

EvSum503

KARNATAKA SOCIAL FORESTRY PROJECT (KSFP), INDIA

[The Project](#) - [The Evaluation](#) - [Overall Conclusion & Success Rating](#) - [The Main Findings](#) - [Lessons](#)

The Project

The KSFP ran for 7 years (1984-90) and was jointly funded by an IDA credit from the World Bank and a grant from ODA under the poverty-focused Retrospective Terms Adjustment (RTA) funds. Total ODA expenditure was £13.7m, or approximately half of the project cost. The primary objective of the project was to increase supplies of fuelwood to rural and semi-urban areas. The project involved two main planting components: a "community forestry" component which aimed to establish communal village plantations on communal land, and a "farm forestry" component to support planting on private farms with subsidised seedlings. Special provision was to be made to ensure that project benefits reached the poorest sections of the community.

The Evaluation

The evaluation was undertaken in December 1990 by a team consisting of a forester, economist and social anthropologist. Use was made of an earlier project review carried out in 1989.

This evaluation was used in the "Forestry Evaluation: Synthesis Study," EvRpt541. (See EvSum541)

Overall Conclusion & Success Rating

The project was judged to have been broadly *successful* in meeting the original targets. The overall economic rate-of-return was 8% and the social impact was generally positive, if more limited than had been hoped. The community plantations were generally less successful than farm forestry.

The Main Findings

- The Karnataka Forest Department (KFD) and each of the two donors understood the project objectives differently. ODA placed higher priority on the poverty-focus of the project, but was unsuccessful in steering the project and KFD in this

direction.

- The farm forestry programme was successful. However, trees were planted for pulpwood and poles, rather than for fuelwood as intended, and there were some problems with a mismatch of supply and demand of seedling types. The re-estimated economic rate-of-return was 11% compared to 22% at appraisal.
- The decentralised *kissan* nursery programme succeeded in involving women and landless in the project, but the nurseries did not become sustainable commercial units as had been hoped.
- The effect of private planting on labour displacement and lost grazing access was considered to be marginal. *Eucalyptus* plantations did, however, have an unquantified negative impact on adjacent food crops.
- Community plantations have not been as successful as farm forestry in terms of yields and economic returns (at 5%). In many cases the returns from grazing would have been higher than that achieved under the project. Poor sites were a major factor.
- Institutional arrangements to involve participants in the planning and management of community plantations were not developed, and consequently area targets were achieved at the expense of other village uses, notably communal grazing.
- Monitoring and evaluation arrangements were more appropriate to plantation forestry than to social forestry.
- Many of the social and institutional constraints which had been identified both before and during the project had not been resolved by the end of the project. This was partly due to a lack of clarity in project design as to the balance between production and social objectives, as well as to a failure to appreciate or implement the scale of organisational and managerial changes required.

Lessons

- There are major differences in institutional behaviour required of forestry departments between 'traditional' plantation forestry and social forestry. Implementing social forestry projects successfully requires major organisational and managerial changes.
- The need for institutional change suggests that a more gradual approach, possibly based on a pilot project, may be more appropriate. This needs to be accompanied by closer field-level institutional monitoring, and by some form of conditionality to ensure that essential changes are introduced.
- More time needs to be spent during design and appraisal in ensuring that there is complete agreement over the project objectives among all parties. This, together with a single agreed project document, will minimise the danger that perceptions of important features of the project will differ.
- The experience of this project does not support the view that people are prepared to grow trees expressly for fuelwood, or that there is an emerging fuelwood crisis.

- Communal tree planting on wasteland competes with alternative land use activities, particularly grazing. Functioning participatory mechanisms or socio-economic studies are required to minimise the opportunity cost of forestry plantations.
- Attention should be paid to the quality of tree seedlings, and to the provision of supporting extension advice, if the impact of farm forestry is to be maximised.