

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	Manish M Chandi
Project title	Impacts of the 2004 tsunami on traditional coastal resource management by indigenous communities in the Nicobar Islands, India
RSG reference	51.12.07
Reporting period	June 2008-May 2009
Amount of grant	£ 5000
Your email address	manish@ncf-india.org
Date of this report	7 th August 2009

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
Identifying the nature of change in resource management		√		The tsunami of 2004 was a turning point for livelihood and natural resource distribution in the Nicobar Islands. In addition, interventions based on governmental, non-governmental and indigenous responses (seen as changes) are ongoing forces of dynamic change influencing the Nicobar socio-ecology. I have compiled considerable data over the past year documenting some of these changes in three communities, and will be building up this dataset of change over the coming years. A separate document outlining these observations and data collected is being compiled and will be sent separately.
Document tenure and distribution of major natural resources in sample sites			√	This is ongoing and has been achieved to an extent where I have been able to decide on a list of comparable natural resources across the three sample regions/communities I focus on within the Nicobar Archipelago.
Market integration and its impact on nature conservation in the Nicobar region		√		I have developed a comprehensive framework of factors that impinge on and impact directly and indirectly, ways in which natural resources are used in the region. As of now given the high dependence on government handouts such as relief and compensation, the impact of markets in the current situation is still evolving, but is visibly an important factor to understand this aspect of the project. This will form a major component of my ongoing doctoral work
The impact of changes in natural resource use		√		This is ongoing and will be compiled along with the previous objective of understanding effects of market integration as well as local systems of resource tenure and use

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

No problems experienced were unforeseen, given previous experiences in the region. On this project, I have so far made two extended visits to the selected sites; the first between September 2008 and December 2008, and the second between March 2009 and May 2009. Through these visits I have been able to collect less information than I originally envisaged. More than logistical difficulties, it is largely the interdisciplinary nature of the project and the complexities of livelihood, natural resource use and conservation that have made putting information together slower than expected. During the second visit, I was accompanied by my supervisor for a period of 10 days, which helped a great deal in challenging and revisiting ideas based on this project, as well as helping develop a systematic framework for output.

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

1. The work conducted so far has shown a strong linkage between the structure of social organisation and varying systems of tenure across natural resource use in the Nicobar Islands. Essentially, ethnographic information collected so far shows that mechanisms of cooperation and regulation are built into patterns of tenure and the structure of social organisation. This is applicable in access to and availability of natural resources across the Nicobar archipelago. A guiding principle of access is through acquiring permissions from perceived (kin groups and social linkages) and actual owners, largely toward mutual benefit. Alongside this principle, is the temptation to free ride on provisions of collective ownership, which increases with size of the social group as well as resource abundance and distribution. Though this is a common phenomenon in systems of resource utilisation and cooperation studied elsewhere, what is unique are the effects of and varying patterns of social organisation as well as the impact of external influences and internal change within the Nicobar archipelago. The perturbation in livelihood, the tsunami of 2004, is an event that has compounded the trend toward individualisation of tenure and access of resources, coupled with changing value systems toward some key resources. This perturbation has greatly influenced these systems of resource use and social organisation.
2. I have premised the project on an assumption of sustainable systems of resource use through traditional mechanisms of management. I have proposed that seemingly sustainable effects of these systems are possibly epiphenomenal, as well as largely based on the availability/abundance of resources and a range of values (economic, cultural, and subjective) attributed to natural resources by the Nicobar islanders. Preliminary information collected in this regard display these characteristics, though the semantics of social relationships and tenure categories for public goods and articles remains to be understood. This is a preliminary finding and information remains to be collected to strengthen this hypothesis as well as identify avenues toward conservation.
3. The role of emerging markets, as well as interventions (rehabilitation and relief) due to a natural disaster, the tsunami of 2004, though partially explored are having a major impact on social organisation as well as natural resource use. This aspect when explored along with current work on resource tenure and cooperative mechanisms within social organisation will provide new perspectives on systems of natural resource use, social resilience and resource stewardship that have not been explored in this landscape yet.

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

My past work (2000-2004) was largely restricted to the southern Nicobar Islands during which my work entailed extended stays on the island of Little Nicobar for various surveys and collecting ethnographic information. During the current project, sampling amongst these islanders has brought new insights in resource governance and tenure that are both useful to the project work, as well for the villagers. We have had wide-ranging discussions on changes that have occurred in arrangement of tenure by way of pressures toward individual property rights in contrast to common property rights and rules of the past. These discussions are insights into current pressures that are not just useful for the project, but also a means of bringing focus to these aspects of change –post tsunami, to the communities and their leadership. This has also occurred at the other sites of Chowra Island and Kakana village on Kamorta Island. An illustration of an outcome of such deliberations was a request from a village on Little Nicobar Island, to the government as well as the Tribal Council, to re-survey sites for permanent post-tsunami housing (part of the rehabilitation effort), as a proposed rehabilitation site fell in their resource gathering and plantation region. On recognising that their past ways and methods have meaning to research and governance, a reinforced enthusiasm to protect and augment a local resource ensued.

In each region I have chosen to sample for this project, I envisaged employing a field assistant from that region. At Kakana village, I availed the services of accommodation, boat hire for transportation and a translator for interviews in the village. Apart from some financial benefits through this project, an endearing aspect during fieldwork has been the ability of respondents to link changing situations of livelihood and resource use patterns in questioning future modes of resource governance. This is to say that there are many islanders aware of the implications of dependence on government dole and well intentioned efforts to resurrect a past economy, fraught as they are with changes to their lifestyle, and socio-ecological resilience. As much of this work deals with such facets, the process of inquiry and response has elicited contemplation by some, toward future courses that they are comfortable with. This ‘informing and influencing’ network at a small scale could potentially be used in facilitating the practical implications of this project and through local decision making processes.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

This project is part of a larger doctoral study aimed at understanding the impacts of the 2004 tsunami on traditional coastal resource management by indigenous communities in the Nicobar Islands. I plan to move onto the next phase of fieldwork to compile information on market influences and current trends of change, complete participatory exercises to map major natural resources used by the select communities, among other exercises drawn up for this work, to eventually compile the information as a thesis.

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

The work is to eventually result in publications both peer reviewed as well as in the popular media. Popular articles are in progress based on field work from this project; presentations at a local level in the Andaman Islands are planned to apprise local Government authorities of the initial outcomes of this project. This will be a continuing process both in the Andaman Islands as well as in the Nicobar Islands.

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

Anticipated period: May 2008 to January 2009 (8 months)

Actual period: June 2008- May 2009 (12 months)

Proposed activities progressed beyond the anticipated time (8 months)-scale due to periodic field visits to fit with local seasonal conditions. The RSG has been the only source of support for this project so far, and I attempted to make the best of time and this support.

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.

Budget Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Investigator stipend	£2,208.59	£2,516.47	-£307.88	One month's stipend was included above the budgeted amount
Field assistance	£773.01	£314.86	£458.15	Less than anticipated field assistance was utilised.
GPS	£98.16	£9.69	£88.47	An existing GPS from the NCF office was used, only a data transfer cable was purchased
Digital Dictaphone	£122.70	£99.29	£23.41	
Data storage devices	£147.24	£128.06	£19.18	
Digital camera	£412.27	£440.54	-£28.27	Difference in cost from the dealer after the budget was made
Stationery, battery etc	£61.35	£63.90	-£2.55	
Books, subscriptions	£98.16	£0.00	£98.16	I used existing sources for this period
Communication/ internet	£85.89	£14.81	£71.08	Lack of sufficient communication facilities in the field
Airfare to Andamans and in the mainland	£294.48	£815.92	-£521.44	Airfares to the Andaman Islands varied from time to time; additionally I travelled to consult project participants and source literature – mainland travel was more than anticipated.
Road, Rail and Ship Travel	£184.05	£320.19	-£136.14	Rail travel also increased as above-more than anticipated.
Helicopter travel	£122.70	£0.00	£122.70	This facility wasn't utilised
Local Boat Hire	£122.70	£54.00	£68.70	I wasn't able to travel to a distant resource gathering region as planned
Accommodation	£214.72	£123.90	£90.82	Local houses were used more than guest house accommodation during transit

Other Field Expenses	£53.99	£92.94	-£38.95	Field work extended beyond the anticipated period during the second field visit; photographs were printed to return to participants of the survey during the second field visit- this was not anticipated and budgeted for.
TOTAL	£5,000.01	£4,994.57	£5.44	
EXCHANGE RATE USED				
Budgeted at INR 81.5 per £ in November 2007		Grant amount received at INR 80.47 per £ in March 2008		

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

- Completing the survey for market integration and linkages to natural resource use
- Finalizing aspects on social organisation and natural resource tenure
- Analyzing and compiling information generated from this project
- Translating the findings of the project for a larger audience-especially the Local Administration and Tribal Council

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?

It has been used during slide presentations of the work in progress so far, and will be acknowledged in publications (academic and popular articles), and project report once the entire work is complete.

11. Any other comments

This has been the first grant I received to carry out field work on this project. I am deeply indebted to the Rufford Small Grants Foundation for the support I received. This work would have taken a lot longer to accomplish without the quick and timely support it has received so far. The work is far from over and other phases of the work are in progress.