



**Research in Environment,
Education and
Development Society**

Annual Report
2019-20

Contents

About Us	2
Geographic Coverage	3
Major Initiatives.....	3
1. MBVSY Melghat Project.....	3
2. Sankul Gramoday Yojana.....	5
3. FPC Support Program	10
4. Fund Raising Initiatives	11
Consulting Services	11
Other Highlights	12
Way Forward	13

About Us

Research in Environment, Education and Development Society (REEDS) is a registered non-profit established in 1992 to work on sustainable rural development. Our focus is on development of sustainable livelihoods for rural and tribal communities through effective management of local natural resources like agriculture, water, forest and livestock. Its core team comprises of experienced development professionals, social scientists, planners, environmentalists and administrators.

Small NGOs and individuals at grassroots have distinctive advantages during the implementation of development projects as they understand the local social structures and have good networks in the local communities. The need for REEDS arises from the fact that most of the time, they lack the connect with professional organizations having technical expertise, project management experience, documentation skills and the ability to reach out to funding agencies for financial support. Many of them cannot collaborate with other NGOs and leverage government programs. This adversely impacts the sustainability of the development projects and in turn, affects the livelihood of community. REEDS envisage bridging this gap and supporting such small development start-ups and leaders who are already working in their native areas on development initiatives.

Vision:

To strengthen the livelihood of rural communities through their empowerment and achieve holistic socio-economic development.

Objectives:

- ❖ To implement development projects in collaboration with local NGO partners and community leaders through technical support, project management techniques and financial arrangements
- ❖ To build the capacities of development professionals and local NGOs towards asset based community driven development model, project management and technical expertise in Natural Resource Management (NRM), agriculture and allied activities, micro-enterprises and other relevant areas
- ❖ To encourage a culture within the funding organizations to view the communities as important elements of social change through effective partnership
- ❖ To enhance the impact of government and private expenditure on the projects and programs to improve local livelihoods and economy at the community level

REEDS started Central India operations from May 2018 from it's office in Pune, Maharashtra. This office has recently completed 2 years. The focus of Pune office has been on implementation of Madhya Bharat Vananchal Samruddhi Yojana (MBVSY) in collaboration with "Yojak – Center for Research and Strategic Planning for Sustainable Development". MBVSY is a flagship program designed by Yojak. The program spans over 5-7 years wherein the first 2 years is dedicated to capacity building of local non-profit organization and then REEDS provides hand-holding support to the same organization for next 3-5 years for program implementation and fund raising.

Geographic Coverage

REEDS predominantly works in blocks with majority of tribal population. Currently it's working in about 24 blocks across 4 states.

Sr. No.	State	Districts	Blocks
1	Maharashtra	Amravati	Chikhaldara
		Nandurbar	Navapur, Akkalkuwa, Taloda
		Dhule	Sakri
		Nashik	Surgana, Kalwan
2	Gujarat	Narmada	Dediyapada
		Dang	Ahwa
3	Andhra Pradesh	Vizianagaram	Salur, Pachipenta
		Prakasam	Giddalur, Racherla, B.Peta, Komarole, Ardhaveedu, Cumbum, Pullalacheruvu, Y.palem, Tripuranthakam
4	Telangana	Vikarabad	Vikarabad, Dharur and Yalal
		Hyderabad	Saidabad

Major Initiatives







Following are major initiatives that REEDS has undertaken this year. Most of these initiatives are long term and REEDS will continue to work on these for atleast next 5 years.

1. MBVSY Melghat Project

REEDS has been working in Melghat right from its inception in Maharashtra. There are 3 clusters of 20 villages each in Chikhaldara block. REEDS has incubated 3 cluster level organizations known as "Parisar Seva Samiti" meaning "Cluster Service Committee". Last year these "Parisar Seva Samitis" were formally registered as non-profit charitable trusts. Following are some of the key activities undertaken last year in this project:

- ❖ **Exposure visit** was organized to Payvihi village in Chikhaldara block. The local project implementation team visited the village. This village has demonstrated use of MGNREGA scheme for development of natural resources in the village. They have planted more than 1 Lakh tree in the community forest area and developed a marketing network for custard apple. The purpose of this visit was to inspire the team to replicate similar efforts in our cluster.

- ❖ **Monthly meetings** were held for all the Parisar Seva Samitis (PSS) to discuss on the progress of various interventions and planning for next month.
- ❖ **Farm Implement Bank:** Set of drudgery reducing farm implements was given to each PSS for group use on sharing basis. Members are expected to pay a small daily rent for the farm implements. There were 15 types of farm implements including bund former, improved ridger, seed treatment, sowing equipment, kono-weeder, improved sickles, battery operated pump, spiral separator, manual maize sheller etc.
- ❖ **Kharip crop demonstrations** were done, total 15 farmers participated in it. Seeds of improved variety of Soyabean – 9305 from Mahabeej and Charu variety of red gram were distributed to farmers. Soil testing was done earlier in May month to assess the soil nutrients. Seed treatment was done using Rhizobium. Appropriate fertilizer dose was recommended to all the farmers. Sowing was done with 4:0:1:0 pattern with 4 rows of Soyabean followed by 1 row of Red Gram. But due to heavy rains during July and August most of the farmers got reduced yield. Two farmers got above avg. yield with about 15% improvement over last year.
- ❖ **Rainfall measurement** was done at 5 villages in two clusters. The locally made raingauge with plastic flask and scale was demonstrated. Accurate readings were taken in 3 villages. This has helped the local community understand the exact amount of rainfall in their village, dry spells and it's relation with the crop management.

Visit to Payvihiir and meeting with the Village team	Meeting of Gotyababa Parisar Seva Samiti	Downloading the farm implements from vehicle
		
Farmer with improved seed bag for Kharif Crop Demo	Raingauges prepared locally for rainfall measurement	Farmer - Sahebrao Shendre with his Soyabin Plot for Crop Demo
		

- ❖ **Backyard Nutrition Garden Seed Kits:** Training was conducted in all 3 clusters on backyard nutrition garden and total 75 seed kits were distributed by Parisar Seva Samitis. The seed kits included variety of 9 vegetables. It included green leafy vegetables and couple of climbers.
- ❖ **Agriculture Expert visit:** Mr. Amit Tillu, expert in organic farming and improved agriculture practices from Nashik was invited for a visit to Melghat clusters. The objective was to get an understanding of the current agriculture practices and plan interventions to reduce the costs, improve soil health and improve the crop yields in long term. Unfortunately the follow-up visits could not happen due to Covid lockdown after the first diagnostic visit.



2. Sankul Gramoday Yojana

Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram (VKA) is a well known non-profit organization in the country and it has its wings spread across most of the states of India. It is dedicated to holistic development of tribal communities with special emphasis on education and health related interventions. VKA's Maharashtra state office approached REEDS to help them in building community level institutions and implement the DPR (Detailed Project Report) developed jointly by VKA and Yojak. This DPR was developed after a 2 year program designed by Yojak for VKA known as "Sankul Gramoday Yojana". The objective of the program was to build capacities of local community to design and plan for sustainable livelihoods through Natural Resource Management. Since REEDS has partnered with Yojak for implementation of development projects, REEDS was on-boarded and MOU was signed between REEDS and VKA in July 2019 for a period of 3 years. REEDS is expected to support VKA in building local cluster level institutions and handhold in implementation of the DPR. Total 4 clusters were identified for this program. All these clusters have predominantly tribal population.

- 1) Ragatvihir Cluster, Surgana Tehsil, Nashik District
- 2) Koswan Cluster, Kalwan Tehsil, Nashik District
- 3) Pimpalner Cluster, Sakri Tehsil, Dhule District
- 4) Ravlapani Cluster, Taloda Tehsil, Nandurbar District

- ❖ **Field Visits to aid in activity planning:** Field visits were done by REEDS in the first month and then initial plan was prepared for 6 months. Various activities related to local institution building, agriculture and forest management were planned.
- ❖ **Van Dhan Vikas Kendra:** Central Govt launched a scheme known as Van Dhan Vikas Kendra for tribal communities who gather minor forest produce for livelihood. One such VDVK supports 15 groups with 20 members each. There is a provision of financial support of 25 Lakhs per VDVK, 2.5 Lakhs for each Van Dhan Gat (Group). This includes working capital of 10 Lakhs. Three proposals were developed by REEDS and submitted to Tribal Development Corporation Nashik. One of these VDVKs at Pimpalner Cluster has received a sanction and it has received a grant of 1.5 Lakhs for training and 5 Lakhs as working capital which is to be returned in 6 months. The procurement of Moha flowers is in progress. Similarly, for Ragatvahir cluster, working capital of 40,000 was provided through VKA. Local self-help group contributed another 35,000 and has procured 25 Quintals of Moha flowers.
- ❖ **Forest Vegetable Festival (Vanbhaji Utsav):** During the months of September and October all the tribal communities consume lot of forest vegetables which are unknown to people living in urban areas. There are as many as 70 to 80 various edible species of vegetables which are consumed by tribal families during monsoon which are a rich source of nutrients and minerals. These have been part of local diet for hundreds of years but due to depletion of forest areas and migration of younger generation, the knowledge and use of these vegetables is also on decline. To revive this tradition, REEDS promotes this festival in all its clusters during month of Sep / Oct. Younger generation is motivated to participate in the festival. Along with the recipe all participants are supposed to write about part of that plant used and any specific medicinal / other property of that plant. This festival was organized in 3 clusters of VKA project viz. Pimpalner, Koswan and Ragatvahir. This festival is a great platform for tribal youngsters to know about this rich tradition which has a strong link with their nutrition.

		
<p>Inaugural Talk by Jui Pethe, Biodiversity Expert from REEDS</p>	<p>Jal Pujan Utsav to express gratitude towards water resources of the village</p>	<p>People Gathered in large numbers for the festival</p>



- ❖ **Awareness Generation on MGNrega Scheme:** REEDS had engaged Pragati Abhiyan from Nashik to conduct a 2 Day training on MGNrega scheme at Nashik Clusters. This scheme has a great potential as it gives a guarantee of year long employment to rural population in Maharashtra State. Tribal farmers have an advantage as they can also undertake work on their individual lands. The training had a very positive impact on the villagers. Lot of them did not know about the various types of public and private land works that are possible through the scheme. This scheme has a great potential to strengthen the natural resources of the village and generate sustainable livelihoods in that process.
- ❖ **Two Day Workshop on PESA Act:** Panchayat Extensions to Scheduled Areas is a very powerful act that gives ownership of all the local natural resources to the community living in that habitation. It takes the Panchayat Raj decentralization to next level below the Grampanchayats and revenue villages. Even a small habitation of 50 households can hold a Gramsabha once it acquires status of PESA village and it gets the right to manage the natural resources within it's boundaries. It will also get a separate PESA bank account and funds for it's own development projects in proportion to it's population. REEDS conducted a two-day workshop at Guhi and Koswan in Nashik Cluster on introduction and provisions PESA Act. In general, the awareness of PESA act is not there among many villages in spite of a PESA mobilizer being appointed in the villages by Govt. of Maharashtra. The participants have taken up the information to smaller groups in the villages.
- ❖ **Micro-enterprise of Maize Thresher:** In Koswan cluster, maize is one of the major crops but the village did not have a automatic thresher. The villagers either did the threshing manually which was very laborious process or had to spend money on transport to get it done. There are also some external vendors who used to bring a mobile tractor driven processing unit. An idea was introduced by REEDS to the village group to buy an electric mini thresher that has a capacity of about 800 Kgs/Hour and costs about Rs. 20,000. The capital was provided to the group on zero interest basis as revolving fund. The village group has already made about Rs 10,000 in the first

season. The group also took the machine to neighboring villages on a bullock cart. The group also made small innovative changes in the design of this machine. One such change was increasing the height of this thresher so that the operator doesn't have to bend the back while operating the machine.



- ❖ **Farmers training workshop by KVK, Malegao:** REEDS co-ordinated with Krushi Vidnyan Kendra Malegao and organized a training just before the Rabbi season. KVK Malegao conducted a Rabbi Margdarshan Shibir at both Ragatvihir and Kosvan. Information about the lead crops of the region and livestock management was given by experts. Around 100+ people attended the shibir in Ragatvihir and Kosvan villages combined. The session included information on soil testing, effective crop management and livestock rearing.



- ❖ **Mini Mobile Rice Mill Enterprise:** Mobile rice mill was donated by one of the “Marwadi Ladies Circle” group from Nashik to Women SHG in Ragatvihir Village. Successful trials have been taken in the village and a permanent place have to be finalized now to setup the mill. There were some problems initially due to unstable voltage supply at the location where trial was taken. This mill has a higher efficiency than traditional hullers and 70-75% of grains are milled without breakage as compare to only 50% of hullers. The cost of the mill is Rs 48,000 and this is also given on no-interest basis to the SHG. The SHG is supposed to return the amount in 2 years of time to Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram.
- ❖ **Backyard Poultry Enterprise:** As an additional source of income to agriculture, livestock rearing is often practiced by rural households. Out of these supplementary sources of income, backyard poultry has been successful in many parts of the country. The initial knowledge about this venture was given by REEDS to youth groups from the villages in Nashik cluster and 25 farmers were willing to participate in this enterprise. Training cum Exposure visit was organized to KVK Nandurbar and total 1075 birds of indigenous variety called Kaveri were provided to these participants. Out of total expenses, 50% investment was done by the youth group. Unfortunately, there was almost 60% mortality in first week after the transport from Nandurbar mainly due to temperature gradient. So overall the venture was just breakeven for the youth group. But the positive outcome is that this group understood the importance of backyard poultry rearing and is planning to buy smaller chicks locally in the next cycle of purchase.

		
Exposure Visit of farmers for Backyard Poultry Initiative by Nashik Cluster: Pic 1	Farmers at Koswan village taking the poultry birds home in a crate	Donation of Rice Mill by Nashik Marwadi Social Group to Ragatvihir SHG

- ❖ **CFR Management Committee Training:** Most of the villages in Pimpalner and Ravlapani clusters have received the community forest rights. But they have not received any training on preparation of a plan for conservation and restoration of this community forest. Ms. Jui Pethe, Project Lead REEDS, conducted training for the CFR Committee members. This CFRMC training for all the 10 villages in Pimpalner cluster was organized at Chawdipada on 26th Feb. About 25 CFRMC members attended the session. Reading of the CFR certificate, roles and responsibilities of CFRMC, drawing map of the CFR area were some of the major activities covered in the training. Broad action plan for next 3 months was discussed. Similar training was also conducted at Ravlapani village, where 30 CFRMC members from 5 villages participated.
- ❖ **Innovative Activity for College Student Camp:** About 35 students from Munje Institute, Nashik visited Koswan for a 2 day shramdan camp. Usually village cleaning or desilting activity is given to students as it's easy. But this year, a new activity was designed by REEDS to tag the tress. Tree Tagging activity will help us document the exact no. of tress by type of species. This information can also go in the bio-diversity register of the village eventually. The students managed to tag 230 trees physically. (200 Moha and 30 Koshimb). The camp was called as "Shramanubhav Shibir".

	
CFRMC Training at Ravlapani	CFRMC Training at Chawdipada

3. FPC Support Program

More than 400 farmer producer companies have been created in Maharashtra under the Maharashtra Agriculture Competitiveness Project (MACP) during years of 2014-17. Most of these companies are struggling today to survive as they don't have adequate working capital and expertise for day to day operations and marketing. In this scenario, most of these companies need professional support to raise the required working capital and marketing of processed agri-produce.

- ❖ First preliminary visit was done in April to FPCs from Navapur and Shahada Tehsils in Nandurbar and Sakri tehsil in Dhule. Total 7 FPCs were visited, 6 out of these were formed under MACP program (Maharashtra Agricultural Competitiveness Program) implemented jointly by World Bank and Govt of Maharashtra during 2014-16. One FPC from Dhule was incubated with support from Lupin CSR Funds.
- ❖ All these FPCs approached REEDS and asked for help to rewrite their business plans and help in working with Govt. agencies for financial support.
- ❖ REEDS was invited to present the current status and needs of these FPCs in front of Hon. Manisha Verma (Chief Secretary, Tribal Dept, Maharashtra State) in Mumbai. Mahesh Chavan, REEDS CEO, attended this meeting along with 6-7 directors of FPCs from Dhule & Nandurbar and made the presentation. As an outcome of the meeting, REEDS was asked to develop revised business plans and submit those to Shabari Adivasi Vitta va Vikas Mahamandal (organization created by Govt of Maharashtra for welfare of ST Community).
- ❖ REEDS conducted a one-day workshop of all the FPCs at Nandurbar to collect information required to develop revised business plans. The business plans were submitted to Shabari Mahamandal and the first presentation was done in Dec 2019. Then the business plans were revised based on the comments and again submitted in Month of Feb'20. After couple of online meetings, the proposals are in final stages of approval.



FPC Presentations at TRTI Office, Pune



FPC Workshop at Yojak Office, Nandurbar

4. Fund Raising Initiatives

- 1) **Workshop with Sewa International:** A two-day workshop was organized at Pune to discuss and plan way forward for partnership between Yojak, REEDS and Sewa International. About 15 representatives from Sewa, Yojak, REEDS and Primove attended the workshop. Various sessions were organized during the workshop to introduce multiple organizations in this consortium formed by Yojak. The keynote speaker was Dr. Sachin Chaturvedi from RIS (Research and Information System for Developing Countries), Govt. of India initiative. Couple of key outcomes of the workshop were finalizing the outline of a MBVSY mission document to be developed for international funding agencies and a decision to provide seed funding to Yojak to build a team in India to provide backend support to Sewa USA for fund raising efforts in USA. All the participants got a good understanding of the MBVSY program and it's long term vision.



- 2) **CSR Funding:** REED Pune has also been taking efforts through CSR Sector. 14 companies were visited and meetings held with respective CSR representatives. But most of the corporates don't have focus on rural livelihood development that too in remote areas such as Nandurbar and Melghat. This is not part of the CSR policies of the most the companies. REEDS is looking for CSR partners to work on the implementation of DPR and smaller area specific customized interventions to combat climate change and distress migration.

Consulting Services

1) Cillage Based Area Development Project (CADP):

REEDS has been approached by partner organization Dr. Hedgewar Seva Samiti, Nandurbar to help them in planning, monitoring and documentation of Cillage project funded by Rajiv Gandhi Science and Technology Commission. HSS received a formal sanction and got the first-year disbursement in month of July. The proposal for this project was also developed by REEDS in 2018. REEDS has developed the six monthly and annual progress reports of the project and also designed a baseline survey for the Farmer Producer Company that has been registered as part of this project. Currently REEDS is working on developing a business plan for this FPC.

2) Content writing and Design for Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Nandurbar:

REEDS has been providing documentation support to KVK Nandurbar for last couple of years. This year also REEDS documented 6 successful interventions of KVK including Backyard Nutrition Garden, Backyard Poultry, Perennial Fodder Cultivation, Millet Processing Unit and Agromet Advisory Services. REEDS developed the professional designed content for a 2 to 4 page leaflets. These short leaflets have been published by KVK in their state level events and also given to dignitaries visiting their campus.

3) Eklavya Gramin Adivasi Vikas Mandal, Nandurbar:

REEDS provided fellowship support to this organization last year. REEDS helped the organization to write it's annual reports for last 3 years in English. These reports were not compiled and REEDS also had to collect lot of information and photos from this NGO partner. REEDS also developed a proposal of local training center which will focus on capacity building and awareness in surrounding villages about conservation of Natural resources, bio-diversity and local traditions. This proposal was submitted to Tribal Development Dept office in Nashik.

4) Booklet on Forest Vegetables of Nandurbar District:

REEDS was selected by Tribal Development Department's Project office of Nandurbar to document the forest vegetables which were showcased in the district level festival held on 22-Sep. Ms. Jui Pethe, Project Lead and Bio-diversity expert from REEDS led this initiative. Detailed information was collected from over 100 participants in the festival. Jui consolidated the technical information and a booklet on this consolidated information will be published soon. Total 70 forest vegetables have been documented as part of this effort.

Other Highlights

- ❖ **Scholarship for Harvard University Program:** REEDS CEO - Mahesh Chavan received a scholarship for a Non-profit leadership program organized by Ashoka University, Delhi in collaboration with Harvard University, USA. This was a leadership program to build capacities of participants around strategy development for non-profits. The program was based on the case study methodology developed by Harvard Business School. This program has helped our team to make some key changes in the approach towards preparation of development plans and initiatives to strengthen people institutions.
- ❖ **Sustainable Development Approach - Short Film:** REEDS has finally completed the editing of this short film which was shot in Feb'18. The film has been produced to demonstrate the approach of Yojak and REEDS to develop sustainable livelihoods for tribal communities through management of their available natural resources. The film has been shared with all the well wishers and donors of REEDS. The film gives a very good idea to those who cannot physically visit Nandurbar to interact with farmers and see the interventions in the ground. The film includes testimonials of many farmers and women self-help groups who have

participated in the development efforts over last 8-10 years. These efforts have transformed their lives and the film narrates the story of this transformation of people from migrating labors to successful farmers and micro-entrepreneurs.

- ❖ **Parisar Seva Samiti Sangam:** A gathering of all the cluster level committees was organized by Yojak at Nandurbar in Jan'20. We had invited Parisar Seva Samiti members from Melghat, Pimpalner, Ravlapani and Molgi to share their experience. Inauguration of a People's study center called as “आपला परिसर आपला विकास, माहिती व अध्ययन केंद्र” was held at village Talavipada, Navapur Tehsil in Nandurbar. This center has exhibits, 3D models, maps, wall charts and demonstrations of various interventions implemented over last few years by Dr. Hedgewar Seva Samiti and Yojak. Villagers can come to this center, conduct regular monthly meetings and spread awareness, learn and get inspiration to implement similar interventions in their own villages.



- ❖ **Certification Program on FPOs by NIRD, Hyderabad:** Mahesh represented REEDS and attended a 5 Day Training of Trainers program on “Value Chain Analysis and Business Development Plan of FPOs” at National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD), Hyderabad in Mar'20. The program covered basics of value chain analysis, management and governance of FPCs and how to go about business development plan for FPCs. Field visits were arranged to couple of FPCs. REEDS is now certified to develop business plans for FPCs. This will help REEDS in development of business plans and mentoring FPCs next year.

Way Forward

REEDS has expanded its Central India operations this year and is working in 6 districts across Maharashtra and Gujarat. It will continue with all its on-going programs next year. The association with Yojak for implementation of flagship program – Madhya Bharat Vananchal Samruddhi Yojana will also continue and more clusters will be added into the program.

Due to the reverse migration of rural communities from cities due to Covid outbreak, REEDS can certainly foresee a surge of demand for employment in rural areas. Therefore, REEDS has decided to focus on

raising awareness and building capacities of villages on MGNrega Scheme in all its clusters. REEDS has already engaged an expert to design the training program and facilitate the development of annual labor budget and village level plans.

REEDS is also looking forward to the implementation of its program related to 7 FPCs from Dhule and Nandurbar. The proposal submitted to Govt. of Maharashtra is in final stages and the project will provide the much-needed financial resources to run the FPCs. REEDS will play a pivotal role in hand holding and mentoring the FPCs. It will also conduct a specially designed training program for the directors of these FPCs so that they can bring in professional management. REEDS will also facilitate the engagement of experts for marketing the agri-produce. There will be lot of eyes on this program as even Central Govt. has announced formation of 10,000 FPCs by 2023. FPCs is the new buzzword when people talk about economic development of farmers these days.

Contact for further Details, Funding Support and Partnerships:

Website: www.reedsbharat.org

Email: Mahesh.Chavan@reedsbharat.org

Mobile: 8007928021
