

EvSum273

INDIA: DRYLAND FARMING RESEARCH

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The Project

In 1975 the ODA helped to set up an Indo-UK dryland farming operational research project at Indore, India, at a total cost of £177,000 (1981 prices). It entailed on-farm extension, soil and water management and data collection activities up to 1982 on a "micro-water-shed" of two catchments totalling some 2,300 hectares (ha) involving 3 villages.

The Evaluation

The evaluation was carried out by a multi-disciplinary team of four.

The Main Findings

- Overall the project was a success although this could not be proven in cost-benefit terms: such an analysis would have been inappropriate due to the project's innovative character and hence the high level of initial costs.
- The availability of good advice, inputs and credit encouraged many small farmers to adopt the new techniques. For example the use of chemical fertilisers increased dramatically, from only 4kg/ha of net cropped area in 1975 to 56kg/ha in 1981.
- The net income of the farmers increased by 65% (1975-1981). Moreover the highest increase in net revenue per cropped hectare was that reported by the small farmers. This shows that the transfer of technology has had a significant impact on small farms as well as large ones.
- One good sociological outcome was the local community and farmer cooperation in the construction and improvement of the waterways for irrigation. This is highly significant given the initial lack of interest and even hostility of some farmers.
- The lack of effective monitoring and assessment meant that no satisfactory explanation can be given for the peaking of productivity during the late 1970s and the subsequent fall. The lessons that could have been learnt here might have been of immense value.
- There was a significant lack of feed-back from the research. The few reports that were written received only limited circulation. Clearly research such as this can have wider impact in many parts of Asia (and Africa).
- Many managerial problems such as financial and staff coordination were encountered since the administration headquarters and the project site were 400

miles apart. Often scientists were having to perform tasks that junior managers could have handled. This could have been foreseen at the planning stage, and adequate provision made for managerial tasks on the project site.