

Dr.R.Indira

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“But it can be said without hesitation that the desire for change was created by the Shastri projects which through their continued efforts and contacts with Joida kept the momentum alive and thus paved the way for transformation.”

Projects:

- 1) *“Engendering Governance: Bridging the Gap between Policy and Practice”*
- 2) *“Building Capacities of Rural Communities through People’s Institutions: Self-Help Group as a Channel for Infrastructure Development and Economic Empowerment”*
- 3) *“Empowering Women through Forestry: The Role of Indigenous Women in Forestry Development Programs (in collaboration with Karim Aly-Kassam of the University of Calgary, Canada)”*

Grant Awarded:

Dr.R.Indira is a former Professor in Department of Studies in Sociology at University of Mysore. She has been associated with the Shastri Indo Canadian Institute since long through four projects -Action Research Project (June- December 2011), Canadian Studies Faculty Research Fellowship (May 24-June 24, 2007), Shastri Applied Research Project- SHARP (2003-2006) and CIDA- Shastri Partnership Project (1998-2001).

Impacts of Shastri Projects in her Field Area Joida

Her field locale Joida is a forest belt that has for long remained outside the purview of many development initiatives. It is the second largest taluk in the state of Karnataka in geographical area, but in terms of development access and performance it is considered one of the



least developed areas in the state. The CIDA-Shastri, SHARP and Action Research Projects stirred a region that had remained largely unaware of change. Through her Project interventions and interactive meetings, we tried to create a bridge between local communities and other development stakeholders. It is to the credit

of Shastri Projects that Joida became known beyond a limited physical world. It also received considerable media attention and continues to do so. They have the satisfaction that the process of change that was set in motion in Joida because of the Shastri Projects led to at least some of their dreams being translated into action. The fact that their Projects' initiatives and experiences have formed the basis for initiating a dialogue on the region's state of development is a matter of great satisfaction.

Some of the most visible impacts that the Shastri projects made are given below:

- The **Community Centre** at village, started by the Shastri Project with support from Karnataka Forest Department has become the focal point of development activities not only in that village but the surrounding region as well. Deria was the entry point for the Shastri Projects.
- **Infrastructure Profile of Joida Taluk:** Their project publication, which contains data relating to all the basic facilities available or not available in Joida taluk, is hailed as a pioneering effort in the region. All human habitations (456) in Joida which is Karnataka's second largest taluk in terms of geographical area have been covered in this profile.
- **Preparation of Training Manuals for Members of Self-Help Groups:** In response to requests by members of Self Help Groups to prepare a manual containing basic information on establishing and managing SHGs, the Project team prepared two manuals, one in Kannada and the other in English. These SHG training manuals have been circulated to all the SHGs in the Project area and are being used in their day-to-day transactions.
- **Establishment of Computer Centers:** Two computer centers were established as a result of her project initiatives. These computer centers have been providing training in basic computer skills to students, state department workers, NGO staff, teachers and members of the public. Local youth with computer skills are providing the training inputs.
- The **Select bibliography on Gender, Forests and Indigenous Peoples** prepared by the CIDA-Shastri Partnership Project has been shared with libraries all over India, and continues to be used as a vital databank on related themes.
- **Movement of Self-Help Groups:** One of the most visible impacts of the Shastri Projects in Joida has been the fillip they gave for starting a movement for the growth and development of Self-Help Groups in the Project area.

- **Profile of Elected Women Representatives and Production of Resource Material in Mother Tongue:** Two unique features of the Action Research Project were creation of a profile of all elected women representatives in Joida taluk and making available resource material on the effective functioning of PRIs to all the women members in Marathi, their mother tongue.
- **Starting a Consortium of Home Stays:** Due to the constant encouragement and exposure received from Shastri Project teams, the local youth under the leadership of Jayanand Derekar have set up a consortium of home stay facilities
- **Providing Toilet Facilities:** One of the most visible impacts that the Shastri Projects had in the region was the breakdown of cultural barriers against having toilets in villages. Today after several hundreds of years some villages have created toilet facilities for their residents.

Ph.D Dissertation that resulted from the Shastri Projects

- Influenced by the Shastri Projects Jayananad Derekar continued his studies by pursuing a master's course in Sociology in the Karnataka State Open University and is currently working for his doctoral dissertation in the University of Mysore on People's Participation in Forest Resource Management in Joida taluk under her guidance.

NGOs started due to the Impact of Shastri Projects:

1. Foundation for Biodiversity & Culture Conservation Research and Development
2. Kali Parisara Pravasyodyama Samsthe
3. Sanjeevani Seva Trust

For more information on the project, please contact: Dr.R.Indira at ramaraoindira@gmail.com