

## **Project Update: May 2007**

Reporting Period: 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2007 to 28<sup>th</sup> May, 2007

### **A. Background:**

With a booster grant provided by the Rufford Foundation, we continued our work for conservation of banyan trees for the third consecutive year. The projects aims to protect the hanging roots of 100 newly adopted banyan trees. Besides, 30 new trees which were adopted in the second year shall also be protected. Thus a total of 130 banyan trees are protected.

### **B. Target Area:**

Banyan trees located in the following 31 villages of Hindol block of Dhenkanal District of Orissa were adopted:

Dandiri, Lahada, Khalliborei, Govindpur, Kallipoi, Nabakishorepur, Rasol, Bhimakhanda, Tantichira, Alusingh, Kharchuli, Satmile, Bampa, Ganjara, Patua sahi, Dalki, Jalagadia, Bampa Patua Sahi, Mundamara, Brahmaniapal, Sana Hindol, Dudurkote, Kathakumpa, Hathura, Panchmile, Charanpur, Barsingha and Thokar, Chitalpur, Bimbari, Ichhapur and Khandasahi.

**C. Progress in attaining Objectives:** A field survey was carried out in December, 2006 to identify 100 new banyan trees whose roots required protection. Only trees satisfying the twin criteria of having hanging roots and also which were suspended a few feet from the ground were selected out of the many banyan trees which were surveyed.

**Selection of Personnel:** Ten literate youth have been appointed in January, 2007 as local volunteers. Mr. Pradeep Routray as been appointed as the Project Supervisor and Mr. Arabinda Majhi has been appointed as field assistant.

**Training:** Single day training was held for them by Dr. Damodar Lenka, Project Consultant and Mr. Biswajit Mohanty, Project Officer in January, 2007 for the animators and the supervisor to acquaint them with our objectives and the methodology to be followed.

**Infrastructure and equipment deployed:** The Society's Jeep is being used by the Project Officer for field tours. The supervisor is supervising the field activities by motorcycle. Computing, accounting and monitoring facilities are being provided at the Head Office.

### **Work Progress:**

- ❖ Setting up of camp: Camp has been was set up at Rasol which is centrally located in the project area.
- ❖ Tree Protection: Fencing with thorns, split bamboo, wooden stakes and coir rope has been done for all the newly adopted trees and was completed by the first week of February, 2007. We have put up 50 metal signboards in selected trees which are on the roadside and have good public visibility.
- ❖ Maintenance of fences: The project supervisor is regularly touring the target area and checking the fences of the adopted trees. Fences are facing damage due to termite attack, forest fire and also due to strong summer storms which uproot the fence at some places. The existing fences of last year of the 30 old trees had to be repaired at many places. Fence

repairs are being done immediately with the assistance of the local animators as and when necessary.

- ❖ Local meetings: After the fences were erected, 15 meetings with local community have been held so far. As we had held such meetings during the previous year, currently we are concentrating on meetings at the new villages in which the newly adopted target trees are found.
- ❖ Wall paintings: 15 wall paintings about the need to save banyan trees have been done at highly visible locations like schools, markets, government offices and cross roads.
- ❖ Posters, leaflets, stickers, banners, etc: 1,000 posters, 1,000 leaflets and 500 PVC stickers have been prepared. 400 posters, 400 leaflets and 200 stickers have been handed out so far. We have also prepared 5 cloth banners for use during school and public meetings. 200 playing cards with banyan tree pictures and slogan have been procured. So far we have distributed 120 packs among the local villagers.
- ❖ School meetings: A total of 10 school quiz programs have been held so far and more could not be held as the schools closed for vacation in March. More quizzes shall be held once the schools reopen in June. The children participated in these quizzes with tremendous enthusiasm. We awarded prizes like school bags, geometry boxes and examination clipboards to winners.
- ❖ Nursery for new banyan saplings: We aim to increase the banyan tree population in the target area by planting new saplings. Two field nurseries have been set up at two different locations i.e., at Dandiri and Bampa villages. While 200 saplings are being nurtured at Dandiri, 100 saplings are being grown at Bampa.

#### **D. Supervision and Monitoring:**

Project Officer's supervision: The Project Officer has paid five visits to supervise and monitor the work of the Project Supervisor and to check fences and the nursery.

Project Supervisor's Work Register: The Project Supervisor is maintaining a work register wherein details of visits paid to each village, meetings, programs, etc are being entered. This Register was regularly inspected by the Project Officer during his tours.

Program Register: The Project Supervisor is maintaining a Program Register in which he is entering details of all field programs held by him including place, date, number of participants, brief proceedings, etc.

Fortnightly monitoring report: This report which is to be prepared by the Project Supervisor contains details of the condition of the fences, number of local/school meetings held, protection level of the hanging roots which have struck the ground, work performance of the local volunteers, details of his field tours, etc. This report is couriered to the Head Office every fortnight. This enables us to keep a close watch over the project's progress and identify the weak areas which need to be improved.

#### **E. Problems encountered and mitigation measure:**

Termite attack is damaging fences at some locations. To overcome this, we have to carry out treatment of the fence border with anti-termite solutions. However, after we erect the green fence

in the monsoon, this problem is not expected to continue. Besides, we also used binding galvanized wire to tie up the fence instead of coir since coir ropes are damaged by termites.

Some fences got damaged due to strong summer storms. However, these fences were repaired immediately.

We had foreseen fence damage due to forest fire since many parts of the target area are forested and fires damage this forest in the summer. To fight such fires, we swept the borders of the fence and kept them free of dry fallen leaves which feed the fire. As a result, not a single fence was damaged due to fire.

