

# BRIEF REPORT OF THE PROJECT

(AMAR GRAM)

(UNDP/GEF/SGP)

**TITLE OF THE PROJECT:** *Improving the quality of life and livelihood of rural community through sustainable use of local resources*

**IMPLEMENTING AGENCY:** Paribesh Unnayan Parishad

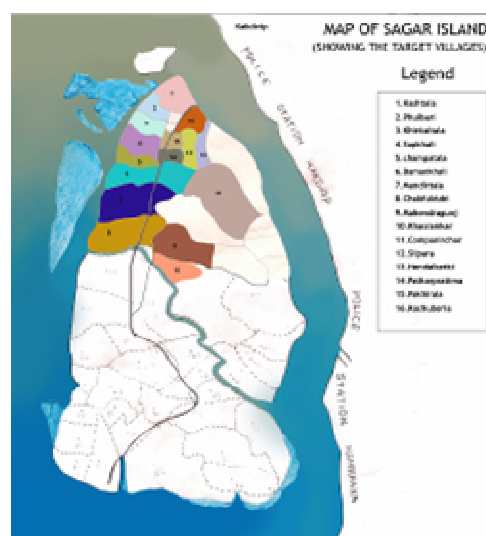
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**GEF THEMATIC AREA:** This is a multi-focal project falls under the SGP focal area of Land Degradation and Biodiversity Conservation.

**LOCATION OF PROJECT:** Sagar Island (21° 37' 21'' N to 21° 52' 28'' N and 88° 02' 17'' E to 88° 10' 25'' E), Sundarbans, South 24 Paraganas, West Bengal, India.

**PROJECT START AND END DATES (as in the MOA):** 30<sup>th</sup> June 2007 to 31<sup>st</sup> December,2009

**INTRODUCTION:** With support from Global Environment Facility (GEF) through United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) Small Grant Programme (SGP), facilitated by Centre for Environment Education (CEE), Paribesh Unnayan Parishad (PUPA) has implemented a project entitled. “**Improving the quality of life and livelihood of rural community through sustainable use of local resources**” in 16 villages of two Gram Panchayats of Sagar Island of South 24 Parganas district during 2007 to 2009 covering a total population of 10,370 and household 2027 under 158 groups (out of total population of 45,556 and household 8908). As a result of continuous community mobilization, a large number of various community groups have been strengthened and also formed. Of all these groups SHGs are the major beneficiaries of the project.



Next to SGH, Farmers Clubs, Poor Man' Group and Eco Clubs play the important role in the project. 2027 Beneficiaries are exposed during various PRA meets, exposure visits and trainings on sustainable local resource (biotic) utilization for the benefit of their social, political, economical upliftment keeping the environmental sustainability with top most priority.

### **RATIONALE:**

The aim was to involve the local villagers in planning, so as to raise the sense of participation & ownership towards their own villages and ultimately empowering them through proper training for effective conservation and management of local resources.

### **GOAL:**

The goal of the proposed project is to develop replicable Model Village (AMAR GRAM), with people's participation, along with its **management plan**, which promotes sustainable, eco-friendly and equitable socio-economic development of rural people primarily through local resource management by way of four inter-related activities, viz., **education, training, research and consultancy** for human resource development. It aims to raise the sense of belongingness (ownership) among the villagers towards their own village (resources) and empowering them through proper training to uplift themselves through effective conservation and management of village bio-resources, soil wealth and most importantly their living environment. The special feature of this project is to establish a benefit sharing mechanism by the community, for the community for the sustainability of the project activities.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- Conservation of local Biodiversity
- Prevention of land degradation
- Building an Environmentally literate Community.
- Income generation through sustainable use of local resources.
- Improving the quality of life through community ownership, community institution building and capacity building

### **STRATEGIES:**

**Community Ownerships:** Developing village work plans, interpreting village baseline using participatory rural



appraisal, building rapport and community trust to local livelihood interventions.

**Community Institution Building:** Facilitating flexible kinship based community led self help institutions and prioritised work plans for villages.

**Integrated Farming Systems Approach:** Community participation in Rain-water harvesting measures; paddy-duck-fish cultivation; vermicomposting; Azolla cultivation; diversified horticulture activities; livestock development (small ruminants and poultry); kitchen garden establishment; nursery development and crops programme.

**Local Capacity Building:** Selection of local women and men village volunteers to be trained and skill upgradation in every area of action.

**Education:** School-based and Community-based Environment education for the Conservation of the ecosystems and associated faunal and floral resources.

**Cost-Benefit Sharing System:** Establishing strong cost sharing & benefit sharing mechanism for most of the activities for the shake of sustainability.



#### ACTIVITIES:

- Community Mobilisation (for participation & ownership through institutional building)
- Capacity Building (in Sample Surveying and PRA techniques)



- Capacity Building for livelihood improvement (vermicomposting, poultry, goatary, integrated farming, entrepreneurship development, etc.)
- Establishment of Model Integrated farms
- Development of Nursery, Kitchen

garden (nutritional garden), herbal garden, etc

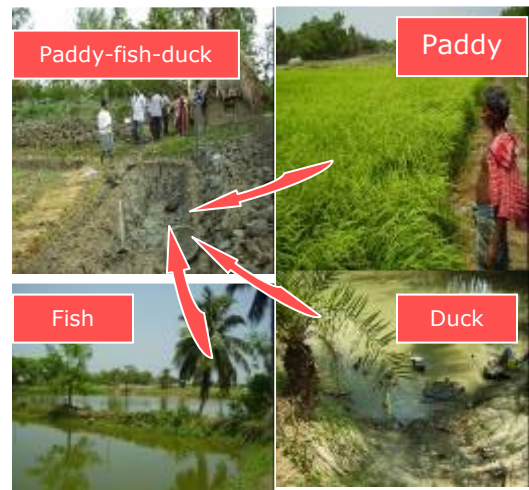


#### RESULTS (brief):

- 16 villages under 2 Panchayats with total households of 8908 and 45,556 population, of which 10,370 people benefited.



- ❑ 77 SHGs (1083 members), 22 SGSYs (331 members), ten farmers Clubs (100 members), 17 poor man's group (159 members) 30 Eco Clubs (327 members), one Biodiversity Conservation Corps (16 students), 2027 beneficiaries were involved through 275 PRA meets during the project period. All the members have fully agreed to share the cost and benefits and cooperate mutually with each other in the activities connected with the project.
- ❑ During the project period a total amount of savings Rs 14, 22, 777 has been mobilized among the SHG members, of which Rs. 2,36, 965 is the amount taken as loan and returned by the beneficiaries to their account after completion of the SGP activities (benefit shared). An amount of Rs. 4, 74, 551 is the beneficiaries' contribution (cost shared).
- ❑ A total of 66 days of training programmes were organised involving a large number of participants, and 6 such programmes organised by outside agencies were attended by 10 participants
- ❑ Qualitative and quantitative studies on the declining (threatened) faunal and floral species groups made and a document on the 'Bioresources and its traditional uses' will be prepared
- ❑ **People's Biodiversity Register** with information related to wild and cultivated plants (357) and wild and domesticated animals (109) from 16 villages was collected by the Coordinators with the help of BCC (Biodiversity Conservation Corps).
- ❑ Seven Model Farm (Integrated Farming System) established with the activities related to integrated farming (Land shaping, Vermiculture, Liquid manure preparation, Mixed Cropping, Living hedge, Rotational cropping, Nursery raising, Kitchen Garden, Backyard poultry rearing, fish-duck culture etc.).
- ❑ 52 SHG members started rainwater harvesting with an agreement to share the cost initially and benefit within one year as per agreement (cost and benefit sharing agreement).
- ❑ Total 135 vermi pits and 30 Hatcheries were established in 16 villages of which 115 pits and most of the hatcheries have fared well.





- 272 kitchen garden developed in the villages with 25 types of vegetables of which 14 are of traditional types and 10 Seed Banks for distribution amongst the villagers in next season.
- A total of 4362 chicks were distributed among 870 SHG members As such on an average per chick a profit of Rs. 10/- per month per chick is being earned by the beneficiaries. 18 poultry sheds supported for continuation of chick rearing activities.
- 94 goat kids were supplied to successful SHG members on cost sharing basis, and also with an agreement of benefit sharing, and 3 goats kids were given on loan (goat ending).
- Suitable varieties of local species were kept in five locally developed Nurseries maintained by 10 SHG members and 3105 (1400 were purchased and 1705 were grown in the SHG nurseries) saplings were distributed amongst the students, SHG members and one local club. One Neem nursery was nurtured by Jalad Gayen, Patharpratima village.
- 39 farmers practiced SRI (System of Rice Intensification) in their field with support from NABARD, Kolkata
- 27 beneficiaries practiced pond fishing with training support and earned substantially. Ten of them cultured freshwater prawn.



### IMPACTS:

- **Social** : Empowerment of women and developing social ties.
- **Environmental**: - Integrated farming with high organic input for the prevention of land degradation and increasing biomass for conserving biodiversity.
- **Economic**: Income generation activities with benefit sharing system established leading to increase of group' fund.

### ACHIEVEMENTS:

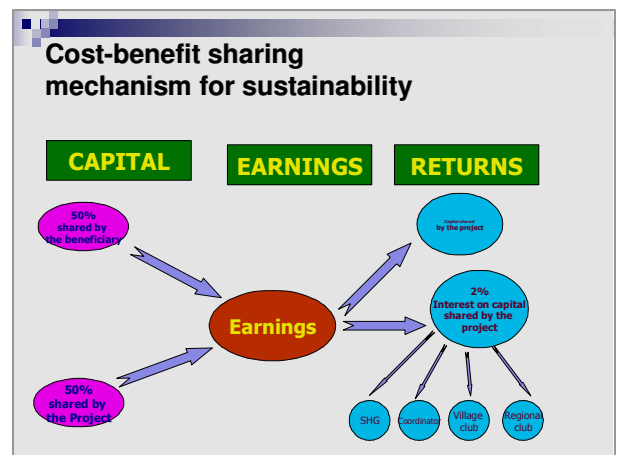
1. Successful involvement of stakeholders
2. Successful acceptance of cost benefit sharing system leading to sustainability
3. Capacity building of local boys & girls
4. Better utilisation of local resources
5. Integrated farming system (7 model farms)
6. Conservation of estuarine and local fishes



7. Conservation of local vegetables (more than 12 traditional types in kitchen gardens)
8. Biodiversity register preparation
9. Livelihood improvement through proper intervention (poultry, goatary, fishery etc)
10. Semi-organic agriculture (efficient production & use of organic input)
11. Organic betel vine yard
12. Organic SRI production (system of rice intensification) — networking with ‘SRI Google’ Group
13. Promotion of small enterprises
14. Positive Links with NABARD & WWF-Eastern region
15. Developing farmers’ groups and linkages
16. Neem Nursery, unique for the area was established for the first time

#### SUSTAINABILITY INDICATORS:

- **Cost-Benefit Sharing System:** Establishing strong cost sharing & benefit sharing mechanism for most of the activities for the shake of sustainability.
- Achievements are innovative
- Capacity of the community members including coordinators developed to continue similar activities
- Links with other potential organization established (NABARD, WWF, Community Development Programme of Gnan Chandra Ghosh Polytechnic, West Bengal Pollution Control Board, local Banks and other Govt. line Departments)
- Replication of the activities is possible (already oranisations and groups from other AILA affected parts of Sagar Island and Patharpratima are convinced with our system of approach)



## FUTURE PLAN

- Activities are to be continued in the same villages involving new Groups in addition to earlier groups for the **successful rolling up of the fund already accumulated** during the present SGP period.
- Capacity building programmes for the youths and youngsters will be given top most importance. If they are properly motivated and trained can serve the purpose with justice. It is observed that the young students from the schools, involved in their early classes (8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> onwards) are good assets for quick achievement of the present project goals, at least in part.
- Conservation of estuarine fishes, juveniles of which are being lost during prawn seed collection.
- Re-excavation and reshaping of silted village ponds for rain water harvesting and conservation of fresh water fishes.
- Promotion of backyard poultry production in sustaining and enhancing poor people's livelihood.
- Training to prepare low cost solar lantern and biomass based energy production.
- Environmental education centers are proving to be a necessity and can be developed in schools which already have developed good rapport with PUPA during the present SGP. Schools are better places for propagating local community ownership through institutional building as per the objectives of the present SGP.
- Farmers getting attracted after the benefits reaped by SHGs. More Farmers clubs will be formed for promoting integrated farming with organic input.
- The soul winning lots who are responsible for the success of the present project are none other than the illiterate women folk. Therefore, they will be involved in a large way.
- More attention in using wealth ranking and social mapping methods to identify the poorest.
- Planning now **to incorporate marketing as an activity** since production and marketing are complementary to each other.