

LAC FARMING

In our landscape, after a series of learnings, the introduction of lac farming has been gaining momentum, particularly with the Kusum and ber trees. Collaborating with a select group of tribal farmers in the Dholbajja cluster has yielded positive outcomes, prompting a desire to expand the engagement of farmers in lac cultivation. Beyond its economic benefits, promoting lac farming serves as a proactive measure to mitigate forest fires, given the fire-resistant nature of the trees involved. This strategy emerges as an effective means to safeguard the landscape from the threat of forest fires.

The pilot phase was initiated in 2023, identifying and pruning 25 lac trees. The results were encouraging, with 15 host trees managed by 8 farmers generating a net profit of **95,000 INR**. In the current year, **58 trees have been utilized for lac farming by 34 farmers**.

The plan for the upcoming year involves scaling up lac farming to cover the remaining villages where suitable trees can be found forming farmer interest groups, leveraging experienced lac farmers as resource persons for knowledge dissemination within the landscape



4 Returns Reflection

Natural Return: The primary focus is on creating awareness about the significance of Kusum trees within the community. This awareness is anticipated to lead to conservation practices for these trees, contributing to the preservation of local biodiversity.

Social Return: This initiative aims to capacitate the community in lac farming, establish social fencing norms in the forest areas of these villages, and generate awareness about forest fires. Additionally, the community's capacity-building in lac farming and the establishment of social fencing norms in forest areas contribute to social returns.

Financial Return: The activity is poised to become an additional income source for lac families across the three villages. Furthermore, it has the potential to provide sustained financial returns as it has proved to be a successful prototype of alternative income streams from forests.

Inspiration Return: The collective efforts and informal governance structures established by the community demonstrated the return of inspiration. Moreover, the successful creation of this model presents an opportunity for scale-up to other villages within the landscape. The potential replication of this initiative can contribute to broader community engagement and the widespread adoption of sustainable agricultural practices.