

Project Update: November 2014

The riverine resource conservation work started in 2008 is taking various dimensions and “ecosystem approach” considered during work is now manifesting itself on grassroots. Samvardhan started its work from the passion of the river and fish conservation and livelihood of fishermen in Western Vidarbha region. During our initial days of study and understanding the problems of rivers and associated people, we have come to an important conclusion that, the river, its associated biodiversity, associated people and issues associated with these components are interlinked with whole basin area. The land use pattern of the rivers of our region is largely agriculture dominated and all the processes related with agriculture are directly impinged on the river. The high input chemical agriculture, changing cropping pattern, wide spread soil erosion and consequently filling of the river pools by silt and its impact on people and river are all interlinked components. Thus, river health and its conservation are inseparably linked with the wellbeing of the basin area and people receding there.

Brief chronological glimpses from the June 2014 are as follows.

- 1. Seed distribution and discussion workshop, Ladegaon, 23rd June 2014.** In association with Apulki, a nonprofit from Pune, arranged seed distribution and discussion workshop at Samvardhan Field station, Ladegaon.
- 2. Exposure visit, Athner, Madhya Pradesh, 26th June 2014.** Samvardhan team of five people visited Naman Seva samiti working area to understand organic agriculture project run by the organization. Team members Nilesh Heda, Arvind Kankirad, Pradip Yevtikar, Ganesh Sawarkar and Dnyaneshwar Dhekade participated in the exposure visit.
- 3. Discussion at CORO, Mumbai and Greenza official work, Mumbai, 30th June 2014.** Coro organised 2 days discussion regarding future CORO-PHF process at Mumbai. Also during this visit strengthen many official work regarding Greenza.
- 4. Participation in 1-day brainstorming regarding rural livelihood arranged by NABARD, Pune, 6th July 2014.** Team member Dr. Nilesh Heda and Arvind Kankirad participated and presented on the issue of “River to Business” in 1-day brainstorming discussion arranged by National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD).
- 5. Field visit by Project Coordinator Mr Jitesh Yona, UNDP, CEE SGP, 10th July 2014.** UNDP CEE SGP programme provides planning grant support to Samvardhan. In this regards, programme coordinator Mr Jitesh Yona visited Samvardhan project area and discussed various issues regarding riverine resource conservation.
- 6. Farming economics, August 2014.** Economic assessment of small and marginal farmers of our area has been done by Samvardhan team.
7. Regular meetings and saving by established farmers club at 10 villages are on-going.
- 8. Village council meeting (GRAMSABHA), 23rd August 2014.** Gramsabha has been arranged at Bambarda village on the issues of holistic village development.
- 9. Capacity building visit by team members, Dhule, 19th to 23rd September 2014.** Team member Nilesh Heda and Arvind Kankirad has been invited for the capacity building of the members of Biodiversity Management Comities (BMCs) in Dhule district.

- 10. Attended MACP 1-day workshop for producer organization, Pune, 11th September 2014.** Team members Nilesh Heda and Dnyaneshwar Dhekade attended 1-day brainstorming organised by Maharashtra Agriculture Competitiveness Project (MACP) of Government of India regarding development of the producer organisation.
- 11. Team member appointed as honorary ATMA member.** Team member Arvind Kankirad has been selected as honorary member of district level Agriculture Technology Management Agency (ATMA) of Department of Agriculture, Government of India.
- 12. Capacity building of the local farmers regarding rational use of pesticides and chemical fertilisers.** Cotton is one of the important and widely spread crops in Bembla river basin. However, unwise use of pesticides and chemical fertilisers showing its bad effects on the ecology of the river basin and economics of the people. Team members Arvind Kankirad has sensitised and provided technical assistance to people about the cotton crop management.
- 13. 100-bird poultry unit establishment.** For the economic upliftment of local farmers it is utmost important to provide farm based alternative livelihood opportunities. In this regards, team member Arvind Kankirad has innovatively developed a 100-bird poultry farm unit for rural masses. A successful demonstration has been completed and it is awaiting field trial.
- 14. Greenza company meeting.** 1-day brainstorming has been arranged at Karanja with all the directors of Greenza regarding business plan, augmenting peoples' participation and value system adopted by the producer organisation.
- 15. CS and auditor appointment for Greenza.** CS Ram Thakkar Associates and Auditor CA. Ashish Heda have been appointed for Greenza producer company.
- 16. Fishermen empowerment process and institutionalisation, 4th November 2014.** A discussion meeting and field visit with fishermen of three villages arranged at Shirsoli in Karanja block. A process of registration of fishermen's co-operative society begins.
- 17. Concept note submission under PPIAD of NABARD.** Bembla river basin in Karanja block constitutes 80 villages. NABARD provides assistance for the holistic development of the village area and natural resources involved. NABARD asked Samvardhan to submit concept note for the same under its Pilot Project for Integrated Area Development (PPIAD) programme. The same has been submitted in November 2014.
- 18. Submission of DPR for Greenza to NABARD under PODF.** Greenza producer company developed a business plan of Decentralized Poultry Development in Bembla river basin and submitted lone proposal to NABARD in November 2014.
- 19. Towards organisational sustainability, 13th and 14th November 2014.** Samvardhan is a partner in the organisational capacity building process initiated by CORO, Mumbai in collaboration with Paul Hyman Foundation, UK. The main objective of the entire process is to strengthen the process of organisational capacity building of Samvardhan and to nurture the process of the capacity building of the grassroot leaders involved in the process of riverine resource conservation. In this regard 2-day brainstorming has been organised at Nagpur.
- 20. Organic fertilizer mission, 21st November 2014.** One-day workshop with local farmers has been arranged at Ladegaon village to explore the possibilities of organic fertiliser production and to devise the process. Dr Ashish Polkade from National Center for Cell

Science, Pune has been main consultant who is helping to initiate and strengthen the process. The land use pattern of Bembla river is largely agriculture, the area witnessed steep increase in the use of chemical fertilisers, which is showing its bad effects on the ecology, as well as economics of the farming system. The unavailability of the good quality organic manure is main constraints for the local farmers. During day-long brainstorming and understanding the scientific process of the manure production, 11 farmers has been ready to prepare organic manure on cooperative basis under the common platform of Greenza Producer Company Ltd. Initially local farmers have decided to set up a centralised plant with capacity 100 tons per month and the work of collection of raw material started. All the raw material collected by the local farmers.

- 21. Selection of the conference paper for “Global Conference on Inland Fisheries” Rome, Italy.** Scientific paper written on the River Conservation Process has been selected by Global Conference on Inland Fisheries to be organised by Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations and Michigan State University. The conference will be held from 26th to 28th January 2015 at FAO headquarters, Rome, Italy. The organisers are providing airfare and accommodation cost to Nilesh Heda to attend the same.
- 22. Setting up of field and research centre.** The basin research is an integral part of our initiative. To foster research on ground, a formal field station and research centre has been set up at the farmhouse of one of the team members Pawan Mishra. The field station is an excellent demonstration point for polyculture, organic agriculture, and watershed management in the field and so on.
- 23. Joining hand in hand with rural youth.** At Bambarda village a youth group has been established along with the SHG of the same. The village youths are actively taking part in the holistic village development.

Photos



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

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





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

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



Establishment of the farmers club at Belkhed village.