

PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

COMMUNITY CONSERVATION OF MANGROVE WETLANDS IN ALLUR MANDAL THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION, EMPOWERMENT AND THE FACILITATION OF A CENTRAL MANGROVE RESOURCE CENTRE.

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1.0. INTRODUCTION: -

Rural Reconstruction Society is a grass roots environmental conservation organisation working in the coastal areas of Nellore District in Andhra Pradesh, South India. The mangrove conservation project has been started in the month of January 2005 in Allur Mandal of Nellore District immediately after the Tsunami which has destroyed the mangroves to a considerable extent. But it has been well established and documented this time that where ever mangroves were present in abundance the impact of the tidal wave was minimal. The incidental timing of the project has helped in creating public concern regarding the depletion of the mangroves and garnering wide scale support for the cause.

2.0. CONSERVATION ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT PLAN: -

With the help of the Project Associates a detailed inventory of mangroves in the area has been taken. PRA exercises have been conducted to assess the various uses of mangroves and the by products, the biotic pressure on the mangrove resources, impact assessment concerning the tsunami damage, etc. The information secured has been compiled, correlated and interpreted to form a base line for future conservation activities. With the help of the local communities and other NGOs a comprehensive conservation plan has been evolved through this input.

3.0. ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION TO COMMUNITIES: -

Routine environmental education meetings have been conducted in the target villages on a monthly basis. The environmental education has been imparted to the communities through formal informative lectures and cultural media to enhance their motivation to conserve

the fragile eco system. The significance of the mangroves in buffering the natural calamities and also in conserving the marine resources for sustainable harvesting has been highlighted.

4.0. INFORMATION, EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION INPUTS:

Memorable and motivating messages have been displayed at vantage points concerning the significance of mangroves through wall writings, wall posters. Educational materials have been distributed through hand outs, pamphlets, etc. Cultural programmes have been conducted in the mangrove resource dependent villages with the focus on reducing biotic pressure and triggering pro active conservation behaviour among the target groups. A mangrove resource centre has been facilitated for the target groups to view the conservation models and gain knowledge.

5.0. FORMATION OF MANGROVE CONSERVATION COMMITTEES: -

10 Mangrove Conservation Committees, each comprising of 6 members, drawn from the formal and traditional leaderships, have been formed in all of the target villages. The Mangrove Conservation Committees have been equipped to conserve the neighbouring mangrove habitats through social sanctions, cultural mechanisms, community education, etc.

6.0. TRAINING TO MANGROVE CONSERVATION COMMITTEES: -

The Mangrove Conservation Committees have been trained in various aspects of conservation at the local level and the reduction of biotic pressure. The MCCS have been trained in organisational, leadership and problem solving skills. They have also been imparted knowledge in the conservation practices concerning mangrove eco systems. The MCCs are highly motivated units now and are conserving the mangrove habitats from biotic pressure through continuing environmental education and the imposition of social sanctions on violators.

1.0. FEDERATION OF MANGROVE CONSERVATION COMMITTEES: -

The Mangrove Conservation Committees have been federated at the apex / project level with a view to enhance their lobbying and advocacy capacities for conserving the mangrove habitats at the project level.

8.0. TRAINING TO FEDERATION: -

Six training programmes have been implemented for the Federation of Mangrove Protection Committees within the project period with a view to enhance their advocacy and lobbying skills. The Federation has been formed at a Mandal level and is able to address various issues concerning the depletion of mangroves in the target area.

9.0. ADVOCACY AND LOBBYING: -

The Federation has taken up various issues with the higher authorities and the political lobby concerning mangrove habitat destruction.

- Arresting invasion of shrimp farms, salt pans and sand mining into mangrove areas.
- To strictly demarcate the mangrove areas and protect the habitat.
- Strict implementation of CRZ Act banning all commercial interventions within 500 metres from the coast line.
- Proactive plantation of mangroves by the government.
- To focus on mangroves while planning shelter belts / bio shields.

10.0. PROMOTION OF NON CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES: -

With a view to reduce the pressure on the mangroves for fuel wood, fuel efficient stoves and bio gas stoves have been promoted in the target area with the collaboration of government agencies.

11.0. NURSERY RAISING: -

A mangrove nursery comprising of various local species has been developed. The various species raised are *Avicennia Marina*, *Avicennia Officianilis*, *Rhizophora Mucranota*, *Rhizophora Apiculata*, *Brugeira Cylindrica*, etc.

12.0. MANGROVE PLANTATION: -

20,000 nursery raised saplings of various mangrove species have been planted in the target area and are being conserved by the communities.

13.0. CONCLUSION: -

The communities have been organised and capacitated to conserve the depleting mangroves in an effective manner. The target groups are made aware concerning the significance of this crucial resource and motivated to conserve the mangroves. Various issues concerning mangrove depletion have been addressed. The communities have been imparted the skills and knowledge to conserve and restore the mangrove habitats for their future generations.

Yours Sincerely,

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