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SOUTH ASIA REGIONAL INITIATIVE FOR ENERGY  
COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT  
GUBBI RESOURCE CENTER: FINAL REPORT

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# SOUTH ASIA REGIONAL INITIATIVE FOR ENERGY COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT GUBBI RESOURCE CENTER: FINAL REPORT

## **DISCLAIMER**

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

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In accordance with the discussions held during the PRESK (Participatory Rural Energy Services of Karnataka) State Level Monitoring Committee meeting on 19th June 2003, a Resource Center was to be established at the taluk level with the purpose of educating farmers and villagers on Water-Energy Nexus issues as well as providing vital information on electricity distribution and other agricultural needs.

On July 25th 2003, Steve McCoy -Thompson of Nexant submitted a report on Resource Center Development and delineated the objectives of the PRESK Resource Center. These were to increase capacity for effective participation, decision-making and management of rural energy and water resources and to provide information on water, energy and best practices in farming to the targeted group of Irrigation pumo (IP) set users and GP (Gram Panchayat)-level functionaries.

During the third week of August 2003, David Zoellner and Gopinath of Nexant, visited Gubbi, one of the four selected taluks (others being Doddaballapur, Chinthamani and Molakalmuru) to explore the possibilities for housing the PRESK resource center and interacted with the officials at the Taluk panchayat office, BESCO (Bangalore Electricity Supply Company) Sub-Divisional office and the office of Assistant Director of Agriculture (ADA). It is heartening to note that the Department of Agriculture, Government of Karnataka (GOK) had already set up a Raitha Samparka Kendra (Farmer Interaction Center) in the office of Assistant Director of Agriculture to provide information to the farmers on farming techniques. The farmers visit this office to purchase seeds, Agri-equipment, etc. This center is also equipped with a computer and telephone facility and is expected to attract farmers for additional information. But, the center was lacking in skilled manpower to man the computer facility. When the proposal of setting up a Resource Center was offered, the Agriculture department readily agreed to house the RC within their premises. As the farmers are the targeted stakeholders for the PRESK project as well, the Resource Center was finally established on September 10, 2003 within the office of the Assistant Director of Agriculture, Gubbi town, Tumkur District, Karnataka.

## Section 2

## Gubbi Resource Center: Functions And Lessons

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The first task of the Resource Center is to create awareness about the facilities available to the target sector. This was done through local publicity i.e. by giving handbills to farmers and by displaying banners at strategic points of the town. Also individual farmers and line department functionaries who visit ADA office are introduced to the resource center activities.

The next task was to collect useful data to be disseminated to the taluk farmers. This was done by visiting and video documenting best practice farms such as Bavikere, Bhadra and Arali's farms for the resource center library. Mines and Geology department, GOK, also provided useful information on groundwater and its status while BESCO provided literature on government schemes for electricity supply to IP sets and efficient energy utilization. The Rural Development and Panchayat Raj (RDPR) department, GOK, provided facts concerning Gram panchayats and its members. Newspaper reports on water and energy are collected, on a daily basis, to provide contemporary happenings in the field. All the data, thus collected, are available as handouts, free of cost, to farmers visiting the Resource Center. The relevant reports relating to energy, water and farming have also been uploaded in the PRESK website ([www.sari-energy.org/presk](http://www.sari-energy.org/presk)) and are accessible through the Internet. Expert lecture notes and Gubbi survey findings on crop selection, debt-revenue ratios have been printed and distributed to the farmers. A booklet on 'Frequently Asked Questions' on Electricity in Kannada has also been printed and circulated to the farmers. A farmer profile register is being kept at the Resource Center to record number of progressive farmers and their farming backgrounds. Presently, 10-15 farmers visit the Resource Center every day and use the facilities available there. Around 1500 farmers have visited Resource Center since its inception and an equal number of stakeholders have participated in its functions.

### 2.1 Facilities presently available at the Gubbi Resource Center

The following facilities are available at the Gubbi Resource Center:

- Computer with Phone and Internet connection.
- TV and DVD player to view demonstration CDs.
- Hard copies on Water-energy nexus and on demonstration farms.

### 2.2 Demonstration CDs inventory

The list of Demonstration CDs available at the Resource Center is as follows:

- Bangladeshi electric co-op interviews.
- KPTCL videos [4 no CDs]
- Hukkeri Electric Co-operative Society [3 no CDs]
- Biogas Generator and Agriculture expert at Ranebennur.
- Biogas + Farmers response at Ranebennur.
- Dr. Renukarya's model Bhadra farm.
- Model Micro Watershed Farming for Marginal Farmers at Bavikere

- ‘Marali Mannige (Back to the soil)’ - Motivational film by PRESK
- Talk by Mr. Seshagiri Rao.
- Road shows held in May
- Interviews with GP members and farmers

### 2.3 Resource Center staff

**Resource Center Manager:** Planning and overall supervision of Resource Center activities

**Resource Center Representative:** Principle liaison for PRESK at Gubbi to interact with GPs and IP set farmers and general administration of RC

**Resource Center Assistant:** Office assistance cum resource center duties

### 2.4 Library

Most of the IP set users depend on rain for their agriculture and general depletion of the groundwater in the taluk has made them show more interest in water conservation, precision irrigation and water harvesting techniques. Toward this end, the resource center is providing information on drip irrigation, sprinkler irrigation, recharging failed bore wells and rain harvesting techniques by giving them hard copies of information.

Many farmers also show interest in best practices in water - energy management and the resource center is providing this information through its collection of demonstration CDs such as Bavikere and Renukarya’s demo-field videos, which the farmers can view at the center.

Also, farmers are briefed about usefulness of internet and many farmers are utilizing this facility to know more about cultivation of new crops like Vanilla, Patchouli, etc. and also local market rates for their crops through PRESK website which has Kannada language version as well for the benefit of local farmers.

The other areas of interest to the farmers are alternative energy sources like Biogas, Bio-diesel, solar and wind pumps to extract groundwater. Towards this end, the resource center has documented local best practices in conventional energy conservation and utilization of alternative energy to extract groundwater such as the one in Mallikarjuna Arali’s Biogas farm in Ranibennur.

Also, local demonstration farms at Gubbi on organic farming, rainwater harvesting has been video documented.

The resource center is lending its documented CDs to local NGO organizations and interested farmers.

## 2.5 Expert Lectures

Expert lectures are conducted periodically to enhance the knowledge of the farmers in agricultural best practices and these lectures have received support from the target sector.

The lecture on 'Model Micro Watershed Farming For Marginal Farmers' by Mr. M. Rudraradhya, Senior Scientist, Agriculture Research Station, Bavikere, Chikkamagalur district, was well received by the farmers. Nearly 100 farmers attended the lecture.

The lecture on 'Rainfall Pattern In Gubbi Taluk' by Mr. PR Seshagiri Rao, Farmer-Scientist, Pavagada Taluk, was also attended by 40 farmers. They have requested Mr. Seshagiri Rao to further associate with them so as to avail the processed information on rainfall pattern.

The lecture on 'Organic Farming' by progressive farmer Balekayi Shiva Nanjappa highlighted the usefulness of organic farming in reducing water-energy needs of the farmers. Around eighty farmers attended the meeting.

Hard copies of these lecture notes have been circulated among farmers of Gubbi taluk.

## 2.6 Field Tours

A field trip was organized on 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb '04 to Mr. Mallikarjuna Arali's Biogas farm to expose 25 farmers to Biogas plant for pumping groundwater. Mr. Shivakumar, one of the participants, is implementing this technology in his farm. The Agriculture Department also conducted a field trip to Bavikere Research Station to view Demo farm of Model Micro shed for Marginal farmers. Seventy persons participated in the tour. Many farmers have introduced elements of this experiment in their farms.

Village panchayats have been requesting resource center to show documentaries in their respective villages. Since the Resource center is situated in the taluk headquarters, many farmers living in the villages find it very difficult to visit the center and avail its facilities. To bridge this physical and digital divide, it was decided to have a mobile Resource center with video facility to disseminate important issues to farmers at their own backyard. The plan is to meet GP members at their offices to sound them on the opportunities for them to participate in selected electrical services, to expose farming community on subjects such as water and energy conservation, best practices and PRESK promotional feature film and documentaries.

The Mobile Resource Center facility was formally launched on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2004 by hiring a mobile van fitted with a battery system for playing the TV/DVD. This facilitates showing DVDs and CDs at the villages. Till date, 4 GP meetings, Video shows in 2 villages and 4 Technical assistance meetings have been conducted.

Technical assistance has also been given to farmers for implementing model projects such as Micro Watershed, Rain water Harvesting and Bore well recharging.

**10<sup>th</sup> September 2003:** Formal inauguration of PRESK Resource Center: Ms. Kavitha Sinha of USAID lighted the lamp and opened the facility.

**16<sup>th</sup> September 2003:** Visit of Mr. Hugh McDermott, Chief-of-party, Nexant, Inc. to the Resource center.

**8<sup>th</sup> October 2003:** Talk by Prof. Rudraradhya on Model Micro shed farming for Marginal farmers.

**6<sup>th</sup> Dec 2003:** PRESK satellite conference was conducted from Abdul Nazir Sab Institute of Rural Development, Mysore. More than 80 representatives consisting of GP members and selected farmers attended the teleconference at Gubbi and participated in the Question and Answer session.

**28<sup>th</sup> February 2004:** The Resource Center Representative participated in the peoples' contact program organized by BESCO for Herur and Ammanagatta GPs to bridge the gap between GPs and the utilities. Grievances relating to electricity services were heard from the participants and due actions were initiated by BESCO officials at the meeting. The participants were briefed about PRESK activities and the facilities available at the Gubbi Resource center for information exchange.

**9<sup>th</sup> March 2004:** PRESK capacity building training program was conducted at the Odekar farm in the taluk for selected GPs. Nearly 40 GP members from 12 GPs attended the program.

**19<sup>th</sup> March 2004:** A field survey in Gubbi taluk was undertaken among the farmers to establish the 'Value of water in agriculture' in the taluk. Farmer volunteers were selected for the survey tasks like data collection and the survey results were disseminated to the farmer community.

**21<sup>st</sup> May 2004:** Mr. Bob Beckman, Program Manager along with regional coordinators of SARI-Energy Project visited the Resource Center and interacted with farmers and GP level functionaries on the relevance of RC.

**14<sup>th</sup> August 2004:** USAID officials, Mr. Glen Whaley and Mr. Ram Berry, visited Gubbi Resource center for review.

**22<sup>nd</sup> September 2004:** Last PRESK Steering committee meeting held in Bangalore where in it was decided that USAID will handover PRESK to GOK and withdraw from the scene within a month.

**31<sup>st</sup> October 2004:** PRESK was handed over to MGRURED, Bangalore as per GOK decision. It was decided to continue the Gubbi Resource Center to provide information to the farmers until GOK decided its further course of action at the taluk level.

**28<sup>th</sup> March 2005:** Formal handover of PRESK Resource center to Agriculture Department, GOK as per their request and RDPR approval.

## Section 5

## Comments From Selected Visitors

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**Mr. D.N. Vidyashankar, Department of Energy, GOK:** Please arrange for a standby 500 watts UPS to avoid interruption during presentations. Utilize the space outside the place as presentation hall.

**Mr. M. Rudraradhya, Progressive farmer:** I am very happy to associate with this organization, which is striving hard for the cause of farming community. It is heartening to note the establishment of the communication center.

**Mr. V. Venkata Subbarao, Former Director (Technical), BESCO:** A good beginning has been made. Please keep it up.

**Mr. Suresh Heblikar, Environmentalist and film maker:** I am impressed at the setting up of the resource center because I strongly believe that technological benefits must reach the common man and especially the farmers in the villages. It is they who contribute to the economy and hence they must be well informed.

**Mr. R.W. Beckman, USAID/New Delhi:** Most interesting. Keep up the good work.

## Section 6

## Status Of Tasks

**Table 6-1 Status of Tasks**

S.No.	Tasks	Status
1	Information dissemination of best practices in water-energy, farming, expert talks on relevant subjects, study tours for farmers.	In progress; to be continued
2	Complete content collection on water/energy subjects for PRESK website.	Done
3	Launch of PRESK website.	Done
4	Piloting of MOU and Monitoring	3 GPs signed resolutions
5	GIS mapping with Ground Water and energy issues.	Done
6	Outreach program for rainwater harvesting and water efficiency projects	Rainwater harvesting consultancy to 3 farmers
7	User group formation and value of water survey.	Done; survey report given to participating farmers
8	Networking with GOK and NGOs	In progress
9	Hiring of resource center assistant and training	Done
10	Capacity Building for local management of the Resource Center and take over	Training imparted to Agriculture Dept. staff
11	Demonstration farms for water-energy efficiency; field studies on water and energy usage and farm output	In progress; to be continued
12	Documentation of best practices on water and energy efficiency in farming	In progress; to be continued

- Resource Center can become a nodal Information center for all concerned Government Departments.
- Documentation of other best practices in the state and country and dissemination in the taluk through the RC.
- Mobile Van with the required facilities to communicate to all GPs to spread awareness of basic energy and water issues.
- Organizing study tours and lectures of Promising practices.
- Developing RC as a hub of developmental activity in the region for promoting participatory approach among the concerned groups.
- Spreading awareness about ground water levels and rainfall quantum in the area.
- The resource center may continue to function even after the withdrawal of Donor agency by transferring it to other NGOs to ensure sustainability of operations.

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