



PROMOTING WATER STEWARDSHIP IN COTTON GROWING COMMUNITIES OF YAVATMAL AND DHAR DISTRICTS

**WOMEN
+WATER**



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INTRODUCTION

Cotton which is a critical input to the textile sector in India is also one of the most water intensive fiber crops in the country. The current practices in cotton cultivation include extensive use of water, pesticides and synthetic fertilizers. This results in loss of soil fertility, disturbing the soil's water balance through drying out, contamination of water sources and diminished use of agricultural land.

As part of the Women + Water Alliance (W+W Alliance), ISC is working with the cotton growing communities in the districts of Yavatmal and Dhar, to:

- Design and implement a model for better soil, water and pest management in cotton cultivation through training programs and demonstration plots, drawing from the Better Cotton Initiative's (BCI) principles of water stewardship, crop protection and soil health.
- Improve understanding of local water balance by involving farmers and village level institutions in water budgeting and developing village water management plans.
- Strengthen women institutions through gender learning group and training of women farmers and entrepreneurs.

AREAS OF IMPACT

- Promoting water stewardship
- Reducing environmental footprint of cotton cultivation
- Strengthening the role of women in cotton cultivation





ABOUT ISC

The Institute for Sustainable Communities' mission is to help communities around the world address environmental, economic and social challenges by deploying expert advice and encouraging local, multi-sectoral partnerships to build a better future shaped and shared by all. Since our founding in 1991 by former Vermont Governor Madeleine M. Kunin and George Hamilton, ISC has led transformative community-driven projects in 30 countries including the United States, China, India and Bangladesh.

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ACTIVITIES

Analysis

- **Situational analysis:** at the village level to understand local water availability, cotton cultivation practices, state of water resources, and the role of key institutions managing water resources.
- **Geo hydrological mapping:** to understand water resource availability, water accumulation in various pockets, and to identify water-critical areas where conservation and management interventions can be undertaken.

Stakeholder Engagement

- **Community engagement for water management:** this will include capacity building and awareness programs on water budgeting and water literacy for farmers and the community.
- **Participatory water budgeting:** Village water budgeting exercise will estimate water resources in the villages. This will help the communities understand overall water availability and usage and then open a discussion on how to manage water collectively.
- **Water literacy campaigns and development of village water plans:** In association with the Gram Panchayats, a village water plan will be developed for better demand management and source sustainability.
- **Strengthening women institutions:** Existing groups in the villages will be leveraged to promote environment-friendly entrepreneurial opportunities for women such as production of bio-pesticides. ISC is also working with its expert gender learning group to enhance understanding of gender aspects in cotton cultivation and water management and is applying its learnings for implementation of the pilot project.

Capacity Building

- **Training programs for farmers:** 3000 farmers (including at least 750 female farmers) will be trained on principles of water stewardship, soil health management and integrated pest management.
- **Demonstration plots through farmer field schools:** will demonstrate good crop management practices like Integrated Pest Management (IPM), Integrated Nutrient Management (INM), green manuring, mulching, *in situ* water conservation.
- **Strengthening water infrastructure:** Repair and renovation of existing water structures to enhance the storage, recharging capacity, and physical access of water in the villages.

PILOT PARTNERS



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