

## Project Update: March 2015

During Rufford Foundation support, we have established, nurtured and developed two important institutions viz. Samvardhan and Greenza Producer Company. Samvardhan, a NGO that have dedicated its work for the holistic ecosystem approach based wetland resource conservation. Greenza Producer Company a producer company of local farmers dedicated for the livelihood generation through market intervention. The work of Samvardhan and direction of Greenza are both complimentary and essential part of our ecosystem approach program.

Brief chronological glimpses from the December 2014 to March 2015 are as follows.

1. 15<sup>th</sup> December 2014. **Formal inauguration and starting of organic fertilizer plant:** The land use pattern in Bembla river basin is largely agriculture. The three important inputs to the farming systems viz. seeds, fertilizers and pesticides are brought from the outer sources and largely genetically modified and chemical in nature. In this scenario to make available organic fertiliser from locally available resources we have with the help of We Systems, a company dedicated for the microbial culture and experts in organic fertilizer production established 15-ton capacity organic fertiliser production plant.
2. 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2015. **Presentation at Global Conference on Inland Fisheries, Rome, Italy:** From 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> February I presented at Global Conference on Inland Fisheries jointly arranged by Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations and Michigan State University, USA at FAO headquarters in Rome. Dr Heda's presentation was part of the conference theme "Drivers and Synergies" which focused on the balance between societal gain and environmental benefit. The abstract for his paper states: *"there is serious need to link employment generation of local people, rejuvenation of local decision-making and conflict resolution systems, and conservation."* The presentation looked at how the work of Samvardhan has been responding to the environmental crisis through developing employment opportunities. The work shows that the valuable knowledge of local communities can be used to achieve regional and national goals, and that providing a livelihood for rural people to restore ecosystems and fisheries achieves both short-term and long-term benefits.
3. 7<sup>th</sup> January 2015. **One-day brain storming and starting of the process of positive change with the widows of farmers at POHA (including farmer's widows):** Single women in the farming system are one of the most oppressed classes of the society. We have started process of positive intervention with about 80 single women of the village. The positive intervention mainly involves formation of women's organization, involving them in river conservation and livelihood generation.
4. **Two fellows selected for Paul Hymen Foundation, UK and CORO process of institutional capacity building:** SAMVARDHAN is partner with CORO and Paul Hymen foundation supported process of institutional capacity building. In this process, each year two grassroot fellows selected for the leadership capacity building. This year, Ms.

Vrushali Bavane and Ms. Punam Darvekar of SAMVARDHAN has been selected for the same.

5. **Strengthening Producer Company.** The farmer's producer company has been strengthened by doing its strategic planning, internal management, audit etc.
6. **Starting of the process of cooperative registration of fishermen:** Process of registration of cooperative of fishermen of three villages has been started.
7. 4<sup>th</sup> January 2015. **Exposure visit of local people:** Arranged exposure visit of 24 selected farmers to Buldhana district.
8. 11<sup>th</sup> January 2015. **One-day workshop with local Farmers.** This year there is severe drought in entire river basin. To discuss about drought and possible adaptive measures one day workshop of local farmers arranged at Judava Hanuman, Karanja.
9. 21<sup>st</sup> December 2014. **One day brainstorming with directors of Greenza.** At Aamkheda. To decide the future strategies of Greenza, brainstorming of the directors has been arranged at farm house at Aamkheda. The brainstorming was an excellent opportunity for the mutual discussion, conflict resolution, and future planning.
10. 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014. Participated in one day discussion arranged by Manoday NGO with the women and government officers to discuss various problems.
11. 8<sup>th</sup> December 2014. One-day fieldwork and discussion with fishermen of Manora Taluka regarding various issues of fishing system and to explore the possibility of future work.
12. 20<sup>th</sup> -22<sup>nd</sup> February 2015. **Three-day study group brain storming. Shodh Abhyas Gat.** Entire SAMVARDHAN team participated in the brain storming arranged by SAMVEDANA. The participation in the discussion helped us to look in the past and to plan for the future.
13. 23<sup>th</sup> February 2015. **One-day capacity building workshop of local farmers:** In association with National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) regarding incorporation of marketing principles in the farming system. 120 farmers from the entire Bembla river basin participated in the programme. The resource person for the programme includes CS Ram Thakkar and CA Ashish Heda along with district chief of the NABARD Dr, Pradip Parhate.
14. March 2015 First Week. **Women's SHG movement.** Women's Self Help Group Movement is an effective way to make positive changes in the women's empowerment and financial security. There are already hundreds of SHGs established in the area by various agencies. SAMVARDHAN team member have initiated process of dialogue for the positive intervention.

15. 1<sup>st</sup> March 2015. **Discussion meeting with the Single Women Association at Samvardhan office.** To decide the strategy of establishment of the Single Women Association in Uma river basin 1-day brainstorming meeting has been arranged at Samvardhan office and steps of organization foundation has been decided.
16. 6<sup>th</sup> March 2015 onward. **Initiation of JAN MAN JODO ABHIYAN (Join people and mind movement):** Bembla river basin in Karanja block of Washim district comprises 67 villages. To unite the people of this vast area, to understand their various issues, status of present drought a movement to visit each village and dialogue with the villagers has been arranged.
17. 10<sup>th</sup> March 2015. **One-day discussion with women of POHA village:** One-day programme has been arranged with the women's of POHA village regarding eco-restoration of UMA river flows adjacent to village. River UMA part of Tapi river basin originated in Washim district. The river is heavily silted and there is urgent need to de-silt it. The women of the village are taking active part in the river conservation.
18. 5<sup>th</sup> January 2015. One-day field work and discussion with team members and local people has been arranged at Samvardhan Field Station, Ladegaon. Mr. Jitesh Yona from UNDP-CEE SGP has been participated in the discussion and field visit.
19. 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> February 2015. Attended 2 days brainstorming discussion organised by CORO regarding organizational capacity building.
20. 20<sup>th</sup> March 2015. Team members visited SAHYADRI Industries and We systems, Pune to study future de-centralized poultry and organic manure production linkages.
21. 26<sup>th</sup> March 2015. Invited for the talk in awareness generation among children at Kasola village school.
22. 24<sup>th</sup> March 2015. One-day brainstorming meeting arranged at Diksha Bhumi, Nagpur.
23. 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015. Attended 1-day evaluation discussion arranged at Nagpur by CORO-PHF.
24. Rotary India program is providing financial support to the eco-restoration activities in the Bembla river basin. In first phase, they have committed to provide 12.32 Lakh (£13381) for this work. Two first order streams of Bembla River each with 1 km length two traditional tanks will be restored in this grant.



Meeting with the Youths of Bambarda village regarding holistic village development.



Discussion with the team of Naman Seva Samiti, Athner, MP, regarding Disability and Organic agriculture.



Establishment of the farmers club at Belkhed village.



Brainstorming discussion with Dr. Ashish Polkade regarding setting up of organic fertilizer initiative.



Field visit with Dr. Ashish Polkade regarding setting up of organic fertilizer initiative.