

## The backdrop

The Indian subcontinent however enjoys varying weather conditions – higher and lower temperatures, rainfall, autumn, and spring which provide optimum conditions for agricultural growth, but farmers lack awareness and skills to increase harvest and climate coping techniques. Unavailability of land, water, irrigational resources and changing weather patterns add to the misery of farmers.

Apart from cereals majorly grown in two seasons – rabi (winter crop) and kharif (summer crop) – there is a need of economic agricultural crops which requires less water, less labour, and readily available resources like manure and provides fruits in a short period of time. Prayatna Samiti, a Udaipur based Non-Government Organisation (NGO) with the support of South Asian Rural Reconstruction Association (SARRA), Bangalore implemented the project “**Development of FAITH Gardens**” in 5 Panchayats of Girwa Block of Udaipur district of Rajasthan. **FAITH stands for Food Always in the Home.** The project aims to promote vegetable cultivation through vegetable gardens, known as FAITH gardens. The vegetable farming through FAITH gardens is a type of economic agriculture. With the introduction of plantation technology and organic manure the farmers can grow vegetables close to their houses. The vegetables provide nutrition to the family members and can be sold to get instant income. In the project Prayatna Samiti provided skill based training to the marginalized farmers, provided them seeds, organic manure, and helped them in preparation of plant beds which resulted in promotion of FAITH Gardens.



## Selection of beneficiaries

The selection criterion was an institutional approach in which Self Help Groups (SHGs) and Farmers Field Schools (FFS) were strategic groups to provide beneficiaries. The beneficiaries were the tribal marginalized farmers belonging to Meena and Rawat tribes.



## Objectives

- ❑ Development of FAITH Gardens.
- ❑ Impart vegetable cultivation skills to the marginalized farmers.
- ❑ Promotion of indigenous vegetable seeds in the villages.
- ❑ Supply important nutritional elements to the family members. them in preparation of plant beds which resulted in promotion of FAITH Gardens.



## Project Progress

Prayatna Samiti organised 3 trainings on “FAITH Gardens Development training for Vegetable Cultivation and Promotion” at Bambora and Kela Talai villages. During trainings 23 farmers were engaged in on site vegetable bed preparation which ensured their interest in vegetable cultivation. Seeds of bhindi, amaranth, kidney beans, brinjal, tomato, carrot, spinach, fenugreek, coriander, onion, and cauliflower were distributed.

Farmers sowed the seeds in the plant beds at their farms. Field staff monitored and provided onsite demonstrations for bed preparation and watering. Fermented Plant Juices (FPJ), Fish Amino Acids (FAA), Oriental Herbal Nutrient (ONH), Indigenous Molecular Organisms (IMO) and Lactic Acid Bacteria (LAB) were prepared and provided to the farmers.

The practice was promoted through FFS. FFS is the group of farmers which is involved in participatory testing of farm based technologies. Prayatna Samiti along with FFS developed vermiwash, a liquid organic manure which supplements macro and micro nutrients and nitrogen fixation bacteria. Vermiwash was sprayed on the vegetables to replace Urea and DAP. Results showed growth in plants and improvement in soil fertility.

**23 gardens promoted by beneficiaries and 1 demonstration at Village Resource Centre, Bambora. Average plot size of the gardens is 400-600 sq. ft.**



## Response of the people who promoted the garden

The people living in the project area practiced broadcast method of seed sowing which did not gave them satisfactory yield. After the advent of project they came to know on the preparation of plant beds which according to them is a new method which gives good yielding and plant growth.

Plant beds help in optimum plant growth and reduces mortality rate. The survival rate recorded over last 3 months was 70% which was 20% more than recorded earlier.

Proximity of garden to their houses has benefitted them in terms of consumption and monetary access. Over three months an average harvest of 4.5 kg was calculated from 23 beneficiary gardens.

People don't have to go the market to purchase the vegetables which has saved their money thus increasing household income.

According to the farmers they can now themselves develop their vegetable gardens. They can harvest seeds and prepare organic manure. The garden requires fertile soil and organic manure which is readily available as by product of animals.

Farmers have planned vegetable gardening for the jaiyad season (summer crop) which according to them will be beneficial for livelihood enhancement. The practice has mobilized farmers to use the waste land and slopes around their houses.

Farmers are also experimenting with new methods of organic farming. Application of by-product of biogas, the slurry, is applied in fields. Composting is preferred over fresh cow dung. Cow urine is sprayed as natural pesticide. Application of Vermiwash has also found importance as it improves soil fertility and enhances plant growth.

According to the villagers the vegetables produced at home are sweeter in taste in comparison to vegetables available in market as they are free from chemical pesticides and chemical fertilizers like urea and DAP.

Beans provided them proteins; chillies, bitter gourd and methi proved good for immunity; bhindi provided iron; carrot provided good source of Vitamin A; spinach provided iron.

## Problems faced in promoting the gardens

Far allocation of wells from the household was one of the problems which barred the villagers from regular water application.

Another problem was the small irrigated area. The area was already earmarked for wheat cultivation on which livelihood of the marginalized farmers depends.

Land was stony and sloppy which was not suitable for plantation.

*Neelgai* (Asian antelope) ate up the crops in night.

Unavailability of manpower was also the problem as most of the men farmers migrate to nearby cities in search of jobs.

The target beneficiaries were tribal communities which do not possess any skills in vegetable cultivation. Their acceptance to the new methods of vegetable cultivation at large scale was also a good challenge.

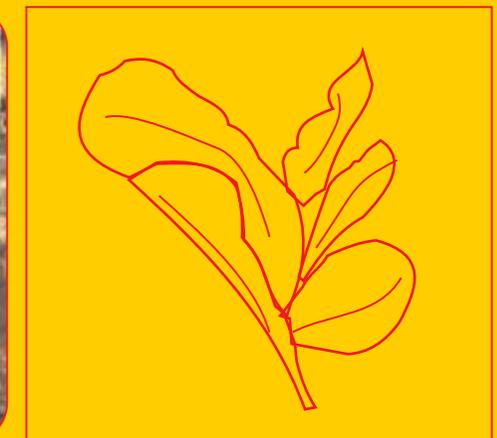
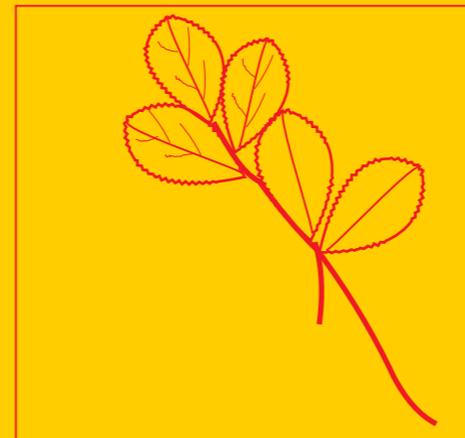
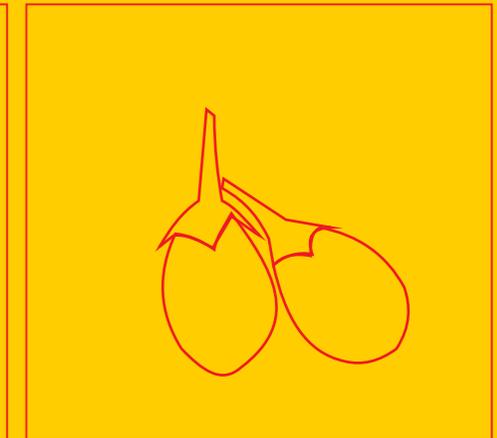
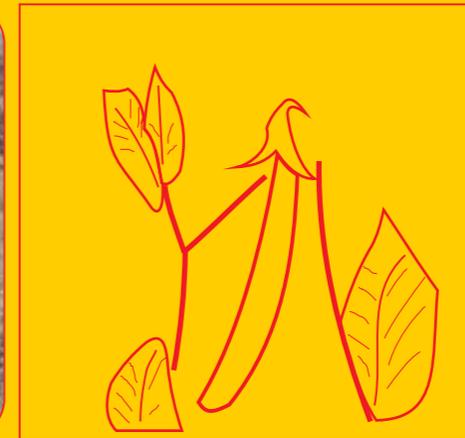
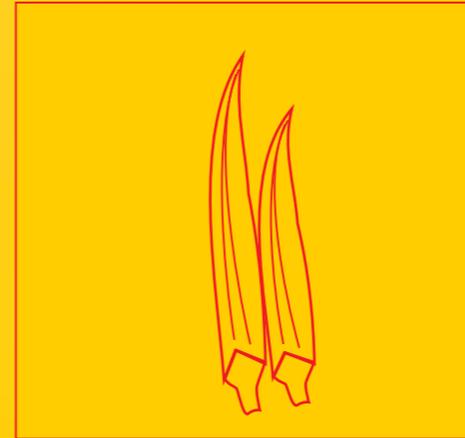


## Fay forward

The implementer is looking up for integrating the thematic area – indigenous vegetable cultivation – with climate risk mitigation practice. As the farmers are struggling with climate shift vegetable cultivation is helpful as income generating activity.

Growing of vegetables on slopes, gradonies, and farms will ensure sustainable livelihoods especially in case of dry land agriculture. Poly net houses and trellis in turn will sustain their growth. Capacity building of the people will be an interim part of the promotion.

Seed banks will be formed in the villages from where villages will buy the seeds.



## Development of FAITH Gardens A vegetable cultivation project

