

State Report: Gujarat

# Gujarat - An Overview



With 2.6 million hectares of land growing cotton out of the 10.6 million hectares of farmable land in Gujarat, the land of 'Baniyas' aka Business Men, the history of cotton production stems not so much from just the ideal climatic conditions or the perfect soil but rather from the fact that little else could grow in this overall dry and arid land.



Gujarat, one of India's western most states enjoys a rich cultural heritage. While Gujaratis (the people hailing from Gujarat) are known for their business acumen, a large part of the state population remains dedicated to agriculture. Of The total geographical area of Gujarat (19.6 million hectares) about 54% is under farming. A total of 1.7 million metric tonnes of cotton is produced every year from 24% of the agricultural land available in Gujarat.

Monsoon in India is a four month long affair from June till September. More than 75 per cent of India's annual rainfall occurs during this period itself. The fate of the crops depend on the performance of the Monsoon. Good rains during the season result in bountiful crops which further

benefit the farmers. A major portion of the country's crop area is completely dependent on Monsoon rains as they're not equipped with methods of manual irrigation. Failure in the monsoon coupled with lack of irrigation facilities, training on decent practises leading to a better crop all leads to huge financial losses for the farmers, which is their primary and only source of earning.

A large part of the state, Kutch is a dessert. Even the area of Saurashtra where Spectrum International works closely with almost 20,000 farmers is quite rain deprived. The average land holding of farmers that we work in this state would be approximately 4-5 acres i.e. 2-3 hectares. Traditionally, these farmers earn on an average around \$2,500 gross and around \$1,200 annually. While using water effectively, reducing the use of harmful pesticide, improving soil health remain the top environmental goals; gender equality, education of the girl child, improvement in general health and use of personal protective equipment remain some of the social challenges that the community faces.



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