About Prayatna Samiti

Prayatna Samiti is a voluntary organisation working since 1989, committed to the socioeconomic development of poor and vulnerable rural communities of Udaipur district located in Southern region of Rajasthan state of India subcontinent. The organisation believes in capacity of rural communities to work for their own welfare. It believes in the collective strength of communities to achieve a just society, free of exploitative forces.

The organisation sees its role as a facilitator for community action, to support the efforts of communities to come together to take the responsibility of development. It works to promote self-empowerment and leadership abilities among marginal farmers and rural labourers by developing institutional structures, management capacity and leadership abilities. The organisation works to enhance awareness of the socio-economic, political and environmental issues that affect people, so that they may address them collectively.

The vision of Prayatna Samiti is to promote self-empowerment and leadership abilities amongst deprived sections of rural communities for their sustainable livelihood.
Work area & community

The organisation is working with 4,012 people living in 120 villages of 5 blocks of Udaipur district located in Rajasthan state of India. The area lies in Southern part of the state which is marked by undulating terrain comprising of hillocks and steep hills of Aravalli mountain range. The temperature in winters often drops to 4°C and reaches up to 45°C in summers. The average rainfall since last 33 years is recorded as 644.91 mm. Highest Intensity/hr of rainfall is 45 mm.

Majority of the people are restricted to reading and writing which is followed by primary education category. The main livelihoods practiced are agriculture and animal husbandry. The migration status is 2 persons migrating for 4 months from each family. There is limited agricultural land as most of the area is slopped surface. Animal husbandry is hit by low milk yield as there is no feed and disease management. The pasture land has low productivity and less water holding capacity. Tribals are not familiar with the social welfare schemes and their rights.
Work strategy

To start with organisation does problem identification through community microplanning during which resource availability and other social problems are identified. Convergence is done with national and state government schemes. Accordingly the inputs are provided in the form of resource mobilization, technology, and capacity building. The inputs help in institutional building like Self Help Groups, Kissan Clubs, Farmers Field Schools, Pasture Committees, Forest Rights Committees, and Village Watershed Committee. The institutions help in approaching community, work implementation and institutional development for sustainability through capacity building. To streamline the approach the emphasis is given on following themes:

- Pastureland development
- Sustainable Agriculture
- Animal Husbandry
- Fostering gender equity
- Enhancing access to community rights
About the annual report

Prayatna Samiti this year made interventions in watershed area and tribal dominant regions. In the effort 50 villages of 5 blocks (Girwa, Vallabhnagar, Kurabad, Bhinder, and Salumbar) of Udaipur district benefited from the activities. The watershed development was promoted in 10 villages through facilitating local institutions – Village Watershed Committee, Self Help Groups and Farmer Field Schools. The development took place in the sectors of pastureland development, agriculture, and animal husbandry. Soil and Water Conservation, plantation, enhancing soil fertility and feed management were the critical areas with climate change taken as cross cutting issue.

In the direction of securing human rights women and child rights were taken as the areas of concern. With special focus on gender equity and nutrition women were sensitized on their rights related to land and employment and the society was urged to abolish gender discrimination and female feticide.

To secure child rights School Management Committees were reorganised to ensure availability of teachers, food, sanitation facilities, and students. Due to limited land possessions marginalized farmers who are forest dwellers were facilitated to apply for Individual and Common Forest Land Rights. In another effort the holistic development approach was followed by merging PESA with Traditional Knowledge. Community Knowledge Registers (CKRs) were developed as reference material for reviving traditional treatments, agricultural and animal husbandry methods.

Prayatna Samiti is thankful to its supporting agencies – Indo German Watershed Development Programme-National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (IGWDP-NABARD), GIZ, Action Aid, Siemenpuu Foundation, SARRA, and International Land Coalition (ILC) for their resource mobilization in the operational sector. Apart from this internal fund raising was done with NABARD for development of Information Education and Communication (IEC) material.

The report describes the activities in close relation to the themes of the organisation.
Pastureland development

Pasture forms a chunk of land mass fulfilling the fodder requirement. Apart from this most of the timber, fuel and NTFP is collected from the land. In the work area around 39% of the land comes under waste land category which is unprotected. The private pasture land is often well protected by people. However, the land is marked low productivity.

The organisation has developed institutions to take up land treatment work for 3,000 ha which consists of commons (forests and government) and private. The work undertakes Soil and Water Conservation and Afforestation through community contributions and government convergence.
Annual recap on Pastureland development

Perceiving pasture as important source of grasses, trees and water restoration the interventions focused on soil and water conservation with climate proofing as cross cutting issue. The local Village Watershed Committee under the supervision of the organisation took up the implementation and monitoring activities. Continuous Contour Trench of 25,327.43 cum accomplished in waste land ranging from 5 to 30 % slope. With the effort to convert pasture into silvi-pasture *Boswellia serrata* (Salar) plantation was taken up on the ridges. Water Absorption Trenches were developed as interceptions to absorb huge quantity of water at foothills. 31,032 cum volume of Thawala with toe wall were constructed to up hold moisture around root stock of the plants growing on the slopes. 3,960.59 cum Gully Plugs developed to allow maximum recharge across the streams. Recharge pits and triangular gully plug models were designed to bear the effect of climate extremes. A total of 569 cum Earthen Gully Plug constructed across 3rd Order drainage line. Gradonies were constructed as steeping inward sloppy narrow bench terraces at contours. Usually, gradonies are suitable for afforestation in uniformly steep sloping land. Gradonies helped in increasing the vegetative cover as the surface area increased. Grasses grown in 380 ha land supported fodder regeneration and reducing splash. They were introduced as best cultivars of the region to provide nutrition to the animals. The grasses grown were *Heteropogon contortus* (Kali Laap), *Cenchrus setigerus* (Motha Dhaman), Rohida and Heran.

As a result of treatment soil and water runoff got reduced. Siltation occurred by 25 %. Per hectare indigenous grass production raised by 1.5 times. Water level raised up to 5 feet in 120 wells in low lying area. Indirectly, per hectare agricultural production increased by 5 q. Farmers cultivated black eyed bean; brinjal, bottle gourd on Gradonies. Income of Rs 5,000/- generated by selling lemons.
Sustainable agriculture

The focus lies in crop cultivated area. The main crops are maize and wheat cultivated in kharif (June to October) and rabi (October to March) seasons, respectively. The produce is normally used for family consumption. The farmers with more than 0.18 ha land often sell the grain at market price. The crops are also the source of fodder and fuel. Lack of irrigated land, water resources, soil productivity, and information of improved practices is a setback in production.

The organisation deals in providing technological inputs and trainings and testing methods of cropping pattern.
Annual recap on Sustainable agriculture

To enhance agricultural produce throughout the year focus was put on improving soil productivity with introduction of runoff control measures and increasing their durability in response to climate extremes. Simultaneously, climate resilient farming measures introduced with focus to enhance market gains and per capita availability of grains. The activities were implemented in watersheds and other villages.

Field bunds of 3,375.41 cum developed in crop land with 3 to 5 % slope. Consequently, soil depth increased by 0.1 m. Per hectare production of indigenous maize increased by 4.5 q and wheat by 9 q. Forage production increased by 10.13 q per hectare. Bund planting of fodder species of Adoosa, Ricinus communis (Castor), Azadirachta indica (Neem), and Bambusoideae (Bamboo) provided extra income of Rs 1,250. Waste Weir provided durability to the field bund by regulating overflow during high intensity rainfall.

4083 variety of wheat, provided to 20 farmers, is a climate resilient variety with the recorded yield 7 q from 20 kg sown in 0.2 ha whereas indigenous variety yields 5 quintal from 36 kg sown seeds. The variety is also known to resist low temperatures. This was locally tested and accepted by Farmer Field School. Introduction of organic farming was another important step which increased soil productivity thereby enhanced production of vegetables and wheat (by 35 % per hectare). Vermiwash and fermented plan juices were the organic manures prepared by farmers in this direction.

The organisation provided trainings on improved vegetable cultivation and preparation of organic manure. 35 vegetable gardens were developed at the close distance to the houses. Plant supported optimum plant growth and reduced mortality rate. The survival rate recorded over last year was 70% which was 20 % more than the earlier. Proximity of garden to their houses benefited them in terms of consumption and monetary access. Since last year an average harvest of 4.5 kg per beneficiary was calculated for gardens developed in 0.6 ha fallow land. Application of organic manure enhanced crop production. 20 women farmers cultivated minor millets with the need to revive traditional crops known to maintain human health, soil fertility and were supposed to be climate resilient.

Apart from technological interventions organisation supported IGWDP-NABARD Rajasthan in developing IEC material. With the aim to educate rural masses on climate change adaptation measures posters on Agromet Laboratory set up in Rawtpura and Anjeni watersheds and Vermiwash were developed. The posters' contents focused on uses of weather measuring tools: Anemometer, Dry-wet bulb thermometer, Rain gauge, and Wind wane and preparation of vermiwash as one of the appropriate organic manures.

Also the organisation supported NABARD in developing Climate Proofing dissemination brochure.
Animal husbandry

Since ages animal husbandry has remained one of the prime sectors of rural interests. In the work area cow, buffalo, goats, pigs, hens, camels, sheep are reared for milk, meat and leather. There are 8,424 cows, 5,616 buffalos, and 11,232 goats in 2,808 families of the work area. The total milk yield is 54,756 litres/day with an average of 2.2 litre/animal/day which is less in comparison to animal density per household. Consequently the income level do not show a marked effect in the livelihood pattern.

With the introduction of improved breed of goats the organisation is promoting fodder and cattle shed management as integrated animal model of animal nutrition.
Annual recap on Animal husbandry

The thematic area focused on feed management. In the pastureland ecosystem the fodder becomes an important source of income generation. With the treatment of waste land the fodder quantity increased by 35 q per hectare resulting in increasing milk production by 0.5 l per animal. 1 cow shelter was developed to regulate milk production during climate extremes. Feed managers and cemented floor were provided to reduce forage wastage and bacterial contamination, respectively. Provision of cow urine and excreta collection was also developed to integrate animal husbandry with agriculture with the preparation of cow urine jeevaamrit and vermicompost. *Pennisetum glaucum × P. purpureum* (Hybrid Napier) was cultivated as a perennial grass species which is known for its high protein content. The grass grows well in temperate and sub temperate climatic zones. The roots of the grass binds the top soil fragments and foliage provides important nutrients to the livestock. The grass regrow at fast speed and attain 8 feet height to provide ample amount of fodder. 25 demonstration units of the grass were done in the watershed.
Fostering gender equity

Woman is an important part of the family and community. She equally toils with man in any of the developmental tasks. However, society has still not recognized her importance in maintain community ecosystem. Prayatna Samiti encouraged women to take part in village development. Women power was recognized through formation of Self Help Groups. SHGs also proved to be a strategy for promotional programmes and organising mass campaigning for achieving food security.

The organisation is working with 220 SHGs consisting of 1,680 women. An intra-loaning of Rs 38,42,196 and savings of Rs 8,52,150 has been done along with bank linkages.
Annual recap on Fostering gender equity

To empower women in decision making and recognizing their importance in village development gender equity was made integral part of any programme. 8 Self Help Groups opened under financial inclusion initiative. With the saving of Rs 100/- per month women have taken loan for purchasing seeds, fodder, animals, marriage and school fees.

The local institutions also proved to be useful in promoting livelihood based trainings. Prayatna Samiti has organised 2 improved agriculture and 2 animal husbandry trainings. 98 women acquired skills on crop sowing and medicating animals. When men move out of the houses for work role of women increases in decision making. SHGs provide them small loans to increase their incomes from livelihoods.

666 women and 785 men participated in national workshops, campaigns, and capacity building programmes organised to sensitize women and society members on women rights so that women may receive equal rights to that of men in the society. These rights consist of land rights, pension provision, enrolment in National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS), and creation of gender discrimination free society by reducing domestic violence. 16 days Beti Zindabad campaign was organised in 5 adjoining districts during which men, women, and institutions were sensitized on declining sex ratio. Through roleplays, rallies, and IEC material society was educated to abolish female feticide, women violation and educate girls.
Enhancing access to community rights

The work area consists of 80% of tribal community residing in Schedule V area. Tribals residing in the forest region are confined to small land holding barring them of agricultural production. Limited intervention of village Panchayats for peoples' development in health, water restoration, employment, education, and food security.

Prayatna Samiti is dedicated for strengthening people’s institutions for creating awareness and welfare schemes and peoples’ rights.
Annual recap on Enhancing access to community rights

1 Mass mobilization campaign, 2 workshops and 5 trainings were organised to sensitize masses of child rights. 1 public hearing was also organised to attract the attention of administration on the uncommitted status of education. For securing Child Rights in tribal dominant area 4 School Management Committees were made functional to ensure the availability of teachers, food, and education standard in the schools. 158 children were linked with *Bal Adhikar Manch* (Children Right Forum) which was further strengthened to aware and sensitize people and children on the child rights. Nutrition, gender, education, and sexual harassment were considered as the areas of prime concern which need to be improved to ensure child rights. 9 child labours were identified from the work area and adjoining villages, blocks and cities who were provided admission in schools. Consequently, status of nutrition, playground, and enrolment and teachers attendance was improved.

137 youths were mobilized to avail employment opportunities under NREGS and facilitated to apply for Forest Land Rights through *Van Adhikar Samiti* (Forest Rights Committee). 125 households got Individual Forest Rights over 102 ha land.

Apart from this non-active Public Distribution Systems and Anganwadi Centres were made functional to support nutrition related acts. 30 Gram Sabhas were facilitated to ensure people's rights under The Panchayat (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA) 1996 and sending notices to Panchayats for providing developmental services in remote areas.

With the aim to revive Traditional Knowledge systems associated with region specific biocultural diversity of the tribal dominated areas of Udaipur the organisation carried out protection and promotion of biodiversity specific Traditional Knowledge for Health and Livelihood Security. 1 Capacity building Workshop was organised which was aimed to aware, create understanding and impart skills to the community members on management of natural resources and adapting best practices. CKRs were revised to include more trees, herbs, livestock, crops, traditional healing methods of human beings and animals, and traditional agricultural and animal husbandry practices. Local germ plasm of the minor millets, herbal plants and vegetables was also been collected to preserve the biodiversity important for health and livelihood security.
Participation in International Land Coalition

International Land Coalition is a global network of societies which secures rights to land, water, and other natural resources in ending poverty. It groups 1,000 representatives of civil society, governments, and multilateral institutions to Eradicate Hunger and Poverty. Over the past two decades, ILC has engaged with the complex and rapidly changing realities in which its members work.

At the global level, ILC has contributed to the widespread recognition of standards of good practice in land governance. ILC aggregates civil society organisations (CSOs) to catalyze joint action with the commitments in: Secure Tenure Rights; Strong Small-Scale Farming Systems; Diverse Tenure Systems; Equal land rights for women; Secure territorial rights for Indigenous Peoples; Locally-managed ecosystems; Inclusive decision-making; Transparent and accessible information; Effective actions against land grabbing and; Protected land rights defenders.

In ILC Asia 2015 conference organised in Thailand Mr. Mohan Dangi, Secretary of Prayatna Samiti presented the case “Securing Rights Peoples Rights on Common Pasture Land” under the commitment Locally Managed Ecosystems. The Rights over Common Pasture Land are observed as Common Property Rights (CPR). The case represented the efforts of the organisation in mobilizing people to develop the commons to secure their rights over the land. The moment led rich farmers to remove their encroachments from the land. Today the land is well managed by people of the village. The program reflects the integrated management of Common Pasture Lands (CPL) which was brought back by ensuring equal rights of all the villagers over the CPL.
**Energy efficiency**

The biogas units were constructed to produce cooking fuel from the animal excreta thereby reducing the consumption of fuel wood and head load. The biogas also reduced smoke emission thereby contributed to the climate change mitigation. 5 units were demonstrated in 3 villages. The models are been able to provide clean source of energy. The practice has introduced a change in habit of the family members with switching over to the gas stove from traditional mud chullha. The beneficiaries cook the 3 times meal from the biogas. The slurry byproduct is being utilized as organic manure in farming.

The improved cookstoves were introduced to reduce the pressure on forests for their fuel wood supply. They also brought down the head load of women as they required almost 50 per cent of the fuel wood to the wood required for traditional stoves. The stove can use any type of solid biomass fuel including wood, cow dung and agricultural waste. 5 Cookstoves were tested in 3 villages.