



# WIRFP Empowering Communities - Jankar System in Gramin Vikas Trust

*This paper presents the processes and experiences developed with communities and practised by Western India Rainfed Farming Project.*

## Who is a Jankar

A Jankar is a paraprofessional, a female or male member of the community, identified by the community, who serves as an internal catalyst, information bank, service provider, trainer, knowledge disseminator and innovator. The Jankar provides help to a village group in monitoring and acts as a link between Government or any extension agency and community.

Trained male and female Jankars have been instrumental in facilitating both planning, implementing and monitoring activities with the communities.

## Role and Responsibilities of Jankars

The roles and responsibilities of Jankars are pre-defined by village group members. These can differ from Jankar to Jankar and village to village. Jankars play an important role while planning, implementing and evaluating/ reviewing the programme. His/her role is over-arching and can include :

- She/he is accountable to the group and ensures equity in distribution of benefits to members of the group, and works closely with other Jankars.
- Motivates villagers to understand the need for development.
- Calls and organises regular meetings/ attends meetings at group level.
- Involves the local community in the process of development, i.e., planning, implementation and evaluation of programmes.
- Supports the community during the implementation of the programmes.
- Regularly attends workshops and training programmes organised by the project/ developmental agency and gives feedback to the group.

## Assessment of Jankar System

The performance of Jankars is assessed by group members on a six-monthly basis, initially with the facilitation of project staff. Later they take the entire responsibility. The project is continuously improving systems for assessment.

Western India Rainfed Farming Project - (WIRFP) is managed by Gramin Vikas Trust (GVT) with the support from Government of India, State Governments, Krishak Bharati Cooperative Limited (KRIBHCO) and Department for International Development (DFID), United Kingdom. This is a participatory, poverty and gender focused farming systems, livelihoods project located in seven districts i.e. Jhabua, Dhar & Ratlam (M.P.) Banswara & Dungarpur (Rajasthan) Dahod and Panchmahals (Gujarat). The project aims to improve the long term livelihoods of poor women & men farmers in the region, most of whom are tribal people from the Bhil community.



## Selection of Jankars

Selection of Jankars is done by the community, keeping the following criteria in mind.

- Willingness to work
- Dedication to the community
- Ability to act as a service provider
- Vision and skill in leading the developmental initiatives for his/her groups
- Can mobilise the community
- Is accepted by the community
- Ability to devote time to duties

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## Vikas Ke Prahari

The story of Veronika Ben, a widow from the tribal village Itawa in the Jhabua district of Madhya Pradesh, explains the role and responsibilities of Jankars. Being a poor widow she has a low status in the social system of her village. Like others she too became a member of one of the groups. With the passage of time she was nominated as a record keeping Jankar of her group because she was the only literate person in her group. As a Jankar she has to mobilise her group for meetings and ensure punctuality. It is her responsibility to prepare the agenda for meetings. She acts as a facilitator and initiates meetings. Simultaneously, she prepares the minutes of the meeting and keeps other records in the record book. She also shares with the group members what she has put in the records. Looking into the systematic management of records in her group, the other groups also started calling her for writing the minutes and records in their meetings. Though there are many other literate boys, they are away from the village. Now, as a Jankar, she is a well-known person. She is now a self-confident lady and she attends different training programmes, workshops and exposure meetings. After attending these training programmes, she shares her experiences at village meetings.

Veronika often visits GOs/NGOs/other departments and has succeeded in developing linkages between SHGs and these organisations. She not only informs co-villagers about different developmental programmes like DWACRA, IRDP, DPAP, etc. but also calls up officials from these departments for the implementation of their programmes. She facilitates the process of need identification for her group and helps in preparing the developmental work plan. She supports her group to prioritise their needs and to act vigorously for the implementation of all plans.

### Jankar assessment parameters

- Understanding in implementing the roles and responsibilities agreed upon by the group
- Presence in the meeting
- Maintaining records
- Facilitator vs dominator
- Exploring opportunities
- Manipulation vs transparency in decision-making and benefit sharing
- Dynamism during the implementation stage
- Knowledge and information generated
- Punctuality and sincerity



*Men and Women Jankars acquiring skills in Grafting and Budding Techniques*

### Payments to Jankars

The community is encouraged to pay the Jankars. However it has been felt that 100 per cent payments to Jankars should be made by community/ groups only in case of income generation activities, like managing a flour mill, diesel engine, etc. Jankars of SWC get 5 per cent of the community/ project contribution. The payment modalities vary from activity to activity and from village to village.

Payments to Jankars are made only after the review of the work that she/he has been doing during the month or for the time

agreed upon by the community. The subsidy/ payments to Jankars by the project are made in a reducing manner, as the project moves from the introduction/ piloting phase to the intensive - adaptive phase and finally to the adoption phase of the programme.

### Jankar System and SHG Concept

Jankars are members of SHGs and are selected by group members. Jankars are fully accountable to and responsible for SHG activity development. The group develops the modalities of the functioning of Jankars and also can replace them, if they do not perform.

### Jankar System and Watershed Management

The project, as an implementing agency, along with the multi disciplinary team of specialists, promotes the Jankar System (specialists/ volunteers of different components of watershed) as a watershed development team at SHG/village level. The team of Jankars undergoes different trainings through periodic exposure visit and workshops etc.

The Jankar System Strategy says, equal number of men and women Jankars should be developed in a village/ SHG. However the total number of Jankar in a SHG varies from 4-7 persons.



## Training Topics

- Technical issues : soil and water conservation, forestry; post-harvest methods; crops and livestock etc.
- Social issues : Conflict resolution, working in groups.
- Working closely with other Jankars and communities.
- Poverty and gender sensitisation issues.
- Developing linkages with line departments/ extension agencies and access resources from them.
- Exposure to the treated watershed areas to see and realise the impact and importance of farming system/ watershed approaches in a holistic manner.

The team of Jankars, works closely in order to implement the watershed development plan in a village.

## Our Experiences

- The Jankar system helps to sustain activities, groups and linkages with development agencies.
- The fact that women have limited participation as Jankars is often due to the attitude of development workers, not the women themselves.
- Project members strongly encourage the community to pay Jankars for services provided by them.
- Project facilitates Jankars to develop their skills so that they become economically independent.
- Trainings and workshops have always been relevant to their roles and responsibilities.
- Jankars facilitate activity on group/ village/ need-based issue as per the needs of the community.

There are presently more than 1608 Jankars in the project, out of which more than 435 are women. They are in the areas of Group Assessments; Record keeping of SHGS; Crops; Livestock; Nursery Raising; JFM Participatory Rural appraisals; Impact Assessments; Irrigation; SWC; Cluster Jankars.

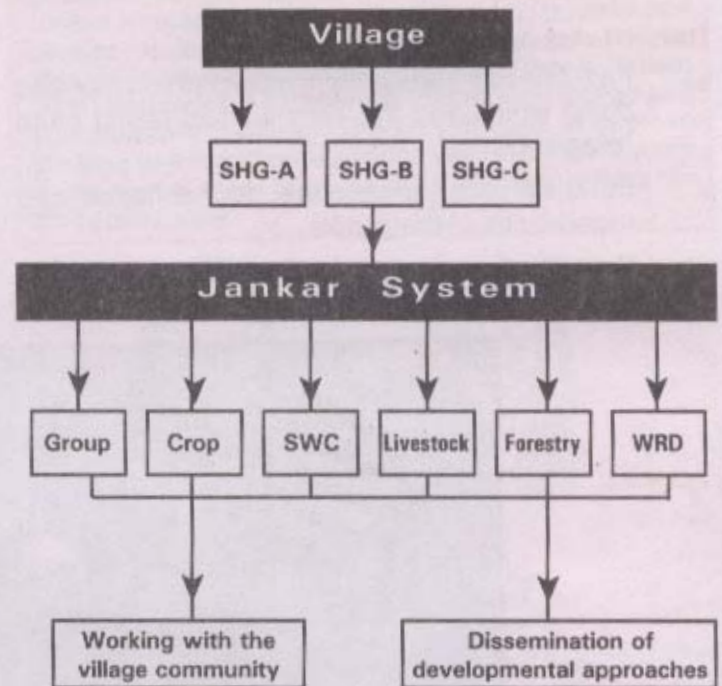
## Present status of Jankar System

The system is used intensively by the local community, neighbouring villages, government organisations, non-government organisations and other agencies.

The District Collector of Jhabua in Madhya Pradesh asked the jankars of project villages on numerous occasions to do participatory rural appraisals, (PRA's) in blocks of the district. A team of 18 Jankars (male and

female) worked for 4-5 days in teams of 2-3 in different villages and did PRAs under the Food Security Mission Project. Extensive support was extended to them by the government department. The Jankars prepared the report and submitted it to the concerned department. Each of them was paid a certain amount of money as incentive, along with conveyance, board and lodging. A copy of the report was later shared with the community of their village.

## How the System Functions



*Women Jankars giving credit to members in a Self Help Group*

### Empowering People.....

Ten project jankars were used by Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) to do impact analysis on the Joint Forest Management schemes under the Arawall Project of Rajasthan. The village communities gained empowerment, seeing their fellow villagers use their skills to benefit. The Jankars earned greater status, when they saw that their views and knowledge were respected. Under various programmes the Jankars have earned more than Rs. 25 lacs over the last five years of the project.

### Benefits of Jankars to the Project :

- Facilitate role transfer from project to communities doing works and the communities taking more responsibilities.
- Build on local knowledge, technologies and experiences of the people.
- Developed as representatives of group/ village

communities in taking their needs forward.

- Poor and women also feel encouraged and involved with actions and activities.
- Counter-balancing power structures in the villages.
- Fast-tracking implementation of activities in the villages.
- Act as service providers to the community as livestock paravets, village volunteers and facilitators of different programmes.
- Provide immediate help to the project in implementation, recording, reporting of activities and impact assessment of programmes.
- Resource for project & non-project villages on grassroot mobilization and clarity for a sustainable livelihoods approach.
- Wider dissemination of project's learning & findings in neighbouring villages and other partner organisations.

Contributions have been made by DFID; TC consultants + GVT Team Members.



*Jankars being used to design, measure and evaluate SWC structures in village Jogrimal, Rajasthan*



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