

SPARSE BUT NOT SCARCE

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This campaign is a response to the solar-hydro power project proposed in Shahabad, Baran district, Rajasthan. The Rajasthan government has approved a proposal by the Greenko Group to clear over one lakh trees for a pumped storage project (PSP) in Baran district, with the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) granting initial permissions for eight additional projects. These projects will require approximately 3,800 hectares of forest land and involve clearing seven lakh trees in the Aravali and Vindhyaachal ranges. To offset the loss of green cover, Greenko plans to plant 6.7 lakh trees in Baran and the Jaisalmer desert region.

This campaign aims to challenge labeling of arid and semi-arid ecosystems as "wastelands" by engaging stakeholders. Assuming, that native vegetation will be lost and introduction of trees in deserts of Jaisalmer would be an ecological disaster. The primary objective focuses on advocating for Greenko's solar-hydro power project to undergo mandatory environmental impact assessments (EIA) as required by law, addressing gaps in enforcement, and mobilizing public and legal support to demand compliance.

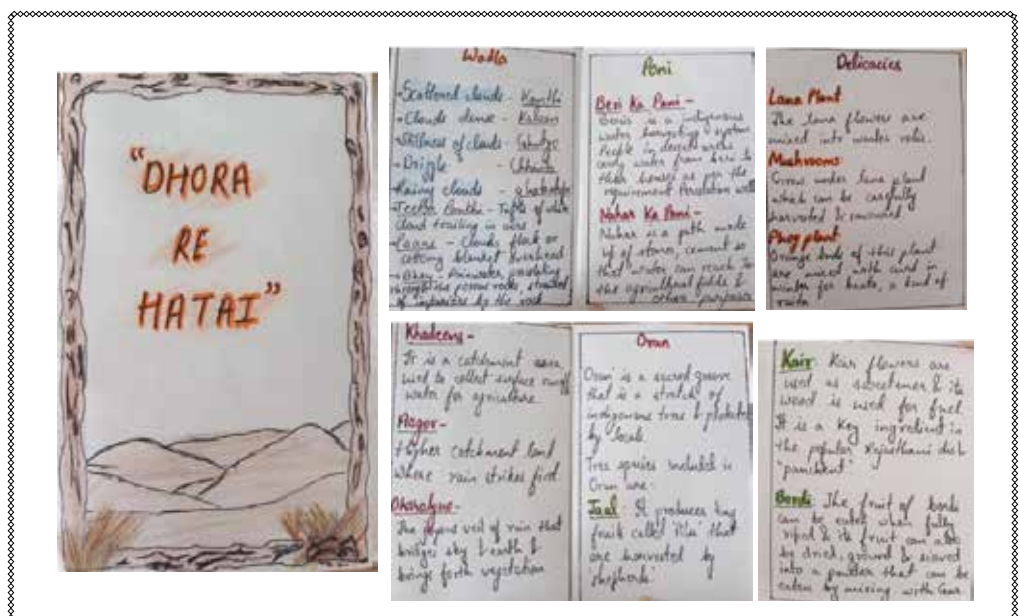
Raising awareness about the ecological importance of deserts in Jaisalmer and semi-arid landscape in Baran, emphasizing their role in sustaining biodiversity. This will involve

education campaigns, partnerships with local communities and environmental organizations, and leveraging media to highlight the significance of these fragile ecosystems.

The education campaigns aim at capacity building in the community, to raise questions regarding the basis of such developments in their region, ensuring Rajasthan government's and Greenko's accountability. These initiatives aim to empower local populations to actively involve in safeguarding their biodiversity.

Arid/Semi-arid Glossary:

Glossary is a medium to mobilize communities by passing on traditional ecological knowledge from older to younger generation while making them aware of the richness of these ecosystems. This awareness amongst the communities can be used to further push lawmakers, MoEFCC and Rajasthan government to denotify ecologically significant arid and semi-arid ecosystems from the Wasteland Atlas of India.



Campaign Posters

These posters question the basis of calling semi-arid regions as wastelands which allows for large scale solar-hydro projects to easily establish. The sparseness of trees in semi-arid regions and bare deserts are fragile ecosystems, often misunderstood for scarcity of biodiversity which results in problematic dense non-native plantations in ecosystems like deserts and semi-arid regions. This leads to ecological disasters both in the location of the solar-hydro project and the compensatory plantation area.



Face of the campaign



Source courtesy: Marginlands by Arati Kumar Rao.