

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. 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. 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	Mohammed Alamgir
Project title	Strengthening Community Based Biodiversity Conservation in the Ethnic Community of Bangladesh
RSG reference	11460-1
Reporting period	April 2012 to April 2013
Amount of grant	£5890
Your email address	alamgirmds@gmail.com
Date of this report	24 April 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
Trend and current status of biodiversity in Village Common Forests (VCF)			Yes	Biodiversity survey has been conducted in two VCFs of two different ethnic communities. Collected data were analysed, representing species diversity and composition, regeneration status, habitat structure, habitat fragmentation and habitat connectivity. Plants were identified directly in the field by local people and botanist.
Indigenous management strategies in VCF			Yes	Community survey with a semi-structured questionnaire has been conducted in both VCFs. Group discussion, key informant surveys in each community has also been conducted. Data were analysed.
The socio-economic condition of indigenous community and their dependency on VCF			Yes	
Perception of indigenous community to biodiversity conservation			Yes	
The reasons of biodiversity depletion in VCF			Yes	
Awareness creation to strengthen biodiversity conservation in VCF			Yes	Community people were actively participated.

2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).

Completing field work according to the provided schedule was very much challenging due to unexpected weather conditions last year in the study area and very remote location of the study area. Therefore we had to spend 2 weeks more in the field work than expected.

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

- We explored the biodiversity in VCF, which was rarely present in literature for conservation study. The most common tree species found in VCF are: *Schima wallichii* (Kanak), *Duabanga grandiflora* (Bandarhola), and *Stereospermum personatum* (Dharmara). The tree species

which are not available now, although previously available in VCF are: *Bixa orellana* (Latkon), *Anisoptera scaphula* (Boilam), *Vitex peduncularia* (Goda) and *Podocarpus nerifolia* (Banspata) etc. The commonly found wildlife are: *Macaca mulatta* (monkey), *Gallus gallus* (bon morgi), *Sus scrofa* (wild boar) and *Felis chaus* (jungle cat). The biodiversity condition in VCF is better than many other forests in Bangladesh and very rich in indigenous species however, biodiversity is depleting with time. The VCFs are also very rich in regeneration and medicinal plants. Medicinal plants are traditionally used by the community people. Therefore conservation of VCF will save many biodiversity of Bangladesh from extinction.

- Indigenous management strategies of VCFs: VCFs have been managed by community people traditionally for more than 100 years. The land is under the total control of a headman (traditional leader). Community people have the forest product use right. Community people collect forest products based on their necessity. They also sell forest products for community benefit. There are seven members executive committee consisted of five male and two female members. They have neither a written forest management plan nor a formal guideline while everything is managed following traditional and customary rules. But rich in biodiversity and closely sustainable in management comparing with other forests of Bangladesh. Community people always protect natural regeneration however nowadays are more interested in monoculture. Most of the community people are illiterate and engaged with tree farming. Therefore, it is depicted that community forestry would be a better option for sustainable biodiversity conservation in developing and highly populated countries like Bangladesh.
- Now community people are more aware to conserve biodiversity after this project. Now they know some of their activities are harmful for biodiversity conservation. These are: shifting cultivation, overexploitation, habitat destruction and unsustainable harvesting. Shifting cultivation emerged as a threat for biodiversity conservation in some part of VCF. Lack of specified management rule to each member and lack of monitoring activities is also responsible for biodiversity loss from VCF. They know some species already lost and some are at the end line. Through this project they also knew that biodiversity conservation can perform multifunction for the community through ecosystem, livelihood, watershed and aesthetics. Our campaign for biodiversity conservation reached to the most of the member of the community and headman (traditional leader). Now community people are very much interested to plant endangered or rare species in VCF. We will also supply our findings to the respective forest department and NGOs working in the study area to support community regarding biodiversity conservation in VCF.

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

There are two types of involvement of communities in this project. Firstly, they participated in semi-structured interviews, group discussion and key informant survey. In this process, their perception towards biodiversity conservation and indigenous management in VCF has been elucidated. Community people also worked into biodiversity surveys. Secondly, we arranged a meeting with some experts and headman (traditional leader) and informed him about the benefit of biodiversity conservation and tasks need to be stopped and tasks need to be done for biodiversity conservation in VCF. In rally community people participated with posters containing simple information about available biodiversity and conservation benefits for the community. Community peoples also

participated into group meetings and seminar where pictorial presentation of available biodiversity and their conservation benefits has been presented.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes, I have a plan to continue this work particularly from land use change and climate change perspective and also to support community people to plant and conserve endangered and rare species.

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

Manuscripts will be submitted to a peer reviewed journal. The findings will also be shared in national and international conferences. The findings will also be shared with forest department who are the responsible body to look after VCF and with other NGOs working in the study area.

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

The RSG was used from April 2012 to April 2013 (12 months) as targeted although schedule was adjusted mainly due to weather conditions.

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	Comments
Community survey	900	780	120	We have finished community survey quicker than expected but used some fund for local travel. Used extra amount for group discussion
Group discussion	360	480	-120	Extra amount was needed for local travel, used from community survey
Key informant survey	60	60		
Biodiversity survey	1000	1000		We had to pay a botanist who went to the field for identification purposes.
Special consultation program with community headman	230	230		
Biodiversity conservation campaign	720	800	-80	Extra amount needed for printed materials and local travel
Seminar with community people	810	780	30	This extra amount used for biodiversity conservation campaign
Conservation education	1200	1275	-75	Extra amount was needed for printed materials and local travel
Salary for principal investigator	250	125	125	This extra amount was needed for biodiversity conservation campaign

				and conservation education
Salary for team members	360	360		
TOTAL	£5890	£5890		

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

As a very few research has been conducted in VCF, the most important next step is to disseminate the findings of the present study to the scientific community and policy maker.

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, I used RSGF logo in all the printed materials (leaflets, posters, billboard etc.) during community awareness programme. I will acknowledge the funding from RSGF in the publication from present study. I will also use RSGF logo in the presentations of the findings of present study in the national and international conference.

11. Any other comments?

I would like to thank The Rufford Small Grants Foundation to provide me this opportunity of research in the remote indigenous community and also to build up my research depth and strength. I think that it is a praiseworthy program for sustainable biodiversity conservation more importantly in developing countries.