

The Rufford Small Grants Foundation

Final Report

Congratulations on the completion of your project that was supported by The Rufford Small Grants Foundation.

We ask all grant recipients to complete a Final Report Form that helps us to gauge the success of our grant giving. The Final Report must be sent in **word format** and not PDF format or any other format. We understand that projects often do not follow the predicted course but knowledge of your experiences is valuable to us and others who may be undertaking similar work. Please be as honest as you can in answering the questions – remember that negative experiences are just as valuable as positive ones if they help others to learn from them.

Please complete the form in English and be as clear and concise as you can. Please note that the information may be edited for clarity. We will ask for further information if required. If you have any other materials produced by the project, particularly a few relevant photographs please send these to us separately.

Please submit your final report to jane@rufford.org.

Thank you for your help.

Josh Cole, Grants Director

Grant Recipient Details	
Your name	Nilesh Kamalkishor Heda
Project title	Conservation of Riverine Resources through People's Participation
RSG reference	1046-C
Reporting period	1 st November 2012 to 30 November 2013
Amount of grant	£12,000
Your email address	nilheda@gmail.com
Date of this report	5 th December 2013.

1. Please indicate the level of achievement of the project's original objectives and include any relevant comments on factors affecting this.

Objective	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Fully achieved	Comments
1) Knowledge: To foster knowledge based eco-restoration and conservation planning by encouraging participatory and holistic approach-based river and village studies.			✓	Eco-restoration planning of three streams and two villages has been performed in participatory manner. Also helped government departments in the planning of forest and lake rejuvenation programme.
2) Work: To do eco-restoration (soil and water conservation, plantation etc) work in the four river basins.		✓		We have performed eco-restoration work at three streams and two water bodies and at agriculture field of one village. We have given more emphasis on only one river basin.
3) Fishes: To foster fish conservation by river conservation, culture of indigenous fishes, lowering culture of invasive alien fishes and by establishing chain of freshwater protected areas.		✓		Eco-restoration at three streams and establishment of one fresh water protected area on Bhivari village stream and identification of three fishermen's groups to foster culture of local species has been done during project period. Awareness has been created regarding invasive alien species of freshwater fishes.
4) Livelihood: To generate sustainable livelihood for local natural resource dependent people through eco-restoration (labour work), fish culture (of indigenous fishes), sustainable agriculture, increasing local basic infrastructure (ground water augmentation, soil and water conservation, farm roads etc) and increase in ecosystem goods and services (fuel wood, fodder, timber etc).			✓	Worked for the registration of Producer company of local farmers and initiated registration of co-operative society of fishermen for livelihood generation. Through producer company, local people will engage in the value addition and marketing of agriculture goods and company will also engage in the eco-restoration activities.

5) Advocacy: To do work for the policy level changes in working pattern of MNREGA and other acts and policies of government related to river conservation.		✓		Worked for the policy level impact on the working of MNREGA. Also created impact in the district level planning comity as I am ex-officio member in vigilance and monitoring comity.
6) Institutions: To rejuvenate traditional decision making and conflict resolution systems in the villages situated in river basins. Involve villagers in the riverine resource conservation while doing their own development. Through systematic capacity building, equip them to manage their own natural resources.			✓	Established 10 farmer's clubs, one youth organisation and one producer's company. 2 Fellows has been chosen for the Paul Hymen Foundation, UK for capacity building and leadership development. Nurtured motivated team of the volunteers.
7) Education: To devise River Study Course (RSC) and to its popularisation among youths; so that new generation will be sensible and knowledgeable about their riverine resources.	✓			All though data has been collected to devise the River Study Course (RSC) however due to the shift of project attention more on eco-restoration and company formation this objective has reserved for next project phase.
8) Agriculture: To lower the impact of high input agriculture on rivers by promoting sustainable low input agriculture.			✓	Through established farmer's club this objective has been successfully completed. Many farmers of five villages are engaged in low input poly culture sustainable agriculture practices.
9) Awareness: To spread awareness among local people regarding various issues related to river and its conservation, acts and policies of government regarding natural resources and right of local people.			✓	Through various workshops, river march, newspaper articles and news, television interview, pamphlets, banners these objectives completed successfully.

10) Capacity building: Capacity building of local people, government officers, policy makers, schoolteachers and students.			✓	
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2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).

Difficulty regarding fund transfer from RSGF to the account of SAMVARDHAN: First difficulty arisen at the beginning of the project, when project. Government of India has enacted “Foreign Currency Regulation Act, 2011”. According to this act every organisation has to register for the prior permission or for FCRA registration number. However, I have registered SAMVARDHAN for the FCRA prior permission. After about 3 months I have received the permission to take funding in SAMVARDHAN account.

Failure by government department to provide timely wages to labourer and its impact on eco-restoration work: On the project implementation level there was important difficulty arises by the problem in the government system, in the wage disbursement mechanism of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guaranty Act 2005 (MGNREGA) implementation. We are using potential of MGNREGA for the eco-restoration. The act stipulated guaranteed wage employment to rural poor through eco-restoration activities. For 5 years, we are facilitating eco-restoration work in Bembla River basins, however, in spite of good quality work people has not received their wage payment even after 3 months. Considering this we have wrote to Minister of Rural Development, central secretary (MGNREGA), state secretary and so on. Considering this dependency of funding on government schemes we are moving our focus on other possible funding sources like private funding, company formation and so on. This year public appeal has been made for the financial contribution to eco-restoration activities. Satisfactory response has been received from the people.

Natural calamities: This year project area received 200% more rainfall than normal. There was havoc in the area due to intense rain this hampers progress of the project for some time.

3. Briefly describe the three most important outcomes of your project.

(1) Eco-restoration of streams: We did complete eco-restoration of three streams (Details shown in the detailed project report).

- Stream 1: First order stream located near Wapti – Kupti village is about 3 km long. On this stream there is small ancient dam. We have de-silted the stream and 286 trolleys of highly fertile silt has been removed and provided to local farmers.
- Stream 2: It is situated near Aurangpur village and is about 2 km long. We did detailed survey and deepening of this stream has performed. Along with stream eco-restoration farm bunding has also done.

- Stream 3: Tulsi stream (3 km long) is situated near Bhivari village and it was completely degraded. We have de-silted it using financial support provided by Ms. Mamta Chhangani.
- Tanks at Bambarda village. Two tanks are situated at Bambarda village completely silted. Through people's participation we have de-silted the tanks. This year, local people are doing fish culture in the tanks.

The immediate impact of this is on ground water augmentation and increase in the fertility of agriculture land.

(2) Steps taken towards making river conservation work sustainable: A historical step to make river conservation project sustainable has been taken by us. More than 80% geographical area in the basin is occupied by the agriculture land. Due to degrading state of agriculture area it is in turn affecting the health of riverine habitats and ultimately aquatic biodiversity. Bundh-less agriculture giving way to increased siltation, the economical situation of concerned farmers due to various ecological and other reasons is also the matter of concern which in turn affecting on their capacity to repair their own landscape area. Same is true with the fishermen of the area. In this scenario, it is essential to make farmers and fishermen self sufficient economically as well as knowledge wise. We have started a process of formation of farmer, labourers and fishermen's groups. During last few months we have started a process of conversion of these rather informal groups into Producers Company as per company act 2013 of Government of India. The name given to this producer company is GREENZA Producers Company Ltd. The basic aim of the company to apply entrepreneur approaches for the conservation of natural resources, to restore the traditional cropping pattern, to make farmers capable to preserve their agriculture so that the harm to riverine resources will be minimised and so on.

(3) Formation of dedicated, motivated team of youth crusaders to make river conservation work sustainable in future: Most satisfying and rewarding out comes of our conservation work is joining of youths of the area in the holistic river revival work. Youths of many villages joined hands to take conservation work on other level. There also joining of large numbers of groups from the community. The concept of the sustainable development is being popular in the impact area.

4. Briefly describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefitted from the project (if relevant).

At every step of the project implementation, the local communities have been involved. Labours and marginalised farmers of the project area are depending on natural resources and labour work for subsistence. Main source of employment in the area is agriculture work. However, due to lack of irrigation facilities agriculture is largely depend on rain. Thus, there is lack of employment around the year. Generation of sustainable employment through eco-restoration activities for marginalised groups using MGNREGA was one of the important activities of project. Along with this we have started process of the registration of producer's company. Through this company marketing of agriculture goods will be done in the future.

Emphasis of project was to build capacity of people and institutions and to help local leadership to immerge. Knowledge about acts and policies has empowered people. Local systems have been

strengthened so that beyond project period, local people will take care of output and system is becoming self-sustaining.

The local people benefited by three important interventions. One was generation of the livelihood through the implementation of MGNREGA, through making linkages with the various government programs like NABARD, various banks and improvement in the agriculture and rural infra structure.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes. The river restoration work is long term process and needs working on various levels. So far we have created satisfactory impact but considering vast area of river basins and involvement of millions of stakeholders it is essential to work further. In this regard, I am applying for the Rufford completion Grant.

6. How do you plan to share the results of your work with others?

i. Study Groups

There are many mechanisms created over the period for information dissemination in the project area. Our area has grand traditions of Study Groups (*Abhyas Gat*). The study groups are the informal structures comprises interested individuals working in various NGOs. There are regular study group meetings carried out in various part of the country. I am regular participant of these meetings and sharing information in the same.

ii. Articles in Newspapers

I am writing creative articles in local language in news papers. Through these articles the results will be spread among broader audience. The articles can be found at <http://nheda.blogspot.com/>.

iii. Web

We have set up website where we post all the project related information time to time. The URL of the website is www.samvardhan.org.in. We have also created website of the producer company and can be accessed at www.greenza.co.in

There are some face book pages created by me where the information about the project is regularly posted. The URL of these pages are as follows:

- a) <https://www.facebook.com/groups/170407403121040/>
- b) <https://www.facebook.com/Samvardhan2008>
- c) <https://www.facebook.com/greenzaagro>

iv. National Service Scheme

Indian universities launched National Service Scheme (NSS). It is popular programme designed for students to work among rural area. Every year each college set up a camp of 10 days in selected village. I already used the potential of this scheme to disburse the information.

v. Collaboration with National JAL BIRADARI:

National Jal Biradari is joint association of various NGO, nature lover dedicatedly working for the water conservation. The group has been established by Mr Rajendra Singh, Megesese winner. I am closely associated with the group and time to time share results of RSG project with them.

vi. Collaboration with UNDP-SGP programme

Recently UNDP-SGP (<http://www.sgpindia.org/>) provided small planning grant to SAMVARDHAN to extend its activities. The results will be shared with this network.

vii. Collaboration with Paul Hymen Foundation (PHF), UK and CORO, India

Recently SAMVARDHAN becomes partner with the PHF-CORO capacity building programme (<http://www.phf.org.uk>). The results will be shared with this network.

viii. Collaboration National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)

Recently SAMVARDHAN becomes partner with the NABARD'S farmer's club programme (<https://www.nabard.org>). The results will be shared with this network.

7. Timescale: Over what period was the RSG used? How does this compare to the anticipated or actual length of the project?

Grant amount utilized for the period of November 2012 to November 2013. However, the work is continuing since first RSG in 2008.

8. Budget: Please provide a breakdown of budgeted versus actual expenditure and the reasons for any differences. All figures should be in £ sterling, indicating the local exchange rate used.

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Reason
Stipend Project Director (1)	2143	2143	0	
Stipend Project Assistant (1)	429	429	0	
Field Assistance (1)	276	276	0	
Travel (12 Months)	2143	2425	282	Started process of registration of producer company of local people, thus needed more follow up at state capital city (Mumbai).
Office Rent (12 Months)	357	357	0	
CONSUMIABLES (12 Months)	357	416	59	
PRINTING of Capacity building materials	595	610	15	
Honorarium	298	370	72	
Hiring fisherman for fish sampling	288	296	8	
Capacity building Workshops.	1403	1539	136	
Policy level Impact: Visit to Ministry 1) Delhi 2) Mumbai	476	476	0	

Village eco-restoration planning	536	494	-42	
River March	476	444	-32	
Plantation of 40000 plants in the river basin.	595	512	-83	
Installation of boards at 2 Fresh Water Protected area	90	120	30	
Leasing out water body for the culture of local species of fishes.	120	0	-120	
Consultation regarding development of river study syllabus	357	0	-357	Due to shift of project attention more on eco-restoration and company formation this objective has reserved for next project phase.
Capacity building workshop of the River Study Course fellows.	270	0	-270	Due to shift of project attention more on eco-restoration and company formation this objective has reserved for next project phase.
Exposure visit of people of selected 25 villages.	330	700	370	More emphasis provided on the team building for the future sustainability of project. Thus, many exposure visits has been arranged.
Financial assistance to river conservation society.	224	224	0	
Impact assessment	179	198	19	
Auditing	58	63	5	
Interest earned	93		-93	
	12093	12093	0	

9. Looking ahead, what do you feel are the important next steps?

During last three Rufford Small Grants, lot of conservation inputs gained and an impact on vast geographical area has been made. In coming future, it is essential to continue this work further as still there are lots of social and technical issues we have to deal with. In addition, I am increasingly thinking that, now project should invest more resources in the enterprises of local people to fetch them out of poverty, education, policy level issues and creating way for the knowledge-based management of the natural resources. Another arena of the intervention is agriculture land as it is estimated that agriculture is an important occupation in the area seriously impacting on the riverine

resources. Keeping this in mind, in coming future, following 11 step programme will be implemented in the whole Bembla river basin and other associated river basins of the area.

- i. **Livelihood generation while doing effective conservation work:** Sensitising local administration and local people for more river conservation work through MGNREGA. To make local farmer capable of doing eco-restoration in their own field.
- ii. **Livelihood generation and conservation of local Fish fauna:** Culture of the indigenous species of fishes through local participatory fish culture groups. Capacity building of the people regarding scientific fish culture.
- iii. **Creation of the river study syllabus for the future generation:** The main aim of this educational intervention is to train village youth, NGO workers and students to understand various components of riverine ecosystems and to equip them for scientific conservation planning. The health of riverine habitats is depending on the basin area, any disturbances in the basin area seriously affect river and aquatic biodiversity on one hand and livelihood of local people on other hand. Last few decades witnessed widespread degradation in the river basin area affecting health of riverine habitats. Degradation of river is not an isolated problem rather it is linked with various interlinked social and ecological problems. The training modules will be designed considering holistic ecosystem approach where anthropological, ecological, economical, approaches will be considered. Students scientifically will study riverine habitats of their vicinity and with local people come up with its planning and through acts like MGNREGA afore mentioned planning will be implemented on ground.
- iv. **Agriculture:** It was learned that; agriculture land is one of the important components in the river health and farmers of the area are important actors in the river conservation. All river basins of the area constitute about 80 % land area under agriculture setup. Considering the effectiveness of agriculture intervention to maintain the sustainability of river we have started agriculture intervention. In this regards we have to work on four fundamental objectives: 1) Ameliorate the present situation of the agriculture like halting siltation, lowering down use of the chemical pesticides and fertilizers, providing basic infrastructure to agriculture like irrigation facility, farm roads, bundings, fencing, warehouse etc.; 2) Changing crop pattern like promoting poly-culture so that the agriculture system becomes more profitable; 3) Fostering scientific, organic, low cost agriculture; and 4) Creating supporting occupational endeavour for the agriculture, through entrepreneur approaches like producer's company.
- v. **Strengthening Community Structures:** Strengthening previously established community structures and creation of the new in Adan, Bembla, Uma, Arunavati and other river basins.
- vi. **Deploying student's power:** Deploying student's power for data collection and awareness generation will be essential step in the future. Creation of the student's groups in schools and colleges will also be done.
- vii. **Popular material:** Creation of the popular material on the relevant government resolutions, acts, rules for the help of local people. Creation of the material on the wetland conservation issues for common man and creation of the material on the scientific fish culture and sustainable agriculture.
- viii. **Fish and habitat inventorying:** More fish fauna inventorying events to assess fish fauna of all river basins of this area.

- ix. **Plantation in Bembla River Basin:** Plants of locally available species will be planted along rivers of this area in next RSG phase.
- x. **Impacting on policy:** There is urgent need to do active intervention and provide inputs in the various existing acts and Government resolution. In this regard there is needed to take help from the court and need to file Public Interest Litigation (PIL) wherever necessary.
- xi. **Uniting women for conservation:** Lack of extensive participation of women in our conservation work is an important lacuna. In coming future, this lacuna will be removed by improving women's participation.

10. Did you use the RSGF logo in any materials produced in relation to this project? Did the RSGF receive any publicity during the course of your work?

Yes. At all capacity building programmes on main banner RSG logo has been printed. On every popular material RSG logo printed. On SAMVARDHAN website, RSGF logo under support category mentioned.

11. Any other comments?

When we apply ecosystem approach to the conservation work it needs consistency in the work. Such consistency maintained by the continuous supply of the resources for some time until and unless system becomes self sustaining. Thus, to maintain the tempo of our work financial resources are expected in coming future as soon as possible.