An Initiative for Community Participation and Rehabilitation of a Watershed Ecosystem in a Mountainous Area in India

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People and Water Conservation

• Complexly meshed interdependence.
• Traditionally natural resource conservation was based on exclusion.
• Through experience participatory approach has been developed.
The Area

Hamlets Sheri, Kanda, Pithoragarh District, Uttarakhand (India)

• Under developed
• No connectivity to road and transport
• Water Scarcity
• Rain fed underdeveloped agriculture
• Negligible facilities for health, sanitation and hygiene
• Poor economic condition
The Community

- Ignorant & uneducated
- Exploitative Practices
- Lost traditional knowledge & uninformed of new technology
- Absence of responsibility, lack of initiative & over dependence on external help
- Alcoholism and drug abuse
- Vulnerability and drudgery of Women
The Biggest Challenge

*Desire for Readymade ‘Quick-fix’ Solutions*

‘you come & do for us’ – No onus
OUR FOCUS - identification of the underlying causes

• The community had lost their underlying interdependence on the environment.

• Could not recognize the relation of their poor economic condition, depleting water sources and their role in it.

Our Prime objective –

Sensitize the community and re-establish their link with bio-diversity.
USP of the Sensitization Initiative

Culmination of

Spiritual Truth underlying Water Customs

with

Technological and Scientific Facts
Methodology

• Selection of the Area
• Pre-programme situation analysis
• Programme initiation
Broad Activities

• Preliminary community survey- Selection of individuals to be trained
• Pre-training sessions
• Training of the trainers
• Community awareness implementation programme
• Pilot Level Technical survey
• Situation Analysis
Train the Trainer

- Theoretical training about Watershed Concept
- Planning for Minor Watershed Management
- Collective Protection and Maintenance
- Role of communication in village perspective for scientific practices
- Development of future perspective
Community Awareness Implementation Programme

Preparatory Phase

• Internal community meetings
• Door to door to visits
• Interviews & counselling
• Formation of Communication Teams
• Survey of the Thal Kedar Forest Area
• Preparation of communication tools
Community Awareness Implementation Programme

Execution Phase

Community Mobilization

- Awareness generation camp
- Presentations from the village community
Community Awareness Implementation Programme

Execution Phase ........

Technical Demonstration:

• Developing Poly Tanks and collection of rain water

• Recharge Pits to maintain water level in the water sources.

• Cleaning & maintenance of existing water sources.

• Creation of culverts at the upper reaches of the hills for temporary storage of water thus promoting ground water replenishment.
Pilot Level Technical Survey

- PLTS was undertaken to survey the natural drainage system, for identifying the possible locations of high flow water channels, and water harvesting

- 25 km² area was surveyed at 1568-1832m altitudes by non-stop 15 km trekking on steep slopes up and down the hills

Out comes:

- Topographical profile
- Soil Structure
- Land use
- Floral Inventory
Impact

- Increase in the level of awareness on water related issues and subjects.
- Development of an understanding of the method and applicability of scientific techniques.
- Realizing the importance of community feeling and collective efforts.
- Spreading of knowledge to women group and their active participation in the water related issues.
Active force behind...

His Holiness says …

“The relation between nature and human life is that of air and breath. To keep breathing you need air, to keep living you need nature.”

His Holiness
Shri Ashutosh Maharaj Ji
Our Strengths

• Driven by Spirituality
• Large volunteers base – young workforce
• Grass-root level reach
• No language & cultural barriers
Thank you

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