

Project Update: September 2012

Out of the four villages selected in initial phase, in two villages there were acute differences among members while selecting the forest area for regeneration of NTFPs. We have had to drop these two villages and select four other villages i.e. Majhor and Jhalu villages of Mangali Panchyat; Manjani village of Jungra Panchyat and Kaiya village of Khajua Panchyat to initiate consensus building meetings.

All these villages passed resolutions asking the Forest Department to initiate the process of forming Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMCs) in their respective villages. With the representatives from these villages we met with the forest officials and submitted these resolutions. The response received was positive. Unfortunately, within 1 month of submitting these resolutions the Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) of Chamba was transferred and follow-up within the department has slackened. We are now, waiting for the new DFO to come and to take charge in order to continue the work.

In the meanwhile, socio-economic and forest vegetation survey was carried out and completed in all six villages. Focused group meetings were conducted with women, medicinal plant collectors and grazier community members identified from the villages. This was followed by preparation of resource map of each village and formulation of forest management plans in all the selected villages. These forest management plans prepared for each village were submitted to the State Forest Department with resolutions from the villages.

The saplings of NTFPs species like *Valerian jatamansi*, *Aconitum hetropyllum*, *Jurinea macrophylla* and *Pichrorhiza kurrooa* developed in nurseries through the support of RSG in Pugthala and Mohal villages are ready to be planted in the selected forest plots.

Forthcoming activities will be:

1. To carry out NTFPs plantation in selected plots.
2. To meet forest officials and initiate the process of formation of Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMCs).



Left: Valerian jatamansi growing in village Pugthala. Right: Valerian jatamansi reaching harvesting stage in Pugthala village.



Left: Meeting in Manjani village of Jungra Panchayat. Middle: Resource mapping exercise in Kaiya village of Khajua Panchyat. Right: Village meeting conducted with forest officials.



Left: Traditional log beehives still used in villages in Chamba. Right: Treacherous mountain paths to project villages.