

The climate of Tikamgarh district is characterized by a hot summer and general dryness except during the southwest monsoon season. The normal maximum temperature during the month of May is 41.8° C and minimum during the month of January is 7.0°C. The mean maximum and minimum temperatures are 32.4°C and 17.5°C respectively.

The normal annual rainfall received by Tikamgarh district is 1057.1 mm. Maximum rainfall (about 90%) is received during southwest monsoon period from June to September.

During the southwest monsoon season the relative humidity generally exceeds 87% in August. The driest part of the year is the summer season, when relative humidity is less than 35%. May is the driest month of the year.

Data on rainfall (Table 2.2) shows that in 8 years before the start of the Project, rainfall was below normal, and in one year (2007), it was 50% below normal. Highest rainfall generally falls in June-July. Due to the sloping topography, and the granite substratum, most of the water is lost in runoff.

Table 2.2: Rainfall pattern

Year	Total rainfall (mm)
2002	785
2003	958
2004	748
2005	806
2006	842
2007	333
2008	1406
2009	865
2010	627
2011	1429
2012	977

Land Use

Tikamgarh is a predominantly rural district with urban population restricted to 30% of total population. According to 2006-07 data from District Statistical Handbook, nearly 60% of the land is cultivated, and of this, over 50% is under double cropping. Only 5% of the land is under different categories of forestland. However, in one of the Adivasi

villages covered by the Project (Sapon), the forestland is much in excess of the cultivated land.

Peoplescape

Peoplescape data discussed below related to the 20 project villages selected for intensive intervention.

A total of 2565 families live in the 20 villages/hamlets covered intensively by the Project. Of these:

- 30% belong to SC groups
- 14% belong to ST groups and
- 56% belong to OBC groups.

The main SC groups are Ahirwar, Vanshkar, Chadar and Khangar. The main ST groups are Saur and Gond. The general population (less than 1% of total) consists of a few Thakur, Jain and Brahmin families.

A total of 16 of the 20 villages have a significant SC population, and in 5 villages (Madnikhera, Satyanagar, Gopalpura, Bhagalpura and Matapur), the SC population is predominant. Half the villages have a significant ST population, and in 3 villages (Sapon, Sauryana, Basiyan Khera) and Haidarpur adivasi basti, the ST population is predominant.

Livelihood pattern

An in-depth socio-economic survey of 95 target group HHs in 20 project villages revealed that:

- Agriculture and wage labour were the main sources of livelihood, engaging over four-fifths of the HHs.
- Around a sixth of HHs had at least one member who migrates annually to distant locations for 8-12 months.
- Around half the HHs got income from fruit and forest species trees, growing on their own lands or in forestlands, but quantum of income is from this source was low.
- Only a fourth of HHs got income from animal husbandry.
- Around a fifth of HHs had small businesses, usually in trading.
- The number of HHs with at least one person having a salaried job was negligible.

Average gross income of surveyed HHs was Rs 56,000 per annum, which means that excluding cost of production in agriculture, average net income was less than Rs 40,000. This was reflected in living-standard indicators:

- While most HHs lived in semi-pukka houses made of mud and stones, only 17% HHs owned motorcycles
- only 13% own TV sets, and
- only 14% used a kerosene or gas stove for cooking.

Land ownership

Barring 6% of the total families, all families owned some agricultural land. However, as data in Table 2.4 indicates, 44% of the total families owned less than 2.5 acres (1 ha) and another 38% owned between 2.5 to 5 acres (1 to 2 ha). Thus 80% of the population comprised marginal and small farmers.

Table 2.4: Land owning pattern in 20 villages

Land owned in acres	No of families
0	145
<2.5	1116
2.5-5	986
5-10	260
10-20	52
>20	6

Water & irrigation status

In all villages, there were functioning handpumps. However, in 13 villages there were only 2 or less than 2 handpumps, and shortage of drinking water was experienced in summer months. In 10 villages, there were a total of 15 ponds, used mainly for washing and feeding water to animals. In all but 3 of the 20 villages, there were public wells. The water was used mainly for domestic consumption.

Groundwater tapped through private dug wells was the main source of irrigation in the entire Tikamgarh district, and the situation is the same in the 20 Project villages. Of the total 6823 acres of cultivable land, around 60% (4037 acres) was irrigated, and of this, around 67% was irrigated by dug wells. Three villages are near a river and in 15 villages there is a nalla nearby, and in 10 villages a total of 18 checkdams have been built by the government across these nallas or rivers. There is no canal irrigation in the selected villages.

It was seen that normally 80% of wells have water in Kharif and Rabi, and some amount of water in summer. Nearly two-thirds of farmers, cultivating around 40% of the cultivated land, did not have wells.

Cropping pattern

Of the total 6823 acres of cultivable land, around 80% (5485 acres) was sown in the Kharif season, and around 70% (4919 acres) was sown in the Rabi season. However, including around 7% of the sown area under different vegetables, only around 38% of the

Bundelkhand Rural Poverty Alleviation Model, Tikamgarh (M.P.)

cultivable land was double-cropped, compared to the district average of 50%. A tiny part of the land was under cultivation in summer under some vegetable crops.

Wheat, soyabean, and urad were the major crops, accounting for 60% of the gross cropped area (10925 acres), with wheat occupying 26% of the area, followed by soyabean (19%) and urad (17%). The important minor crops accounting for over 5% of cultivated area were mustard, til and paddy.

Around one-fourth of households cultivated vegetables in kitchen gardens and/or parts of their land. The major kitchen garden vegetables were tomato, brinjal, bottle gourd, pumpkin and bhendi (lady's finger). Except for onion, which was grown by a couple of farmers in areas over 1 acre, average area under vegetable cultivation per cultivating household ranged from 0.3 to 0.7 acres.

Livestock

There were around 2700 heads of cattle owned by around 1000 HHs, as shown in Table 2.8. The productivity of the animals was quite low, with average daily milk production per cow being only 0.8 litres. Average milk production per buffalo was 2.7 litres. It is notable that only around a third of all HHs owned bulls. Most HHs depended on use of tractors for ploughing.

Table 2.8: Domestic animals population

Animal	Total no. Of animals	Total no. of animal-owning HHs
Bull	1682	885
Cow	1545	818
Buffalo	1123	491
Goat	1545	233
Sheep	15	3
Poultry	598	113
Pigs	18	4
Horses	7	7

Public infrastructure

The 20 villages are well served by public infrastructure in terms of primary schools and electricity supply. In other respects, especially health and transport infrastructure, the villages are poorly served. However, most services are available near the village (within distance of 5 km).

Access to entitlements

A total of 2562 children were enrolled in schools in the 20 villages, but around 25% are not attending regularly. There were a number of families that saw no benefit in sending children, especially girls, to school regularly.

Around 17% of HHs were not covered by PDS—they did not have any kind of card.

Around 77% of HHs had MGNREGA cards. However, only a third of card-holding HHs had got work in the preceding 12 months.

Food insecurity

The in-depth study of 95 sample-HHs revealed no HH suffered from chronic starvation. However, 48% HHs had less than 3 full meals a day, and 11% HHs reported that they sometimes cooked and ate grains of wild grasses

3. Program Findings

This section discusses the project's achievements in 2012-13 vis-à-vis its objectives. It also throws light on project design and implementation.

3a. Fulfillment of Objectives

2012-13 was the 2nd year of the project, and ABSSS was implementing it in an area where the organization had only one year's work experience or even contacts. Hence, there was a backlog in the first year, which was attempted to be covered in the second year.

Despite these limitations, the project could go a long way in fulfilling some of its objectives, as discussed below.

Forming and building capacity of CBOs, especially of women

The project staff could strengthen rapport with the community, secure involvement of key community leaders, and strengthen four kinds of CBOs: women's SHGs, farmers' groups, groups of teenage girls (kishori mandals). Few new SHGs could be formed and nor was there much purpose in devoting time and energy to this activity as SHGs are being formed in the area by DPIP and Tejaswani programmes; effort in the same direction by the Project would have only meant duplication and confusion. Hence only 5 new SHGs were formed and the focus was on strengthening all the CBOs already formed under the Project in Year 1. The details of these groups are given in Table 3.1. All SHGs and farmers' groups met at least once a month, with 84% average attendance for SHGs and 75% attendance for farmers groups.

Table 3.1: Details of CBOs formed

Type of CBO	Formed in 2012-13	Total formed	Total members	SC members	ST members
Women's SHGs	5	71	851	280	161
Farmers' groups	0	37	442	142	72
Kishori mandals	0	21	236	96	63
Water users' group	0	1	13	0	13
TOTAL	5	130	1542	518	309

As shown in Table 3.2, a number of training programmes were held to build capacity of SHG members.

Table 3.2: Capacity building programmes for SHGs

No	Date	No of participants	Resource person(s)
1	May 5	34	Project staff
2	May 9	31	-“-
3	May 11	34	-“-
4	May 21	28	-“-
5	May 22	22	-“-
6	June 15	46	-“-
7	June 18	19	Mahila Vikas Adhikari
8	June 31	30	-“-
Total		244	

Capacity-building of farmer group members was done through technical training programmes, as discussed later.

Overall, we will rate performance against this objective as satisfactory.

Enhance savings of women and role in decision-making

Women in the project have traditionally been following ‘purdah’ (except in adivasi settlements) and their role in household finances and decision-making was minimal. To reverse this situation, the project used SHGs as a platform for initiating households savings that would be controlled by women, and a platform for discussing women’s rightful position in the home and the village.

While some members of groups have decided to save Rs 50 a week, most groups have decided on a norm of Rs 10 per member per week. A total of 25 SHGs have opened bank accounts. Details of savings are shown in Table 3.3. Some inter-loaning has started. Main purposes of loans were for purchase of agriculture inputs and meeting expenses on account of illness and family functions.

Table 3.3: Details of SHG finances

Indicator	Amount (Rs)
Total savings	246646
Cash in hand	128365
Cash in bank	87951
Inter-loaned	27670

We will rate performance against this objective as satisfactory.

Scientific NRM and improved agriculture practices

This objective head includes:

- soil and water conservation (SWC)
- water resource development and management (WRD &M)
- agriculture development
- horticulture, forestation and grassland development.

SWC

No soil and water conservation works could be initiated during the 1st year because of the late start of the project. Hence momentum was built up during the year and land bunding was carried out on a total of 227 acres in 8 villages, benefitting 91 families, of whom 72 belonged to SC/ST groups.

Table: Details of land bunding

No.	Villages	Beneficiaries				Covered area (acre)	Total volume (cum)
		SC	ST	OBC	Total		
1	Sauryana	0	27	0	27	70	2967.69
2	Nagara	4	0	10	14	44	3247.90
3	Mairikhera	0	10	0	10	27	2008.81
4	Dari	4	2	0	6	28	1950.02
5	Ramnagar	0	0	3	3	6	495.55
6	Sapon	0	15	0	15	27	1443.48
7	Ratanganj	0	6	6	12	21	1034.77
8	Matayakhera	0	4	0	4	4	395.81
Total		8	64	19	91	227	13544.03

A total of 4841 person-days of employment were generated through the above work, and 70% and 33% of the employment benefit went to SC/ST persons and women respectively. Nearly 10% of the labour cost of Rs 6.25 lakhs was contributed by beneficiary families.

WRD&M

Under the head of WRD &M, several water harvesting structures were constructed as shown in Table below. The beneficiaries were selected through consultation with SHGs, with beneficiary HHs contributing 12% of labour cost through own labour. In case of group dug wells, beneficiary HHs contributed 50% of labour cost. Group-well users have informally laid down rules for drawing water.

Bundelkhand Rural Poverty Alleviation Model, Tikamgarh (M.P.)

Table: Details of water harvesting structures constructed

Type of structure	Nos.	No. SC/ST HHs benefitted	Total cultivated area covered (acres)	Total work volume in cubic metres	Total person-days employment generated	Total cost (Rs)
Farm ponds	4	3	10	456.60	204	174947
Group Dug wells	12	40	115	1124	3162	812392
Other (ponds, etc)	2	26	104	4019.39	1421	525703
Total	18	38	229	5599.99	4787	1513042

Agriculture development

Agriculture development was done through three activities:

- farmer training programmes
- promotion of PoPs with input support
- large-scale promotion of seed treatment.

Three farmer training programmes were organized as shown in Table.

Table: Details of farmer training programmes

Start date	Period (days)	No. of participants	Resource person	Topic
May 27	5	8	Subhash Palekar	Zero budget farming
June 26	1	48	Dr RK Prajapati, and Dr VL Sahu, KVK Tikamgarh	Kharif cropping
Aug 25	5	51	Subhash Palekar	Zero budget farming

A number of farmers were encouraged to follow KVK-recommended PoPs for main kharif and rabi crops as shown in Table. Support was given in the form of fertilizers (DAP, urea, MOP), cultures (Rhizobium, Azotobacter, PSB), Trichoderma and jaggery for culture treatment. The value of support was Rs 1000-2400 per acre depending on the crop. Paddy was sown using SRI method. The results of the PoP demos were significant, as discussed in the Impact section.

Table: Details of farmers given PoP support

Crop	Variety	No of farmers	Total area cultivated (acres)
Paddy	Pant 12, Narendra 97	27	4
Soyabean	JS 9560	51	21
Wheat	GW 322, GW 366, Lok 1	135	64.28
Gram	JG 315	32	16
Mustard	Pusa Bold	36	19.45
Total			124.73

Seed treatment and use of cultures was promoted on a large scale by providing the inputs to a total of 1200 farmers living in around 28 villages. To enable farmers to see the benefits of these methods, support was given for cultivation in units of half acre. Crop-wise details are given in Table . The main benefits, observed by farmers, was low prevalence of diseases, good germination and good primary growth, compared to plots cultivated without use of these methods.

Table: Crop-wise details of farmers given support for seed treatment and culture

Crop	No of farmers	Total area (acres)
Wheat	785	392.5
Gram	250	125
Mustard	165	82.5
Total	1200	600

While small-scale vegetable cultivation is done in the Project area, many SC/ST families have never grown vegetables due to lack of knowledge and confidence. Also, use of good vegetable seed varieties is uncommon. Hence, the Project encouraged particularly SC/ST farmers (Table below) to take up vegetable production on a small scale (Table below), with help of Project support, in the form of quality seeds and fertilizers. Support per farmer was worth around Rs 600.

Table: Families provided support for vegetable cultivation, by social group

Social group	No. of families
SC	19
ST	52
OBC	42
General	5
Total	118

Table: Details of vegetable cultivation demos

Vegetable	No. of farmers	Total area (acres)
Tomato	54	1.34
Brinjal	29	0.37
Chilli	21	0.26
Potato	103	0.83
Onion	37	0.84
Total		3.64

Horticulture, forestation and grassland development

In nine Project villages, 28 families were encouraged to do horticulture with Project providing saplings of fruit trees like mango (574 saplings), guava (366), amla (66), lemon (144). The saplings were obtained from reputed nurseries. Technical guidance was

provided to beneficiary farmers. Survival rate till March 2013 was 55% for mango, 75% for guava, 42% for amla and 72% for lemon.

Overall, we will rate achievement under this objective as very satisfactory.

Building capacity to claim entitlements

The project's fourth main objective is to strengthen the capacity of CBOs to claim entitlements under MGNREGA, Forest Rights Act (FRA), etc. Through efforts of the Project, 62 ST families of Sauryana Adivasi village got homestead land titles. Families also benefitted from PDS regularization.

We will rate work done under this objective head as satisfactory.

Leveraging available public funding

To leverage available public funding and other resources, for the benefit of project communities, the Project submitted required information to NABARD for a watershed development programme in the Project area. NABARD officials are expected to make an appraisal visit shortly.

To leverage funds available under MGNREGA, Project Director met CEOs of Zilla and Janpad Panchayat. The Commissioner, Rural Development (MGNREGA), CEO Zilla Panchayat, CEO Janpad Panchayat, District Collector and officials of more than a dozen departments visited the Project area in January 2013 and assured support under MGNREGA if net planning of area was done and submitted.

The Project maintained close contact with local KVK, which responded warmly with support for training programmes, PoP design and guidance on crop management.

Continuous support was also got from Pradan, the technical consulting organisation appointed for the project.

Overall, we will rate achievement under this objective as satisfactory.

3b. Project design and implementation

The project was designed by ABSSS following specific guidelines given by SDTT under Bundelkhand Initiative, and reviewed by Pradan.

The project is based on the multi-sectoral approach of the SDTT Bundelkhand Initiative, which seeks to address the complex of social, economic and political challenges to development in the region through a comprehensive intervention, as the issues are interlinked. Accordingly, the project is designed on four strategic pivots:

- Building voice of the poor, especially women, and increasing accountability in delivery of essential services
- Demonstrating sustainable land-based livelihood models
- Leveraging government resources
- Strengthening NGO and community capacity

The core implementation strategy is working with the community. Initially, village level meetings were conducted to orient the community about the organization and project objectives and activities. Initially these meeting were informal but gradually they were turned into formal meetings. Once CBOs were formed, all activities are rolled out through them. Farmers' groups and SHG are involved in:

- Prioritization of activities at different villages
- Selection of sites/beneficiaries
- Local coordination for implementation
- Monitoring work

Notably, all the village-level workers of the project are selected from the community and have been given handholding support to perform expected tasks.

3c. Project outputs and dissemination

The project undertook two studies in 2012-13:

- SC/ST households doing regular seasonal migration in Project area: A detailed analysis was done of 45 randomly selected SC/ST HHs with at least one member who had migrated in at least 3 of the previous 5 years. The analysis showed that for SC/ST HHs in project area, migration is largely a coping mechanism, though it also meets the purpose of capital accumulation to some extent.
- Study of livestock ownership and management practices of target groups HHs: Analysis of 100 sample HHs and in-depth survey of 30 target group HHs was done. It showed that the number of animals per 1000 persons is 586, with cows and bullocks accounting for 54% of total animal population. Social category of HH is a major determinant of type of animal owned. Only chicken and goat are bought or sold regularly. Only 25% HHs have any income from livestock and average net annual income from livestock is only around Rs 3500.

The above studies were discussed internally, disseminated to technical advisors and SDTT officials, and made available through ABSSS website.

For making people outside project area aware of the project, efforts were undertaken to invite a number of different experts and officials to visit project sites. Key visitors, apart from SDTT officials and project consultants, are shown in Table below.

Table: Key visitors to Project

Date	Visitor	Organization	No. of persons
May 12	Ram Gopal	IIT, Delhi	1
July 17	SK Sonkar	NABARD	42
Aug 6	SK Sonkar	NABARD	1
Dec 15	Ashish Yadav	BBC	5
Dec 28-29	Rajendra Nigam	Gram Unnati Sanstha, Mahoba	20
Jan 23	Ravindra Pachtor, and other senior district officials	Rural Development Department (Commissioner), District Collectorate, ZP, Janpad Panchayat	15
Jan 25	PL Solanki	Zilla Panchayat (CEO)	3
March 9	Basudev	Bundelkhand Sewa Sansthan	20
March 9	Sanjeev Kumar	Goat Trust, Lucknow	1
March 24	Sagun Qureishia	Samhit Vikas Sewa Sansthan, Chattarpur	16

Visit of District Collector, MGNREGA Commissioner, Zilla Parishad CEO and other officials to project area on January 23, 2013 received extensive coverage in local/regional newspapers like *Jan-Jan Jagran*, *Nav Bharat*, *Bundelkhand Jagran*, *Dainik Bhaskar*.

3d. Capacity building

Apart from training programmes mentioned earlier under section 3a, exposure visits were organised to help build the community's confidence and resolve to undertake development work:

- In October 2012, a total of 15 Project participants visited ABSSS's integrated watershed development programme sites in Chitrakoot, over 3 days.
- In January 2013, a total of 27 participants visited ABSSS's integrated watershed development programme sites in Chitrakoot and Banda, over 3 days.

Project staff attended capacity building programmes as below:

- Accounts staff attended a 2-day training programme on accounting systems in Jhansi, organized by Pradan.
- 8 Project staff attended a 4-day training programme on SHG promotion in Jhansi, organized by APMAS.
- Project Agronomist attended a 3-day programme on livelihoods planning in Kesla, Hoshangabad, organized by Pradan.

4. Project Management

The project is managed by professional staff comprising:

- 1 Director (part time)
- 1 Programme Coordinator
- 2 Subject matter specialists (agriculture; women's mobilisation)
- 2 Cluster coordinators
- 7 village level workers

On need-basis project uses services of consultants in the field of improved agriculture, and field-based documentation and research.

Other than the Director, all staff are located in Tikamgarh town, close to the project area. The Director and ABSSS accountant make regular visits to project at various stages of implementation.

Weekly meetings are held at the project office to assess the progress of activities against objectives. Reviews are conducted by the Director on a quarterly, half-yearly and annual basis to assess the impact of the programmes. Through regular CBO meetings and field visits, senior project staff is attuned to specific problems/issues hindering implementation, and capacity-building and other needs that have to be met.

Annual financial audit has been undertaken by the statutory auditor.

5. Impact

In its second year, the project had following major impacts:

- Establishment of good agricultural practices in project area.
- Preparedness of community for land bunding
- Increase in area of cultivation and production due to construction of wells.
- Demonstrated benefits of PoP, resulting in higher yields.
- Number of HHs took to vegetable cultivation for the first time.

Establishment of good agricultural practices

The Project area was characterized by poor agricultural practices like broadcast sowing, excessive use of seed quantity and use of seeds without treatment. Through Project training and demonstrations, a number of farmers took to good practices like line sowing, optimum use of seeds, and seed treatment before sowing. A total of 203 farmers did line sowing in the year and thereby reduced seed quantity and seed cost by roughly 30%. A total of 1200 farmers covered under scaling up activity of the programme did seed treatment and culture treatment before sowing, and got benefits in terms of reduced incidence of disease and better germination.

Preparedness of community for land bunding

Land bunding for the purpose of soil and water conservation was unknown in Project area and the target group farmers showed high resistance when the Project proposed bunding. However through exposure visit and meetings, 91 farmers were mobilized to agree for bunding on their lands. As a result of noticeable positive impact on yields in their lands, more farmers have started to come forward for bunding.

Increase in area under cultivation and production due to construction of wells

Construction of 12 dug group-wells had significant impact on users' returns from agriculture as seen in Table 5.1, which shows data for 10 wells. Increased availability of water led to increased area under cultivation as also increase in irrigation rounds, as a result of which yield doubled. (Cultivated crops were jowar, peas, wheat and mustard).

Table 5.1: Increased agriculture returns due to well construction

No of wells	No of users	Users' total irrigated area (acres)		Users' total production (quintals)	
		Before	After	Before	After
10	53	58.9	84.6	284.59	701.8

Demonstrated benefits of PoPs

The project demonstrated to community the benefits of using PoPs incorporating improved seed varieties, optimum seed quantity, seed preparation, line sowing and optimum nutrient dose. PoP support was given for demo plots of 1-acre. Through these measures, significant increases in yields were demonstrated.

Bundelkhand Rural Poverty Alleviation Model, Tikamgarh (M.P.)

Results of samples of farmers given benefit of PoPs are shown in Table 5.2, with comparative yields obtained in the year by other farmers using traditional methods. (For each crop, comparison figures were obtained from roughly same number of farmers/area under cultivation, in same cultivation area(s)). It can be seen that:

- Yields of gram and mustard were nearly double, and
- Significant increases in varieties of wheat were also obtained though the Project area is not suited for wheat cultivation and the crop was affected by severe frost.

The demo plot results were observed by a number of farmers as shown in figures of farmers visiting the sample of demo plots.

Table 5.2: Demonstrated benefits of PoPs

Crop	Variety	No. of sample farmers with PoP demo plots	No. of other farmers visiting PoP demo plots	Yield (kg/ha)	
				Demo plots	Comparison plots
Wheat	Lok 1	8	83	1685	1095
	GW 322	17	110	1284	1138
	GW 366	11	60	1492	1118
Mustard	Pusa Bold	6	149	504	272
Gram	JG 315	7	135	847	490

First-time vegetable cultivation by a number of HHs

With Project encouragement and support, over a 100 families of which 70% belong to SC/ST groups did vegetable cultivation for the first time. Due to severe frost in January and February, the crop was badly damaged. Even so, farmers could earn significant value of production till March 31, as shown in Table 5.3. (Tomato, brinjal and chilly production continued after March 31).

Table 5.3: Value of vegetable production with Project support, till March 31

Vegetable	No of villages	No of farmers	Total area (sqm)	Total production (kg)	Value of production as per sale price in local market (Rs)	Qty sold (kg)
Tomato	10	28	3700	3515	42180	1950
Potato	13	71	8785	10667	106670	8797
Brinjal	4	12	1076	1029	10290	439
Chilly	4	6	546	259	12950	149
Total			14107	15470	172090	11335

6. Overall assessment

Considering various non-beneficial factors like newness of organisation to Project area, and plethora of diverse objectives, the Project made satisfactory progress in year 2. While some objectives could not be largely met, this was only due to the fact that the organization was not established in the area and therefore did not have background to easily win confidence of the local community and network with government functionaries.

In retrospect, the project design should have been so framed that years 2.5 to 3 were earmarked for leveraging public funding, and emphasis in years 1 to 2.5 was on community mobilisation and capacity-building.

7. Recommendations

Based on the learning from year 2, ABSSS suggests that when the Trust considers similar projects in other regions, or the same region, it should:

- Give a lead time of at least 12 months for organizations new to a project area, for networking and establishing working relationships with government functionaries and development agencies.
- Limit the number of objectives to be met within a short period of 3 years, so that the Project is able to deliver in a focused manner.