

# Development Alternatives – A Brief Profile

Development Alternatives, India, is a non-profit research, development and consultancy organisation established in 1983 under the Societies Registration Act. It fosters the new relationship in the people, technology and environment interactions needed to attain the goal of sustainable development.

The Technology Systems Branch focuses on designing and developing environmentally sound and appropriate technologies in close collaboration with the other branches. Several technology packages in Shelter, Domestic Energy, Handmade Paper, Textiles, Pottery, etc. have already been disseminated and others are in various stages of development. The sister organisation, Technology and Action for Rural Advancement (TARA) undertakes production and dissemination of the technologies.

The Environment Systems Branch designs environment management strategies at various geographic scales and levels of detail. Experimental cum demonstration projects are also undertaken in the field. The range of field studies and projects include Environmental Impact Assessment and Analysis, Environmental Management Plans, Environmental and Social Policies and Procedures, Community development, Food Security in tribal areas, Rehabilitation and Resettlement, Pollution Prevention, Cleaner Production, Waste Management, Natural Resources Management using GIS & Remote sensing, Income Generation through Microenterprises and Biodiversity Conservation.

The Institution Systems Branch, including Development Alternatives Information Network (DAINET), the Training Systems Unit, the Communication Unit and the Small Organisations Support (SOS) Programme provide a range of support services to the environment and development community in India. The sister organization TARAhaat.com is fast emerging as a major portal for providing connectivity, content and other services in rural India.

A highly competent and motivated staff of more than 400 professional and support staff in diverse fields ranging from Anthropology, Sociology, Economics, Forestry, Ecology, Geology, Engineering, Analytical Chemistry, Information and Computer Services, Planning and Management contribute to the assignments undertaken by the DA Group. Professionals for each assignment are carefully selected to provide trans-disciplinary inputs effectively. Besides R & D workshops, support is also drawn from a well equipped Computer Unit, an accredited Information Unit and Geomatics Facility. The Environmental Monitoring Facility can undertake soil, water and air analyses.

The Regional Office in Bangalore its operation has built up considerable expertise in the field of low-cost construction using appropriate technologies and local materials as well as in income generation activities. The Regional Office looks after the operations in Karnataka and other southern states.

The Regional Office in Jhansi looks after the operations in the Bundelkhand region. It has shown excellent results on ground in wasteland development, natural regeneration, soil and moisture conservation, community irrigation systems and income-generation activities. An Appropriate Technology Centre has been established in Orchha, Madhya Pradesh. This Centre is a unique experiment in design and dissemination of appropriate technologies in the Bundelkhand region.

Broader management decision-making is the responsibility of the Management Group which comprises of all senior managers and usually makes its decisions by consensus. The Governing Council has overall responsibility of policy formulation and also ensures financial integrity and programme quality.