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## UN IN ACTION

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### INDIA: FARMERS INCREASE COTTON YIELDS

#### VIDEO

HARVEST RITUAL

COTTON BEING PICKED

MANDAVARI, COTTON FARMER,  
ON-CAMERA

SHOTS OF FARM

SHOTS OF SOIL

#### AUDIO

##### NARRATION

Mandavari, who lives in India, owns the land here. (4)

Today, she is praying for a good harvest. (3)

More than 3 million farmers depend on cotton in Maharashtra State alone. Over 900 people committed suicide in this region last year. (10)  
Like Mandavari, who supports a family of thirteen, they were deeply in debt. (5)

##### MANDAVARI RAJURKAR: (In Hindi) F

*“There was very little rain last year, so we had a marginal yield and had to use a lot of pesticide. We could not cover our expenses. We had to take a loan just to feed ourselves.” (13)*

India is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest producer of cotton in the world, yet yields remain amongst the lowest globally. India produces just 550 kilos of cotton per hectare annually, whilst China produces

double that amount. (15)

PRABHAKAR MISHRA,  
CAIM (MAHARASHTRA STATE  
AGRICULTURE)  
ON-CAMERA

PRABHAKAR MISHRA: (In Hindi) M  
*“In this region, farmers face rocky conditions  
and soil erosion so the yield here is lower.  
Cotton is also very susceptible to pests, so  
costs have been increasing.”* (12)

VARIOUS SHOTS OF TOWN

NARRATION  
For cotton farmers, cutting costs and improving  
yields is of utmost importance. (5)

FARMER TRAINING SESSION

Over 57,000 cotton-growing households in  
Maharashtra State in western India receive help  
through a plan supported by IFAD, the  
International Fund for Agricultural  
Development, in partnership with the state  
government organization CAIM. (16)

Farmers attend training sessions and learn  
sustainable cotton cultivation through methods  
developed by the Better Cotton Initiative, BCI, a  
global program to improve standards. (12)

PRAMOD YAWATKAR, FIELD  
COORDINATOR,  
ON-CAMERA

PRAMOD YAWATKAR: (In Hindi) M  
*“The pesticide companies have convinced  
farmers to depend on chemicals. What they  
don’t explain is that pesticides lose their impact  
when insects develop resistance, so there’s few  
long-term benefits.”* (14)

NARRATION  
The IFAD-backed project teaches them to use  
local leaves, including neem. Mixed and

NEEM LEAVES/IFAD SUPPORT

fermented, they serve as a natural repellent. (9)

DUNG COLLECTED

And there's another commodity in abundance here- dung from domestic cattle is collected to make natural fertilizer – a free natural pesticide, safe for plants and workers. (12)

SPRAYING OF COTTON PLANTS

DURVASH RAJURKAR: (In Hindi) M

DURVASH RAJURKAR,  
COTTON FARMER, ON-CAMERA

*“Our plants this year are green and healthy, even though we've had little rain. Before, they would have turned yellow.” (7)*

SHOTS OF COTTON BEING  
COLLECTED/COTTON OFF TO  
MARKET

NARRATION

Results from the first year of the program are encouraging. Each farmer increased their profit by 42 percent- that's 167 US dollars, a fortune in their community. (12)

The project also guarantees the farmers a better price at market, in excess of 7 million dollars covering 42,000 households. (9)

SIVA BALASUBRAMANIAM,  
CONSULTANT, BCI, ON-CAMERA

SIVA BALASUBRAMANIAM: (In Hindi) M

*“Individual farmers are often cheated in terms of the weight and price when they try to sell. In order to correct the problem, we suggest that they band together and sell cotton seeds collectively.” (21)*

MANDAVARI WITH INFANTS

NARRATION

Mandavari owes her creditors more than 4,000 US dollars, but this year she has done well, and even hopes to turn a small profit. (9)

MANDAVARI ON-CAMERA

MANDAVARI RAJURKAR: (In Hindi) F  
*“This year I’m hopeful. We have been able to use low-cost spray and fertilizer. So we were able to bring down our expenditure significantly.” (7)*

PARTING SHOTS OF FARMS,  
PEOPLE, AND COTTON

NARRATION:

It’s the end of a long, hot day, but the first harvest is in. Overall yields still depend on rainfall, which can be unreliable. (9)

but by cutting costs Mandavari will have more money to feed and educate her grandchildren. Even the smallest savings are an answer to her prayers. (10)

This report was produced by Anu Anand for the United Nations.

UN LOGO