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**REPUBLIC OF INDIA**

**COMPLETION EVALUATION**  
**ANDHRA PRADESH TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**  
**AND**  
**AGREEMENT AT COMPLETION POINT**





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## FOREWORD

This document being submitted for the consideration of the Evaluation Committee contains two distinct sections related to the completion evaluation of the Andhra Pradesh Tribal Development Project, India. The first section contains the evaluation's Executive Summary, and the second section includes the Agreement at Completion Point that is a mandatory feature of IFAD evaluations. This Agreement at Completion Point was reached among various evaluation partners on 30 April 2001 in Hyderabad. It is based on an in-depth analysis and reflections on the main evaluation findings. The Agreement at Completion Point is the product of a learning exercise and an intense dialogue among the members of the Core Learning Partnership.<sup>1</sup> It consists of five key evaluation insights.

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<sup>1</sup> These included the commissioner of the Tribal Welfare Department of the Government of Andhra Pradesh, the development cooperation officer at the Embassy of The Netherlands in New Delhi, Outreach (a non-governmental organization) and IFAD (represented by the Asia and the Pacific Division and the Office of Evaluation and Studies).



## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

APTDP	Andhra Pradesh Tribal Development Project
GCC	Girijan Cooperative Corporation
ITDA	Integrated Tribal Development Agency
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Product
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PWG	People's War Group
SHG	Self-Help Group
VTDA	Village Tribal Development Association



## MAP OF THE PROJECT AREA

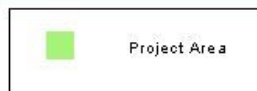


### INDIA

### ANDHRA PRADESH TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (APTDP)

Completion Evaluation

Map of Project Area



Source: IFAD

The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IFAD concerning the delimitation of the frontiers or boundaries, or the authorities thereof.





## SECTION ONE: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### I. INTRODUCTION

1. **Project background.** The Andhra Pradesh Tribal Development Project (APTDP) was appraised by IFAD in December 1990. The loan became effective on 27 August 1991 and closed on 31 March 1999. The total project cost was USD 46.5 million, funded by the Governments of India/Andhra Pradesh (USD 19.5 million), IFAD (USD 20.0 million) and The Netherlands (USD 7.0 million). The cooperating institution was the United Nations Office for Project Services. The Tribal Welfare Department of the Government of Andhra Pradesh was the executing agency, with overall responsibility for project implementation.

2. **Project area.** The project area is located in the north-eastern regions of the state of Andhra Pradesh. The project was implemented in four contiguous Integrated Tribal Development Agencies (ITDAs), with a high concentration of families engaged in *podu* (shifting/slash-and-burn) cultivation: Seethampeta (Srikakulam district), Parvathipuram (Vizianagaram district), Paderu (Visakhapatnam district) and Rampachodavaram (East Godavari district). The project area comprises wide plains, hills and narrow valleys. The altitude ranges from 200 m to as high as 1 600 m in some areas of Paderu, and the area contains a wide range of microclimates. The areas where *podu* cultivation is practised often have steep slopes in excess of 28 degrees. Rainfall averages about 1 100 mm per year, with around 80% of precipitation occurring during the south-west monsoon (June-September). The project area is endowed with a generally good climate, productive soils, rich biodiversity and is subject to less demographic pressure than exists on the plains.



Picture 1: A stripped peak suffering from deforestation and soil erosion in the project area.

3. **Target group.** At the time of project appraisal, the entire project was inhabited by scheduled tribes. About 70% were engaged in *podu* cultivation, and the majority of the remainder relied on rainfed crop production. The degree of poverty was greatest among the 13% of households with only *podu* land, and average incomes per year, including off-farm income, were estimated at



2 660 Indian rupees (INR) for these households. The comparable figure for families with both *podu* and permanently cultivated land was INR 3 710. Both figures were well below the annual poverty level of INR 4 800 per household used by the Integrated Rural Development Programme. Especially vulnerable groups include significant numbers of landless households, the poorest women and under-employed youth. About 60% of tribal families were reported to be in debt to non-tribal traders/moneylenders, with an average debt of INR 1 390. The target group comprised all 63 370 families living in the 2 077 villages of 16 selected watersheds.

4. **Objectives and strategy.** The main objective of the project was to foster self-reliant household food security by increasing food production and raising the income of tribal families, with specific focus on households practising *podu* agriculture. The project strategy included several elements: (a) planting the hill slopes with tree crops to provide food and cash income, as well as utilizing soil conservation measures to restore the ecological equilibrium; (b) improving the productivity of food crops through expanded irrigation and improved farming technology; (c) formulating a community development strategy to ensure the sustainability of economic development; and (d) identifying measures to address the chronic indebtedness among tribals by strengthening credit and marketing systems and, in particular, by building up the assets and capacities of the Girijan Cooperative Corporation (GCC).

5. **Project components and implementation.** The APTDP had the following components: (a) community and women's development (6% of project costs), (b) health and education (9%), (c) natural resources development (70%), (d) credit and marketing support (9%), and (e) project management support, including monitoring and evaluation (6%). The Tribal Welfare Department had the overall responsibility for project implementation, with the commissioner for tribal welfare as the project coordinator. Project activities were implemented through the regular ITDA channels. The respective ITDA project officer was designated as project director and was responsible for day-to-day management of the project.

6. **The political factor: Naxalism.** The main risk involved in the implementation of the APTDP was the history of socio-political unrest in the region. During the 1970s and 1980s, the project area witnessed a period of turbulence as the epicentre of the Naxalite revolt, a radical insurgency movement. The initiation of the project represented a bold move on the part of both the Government of India and IFAD and provided the opportunity to assess the relationship between a grass-roots-led protest movement and the operation of a participatory tribal development project.

7. **Completion evaluation process.** The main objective of the completion evaluation was to assess the performance and impact of the APTDP. An additional objective was to document the experiences of the project and develop a series of lessons learned that could assist in the design and implementation of similar ongoing and future projects in the country and elsewhere. The evaluation was jointly conducted with The Netherlands, the project's cofinanciers, and was planned and implemented to promote maximum local participation and ownership.

8. A participatory rural appraisal (PRA) was undertaken from 15 September to 15 October 2000 by Outreach (a non-governmental organization (NGO) based in Bangalore, India). The objective of this exercise was to collect primary data from project stakeholders in order to assess the performance of the project from the beneficiaries' perspective, including its targeting, impact and sustainability. The results and analysis of the PRA were discussed in a stakeholders' workshop in Hyderabad in October 2000 and were made available to the evaluation team.

9. The completion evaluation team was then fielded in November 2000. It held discussions with representatives of the Indian Government and the Embassy of The Netherlands in New Delhi before proceeding to the project area, where discussions were held with officials of the Government of Andhra Pradesh, NGOs and other project participants. Two workshops representing major



stakeholders were held at the outset and at the end of the mission to create a forum for consultation, dialogue and knowledge-sharing. Mission members spent about two weeks in the four project areas, during which they were able to interact directly with beneficiaries in 35 villages and gain valuable insights from their experience. They also examined some of the physical achievements of the project and participated in in-depth discussions with key project staff. A video conference (Delhi/Rome) was organized during the evaluation mission's wrap-up meeting in New Delhi. This provided concerned IFAD staff from the Office of Evaluation and Studies and the Asia and the Pacific Division with the opportunity to participate in discussions. Finally, a stakeholder workshop was held on 30 April 2001 in Hyderabad to discuss the draft evaluation report and to formulate the evaluation's Agreement at Completion Point.

## II. IMPLEMENTATION PERFORMANCE

10. **Natural resources development.** The physical results under the natural resources component have generally matched or exceeded targets. Total food production in the project area has increased by an estimated 500% during project life. However, these figures mask important problems, such as the need for better maintenance of irrigation systems, a lack of sufficient know-how regarding horticultural techniques and, perhaps most significantly, an increased vulnerability to drought because of the dependence on irrigated agriculture at the expense of traditional techniques that included built-in measures to counteract periodic drought conditions. When questioned, the farmers admitted that they were continuing *podu* cultivation as a fall-back mechanism, or that they would revive it if necessary.

11. More specifically, about 20 000 ha of rainfed lands were provided with irrigation, representing an increase in the irrigated area of six and a half times as compared to the pre-project period. More than 54 000 ha of land belonging to some 27 000 households were subjected to soil and water conservation measures. More than 55 000 families now directly benefit from highly productive horticultural plantations and orchards, where the emphasis is on mixed plantings of cash and food crops. A most significant achievement has been the establishment of nearly 40 000 ha of orchards, mostly cashew, but also mango, guava, citrus and silver oak for coffee. Under the APTDP, in addition to greater irrigation and soil conservation methods, determining factors in enhancing food production were the development of improved seed varieties, the wider application of fertilizers and the adoption of improved agricultural practices.

12. Agricultural extension is provided by village extension officers. The outreach capacity of the village extension officers is constrained by the lack of training necessary for the dissemination of innovations and technologies, and of transportation facilities. To overcome these constraints, some support has been provided by village-level workers and the posting of agricultural graduates as agricultural development consultants in villages that are not easily accessible. The APTDP achieved its target of establishing 6 500 demonstration plots and 2 400 seed-production sites. About 900 farmers were given training to enable them to establish satellite nurseries. Adaptive research was initially made available through Andhra Pradesh Agricultural University, and since 1995 the responsibility has been entrusted to the National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management. Research focused on cropping systems, inter cropping experimentation, natural resources management and so on.

13. **Community participation and village institutions.** Participatory approaches designed to motivate and empower men and women have been a key process in project activities. The APTDP established a variety of local-level institutions, including self-help groups (SHGs), cluster-level associations of SHGs, user groups/village development committees (for example, for education, health, irrigation, grain banks) and a nodal institution in the form of village tribal development associations (VTDAAs). The latter were conceived on the one hand as a forum for the expression of



community priorities and concerns and on the other as a means of delivering project and programmes to the community. A total of 1 029 VTDA's were formed in the project area, five times the original target. Similarly, 1 231 SHGs were formed. However, more than half of the SHGs are inactive, most likely due to the fact that they can be set up easily, but are difficult to sustain. The cohesiveness and sustainability of groups have been weak, and too much emphasis has been given to the mere existence of SHGs. A total of 467 grain banks were established. They have been the most significant of village-level institutions and have enabled members to do without the services of moneylenders for the greater part of the year. Community coordination teams – groups of young, dedicated professionals who live in villages for up to three years – have had notable success working with villagers by encouraging genuine participation in helping tribal communities identify village priorities and implement and monitor development activities in the sphere of health and education.

14. **Education.** The principal activities in education focused on infrastructure and access improvement, training, awareness-building and performance monitoring. The support for community initiatives included the provision of matching funds for the construction of community (*maabadi*) schools and for the payment of their teachers, as well for basic equipment such as blackboards, stationery and slates. Support was given to 1 323 community schools, covering nearly 20 000 schoolchildren. A total of 81 educational resource centres were constructed. These were used for ongoing teacher training programmes, access to educational materials and teacher conferences. Training sessions included teacher training, programmes for community school volunteers and guidance for village education workers. Awareness campaigns were mounted to emphasize the importance of education and increase enrolment in primary schools and to reduce drop-out rates. Through this component, the project also ensured the provision of midday meals and the undertaking of a comprehensive survey in terms of access, capacity and enrolment projections, as well as the rationalization of educational institutions and school complexes through a scientific school-mapping exercise.

15. Considerable emphasis was given by the educational resource centres to improving teaching methods and monitoring educational standards. The basic model of these centres included a training hall equipped with audio-visual facilities, a library, a laboratory, a kitchen and some accommodation for visiting teachers. The centres normally served 30-40 schools of all kinds under the aegis of the head teacher of the school that hosted the complex.

16. **Health.** Considerable emphasis was placed on the health sub-component at the design stage, but, as with education, little was achieved in the first years of the project. The programme focused on the promotion of community-based preventive health care. The principal objectives of the health sub-component were to promote accessibility to primary health care and monitor mother and child health/epidemics, as well as to raise the awareness of tribal people and capacity-building among medical and paramedical staff and tribes. Another key element in this initiative was the deployment in remote villages of well over 1 000 community health workers, each of whom was provided with a month's intensive training and a basic medical kit. The basic training focused on hygiene, malaria prognosis and first aid. Community health workers were selected from among married women in their twenties and thirties, preferably with a modicum of education. Other major achievements included the provision of drugs, equipment and vehicles for 32 primary health centres and of vehicles for mobile medical units; matching grants for the construction of 181 subcentres; the establishment of a referral fund for medical emergencies; and the provision of training kits. Thirty-seven jeep-cum-ambulances were supplied to primary health centres. Training sessions were provided for medical officers at the Indian Institute of Health Services in Hyderabad, and drugs and other equipment were supplied to primary health centres and subcentres.

17. **Housing.** Upon the recommendation of IFAD, the Tribal Housing and Habitat Improvement Facilities Programme was proposed as an additional activity in 1997-98, and the loan agreement was accordingly amended. As *podu* lands were converted to orchards and plantations and forest



regulations were more strictly applied, the growing shortage of roofing and thatching material provided the rationale for inclusion of the housing programme. The basic objective was to provide low-cost *pukka* (bricks) housing to tribal villagers. A total of 14 292 houses were constructed, only eight short of the target. The housing programme was to be funded through a grant to VTDA's to be distributed among villagers as loans. In the majority of villages, however, payment for the houses has been regarded as a grant and not as credit, although beneficiaries have supplied the labour or labour payments and, in many cases, additional materials. The procedures for selecting beneficiaries under the housing scheme were not consistent, and the involvement of beneficiaries in design was limited.

18. **Credit and marketing.** The project provided resources to improve the operational capacity of GCC, in particular its ability to manage credit operations, improve marketing and support research and development activities that would benefit tribal people.

19. The project's performance in credit delivery was inadequate. Crop loans were provided both in cash and in kind, with approximately 59% being distributed in cash, and the rest in the form of fertilizers and other agricultural inputs. Consumption loans were also provided. SHGs were the principal vehicle for the channeling of credit. About 60% of the SHGs formed during the project period were inactive. In the six villages studied during the PRA, two SHGs were totally defunct, and the four remaining could be categorized as functioning moderately. It was noted that SHG activities were better in the initial years and gradually worsened. The initial enthusiasm is partly explained by the provision of matching grants to the SHGs by the project irrespective of their performance.<sup>1</sup>

20. In terms of credit delivery, the amount disbursed more than doubled from 1991-92 to 1992-93 (from INR 6.6 to 13.6 million) at the time that IFAD funding to GCC became available, but then gradually fell, reaching its lowest level, INR 2.2 million, in 1996-97. It picked up slightly in the next two years, but had still only reached INR 4.9 million by 1999-2000. The trend was similar in terms of loans in the form of agricultural inputs. From a 1991-92 level of INR 2.3 million, the total amount of such loans increased to INR 6.4 million the following year and thereafter began to fall sharply, until in 1998-99 no loans at all were disbursed, and only INR 2.1 million was disbursed in 1999-2000. One of the reasons given by GCC for the reduced levels of credit was the sharp decline in recovery rates. The GCC figures indicate about 60% recovery in 1999-2000, which is more than the rate in some earlier years. For example, in Paderu district the collection rate declined steadily from 88.7% in 1994-95 to 39.3% in 1999-2000.

21. In recent years, GCC has put more emphasis on marketing than on the provision of credit. With regard to marketing, GCC took a number of steps in organizing grass-roots channels, strengthening

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<sup>1</sup> Cluster-level associations have been set up in many areas of the Andhra Pradesh Participatory Tribal Development Project with the principal aim of ensuring that communities can take full advantage of all ITDA programmes. The associations consist of ten or more SHGs formed according to the norms of the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development. Individual SHGs were considered as too small to be effective borrowing units, and their capital did not go far enough as investments in productive and profitable activities. The formation of cluster-level associations is a significant step in facilitating credit from GCC, ITDA and banks, and, in the Bhadrachalam ITDA, the institution has made remarkable progress. The emphasis was on the formation of women's cluster-level associations that combined several SHGs. The evaluation team observed two cluster-level associations in Bhadrachalam which had been able to purchase tractors and lease land for cultivation. Shops had been set up; the management of girls hostels had been taken over, and other profitable activities had been planned. However, the notion of the cluster-level association is still in its infancy and has not been fitted into the overall scheme of the Girijan Primary Cooperative Marketing Societies, nor coordinated with the activities of VTDA's. Although the Bhadrachalam ITDA adopted a clear policy of promoting women's groups, GCC as a whole does not have a specific gender dimension built into its programmes. In Bhadrachalam, the evaluation team noted a new wave of women's awareness and a determination to generate income independently and take organizational initiatives with the support of state agencies, NGOs and other public bodies. Women's groups campaigned against alcoholism and the trade in liquor and were addressing significant issues, including primary education and health.



the supervision of procurement and sales and developing new products. In particular, the reach of the Girijan Primary Cooperative Marketing Societies was greatly extended. VTDA's organized periodic meetings of villagers to discuss who needed credit and how to improve the marketing of produce and obtain better prices. The project also provided training for functionaries of the Girijan Primary Cooperative Marketing Societies and considerably improved methods of processing, packaging, transportation and promotion.

22. Research and development activities constituted a major aspect of implementation, and GCC has tackled these activities systematically by commissioning market surveys and studies on processing techniques, financing opportunities and pricing, and undertaking the regular monitoring of the activities of tribal people. This has led to the identification of new non-timber forest products (NTFPs) and the creation of a database on forest products and their use. The emphasis on research and development has supported a process of synthesis between modern techniques and the tribal people's indigenous knowledge systems and has boosted efforts to market forest produce more actively. GCC initiatives have generated value-added items derived from many forest products such as gum karaya, gum olibanum, cleaning-nuts, marking-nuts, jatropha curcas, gymnema leaf and neem. The generation and processing of gum karaya have been particularly successful, providing much employment to tribal women. Gum karaya has been developed in four forms, powder, granule, cream and gel, with numerous usages promoted commercially. Cleaning-nuts are another item of technical processing, which has led to the production of Natfloc-1001 with a variety of functions in the clarification of water, including in large-scale industrial operations. These and many other familiar items, such as soap, honey and washing powder, have been developed by the research department of GCC.

23. The overall value of the forest and agricultural produce purchased by GCC rose sharply to a total value of INR 220 million in 1999-2000, compared to an average of about INR 100 million during 1992-96. The collection and sale of gum karaya are an increasingly important part of GCC operations, with top-grade gum being purchased from villagers at INR 125 per kg, a fivefold increase during the project period. The GCC organizational expansion facilitated by the APTDP led to the creation of the Commercialization, Research and Development Division, illustrating the emphasis GCC assigns to issues related to market linkages.

24. **Project management and coordination.** Project implementation was marked by frequent changes in management personnel in the Tribal Welfare Department. Nevertheless, the overall project coordination by the Tribal Welfare Department was effective. ITDA project officers were particularly enthusiastic in their efforts to institutionalize participatory approaches, and their efforts culminated in the Government of Andhra Pradesh issuing an order requiring that all works in tribal subplan areas should be executed by village SHGs. One major problem has been the fact that intermediaries between ITDA and the grass-roots level are limited, which has not facilitated project operations. Project supervision by the United Nations Office for Project Services was highly incisive and constructive, and the appointment of the same cooperating institution to supervise the follow-up project (the Andhra Pradesh Participatory Tribal Development Project) has provided good opportunities for the transfer of experiences between the two projects.

### III. ANALYSIS AND IMPACT

25. **Food security and natural resources.** The combined effect of better agricultural practices, input supply, horticultural initiatives and infrastructure interventions has led to marked increases both in productivity and in total production and thus a significant improvement in food security and income levels. The PRA reveals that the food security of selected households across the four ITDAs had improved by 20-30% by project year six. More specifically, at project inception only six households out of 24 enjoyed food security for nine months or more of the year, and this figure had increased to 18 by project completion. For the four poorest households, which were described as enjoying only



three months' food security initially, the period of food security had doubled by the time of the PRA. In the village of Diggavu Solamalu, in Paderu, there were seven households in the pre-project period that had a full 12-month food security, and this figure had doubled to 14 by project completion. The number of families enjoying at least nine months' food security increased from 12 to 17. Generally, those households that were less food secure did not possess irrigated land.

26. The GCC initiative in gum karaya has been a major source of income for almost 12 000 tribal people and an important source of employment for tribal women. Coffee has proven to be popular with tribal communities and has generated greater economic returns. There has been a per-unit yield increase of 84% for Seethampeta, 94% for Paderu and Rampachodavaram and 115% for Parvathipuram. The average yield of paddy throughout the project area has increased nearly threefold (from 1 100 to 3 100 kg/ha), and, in cases of optimum fertilizer application, up to 4 500 kg/ha. Given an irrigated area of 20 000 ha by the end of the project, total food production from the irrigated area can be estimated at 62 000 t, without the application of fertilizer. If only 20% of farmers applied fertilizer, production would be in the region of 80 000 t, an increase of almost 500% over the pre-project era.

27. Generally, the perception of farmers is that irrigation and plantation have been the main contributions of the project. Extensive *podu* areas have been converted into orchards, with a positive impact on the environment. This transformation has also been sound from an economic standpoint, since the potential economic returns from orchards are several times greater than the returns from *podu* farming. However, price fluctuations and continuing exploitation by middlemen have meant that farmers have frequently been compelled to sell their products at uneconomic prices. In several villages, the progressive diminution of *podu* farming can make the tribals more vulnerable to severe drought conditions, and in some cases they are uneasy at not having their traditional mix of rainfed grain and other low-intensity crops to fall back on. This problem has been exacerbated by extended periods of drought in the past few years. These difficult conditions underline the need to promote agricultural strategies that rely on irrigation and rainfed systems. Further, to ensure the sustainability of plantations, there is a clear need for more training to educate farmers in agricultural know-how concerning new crops and techniques and the ongoing management of their plots.

28. The sustainability of small-scale irrigation is especially dependent on the effectiveness of community action, and, where the local communities have not been properly consulted in planning, the actual location of the check dam has sometimes been inappropriate. Similarly, the quality of construction has suffered when local people have not been involved in implementing the scheme and the necessary land development has not taken place, with the result that the benefits of irrigation have failed to reach the maximum number of households. Greater attention must still be focused on certain key technical aspects of irrigation development. These include the need to ensure that each scheme is selected on the basis of cost effectiveness, the permanency of water supplies and equitable land distribution and that it is designed and executed on the basis of detailed field investigations and PRA exercises. Greater financial and technical support to farmers is also required for downstream on-farm water projects to ensure the maximization of benefits and equitable distribution of the water through the formation of permanent water users associations. The expansion of irrigation has greatly contributed to reductions in the pressure on *podu* land and increased the area cropped under rice. However, there are striking disparities with regard to cropping intensity, improved crop husbandry and maintenance.

29. **Environment.** The evaluation generally noted an abundance of natural vegetation, and the project areas on the whole are well watered and fertile. Strict forest regulations are in place to prevent deforestation. Attempts to curtail the practice of *podu* cultivation are important for maintaining and improving environmental conditions, and terracing and bunding have in many cases led to immediate improvements in the orchard-level conservation of soil and water. However, it remains unclear whether thinly planted orchards will suffice to prevent localized erosion, especially where appropriate



soil-conservation measures have not been put in place or where other ground cover is scarce. There is also concern about the development of low-lying land for paddy cultivation, with the application of non-organic inputs for high-yield varieties of rice such as fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides. Care must be taken to avoid a build-up of chemicals in these regions, and impact assessment and research into alternative agricultural practices may be necessary. The potential for organic methods of agriculture should be explored, particularly in view of the rapidly expanding market that exists for organic produce.

30. **Beneficiary participation.** Participation was promoted through SHGs, VTDA and users groups. Such institutions have been replicated on a large scale in Andhra Pradesh and cover a wide range of activities. However, one problem has been that there are too few intermediaries between ITDA and the grass roots. Village-level workers and agricultural development consultants have had to cover up to 60 habitations, which often are widely scattered and remote, making it virtually impossible to meet villagers regularly. Thus, often only a small proportion of tribals have been able to grasp the benefits of ITDA inputs, which in some cases has led to strengthening those who are less poor. Despite some good results in the institutionalization of participatory approaches, the concept of participation has been conceived differently by people. Participation has also invariably been linked with an activity, so that social mobilization and community participation were primarily seen as a mechanism for preparing people for the delivery of services, rather than as a process for boosting empowerment. More could have been achieved, but perhaps the time and interaction required for such new thinking to take root in government-led programmes were underestimated. Furthermore, executing agencies require greater incentives to institutionalize structures in support of participatory development processes that can gradually lead to the transfer of authority 'downwards'. The concept of participation promoted through the APTDP has been extremely important, as it has provided the stepping stone for future development programmes and activities. Participation has contributed positively to changes in social relationships not only within the state and grass-roots institutions, but also among tribal people themselves, as well as between tribal people and other actors in the informal economy, such as moneylenders, traders and other service providers. The APTDP also assisted in initiating a trend to change administrative and bureaucratic approaches, bringing them more in line with the fact that sustainable development is best achieved from the 'bottom'. The PRA signaled that there needs to be a much greater emphasis on training of project staff and enhanced support from ITDAs for village institutions, as well as capacity-building and the streamlining of institutions for the sustainability of the programme.

31. **Credit and marketing.** In the past decade, there has been a fluctuating trend in terms of credit delivery and a clear reduction in the amount of loans because of the sharp decline in recovery rates, implying that tribal capacity to repay loans improved only marginally. However, the presence of the GCC credit facility has given a certain confidence to tribal communities, and, through the creation of SHGs, the propensity to save has now become more well established among tribal people. The practice of borrowing in advance and pledging the produce of the following season has not been entirely displaced, despite GCC's expanded programmes. However, wherever there are active social workers or committed officials, the GCC schemes have had a noticeable effect. Greater efforts need to be made to sustain the flow of credit and improve recovery rates and to devise measures so that the landless are able to participate in such schemes.

32. The marketing of NTFP has been given a major boost. GCC undertook research on the processing and marketing of the forest produce collected by tribal peoples. Its initiative on gum karaya was a good example of the benefits of combining a concern for tribal people with the dissemination of scientific knowledge and professional marketing techniques. Gum karaya is the most important NTFP procured by GCC, accounting for about one-half of total procurement, and is a major source of income for almost 12 000 tribal people. The employment of a pharmaceutical specialist by GCC led to the development of scientific tapping and post-harvest practices, and storage and quality control were modernized. Nearly 80 consultants and 400-500 liaison workers were engaged to train





and supervise the collection of the gum. Within two years, the price of Grade-I gum tripled, from INR 30 to 90 per kg, and tribal income rose proportionally. Tree life was also extended as a result of improved techniques of tapping. Similar successes were achieved in the development of biofloculant from cleaning-nuts, in the identification of a large number of medicinal herbs available in the forest and in establishing markets for them. GCC attempted to institutionalize the involvement of tribal communities in these efforts and also to involve tribal youth through forest-produce gatherers associations. However, the trader-cum-moneylender continues to have a strong presence in the marketing of NTFP, and even though the law has given monopoly rights of procurement of NTFP to GCC, it has been able to procure only about 70% of these products according to its own assessment. The remaining portion, often including the best quality NTFP items, is left to the private trader. The linkage with the moneylender continues because of transactions based on the dynamics of tribal contingent needs. The trader's agent arrives at the villager's doorstep as soon as the produce is available and collects the item against advances provided earlier. Even though the interest on the loan is as high as 10 or 15% per month, the practice continues, and in some places VTDA or the liaison worker has intervened only to redirect this sale to GCC. Further improvements need to be made in ensuring greater communication at the village level as regards the availability of information on NTFP prices fixed by GCC. Because of illiteracy and lack of information, traders are in a position to manipulate prices for the purchase of both agricultural and forest products.

33. **Social impact.** The PRA indicates that the project successfully reached the great majority of households within five of the six settlements. In the six villages assessed, three villages identified the construction of the check dam as the most important achievement, and the other three cited the construction of *pukka* houses. A total of 14 292 houses were constructed, and tribal people felt pride of ownership because of their involvement. The overall standards of health and nutrition are surprisingly high, and the placement of more than 1 000 community health workers to make basic health facilities available in remote villages has been the most important innovation under the health component, especially in pre-natal care and hygiene.

34. The demand for education now has its own dynamic: a conclusion that may be the single most significant development in terms of long-term changes in perceptions in tribal areas. The introduction of community schools and direct involvement of parents in managing the schools have played an important role in raising enrolment and attendance rates. In all four districts, there have been annual increases in enrolments (27% for Seethampeta, 9% for Parvathipuram, 12% for Paderu and 19% for Rampachodavaram), of which approximately 40% are accounted for by girls. School drop-out rates fell from 71% in 1995 to 53% in 1998 and continue to fall. One crucial educational element that needs to be addressed immediately is the provision of vocational training in tribal areas.

35. According to the PRA, the status of women is generally higher in tribal areas than in non-tribal societies, and in some instances, the leader of VTDA was a woman. The PRA shows that the perception of gender equity improved noticeably in all six villages under review, mainly because of the existence of SHGs. However, the dynamic connection among women's groups, credit access and income generation has been absent in the APTDP area. Female literacy rates in the project area have risen substantially, although perhaps the main impact of the project activities on women has been the steadily increasing proportion of girls in school. One negative impact on gender equity has been the fact that men now concentrate more on work in the irrigated areas, whereas men and women were previously accustomed to a large degree to working together on *podu* land. Women play a key role in agriculture, village institutions, education and rural marketing, and it is essential that gender issues be woven into all aspects of IFAD strategy.

36. **Peace-building.** The project area suffered from an insurgency campaign mounted by the Naxalite People's War Group (PWG), which, in the early stages at least, appeared to have been motivated by a genuine desire to improve the welfare of tribal people. At that time, the PWG served to highlight the problems of tribal people and the urgent need of measures to protect them, in



particular in terms of their alienation from tribal lands and exploitation by unscrupulous moneylenders and middlemen. The APTDP contributed to reducing insurgency activities in the project area, illustrating that the Fund has a facilitating role to play in peace-building, particularly in those areas in which protest movements are supported by people at the grass-roots level that have little choice but to join due to their social and economic vulnerability.

37. The project demonstrated that IFAD has a development philosophy characterized by participatory and bottom-up approaches, with the objective of transferring decision-making and ownership to tribal people themselves. IFAD also contributed to promoting changes in attitudes among government and related authorities on the one hand and people at the grass-roots level on the other – particularly participants in the insurgency movements. In its earlier days, the PWG gained momentum through the support of disenchanted tribal people, relegated to lives of abject poverty, who looked to the PWG as a possible escape from misery. However, the APTDP brought about changes and development in ITDAs that created an atmosphere of optimism and empowerment, leading tribal people to gradually distance themselves from the PWG, thereby weakening the Naxalite movement in the project area. Finally, the APTDP promoted better functioning of the informal sector in the tribal area, including among moneylenders, contractors and traders.

#### IV. INSIGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

38. **Participation and empowerment.** The APTDP has been a pioneer in stressing community participation and has brought about changes in tribal development during implementation by creating space for a multi-stakeholder approach with a specific focus on tribal people. One achievement has been that programme management has been initiated, executed and monitored by communities and tribal people have been empowered as partners in the improvement of their natural resource base and their means of livelihood. However, despite some good progress towards the institutionalization of participatory approaches, the concept of participation has been differently understood by different people at different times. Consequently, community participation strategies were applied differently in the four ITDAs, and there was inadequate continuity in the approaches and the emphasis on participation. Moreover, because participation was linked with an activity, social mobilization and community participation were primarily seen as a mechanism to prepare people for the delivery of services. It is important to build a culture where people are not accountable for the results achieved, but for their ability to ‘manage for results’. Village institutions should be organically linked, nurtured and facilitated. Training and capability development for social mobilization should be an integral and regular aspect of project design and implementation, as should the involvement of competent NGOs. Careful attention should subsequently be given to the institutionalization of the expertise and skills generated so that the capabilities developed are successfully sustained.

39. **Community institutions.** The performance of various community institutions varied widely from village to village, depending largely on the level and regularity of project inputs, both economic and motivational. The design of future projects should be more realistic as to the formal extent of community involvement, and competent NGOs should be involved in both the creation and support of nascent institutions. With the knowledge that villages with strong traditional institutions find it easier to internalize new approaches and technologies, the intensity of project delivery needs to be based on the institutional capacity available at the village level. The fact that the project lacked a coherent strategy to ensure the convergence of community institutions with the traditional power structures on the one hand and government institutions on the other may have created difficulties in achieving better bargaining power for the community. In order to avoid the emergence of parallel and potentially divisive structures, the nature of traditional authorities must be investigated, and the necessary links between new and old institutions explicitly recognized. Although the project was successful in bringing about changes in attitudes among development workers at all levels, the building of strong, long-lasting community institutions that allow tribals to become self-reliant and to



reduce their dependency on external institutions is a process that requires time, the continuity of efforts and sustainable support mechanisms.

40. **Insurgency movements and development projects.** The APTDP offers an unusual opportunity to examine the role IFAD can play in conflict resolution, in particular through assessment of the relationship between an insurgency movement (Naxalism) and the operation of a participatory development project in tribal areas. The mere involvement of IFAD in such a sensitive area was seen as a serious effort by the Government to respond to tribal disaffection and exploitation. IFAD provided a silent bridging leadership, playing the role of a facilitator that could be trusted and was committed to furthering the interests of tribal communities. The Fund's facilitation role significantly contributed to greater awareness within the Government and the civil-service cadres and to a process of change in bureaucratic attitudes that favoured more listening and greater partnership-orientation in the effort to boost the development of the girijans (tribal people). Emphasis was also placed on the need to address the movement through social and economic advancement schemes, as well as through a law-and-order approach. The APTDP also brought about the development of ITDAs, creating an atmosphere of optimism and empowerment, thereby weakening the Naxalite movement in the project area. In order to maintain the physical and social assets created under the APTDP, further investment in infrastructure, training programmes and adaptive research is essential.

41. **Exit strategy and post-project monitoring.** Although the development of a post-project completion plan is integral to project design, it is common for projects to be designed and implemented with limited attention to a strategic phase-out. It is necessary to devote serious attention during design to a completion plan that identifies institutional responsibilities and roles and, to the extent required and where possible, recognizes that IFAD's continued assistance in the post-project period is critical. This task would be facilitated by the creation of a post-completion monitoring system to highlight important issues requiring the Fund's follow-up and guidance. There is a need for the immediate assistance of IFAD and the state in consolidating the achievements and impact of the APTDP, particularly with respect to capacity-building in communities and community institutions. This would require the allocation of additional resources specifically allocated to social mobilization and training.

42. **Food security, *podu* farming and the environment.** Total food production in the project area has increased by an estimated 500% during project life. However, this figure masks important problems, including poor maintenance of irrigation systems, a lack of sufficient know-how regarding horticultural techniques and, most significantly, increased vulnerability to drought because of the dependence on irrigated agriculture. The degree of change involved in the replacement of a tried and tested agricultural pattern by an approach requiring different techniques, different seasonal patterns and a different attitude towards natural resources must be recognized. For example, emphasis needs to be placed on preliminary research concerning the choice of horticultural crops in particular areas to determine which crops would be successful in given soil, altitude and climate conditions. Wherever radical agricultural transformation is being attempted, there is a vital need for training, guidance, adaptive research and strengthened extension services in order to support and sustain the transformation. The training of trainers is the first requirement of training programmes, and this must take into account the fact that the line department officials themselves may have little knowledge of either local conditions or tribal societies.



Picture 2: A project beneficiary weeds the basin around mango saplings.

43. **Water users associations.** A notable achievement of the project in terms of the increase in irrigated land has been the utilization of indigenous knowledge in the design and construction of cost-



effective irrigation systems. However, in various villages the full impact of these improvements has yet to be realized, owing to the underperformance of water users associations. The responsibilities of these associations include the construction and maintenance of irrigation channels, but in many cases no associations existed, or, where they did exist, they were ineffective. In some cases, irrigation channels are already in need of maintenance. The main reason for this appears to be the lack of training provided to water users associations concerning their duties and responsibilities. Irrigation development includes the appropriate construction of field channels, land development, efficient on-farm water-management measures and efficient land-use and crop production, as well as post-harvest management practices. In each of these areas the training of association members is the crucial element. Despite the repeated recommendations of supervision missions, the necessary training programmes were not put in place. In many schemes, there is now sufficient water for a second crop, but there has been no investigation of the possibility of advancing the second planting, as was done in earlier programmes in the plains of the Godavari districts during the Green Revolution of the 1960s.

44. **Importance of vocational education.** The demand for education in tribal areas has grown rapidly over the last decade, even in the absence of the necessary infrastructure and personnel. However, educational gains have not been matched by employment opportunities. The ashram schools, which are geared towards basic academic education, meet the overall mental- and social-development needs of the child but are not directly linked to post-school employment. Although these



Picture 3: A traditional shoe-making family has received assistance from GCC to enlarge its family business.

schools are admirable, tribal communities have an immediate need for craftsmen, irrigation engineers, nurses, teachers and tailors, and, above all, there will be an increasing need for farmers with knowledge of slope-agriculture land technology, pesticides, orchard maintenance and animal husbandry. Hence, it is important that the teaching of these skills be given the central importance it deserves, and this should be achieved within the existing ashram system. This shift in the purpose and philosophy of the ashram schools will require the full support of the Government of Andhra Pradesh, and it must be emphasized that the educational system cannot stand outside the development process as a whole. The Government of Andhra Pradesh should be encouraged to set up a working group within the Department of Education to explore the possibilities for vocational education within these schools. As part of the suggested post-completion process, IFAD should perhaps consider funding comparative studies on vocational education and its applicability to tribal areas.



45. **Health care.** Community health workers have been one of the undoubted successes of the project. The basic training package is sound and should be refreshed and extended where possible. In particular, basic midwifery training should be included in all programmes, particularly in view of the resistance to institutional care among tribal women in certain places. The Government prohibition on



Picture 4: People from the tribal areas visit the market to sell their produce.

intramuscular injections by unofficial health staff might perhaps be reviewed. After two or three years of experience and a series of training programmes, such injections ought to be well within the competence of capable community health workers. The relationship between official health staff and the community health workers needs to be one of partnership. In some cases, there is some suspicion on the part of trained officials towards the 'barefoot doctors', and indeed this is to be expected to a certain extent. This could be minimized by ensuring that the health staff immediately superior to the community health workers be personally implicated in their training, as well as in supervision. In this way, they could themselves identify with the progress and achievements of the community health workers. Some workers were given very specific instructions to deny the validity of traditional medicinal practices. In view of the emphasis on the part of the project and ITDAs on respecting, utilizing and building on traditional tribal culture, more attention might be given to an assessment of traditional practices regarding herbal teas, roots and

other medicinal plants. Wherever possible, beneficial therapies of this kind should be married with modern therapeutic practice. The dismissal out of hand of local knowledge runs counter both to the spirit of the project and to the increasing attention being accorded to traditional medicine in general.

46. **Land and parity issues.** The disparities that exist between remote and less remote villages must to some extent be regarded as inevitable given the difficulties of communication. Where reaching a village demands long journeys on foot and overnight stays, the evaluation noted that the village does not receive the same attention as more accessible habitations. In effect, more remote villages require a greater proportional investment in terms of time, effort and money, and this needs to be reflected in project design. Wherever possible, a housing scheme should include all householders of a hamlet or village, provided they meet the targeting criteria, in order to avoid the emergence of a two-tier social structure with hut-dwellers as a conspicuously less-favoured group. Certain long-standing settlements are located in areas designated as reserve forests. Communities have been allowed to remain where they are, but it is still legally impossible for secure land titles to be issued in such circumstances. This is a matter that requires consideration by the Forestry Department and ITDAs in order to ensure greater integration of all segments of tribal society. Finally, tackling the problem of landlessness has not been a major focus of the APTDP, and the majority of project activities have focused on households with a modicum of land. However, the seriousness of the problems of the poor and of marginal farmers in tribal areas can be gauged from the fact that approximately 20-25% of the households in tribal areas are estimated to be landless.<sup>2</sup> Marginal farmers having up to two acres of land constitute 30-35% of tribal households. In other words, almost half of the tribal families possess little or no land and rely either on NTFP, or on work on other people's fields or on *podu* cultivation.

<sup>2</sup> In some villages, the definition of landlessness is understood in terms of the lack of ownership of 'wet land', and *podu* land is not reckoned as cultivable land.



47. **Maintenance of physical and social assets.** Although the project achieved good results in terms of infrastructure-related improvements and attempts at social mobilization, an urgent concern is the extent to which these assets can be maintained in the post-project phase. Continuing efforts are necessary, particularly in terms of training programmes for ITDA staff and beneficiaries alike. This means that levels of investment must be maintained. During the year 2000 and beyond, state financial problems have meant that ITDAs have been starved of needed funds. The effect of the recent shortage of funds on the operation of ITDAs has clearly been profound, and in many cases it was difficult for the evaluation to determine how far this alone was responsible for operational deficiencies. The evaluation witnessed examples of damaged irrigation channels, vehicles out of commission, buildings requiring immediate repairs, cashew farmers struggling due to lack of training and guidance, primary school children without slates, and SHGs without motivation. In Paderu, the closure of the *maabadi* schools affected nearly 14 000 schoolchildren. All these problems can be addressed through relatively small interventions, but recently ITDAs have not had sufficient resources even for these.



## SECTION TWO: AGREEMENT AT COMPLETION POINT

### FIVE INSIGHTS

This agreement reflects an *understanding* among the core partners at the completion point of the completion evaluation process to *adopt and use* the learning and recommendations from the completion evaluation in the implementation of the Andhra Pradesh Participatory Tribal Development Project and in the design of new projects and programmes aimed at the development of tribal people. The core partners included the Ministry of Tribal Affairs of the Government of India, the Tribal Welfare Department of the Government of Andhra Pradesh, the concerned ITDAs (Seethampeta, Parvathipuram, Paderu, Rampachodavaram), the Development Cooperation Section of the Embassy of The Netherlands in New Delhi, the Girijan Cooperative Corporation, Outreach (an NGO), the National Institute for Agricultural Extension Management, and IFAD (represented by the Asia and the Pacific Division and the Office of Evaluation and Studies).







## **PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT**

1. When it was designed, the APTDP was a pioneer in stressing community participation. In this sense, the project was unique in reaching tribal groups and communities and was quite distinct from the conventional sectoral and departmental approaches practised at the time.
2. The platform for participation that was developed by the APTDP benefited from the experiences of other projects aimed at rural development and poverty alleviation, including the SHG-model experimented in the IFAD-supported Tamil Nadu Women's Development Project. The other institutions created to promote participatory development included village development committees, VTDA's, grain banks and various interest groups linked to specific activities (for example, irrigation, soil conservation and health), as well as the recruitment of agricultural consultants. In addition, one novel concept introduced by the GCC was the formation of community coordination teams consisting of groups of dedicated young professionals who lived in tribal villages to assist in social mobilization, awareness-building and the identification of needs and priorities around which development interventions could be built.
3. Overall, the project has brought about changes in the tribal development scene by creating space during implementation for a multi-stakeholder approach with a specific focus on tribal people. One achievement has been the shift in focus from the limited objective of increasing employment opportunities through labour-intensive schemes to the objective of programme management that is initiated, executed and monitored by the community and of the empowerment of tribal people as partners in the improvement of their own natural resource base and means of livelihood. By and large, communities have responded positively to this approach, demonstrating that, with appropriate support, many of the key issues afflicting the welfare of tribal peoples may be resolved. For example, in spite of the fluctuations in the level of credit delivery, the propensity to save has now become well established among tribal people through the creation of thrift and credit groups.
4. However, despite good progress in the effort to institutionalize participatory approaches, the concept of participation has been differently understood by different people (in the Government's Tribal Welfare Department, in GCC, among project officers and the staff in the ITDA's, and elsewhere) at different times. Hence, the participation strategies applied were different among the various ITDA's depending largely on the perceptions of the project officers and related staff in a given period. Due to the short tenure of project officers and other government staff, there was inadequate continuity in approaches and in the emphasis on community participation. It must also be stated that the sequencing of project initiatives was not carried out in a manner likely to reinforce community participation. For example, the investments in natural resource development were not linked to the building of tribal institutions and the strengthening of the institutions that would eventually take responsibility for the management of the natural resource base.
5. Moreover, participation was invariably linked with an activity. The strategy aimed at involving tribals in, for example, the execution of irrigation schemes, horticulture development, soil conservation initiatives, or savings and credit activities. Thus, the APTDP was set up in such a way that social mobilization and community participation were primarily seen as a mechanism to prepare people for the delivery of services. Using participation as an independent process mainly aimed at empowerment was not a central feature in the APTDP. Nor was this concept fully internalized by the executing agencies, whose thinking was by and large driven by the administrative and bureaucratic practices of the time, which emphasized the intensive involvement of state structures in development activities. More could have been achieved in terms of social mobilization. IFAD and the cooperating institution strongly advocated the need for greater participation, but they may have underestimated the time and interaction required for the new thinking to take root in Government-led programmes, such as the APTDP. Attempts were made to institute community coordination teams at the village level and to recruit agricultural consultants and others to mobilize, motivate, organize and train tribal people.



However, the results were moderate for a number of reasons, including the need for more time than was envisaged to develop social mobilization processes. Furthermore, executing agencies require greater incentives to institutionalize structures to support participatory development processes that can gradually lead to the transfer of authority ‘downwards’. The evaluation concluded that effective social mobilization is crucial for building participation, and for this it is essential to understand how traditional societies function. Finally, the evaluation noted that there is room for involving competent NGOs in the process from an early stage.

6. Nevertheless, even the limited concept of participation promoted through the APTDP has been extremely important, as it has provided a stepping stone for future development programmes and activities. Participation has contributed positively to changes in social relationships not only within the state and at the grass roots and grass-roots institutions, but also among the tribal people themselves, as well as between tribal people and other actors in the informal economy, such as moneylenders, traders and other service providers. The APTDP also assisted in initiating a wave of change in administrative and bureaucratic behaviour, making it more open to the fact that sustainable development is best achieved from the ‘bottom’.

7. The evaluation recognizes that the state, too, has a crucial and concurrent role to play in participatory processes, in particular by promoting a favourable environment that can lead to the erosion of the ‘dependency culture’ that is deeply rooted in tribal societies, which are accustomed to receiving services and resources from the ‘top’. This ‘dependency’ not only suggests the need to develop self-reliant tribal communities that take charge of their own decisions and their own resource allocation, but also refers to the ‘dependency’ that has arisen in the Government apparatus and among Government officers supporting tribal development, that is, the project officers, ITDA staff and others whose performance is largely assessed on the basis of the ‘results achieved’ in tribal development. Therefore, project-related staff often focus on targets and output achievements. Consequently, their approaches do not necessarily favour more open and lasting participatory development, which, by the nature of the concept, requires a longer term investment and is a more laborious process, since the necessary incentives and motivations are lacking. It is therefore important to build a culture in which people are not so much accountable for the ‘results achieved’, since results are not exclusively in the hands of a single person or institution, but are accountable for their ability to ‘manage in order to achieve results’. In sum, overcoming the dependency culture requires a paradigm shift whereby needs are addressed from both angles.



Picture 5: A typical dry landscape.



## Recommendations

- Participation should not be confined only to specific activities. Instead, it is necessary to devote attention to local-level institutional development in order to promote grass-roots participation and empowerment following the ‘development ladder approach’. This could consist of the institutionalization of SHGs, village development committees and cluster-level (apex) organizations of village development committees, which should all be organically linked, nurtured and facilitated. In this way, participation will not be merely a process determined from the top into which those below are involved.
- Participation as a means of empowerment does not involve only the delegation of the powers of project functionaries. It includes the entrustment of functions, funds and control to participatory groups at the local level. The building of groups and the development of institutions that are nurtured over a period of time result in a successful empowerment process.
- Participatory processes can be better sustained beyond the project period if they are institutionalized within existing structures and programmes. This lesson was established during the IFAD Country Programme Review and Evaluation in Viet Nam (2000).
- Training and capability development for social mobilization should be an integral and regular aspect of project design and implementation. They should not be a one-time affair or training modules implemented in an ad-hoc manner. Given the limited quality of the training institutions (specific to tribal scenarios) in Andhra Pradesh, adequate investments for the development of resource persons, resource materials and training methodologies must be provided on a long-term basis. The institutionalization of the expertise and training skills generated needs to be given careful attention so that the capabilities that are developed become sustained.
- The project design should make provision for the involvement of competent NGOs in activities such as the social mobilization at the grass roots, awareness-building and the training of tribal people, as well as in service provision in selected areas depending on the comparative advantage of the NGO. It is recommended that NGOs be identified and selected during the project design process, so that different project partners are aware of each others roles and responsibilities. Selected NGOs should become part of the design process, following a thorough capacity assessment of each institution.
- Supervision missions have played an important role in changing administrative behaviour and in providing implementation support. It is extremely important that the composition of supervision missions is based on specific project requirements and that adequate financial resources are available for this activity.



## BUILDING COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS

8. Building community institutions was central to the strategy of the APTDP. Such an institutional capacity was perceived as the engine for the participatory planning, implementation, maintenance, ownership and sustainability of activities. The APTDP established a variety of local-level institutions, including SHGs, cluster-level associations of SHGs, user groups/village development committees (such as for education, health, irrigation and grain banks) and a nodal institution in the form of VTDA. The latter were conceived on the one hand as the forum for the expression of community priorities and concerns and on the other hand as a means of delivering projects and programmes to the communities. The leaders and members of VTDA were chosen by the communities as their representatives, and generally this selection required the approval of the traditional councils of elders, so that the relationship between the new and the old did exist, albeit on an informal basis.

9. The performance of the various institutions varied widely from village to village, depending largely on the level and regularity of project inputs, both economic and motivational. The activities of the committees, often including VTDA, came to focus on a particular individual, and in many cases committees effectively consisted only of this one individual. The chief function of the leader of VTDA, who in general was the most quick-witted and articulate of the young men, was in effect to act as a spokesperson for the village, but VTDA rarely developed into a genuine forum as it had been designed to do. It was usual for the VTDA leader to consult the village elders (the traditional authority) before agreeing to or promoting a particular scheme, which indicates that the collective authority of the village still resided with the elders. It should be pointed out that VTDA did serve an important purpose during the operation of the project by acting as two-way link between the community on the one hand and ITDA on the other, and after project completion there have been signs that this function has continued. It is the leader of VTDA, for example, who is responsible for conveying the requests and petitions of the villagers to ITDA, but no reports – not the United Nations Office for Project Services' supervision reports, nor project completion reports, nor the Mid-Term Review – considered that VTDA had developed into a sustainable institution.

10. The activities of the various sectoral committees also tended to revolve around a single individual and, often, around a single issue. In several villages, for example, the 'education committee' consisted of one person who had accepted responsibility for ensuring that the children all attended school and to get the non-attenders to return to school. The health committee often did not operate at all, and its intended functions were being carried out by the community health worker. Again, it is important to recognize that these phenomena are not necessarily a sign of failure, but they are far from what was originally envisaged and suggest that the design of these institutions was ambitious and complex. In the case of water users groups, which have a crucial task in maintaining and repairing the irrigation systems, the evidence indicates that this task was not carried out in the formal and regular way that the project had intended. The SHGs generally experienced an initial period of activity and enthusiasm that later waned, partly because they lacked incentives after they had obtained the matching grant, but also because of a lack of sustained guidance and motivation from the outside.

11. A factor to be noted is that the APTDP lacked a coherent strategy to ensure the convergence of community institutions with the traditional power structure on the one side and with Government institutions on the other. The existence of such parallel institutional structures may create difficulties in achieving better bargaining power for the community and in fostering genuine participatory development. The building of community institutions that allow tribals to become self-reliant and to reduce their dependency on external institutions that have provided support for years is a process that requires time, a continuity of efforts and sustainable support mechanisms. Therefore, although the project brought about changes in attitude among development workers at all levels in terms of the



need to promote effective local institutions, further work is required in order to create strong, lasting community institutions.

### **Recommendations**

- It is necessary to examine the roles and relationships in traditional societies, as well as the traditional community institutional arrangements that exist. In particular, the nature of traditional authorities must be systematically investigated, and the necessary links between new and old institutions explicitly recognized, in order to avoid the emergence of parallel and potentially divisive structures.
- Villages with strong traditional institutions find it easier to internalize new approaches and technologies, as well as to upgrade their knowledge. Therefore, in order to obtain greater impact, the intensity of project delivery needs to be provided based on the local institutional capacity available at the village level, rather than being predetermined and delivered in an equal manner across all villages.
- The design of future projects in this regard should be more realistic about the formal extent of community involvement. Small communities with no previous experience of formal institutions are unlikely to support a number of active committees. Therefore, it is fundamental to rationalize the formation of village development committees, prioritizing those that respond to the critical village-level requirements.
- NGOs must be involved in the creation and support of nascent institutions.
- The sustainability of community institutions must be viewed in terms of a much longer time-scale than simply the seven years of project duration. Further, such community institutions should not be designed only for service delivery or acceptance purposes, but should be seen more broadly as platforms for community participation and empowerment.



## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PROTEST MOVEMENTS AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

12. The APTDP offers an unusual, possibly unique opportunity to examine the role IFAD can play in conflict resolution, in particular since, because of it, one can assess the relationship between a radical protest movement, Naxalism, and the operation of a participatory development project in tribal areas. During the 1970s and 1980s, the project area witnessed a campaign of varying intensity mounted by the PWG, which in its early stages at least appears to have been motivated by a genuine desire to end the exploitation of tribal peoples and to achieve for them a measure of social justice in terms of land, resources and opportunities. At that time, the PWG served to highlight the problems of the tribal people and the urgent need for measures to protect them, in particular by putting an end to the alienation of their tribal lands and their exploitation by unscrupulous moneylenders and middlemen.

13. What made the APTDP different from other interventions aimed at the advancement of tribal people? Primarily, one must record that the APTDP was the first project exclusively devoted to the development of tribal people that was supported by an international organization in Andhra Pradesh. The mere involvement of IFAD in such a sensitive area was seen as a serious effort by the Government to respond to tribal disaffection and exploitation. IFAD provided a silent bridging leadership, playing the role of a facilitator that could be trusted and was committed to furthering the interests of the tribal communities.

14. It is not easy to identify which aspects of the project most impressed the PWG, but they appear to have appreciated in particular the mechanism for the involvement of VTDA's in participatory contract procedures for the construction of irrigation and soil conservation works and related activities. This innovation was eventually adopted across the entire state in all tribal areas through a Government order that made the PWG realize that serious efforts were being undertaken to uplift the overall well-being of tribal people. The PWG also appreciated that APTDP attempted to depart from the traditional top-down, bureaucratic model of development and provided an alternative that promoted empowerment and transferred decision-making, development planning, implementation and ownership to the tribals. This is illustrated by several instruments pioneered by the project that allowed for deeper beneficiary participation and self-determination, such as the creation of community coordinator teams, VTDA's, SHG's, participatory contract procedures, specific interest groups and village development committees.

15. IFAD's facilitation role significantly contributed to raising awareness within the Government and civil service cadres of the necessity of dealing with the protest movement in a judicious manner based on a determination to understand the root causes of the protest movement and to find ways to address them rapidly and systematically. IFAD assisted in initiating a process of change in bureaucratic attitudes that demanded more of a listening and partnership-oriented stance in terms of the development of the girijans, as well as emphasizing the need to address the concerns of the movement through social and economic advancement measures, as well as through a law-and-order approach. For instance, the lack of access to land was a prime grievance of the tribal people that had led them to support the Naxalite movement. The same issue is one of the determining factors behind the Tamil insurgency in Sri Lanka (IFAD Country Programme Evaluation of Sri Lanka, 2001). Consequently, the APTDP's advocacy role led the Government to distribute land to tribal people in the Bhadrachalam and other ITDA's. The APTDP brought in a fresh approach and a new mind-set within the Government and civil service in tackling a conflict that had created intense disruption in the people's daily lives.

16. There has apparently been a corresponding change in the Naxalite movement itself, with the departure of many of the idealistic cadres of earlier times, so that the movement now appears to be less one of educated ideologues and more a focus for frustrated and unemployed youth. This may also



be partly attributed to IFAD and the APTDP. In its earlier days, the PWG gained momentum because of the support of disenchanted tribal people who were being obliged to live in abject poverty and who looked up to the PWG as a possible highway to break out of their misery. However, the APTDP brought about changes in and the development of ITDAs, thereby creating an atmosphere of optimism and empowerment and leading the tribal people gradually to distance themselves from the PWG, thus weakening the Naxalite movement in the project area.

17. The APTDP also instigated better operations by moneylenders, contractors and other private service providers in the tribal areas. Through its commitment to uplifting the livelihoods of tribal people, the APTDP provided the PWG with a yardstick to measure and monitor the operations of the informal sector. Moneylenders, contractors, traders and others were compelled to provide better deals to tribal people in terms of interest rates and farm-gate prices for produce in order to avoid reprisals from the PWG. This has forced out a sizeable number of informal operators in the project area, in particular those whose prime objective was their own personal enrichment at the expense of tribal people. In fact, the APTDP paved the way for the Government to ban contractors from the tribal areas, ordering that all works should be executed by village-level SHGs.

### **Recommendations**

- The current notion of tribal development is largely based on ‘area development’ and ‘community participation’. That there are different landholding groups or classes, that there are big and small tribes in each village, or mandal, or district, that women have to be treated specifically are all issues that need to be fully built into the philosophy of tribal development. This will contribute to more equitable and sustainable development.
- Serious and urgent measures must be taken by the Government to maintain the physical and social assets created under the APTDP. In terms of natural resource management, as well as social programmes, much has been achieved, but the achievements are still fragile. In order to be sustainable, further investment in infrastructure, training programmes and adaptive research is essential. It is also essential that the levels of competence and commitment of the senior officers, in particular the ITDA project officers, be maintained.
- The Government must continue its commitment to participatory approaches to development programmes and to a step-wise transfer of decision-making to the local level, with a concurrent emphasis on capacity-building.



## EXIT STRATEGY AND POST-PROJECT MONITORING

18. The lessons and recommendations under this heading have been repeatedly observed through a series of evaluations of IFAD-supported projects undertaken in the past few years, not only projects in India, but also in other countries and regions. Thus, it is common to find projects that have been designed and implemented with limited attention to a strategic phase-out so as to ensure continuity in institutional support, processes and resources to achieve the consolidation of investments, leading ultimately to enhanced results and a lasting impact. More often than not, IFAD has withdrawn its presence and involvement after the project closing date, leaving its partners at country level and primarily those at the grass-roots level in a state of disarray. However, this primary issue is not one that IFAD alone must reflect upon. The other main partners involved in development interventions must also address it.

19. The phasing out of the APTDP was not designed or even planned for. The sustainability of institutions and their socio-economic significance depend basically upon the stream of benefits and the support structures left in the wake of withdrawal. The use of social-fund mechanisms like savings and thrift groups and community health initiatives, which are so effective for sustaining initiatives, were not conceptualized and carried further. Participatory groups and their organizations were not well integrated into apex institutions or federations, so that they could not have continued as support organizations at the village and cluster levels.

20. The absence of a planned withdrawal of the Fund and related institutions, such as the United Nations Office for Project Services, which provided technical support through supervision missions, and the lack of a capability of community institutions to assume responsibility for their own development are a cause for concern. For example, soon after project closure, the Government of Andhra Pradesh banned daily wage and contract appointments among local-level community functionaries, who were deeply distressed by this step. Overall, the project should have left behind people-centred, community-driven institutions at the village, mandal and ITDA levels. A little more organizational and financial support for the community-participation structures already established would have created an alternative paradigm to alleviate the excessive dependence upon ITDAs and their staff, thereby further fostering the participatory process and overall development.

21. The evaluation experience of the IFAD-supported Tamil Nadu Women's Development Project (1999) confirms the need for the articulation of a post-completion strategy. The Tamil Nadu Women's Development Project is recognized as a highly successful intervention that promoted innovative approaches to empowerment, capacity-building and income generation. After project closure (December 1998), the project was scaled up and replicated in all the districts of Tamil Nadu by the state government. Nevertheless, it was clear that the withdrawal of IFAD had created a vacuum that exposed the project and its implementing institutions to external pressures, including the pressures from the bureaucracy and from politicians. The project could no longer benefit from IFAD's support in shielding off undue interference, ensuring neutrality and minimizing delays, for instance in the selection of NGOs or of commercial banks that could become involved in project activities. The Tamil Nadu Women's Development Project illustrates that, even when a project is regarded as successful, there is a need for an appropriate degree of IFAD stewardship after project completion.

22. It was fortunate that the APTDP was followed up by a project (the Andhra Pradesh Participatory Tribal Development Project) funded by IFAD that covered other districts in Andhra Pradesh. The follow-up project was entrusted to the same executing agency (the Tribal Welfare Department of the Government of Andhra Pradesh). This provided some continuity in a few areas, but by no means provided a substitute for a clear 'exit strategy'. In those cases where a second-phase project is a 'second phase' in a more complete sense (that is, in terms of area coverage, the target groups and interventions), a phasing-out plan would still be required at the end of the 'first phase'.





Picture 6: A view of the well where deepening and pipe-laying work is taking place.

### Recommendations

- It is necessary to devote serious attention during project design to provision for the development of a post-project completion plan, including the identification of institutional responsibilities and roles.
- There is a need for immediate assistance by IFAD and the state in order to consolidate the achievements and the impact of the APTDP, particularly with respect to capacity-building among the communities and their institutions. This would require the allocation of additional resources particularly devoted to social mobilization and training.
- The Fund's continued assistance during the post-project period is often critical. This task would be facilitated by the establishment of a post-completion monitoring system to identify important issues requiring IFAD follow-up and guidance. Such post-completion monitoring may highlight the need to undertake specific follow-up studies in areas that offer potential for knowledge generation and to document field-level innovations that can be further tested, as well as to contribute to IFAD's impact-monitoring activities. In this regard, future project designs might involve the creation of special funds for institution-building for this purpose. This should be regarded as an integral part of design, and, if needed, the Fund should provide post-project grants to ensure that such activities are undertaken. IFAD could explore the possibility of using the NGO-Extended Cooperation Programme or the technical assistance grant mechanism for this purpose.



## FOOD SECURITY, *PODU* FARMING AND THE ENVIRONMENT



Picture 7: A woman beneficiary clears the irrigation canal which carries water to her plantation field.

23. In terms of natural resource management, the most significant activity of the project has been the attempt to use settled irrigated agricultural systems to replace the traditional methods of shifting (*podu*) cultivation. The aim is to improve household food security through the cultivation of high-yielding paddy rice and horticultural crops, as well as to protect the environment against deforestation and soil erosion. This necessitates radical changes in patterns and methods of farming and the introduction of farming systems of which the girijans have in general little or no experience. The project 'package' in this respect thus includes training programmes and expert supervision, as well as inputs such as seeds, fertilizer and saplings.

24. The physical results of the natural resources component have generally matched or exceeded targets, with a sixfold increase in the areas irrigated and the plantation of about 40 000 ha for horticultural crops. Total food production in the project area has increased by an estimated 500% during the project life. However, the figures mask important problems, including the poor maintenance of irrigation systems, a lack of sufficient know-how regarding horticultural techniques and, perhaps most significantly, increased vulnerability to drought because of the dependence on irrigated agriculture at the expense of traditional techniques that included built-in measures to counteract periodic drought conditions. When questioned, the farmers admitted that they were continuing *podu* cultivation as a fall-back mechanism, or that they would revive it if necessary. The attitude of the authorities to this seems to have been flexible in view of the difficult circumstances.

25. What needs to be recognized is the scale of the change that is involved in the replacement of a tried-and-tested agricultural pattern by methods requiring different techniques, different seasonal patterns and a different attitude towards natural resources. The key factor here is the need for effective training, guidance and adaptive research in order to support and sustain the transformation. The training programmes need to extend to the trainers, as well as to the trainees, because many of the line department officials have little experience either of tribal communities, or of upland agriculture under the local climatic and geophysical conditions. The programmes also need to be regular and ongoing.



The problems involved in a mature cashew orchard are not those involved in a newly planted orchard, and the techniques employed in second-crop cultivation are not identical to those employed in a one-crop system. Fertilizer needs to be supplied, but also to be correctly applied. The work of line departments has been made difficult by frequent changes in personnel and an emphasis on formal statistically verifiable targets. Adaptive research appears to have concentrated too much on commodity-centred activities and not enough on the efficient utilization of natural resources. In addition, the planting of cashew appears to have been regarded as a panacea, resulting in cashew cultivation in unsuitable soils and microclimates. The effects of this can be observed especially in the higher altitudes of the Paderu ITDA.

### Recommendations

- Emphasis needs to be given to preliminary research concerning the choice of horticultural crops in particular areas. Although the project – in theory at least – left the final choice of crop to the villagers, it is clearly vital that the alternatives offered should include only those crops that have proved successful in the particular soil, altitude and climate conditions. Since they have no experience in the cultivation of these crops, the farmers will inevitably (and rightly) be influenced by agricultural officials in this respect. For example, in the Paderu ITDA, given the excellent climatic and agro-ecological conditions, large areas have recently been put under coffee plantation, and even a larger amount of area has been covered with shade-bearing trees. The state government should undertake special initiatives and intensify coffee plantation. Coffee has proved to be very popular with tribal communities and has generated greater economic returns. There has also been a consequential reduction in *podu*, resulting in positive gains for the environment, also because of the increased forest coverage.
- The training of the trainers is the first requirement in the training programmes, at least in terms of timing. This training must take account of the fact that the line department officials themselves may have little knowledge either of local conditions, or of tribal societies. Thus, the content of the training must involve the basics in these respects. At the same time, the officials must understand that their authority as experts depends on the genuine level of their expertise in the particular conditions in which they are operating. In other words, their expertise is not a function of their rank, but must be demonstrated.
- The value of adaptive research can only be proved by results in the field, where the criteria will not be technical or academic, but practical. Thus, adaptive research must be applied and tested at village level, and this in turn depends on a well-trained and vigorous extension service. At present, the extension services under the APTDP are undermanned and undertrained, which suggests that insufficient attention has been given to this critical component of natural resource management in circumstances in which a radical agricultural transformation is being attempted.