

Project Update: February 2012

I have been organising preliminary discussions with chiefs and community representatives and the scheduled discussion was completed in a very friendly environment. Chiefs and leaders of eight villages of the targeted area attended the discussion. Chiefs and representatives attend in the discussion are from attend from localities of proposed area. They are from localities at a distance of about 1.30 hours walk or about 4-6 km, are the nearest locality and farthest were 4-5 hours walk or 15-18 km from Parkup area. In addition, I have set a temporary field camp in the Parkup to run field activities and to sustain communication with community. It's a small locality, situated in the fringe of Karbi hill, where communities of the target area visit weekly market of Parkup for sale and buy commodities.

I have collected necessary information from community representatives to initiate project activities. It revealed that they are interested in pigeon pea cultivation, while advocating for broom grass instead of green gram. Preference for broom grass is mainly due to market demand, perennial productivity and their traditional expertise and for few other benefits. Usually they sell dried broom grass to the middleman; however, only a handful of growers made finished broom for direct marketing. Notably it's a supportive subsistence crop. They sell their product @ £ 0.24/ kg and @ £ 0.07/finished broom. Whether in the urban market, retail value is around @ £ 0.20 for /piece of finished broom. They said that 3-4 pieces of broom can be made from 1 kg of dried broom. Therefore, cultivation of broom grass at large scale can generate additional employment for old people and woman of the community, who otherwise stay at home idle. So I think their suggestion could be take into consideration and perhaps could be a better cash crop in compare to proposed green gram.

In addition, an orientation and training programme for field staff will be organised for socio-economic survey. We are planning to initiate survey from 1st April 2012.