

Project Update: December 2009

Following activities were carried out in this quarter:

- Formation of user group committee in two villages.
- Microplan formulation process completed in two more villages.
- Process initiated to get Microplans approved from the General house of Gulai Panchyat and the Forest Department.
- Pre-plantation preparation meeting in five villages.
- Plantation of *Valeriana jatamansi* in five villages.

In this quarter we were able to work with communities till mid-September 2009, after which they keep busy with the harvest of the Kharif (summer) crop, preparation and sowing of Rabi (winter) crops and in collection of fuelwood and fodder for the winter. Considering the hectic schedule of the people we had to postpone the training programmes for community members on establishment of NTFPs nurseries till December 2009.

Meeting on formation of village committee

A joint meeting of Dabhu and Banyot was conducted which was attended by all the 14 families from both villages. This was done to resolve the issue of selection of the plot for NTFP regeneration work between the two villages. As these are neighbouring villages there were some differences on plot selection. In this meeting a joint committee was formed, which will decide on selection of plot area with the consent of all families from both villages.

Final meeting on Finalization of Microplan Formulation

In the first half of August 2009, the microplan formulation exercise was completed in two more villages i.e. Chulhan and Bharoga. Each village has selected a nearby fir forest area for regeneration of NTFPs. As these nearby forest areas are also used for grazing so the issue of protection was important. Both in a focus group meeting and village level meeting it was discussed that *Valeriana jatamansi* is not a browseable species, but it will need initial protection till planted saplings get well-rooted in the soil. It was decided in the meeting to restrict cattle grazing for three months following the plantation. Members volunteered to keep continuous vigil turn by turn and placed a fine of Rs. 10 per cattle in case of violation. A “memorandum of agreement” similar to the one in Pugthala was signed with both villages.

Process initiated to get Microplans approved from the General house and the Forest Department

All three user groups i.e. Pugthla, Chulhan and Bharog, put up their respective microplans before the general house of Gulai Panchyat (legally recognized local self governance unit) and it was unanimously approved. A copy of passed resolution was sent to Forest Range Officer and Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), for their information and approval.

Pre-Plantation Meeting in five villages

Before plantation a planning meeting was conducted in all five villages in which following issues were discussed:

- Method of plantation;
- Payment of labour charges involved in plantation work;

- Arrangement of saplings;
- List of persons going to participate in plantation work- one person from each family;
- Date of plantation.

Regeneration work carried out in five villages

Once the area started receiving monsoon showers and micro climatic conditions became conducive for regeneration work plantation of *Valeriana jatamansi* was initiated in second half of August 2009 with support from all the five villages i.e Pugthala, Chulhan, Bharoga, Kut-butoa and Binola according to microplans. Dabbu and Banyot had to be left out as these villages were not able to decide upon forest area to be selected for this purpose. The saplings were arranged from the nurseries previously developed in Kut-Butoa villages of Charda area. Women actively participated in the plantation work and by 10th September 2009 plantation was completed in all five villages.

Table-1- Village wise Plantation carried out in year 2008-09

S.No.	Village	Planted area (Hectares)
1	Pugthala	1.5
2	Chulhan	1
3	Bharoga	1
4	Kut-Butoa	0.5
5	Binola	0.5
Total		4.5



Left: Planted seedlings of *Valeriana jatamansi* in Pugthala plot. Right: Harvesting of Maize and Amaranths.