



Biodiversity Conservation



COMMUNITY APPROACH TO LIVELIHOODS THROUGH SUSTAINABLE USE OF LOCAL RESOURCES

Project Background

Paribesh Unnayan Parishad (PUPA) currently implementing the project of Global Environment Facility (GEF), United Development Programme (UNDP) Small Grant Programme (SGP) on Conservation of Biodiversity in Sagar Island (Sunderbans) West Bengal through Self Help groups, village coordinators, village clubs and regional clubs.

The goal of the project is to develop a replicable model village (AMAR GRAM). Impressing people's participation, supporting community led management plan, leading to promote sustainable, eco-friendly and equitable socio-economic development. It aims to enhance the sense of belongingness-local ownership. Effective management of village bio-resources, soil wealth and social and cultural values.

Project Strategy

The project with the support and guidance from **Centre for Environment and Education (CEE)** is implemented an Integrated Soil-Water-Biota Management (ISWBM) using participatory methodologies eg PRAs, PLAs as tools. More emphasis in the project has been on the **processes of doing actions**, rather than **mere activity led approaches**. The locals documented local resources and its utilization including biodiversity assessment, valuable traditional knowledge systems & culture at village level. The project strategy has been to develop mutual respect, community ownerships and sustainable actions to have a three-phased approach namely:

Phase I: Mobilize the community through the use of 'participatory micro planning (PMP)' techniques to identify, analyse and prioritize the needs of the community. The Community needs will then help to develop into comprehensive Village Work Plans (VWPs) as the outcomes.

Phase II: Facilitate and promote informal, kinship based-common interest self help groups (SHGs) for increasing self-help, collective bargaining, community negotiations and for implementation of the program.

Phase III: Enhance the skills and capacities of a range of local community volunteers and local resource grass root persons, (including both men and women) to plan, implement, manage and monitor resources and activities.

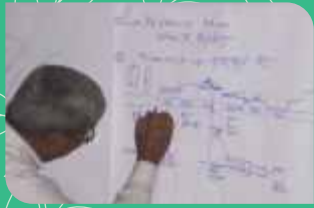
Project Activities

- **Community mobilization:** Informal regular and timely meetings and strategic planning workshops conducted with the local organizations, panchayat members, government officials, community leaders to create awareness and to sensitize all about the objectives and advantages from the project.
- **Community Participation:** Nineteen villages under three clusters selected for the project. Village communities shared costs in various activities like Rain-water harvesting measures; paddy-duck-fish cultivation; vermin composting; azolla cultivation; diversified horticulture activities; livestock development (small ruminants and poultry); kitchen garden establishment; nursery development and crops programme. Revitalization of about 40 existing Self Help Groups involving nearly 1000 members. Savings of more than Rs 3 lacs made and bank loans accessed for another Rs 3.5 lacs.
- **Establishment of field demonstration farm:** for demonstrating organic farming and simple, low cost and easy to translate technologies with all other associated activities.
- **Training Programmes:** Various types of training programmes were organized targeted to youth, school students, women and farmers. Tailor made training programmes were designed and conducted in the areas of environment education, traditional uses of bio-resources, integrated farming, Eco-friendly & energy efficient uses of non-conventional energy sources



Geographical Area	:	Sagar Island, Sunderbans, West Bengal, India
No. of Beneficiaries	:	13,575 households in 19 villages
SGP Grant	:	
Co-Financing	:	
Project Time Period	:	

SGP The GEF Small Grants Programme



- Evaluation workshops: participatory monitoring systems involving the locals have been encouraged
- Documentation: Documentation of biological resources was done along with its utilization and indigenous traditional knowledge and its publication (in local language). Also documentation on future management plan was also done.
- Cost benefit Sharing model developed in the project.

Project outputs

- 19 villages under 2 panchayats namely, Mooriganga No.1 and Mooriganga No. 2 grampanchayats, with total households (HHs) of 13,575 and 23,890 population benefited.
- Qualitative and quantitative studies on the declining (threatened) faunal and floral species groups made and a document on the 'Bio resources and its traditional uses' prepared.
- 5 replicable Model Farms established with integrating and interlinking valuable traditional agricultural wisdom and technologies with the modern and sustainable technologies. 10 more farms will be established by the end of the project.
- Capacity in integrated farming developed by training at least 100 persons, including 47 women from the local community. Special focus in technical know-how in the areas of rainwater harvesting and Vermin composting. 5 vermi-hatchers and 50 vermicomposting units established.
- 55 kitchen gardens established to revive local varieties of vegetables and preservation of seeds.
- Relevant technical knowhow for trapping and using non-conventional energies like Bio-solar cooker, Conventional gohar gas plant with fixed cemented dome type (Dinabandhu model), improved chulla, etc. made available to local community by training 25 selected locals in the skill offsetting and maintaining the 20 energy units
- 9 Environment Education study centres established. More than 1000 students and 20 teachers from at least 10 local schools and members of more than 10 local clubs e trained on sustainable living and life style consumption patterns.
- Encouraging adoption of the SRI (System for Rice Intensification). Less seed, wide spacing, less water, less or no use of chemicals.
- These efforts put in by the eco club coordinators and some of the students, later supported by Shirshendu and Rabisankar, are significant as it is helping revive some of the traditional food source and practices, thereby improving the nutritional security of the poor villagers.
- 5 nurseries raised with more than 1 lakh saplings of locally suitable varieties of plants set up.
- 40 local youth involved in the project during the PRAs and other related tools.
- Eco Clubs were formed in 3 schools and students have been trained towards different methods for reviving some of the traditional food source and practices, thereby improving the nutritional security of the poor villagers. Students have also been trained in methodology and techniques involved in the collection and culture of the threatened species thereby acting as pilot entrepreneurs for biodiversity conservation.

Lessons

- Increased incomes from agriculture, vegetable production of diversified nature and alternate income generation activities like fish and duck rearing and mushroom cultivation led to more community respect and trust.
- Manu ring with judicious application of cow dung @ 10 ton/ha is optimum for 7500 nos. stocking density per ha.
- Communities accessing bank loan for productive use and small enterprise always enhances confidence and ownerships
- Hand holding by CEE resulted in the NGO encouraging the entrepreneurship-business model approach in the project. The benefit sharing model also strengthened the performance levels.
- Flexible approach by CEE enabled activities to be re appropriated to be more results based.
- Increase in green cover, related introduction/emergence of the local bio diversity and also increase in crop productivity and soil fertility



PUPA
8/1B Raipur Road,
East Kolkatta-700032 West Bengal
Mob.: 09433943194
Email : amargram_pupa@rediffmail.com

Regional Co-ordinator
Dr. D P Rath
Centre for Environment Education,
A-5, Bar Munda, HIG Colony
Bhubaneswar-751013,
Tel:0674-2551344
Email: ceebhubaneshwar@ceeindia.org

National Co-ordinator
GEF UNDP Small Grants Programme
CEE Delhi.
C-40 South Extension-II,
New Delhi-110049 Ph.: 011-26262878-80
e-mail : sgpdelhi@ceeindia.org
www.ceeindia.org

