

## Biodata

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**SPECIALISATION:** MBA, Rural Management, Natural Resources, Management, Ecology, Livelihoods and Decentralized Governance, Ecological Stewardship.**SYNOPSIS OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNEY:**

I have worked in the field of natural resource management, ecology, livelihoods and governance for the last 39 years.

Over the course of this work, I have travelled extensively across the country and interacted with diverse communities on the situational context in which the issues of natural resource management, decentralized ecological governance and livelihood are based. This has led to the belief that sustainable livelihoods and ecology are only possible with the informed participation of the local communities in their development, protection and management. While the importance of women and children for the protection of natural resources was underlined right in the beginning, in the last 16 years this work has taken prominence due to them being the worst affected by ecological and other disasters as the recent COVID19 pandemic show. In the case of children, the imperative also stems from the fact that they will be the decision makers of tomorrow.

The understanding I have today is based on periodic social and ecological impact assessment studies of organizations, government programs and eco-systems in different parts of the country. In this connection, I have engaged on issues related to Climate Change, Sustainable Development Goals – Agenda 2030, Education, Health, Employment and Federation approach to decentralized governance. In response to a call to participate from Echo Network, am actively using my expertise to develop the conception of community based Ecosystem Stewardship extracting generic lessons

from cross country and international experiences. In terms of the progression in the work, it began with people's involvement in regeneration of degraded lands including pasturelands and agricultural wastelands as well, expanded to the process of watershed development which was crystallized into developing a process for sub basin approach under different ecological and socio- economic and cultural conditions. The approach involved an understanding of the water balance and its relation to land use. An evaluation of the impacts of the introduction of the bio-fuel program led to situating issues in concrete land use contexts to meet food, fuel, fodder, health and other basic needs keeping in mind the ecological concerns emerging in the region as well. The two threads combined led to examining different eco-systems across the country and the potential of these for sustainable development. Framing this in the context of climate change was the next corollary which was first attempted in Jaisamand Catchment area about eighteen years back due to the availability of the complex set of data required for this purpose. The progression of this work to the field of ecological stewardship led to looking at issues related to decentralization of governance embracing the 73rd and 74th Amendment, the relevance of the Millennium goals on sustainability and more recently the Sustainable Development Goals.

IELA (Institute for Ecology and Livelihood Action) was founded in 2015, to take up action research studies and activities to promote the cause of sustainable livelihood and ecology. IELA builds on the research and work done while I was in SPWD (Society for Promotion of Wastelands Development) and aims at innovative mechanisms for institutional collaboration in the service of the cause mentioned above. IELA is now currently supporting NGOs, CBOs and Community based activists across the country on how tribals, fishers, pastoralists, small farmers and migrant wage workers can use the provisions of various acts related to decentralization of governance to help blend conservation with livelihood concerns. In this connection seven State level reports on Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Jharkhand, Sikkim and West Bengal have been prepared. The idea is to mesh local initiatives into relevant State and National level forums to show the relevance of renewable energy as a means to power sustainable development minus displacement, thereby addressing concerns related to unviable projects and the burgeoning Non Performing Assets (NPAs) of banks. Following participation in Echo Network, this work is now being integrated to help the Stewardship group of that Network develop a model approach. Accordingly, the engagement with universities in general and Academic and Research Institutions in particular has been enhanced. The recent participation in the Summer Internship programs of Xavier Institute of Social Sciences (XISS), Ranchi is one such attempt. The emergence of the Biological Diversity Act 2002, MGNREGA in 2005 and Forest Rights Act in 2006 provided a local governance framework and related funds to explore these ideas with the help of the local panchayats who prepared proposals for the NREGA for the government. Examining the developments relating to renewable energy and the impacts on local communities, the potential for this in the framework of decentralized sustainable governance is being explored and the same is being put into some shape though dialogue with local communities in general and 'Fenaimata-Revakhand Jaiv Shristi Mandal' in Chhota Udepur, Gujarat in particular. With the formulation of agenda 2030, this could be given concrete shape through active engagement with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Engagement with the National Inclusive Children's

parliaments (NICP) around the SDGs with its Secretariat at PRATYeK office in Delhi helped to give shape to an agenda with children in the States of Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra. In collaboration with St Mary's of the Angels Fathehpura, Udaipur how to give these ideas practical shape is being worked out with schools and organizations that IELA is actively working with.

Active in various fora and networks across the country on issues related to Natural resource rights, livelihoods, ecology, with children, women, fishers, tribals, pastoralists, small farmers on issues related to governance and climate change. As a member of ICAN (Indian Community Activists Network), had actively promoted the cause of community control of natural resources which also embraces Satellite technology like 4G etc.

Modern technology in the service of society can help to develop people, scientist partnerships for the cause of humanity controlling the unbridled destruction of the natural resources to enhance the profits of a few. Lately as a member of the NICP, have actively participated in various forums on issues related to child rights and child protection and highlighted issues related to the concretization of SDGs. These experiences have help develop a charter of demands for local communities dependent on the natural resources for survival and has been the base for comments on various acts and policies framed by the Government of India. More recently, participation in the activities of the Echo Network in relation to developing the specific and general concepts related to ecosystem stewardship principles of Circular economy are also being explored.

In order to develop a positive perspective on sustainable development, in connection with the Pandemic and sustainable development and role of children as future leaders of this country, issues wrote a number of plays and poems covering a wide range of topics, National and International developments. A series of policy briefs highlighting the need to develop people's federations as a way of facilitating and engagement between bottoms up concerns with National and Global ones. Following the initiative of Foundation for Ecological Security (FES) to respond to the Task Force on Grazing Ecology set up by the Government of Rajasthan a series of papers have been prepared on the Ecological conditions in Rajasthan and in particular the relevance of pastoralism to this State.

#### **KEY EXPERTISE AND EXPERIENCE:**

- MBA in Rural Management from Institute of Rural Management Anand (IRMA) in 1985.
- Currently, Managing Trustee IELA.
- Almost four decades of experience in ecology, decentralized governance, community-based natural resources management- watershed development, joint forest management and pastureland development in particular. This experience includes analysis of farm-based livelihoods and livelihood strategies of the poor in fragile ecological zones. I have worked extensively on project design, capacity building, project management, monitoring and evaluation, action research, process documentation, and policy advocacy. This experience spans states as diverse as Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Jharkhand, Odisha, Assam, Meghalaya, West Bengal, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and

Kashmir, and involves intensive work with NGOs and CBOs in these states.

- In the field of water resources management, an action research project to conceptualize and implement basin-level water resource management, involving NGOs and communities working in micro-watersheds in the Jaisamand catchment in Rajasthan, and working upwards to sub-basin and basin levels was initiated by him. This involved the establishment of a Village Resource Centre to consolidate primary and secondary data in Jaisamand catchment. This exercise has been the basis for initiating a Wasteland Characterization exercise in the Jaisamand Catchment area. In pastureland development and management, began with project design and implementation with partner NGOs and moved on to careful process documentation and analysis of the dynamics involved. A key output of this was a co-authored Synthesis Paper published by the Natural Resources Institute, UK. Process documentation and analysis of farm-based livelihoods of marginal and small farmers in Rajasthan and Gujarat over several years culminated in organizing two workshops on marginal agriculture in Gujarat and Rajasthan. The proceedings contributed to the emerging focus on livelihoods in watershed development. This also led to a major study on livelihood strategies in semi-arid regions of Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan, with the Natural Resources Institute, UK.
- I have also been closely involved with an action research project in Maharashtra – the Wastelands Integrated Research Program (WIRP), which sought to establish minimal water, biomass and land requirements for communities and the production systems that would yield optimal results. The advocacy work was a product of close involvement with the JFM program in Rajasthan, where projects were formulated and monitored and processes documented over several years. This helped me to understand various inter-linkages necessary for taking up work related to ecology and sustainable governance. In several strategic meetings of forest stakeholders, the issues of democratic and participatory functioning, transparency, and rightful share of usufructs for communities were highlighted.
- I have also been instrumental in the development of a State-level forum known as the Rajasthan Prakritik Sansadhan Manch to take up issues related to natural resources management across the State and contributed significantly to the debates over the Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Rights) Bill. I have undertaken studies of the impact of the National Wasteland Development Board's Grant-in-Aid program, and of the Social Forestry program of the Government of Jammu and Kashmir. A number of studies have been published extensively in reputed national journals.
- In 2019, these experiences helped to upgrade involvement with women and children around the 17 Sustainable development goals (SDGs) an integral part of agenda 2030. In 2021 as part of the faculty of Xavier Institute of Natural Resource Management, Ahmednagar helped to develop the course curriculum to conceptualize experiences related to the Millennium Assessment tools and the SDGs. This theoretical understanding was used to sharpen the ecological perspective to local self-governance and the relevance of the SDGs in this regard is now being applied to develop women and children's groups in the States of Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra while the larger expertise is being used to develop a National Forum to support local communities engaged with

Natural Resources across the country.

- Late in 2022, got associated with Echo Network following a workshop on the relevance of Ecosystem Development for the Aravalis based on the work done by SPWD and others in the State of Rajasthan. As a start a paper on Ecosystem valuation highlighting the limitations of the cash/market economy in dealing with ecological issues and the need for community based valuation methods that took into account their knowledge of ecosystem services and related livelihood patterns based on experiences of IELA and its partners in the States of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra and other States was advocated. This association led to being able to formulate IELA's approach in relation to Ecosystem Stewardship which is being developed further in partnership mode.

#### **QUALIFICATIONS:**

<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Institute and Course</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Marks Obtained</b>
<b>1.</b>	International Institute for Forestry and Natural Resources at Colorado State University, Fort Collins Colorado, U.S.A. - Course on Integrated Watershed Management	<b>1988</b>	<b>Training in USA</b>
<b>2.</b>	US Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, U.S.A. - Course on Watershed Rehabilitation	<b>1988</b>	<b>Training in USA</b>
<b>3.</b>	Institute of Rural Management Anand - Post Graduate Diploma in Rural Management	<b>1985</b>	Grade 3.4 In first five throughout course
<b>4.</b>	Wadia College of Commerce, Pune - B.Com.	<b>1983</b>	<b>70</b>

#### **OVERSEAS EXPERIENCE:**

- Training in the USA in 1988. This covered a short course on Integrated Watershed Management at the International Institute for Forestry and Natural Resources, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado
- Short course on Watershed rehabilitation, US Department of the Interior, Bureau of land management.
- Attended a workshop on Local Institutions at Chiang Mai Thailand in 1991. Paper presented on Traditional management by the local institutions.
- Attended the Sub Global Assessment meeting of the Millennium Assessment follow up at Bali Indonesia in 2009

#### **EMPLOYMENT RECORD:**

- **April 2015 to Present, at Udaipur, India as Managing Trustee, Institute for Ecology and**

### **Livelihood Action (IELA).**

Working across the country have developed concept notes on Relevance of Commons for sustainable development, Gender and Natural Resource management, unorganized sector labor, relevance of renewable energy for decentralization, Valuation of ecosystems for sustainable development and livelihoods and Relevance of geo-spatial tools for facilitating real time research on sustainable development. These have been the basis for identifying and working with CBOs for empowering local communities for sustainable development in diverse ecosystems across the country. Modules for working with forest dwellers and forest dependent communities, fishers, pastoralists are in the process of being worked out. I have also facilitated development of modules for sustainable urban development. In early 2020 did an Impact evaluation study for PRATYeK based in Delhi on the relevance of their work to the recently created National Inclusive Children's parliaments. In association with XINRM, Ahmednagar helped to develop curriculum for relating field experiences with conceptual and theoretical knowledge and developments in the field of ecology, livelihoods, climate change, sustainable development and decentralized governance. This is being applied in the State perspectives developed by IELA for seven States of this country and now this is being used to link area based and thematic work related to ecosystem Stewardship at State and National level.

#### ► **July 2008 – March 2015 at New Delhi, India as Executive Director of Society for Promotion of Wastelands Development (SPWD).**

I revamped the organization so as to strengthen the action research program in various sectors of natural resource management. I have facilitated the development of perspective on ecology and livelihoods, climate change, forest rights act, conservation agriculture, mining issues and its relation to NRM, creation of a State Resource group on NREGA in Rajasthan. I initiated a process of panel discussions on burning issues like biodiversity, living soils and land use. Discussions with civil society on the Ganga Action plan and engagement with ward representatives in the pollution affected zone of Kanpur in order to understand issues involved in sustainable governance of river basins.

#### ► **1998 – 2008 at Udaipur, India as Program Director at Society for Promotion of Wastelands Development (SPWD).**

I was looking after SPWD program in Rajasthan and Gujarat.

##### Major activities undertaken –

- JFM a number of workshops and meetings have been conducted to highlight various issues. One Public Hearing has been conducted in Sandni the first village in the State to be registered under JFM. The issue of distribution and provision of an equitable share to the community has been highlighted for the first time.
- Institutional building at the village level, minute process documentation of the dynamics related to natural resource management.
- Watershed development, a study on small water harvesting structures was done, which was later the basis for a workshop on it. Presentation were made from different regions of

## Rajasthan

- Coordinated a livelihood study in collaboration with NRI involving 16 villages of 5 blocks in 3 districts of 2 States of Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan.
- Coordinated a Pastureland study along with NRI involving case studies from 15 villages in three districts.
- Creation of a State level forum, Rajasthan Prakritik Sansadhan Prabandhan Manch to debate on burning issues related to water , forests , common land, mining and animal husbandry in the State of Rajasthan . The forum provides the basis for study of policy level issues for further action at the state level . Some of the issues taken up have been the State water policy including a debate on ground water concerns , biofuels and the Forest Rights Act 2006,
- Facilitation of a basin level approach to natural resource management and initiation of data base development in this regard.

### **1994 - 1998 at Udaipur (SPWD)**

- Major responsibility was to develop an understanding of how to take the newly formulated JFM guidelines in the State forward.
- The process of developing Institutions at the village level with specific reference to Natural resource management
- Study of livelihoods and their relation to natural resource development
- This culminated in two regional workshops on marginal agriculture, along with a series of smaller workshops on different facets of the same. A case study on the dynamics of pastureland development was also prepared & presented in the workshop on environment economics in Delhi.

### **1990 - 1994 at Delhi (SPWD)**

- Coordinator for projects in Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra major focus was on watershed and strengthening of village institutions

### **1987 - 1990 at Pune (SPWD)**

- Promoted to Program Officer in 1989
- Wasteland Integration research project. This project, in collaboration with CASAD, aimed to examine the relationship between land, water, energy and biomass production. Experiments were planned in 2 basic locations Nandurbar in Dhule District and Balavadi/ Benapur in Sangli District. Associate experimentation was also carried out at Pune, Solapur, and Warora. The experiments were designed & aimed at achieving a minimum standard of livelihood, which would meet basic food and cash requirements. Maximization of local labour and nutrient recycling through production of biomass on the more degraded lands, was the basic strategy. The role of external water and funding was to provide the initial impetus and also to establish rights of local communities over the larger resources
- Herbal Remedies – The work was taken up with Jan Seva Mandal [JSM] Nandurbar.