

Final Report

(To be completed by NGO/CBO grant recipient at the end of project)

Approved - ✓
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1. Grantee Partner

Name of local NGO/ CBO: URAVU Indigenous Science & Technology Study Centre

Grant Recipient Address: Thrikkaipetta P.O, Wayanad District, Kerala State, South

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Person in charge of Progress report: Mr. Surendranath C

2. Identification of the Project

Project Name: Conservation and Sustainable Management of Non-timber
Forest Products through a Participatory Approach in the
Western Ghats, Kerala

Project number: SGP/GEF/IND/OP3/02

GEF Thematic Area: Biodiversity

Location of Project: Wayanad District, Kerala State

Project Start and End dates: 16th December 2006 and 15th December 2008 (As in the MoA)
and extended upto March 2010

3. Financial Summary:

<i>Fund Utilization & Disbursement Request</i>	Amount (Rs.)
SGP Grant amount	15,63,839
SGP Funds received to date for this grant	15,63,839
SGP Funds spent to date	15,63,839
Funds balance	Nil
SGP Grant disbursement requested	Nil

4. Project Co-financing Received:

Source (s)	Type (In-kind or Cash)	Amount (Rs.)
Uravu	Cash	Rs.10,000
KFRI	Cash	Rs. 1,50,000

5. Progress Report

a. Participants/Beneficiaries

- Number of females: 64
- Number of males: 53
- Number of children: as per the families 165

b. Capacity Building/Training

- Number of females: 40
- Number of males: 30
- Number of children: 20

c. Detailed Summary of Activities *(Increase rows as required)*

(Guidance Notes: Give details on each the activities performed, as specified in the MoA, and also add any new activities undertaken in the project)

Sl. No.	Activities as approved in MoA	Progress as on date	Remarks
1.	Socioeconomic survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Appointed Research Staff - Socioeconomic survey was conducted. - Income data updated to March 201 	
2.	NTFP resource Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -45 plots taken within the forest area to enumerate NTFP resources -Plots were taken both from natural forests and plantation areas. -A series of enumerations of NTFPs in the plots were conducted till December 2009 	
3.	Revived Eco-Development Committee in the selected colony	<p>With the participation of this committee :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Forestry work was organized which gave income to the tribals. - Organized one medical camp in the selected colony. This was done in collaboration with Matha Amrithanathamai Hospital, Kalpetta. - Organized two major training programmes on Bamboo Handicrafts. About 20 participants attended the same. The second one, a more advanced training was carried out with the participation of the Forest Department. - Two bamboo products design workshops were organized and both were attended by 20 participants each. 	
4.	Meeting of the resource management committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resource management committee meetings were convened frequently so as to plan the management of NTFPs and to organize training on production of bamboo products 	
5.	Training on sustainable collection of NTFPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Five training classes were imparted to the primary beneficiaries on sustainable collection of NTFPs. The resource personnel's included , <p style="margin-left: 40px;">Prof. T. A Pancicker, Medicinal Plant Expert</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">Dr. B.Mohankumar, Associate Dean, College of Forestry, Kerala Agricultural University</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">Dr. N.Sasidharan and</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">Dr. P.K.Muraleedharan. Scientists, KFRI</p>	

6.	Organized simple value addition	- Training and demonstration was organized on sustainable collection of honey in the study area with the help of Keystone Foundation, Nilgiris. This was attended by about 20 beneficiaries	
7.	Identification and conservation of Genepool area	- KFRI had marked and conserved a gene pool area in the study site as part of an earlier study conducted during 1999-2003. The research team visited this area and decided to further conserve this as the gene pool area in this study also.	
8.	Preparation of seedling	- Established a good nursery of selected NTFP species and about 5000 seedlings of 14 rare and endangered species of NTFPs were raised.	
9.	Planting of seedlings	- All seedlings were planted in the forest area with the active participation of the tribals	

d. Results (Use as much space as required)

(Guidance Notes: The extent to which the objectives specified in the MoA, were accomplished; Unplanned achievements; Shortfalls in targets; Describe immediate benefits received by participants and/or recipient communities)

Project components/ Activities	Expected Results/ outcomes/ outputs (as planned)	Results achieved (Actual achievements)	Remarks
Participatory management of the Stakeholders	Effective participatory management for conservation and management of NTFPs organized	Revived Eco-Development Committee and strengthened unity among the people . Socioeconomic and participatory resource surveys and mapping done Organized meetings and workshops of stakeholders	We received whole hearted support from Forest Department and tribals in the execution of this project
Enhancement of livelihood security	Livelihood security of tribals in the study area enhanced.	- Conducted five meetings on sustainable collection of NTFPs - Organized four training programmes on bamboo products - Organized one medical camp - Organized a training	This has helped to improve their productivity and income. For instance their total monthly income during June 2007 was Rs.10780 which increased to Rs 86370 during March 2010. Their

		<p>programme on sustainable collection and processing of honey by Keystone Foundation in April 2009.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organized one training programme each on ecotourism and mushroom cultivation 	artisan skill was also improved
Conservation of diversity of NTFPs	Biodiversity of NTFPs in the study area conserved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identified and conserved Genepool area. - Prepared an inventory of NTFPs . - Establishment of a nursery to prepare seedlings. - Scrutinized the sustainable level of extraction. 	5000 seedlings of 14 species were raised and planted
Dissemination of research results	Sustainability of the participatory management activities for conservation of NTFP maintained and disseminated	Based on results of the project, two scientific papers were presented in two International meetings held at Bangkok and Cochin.	The titles of papers and other publication details and date and place of conference were given under XII

e. New Developments, Unexpected difficulties/problems & Action taken to solve them

Nil

h. Lessons Learned: (Use as much space as required)

(Guidance Notes: Lessons learnt during project implementation; Request for additional technical assistance etc.)

The tribals compared to other communities have the culture of community living. Partly because of this and partly due to more job opportunities outside the forest area, initially, it was difficult to organize PFM in the study area. Later when the motive of the project was known to the people, they were very co-operative. All stakeholders, especially the Forest Department Officials were very keen in associating PFM activities. It was understood that awareness creation is the one most important steps in a PFM activities.

6. Assessment of lessons learnt during Project Implementation (Use as much space as required)

(Use the questions given below as guidance questions and add more question/points if necessary. Also, substantiate the report with supportive documents, letters and evidences)

- I. Describe the effects of this project in relation to the GEF focal areas and operational programs. Explain how the project was able to have an effect on biodiversity, climate change, or international waters. Assess the potential **global benefits** of this project.

Ecological degradation and biodiversity loss due to over-exploitation of NTFPs occur in several tropical regions of the world, and Kerala -- part of the Western Ghats--is no exception. Here, in the olden days, extraction of NTFPs was at a low impact level. Recently, in the context of low employment generation outside the forestry sector, the tribal dependence on NTFPs for livelihood has increased manifold. This brought about drastic changes in the pattern of collection from traditional low impact to more intensive forms of extraction. Simultaneously, the centralized management system of NTFPs by the Forest Department was found to be inadequate and ineffective.

Of late, this has been replaced by participatory forest management (PFM) with tribals/local communities and the Kerala Forest Department as participants. Theoretically, participatory management is a better system for the conservation of NTFPs. However, this system implemented in the state by the Forest Department is ineffective due to the lack of active participation of the stakeholders. This calls for an improved system of participatory management to conserve resources and enhance income of the tribals. In this study we attempted to organize a participatory management of stakeholders (tribals, Scheduled tribe societies, the Federation --the apex body Scheduled caste /tribe, and pharmaceutical companies in the state) and to enhance the income of the tribal to see its impact on biodiversity. Generally, ecology-economics linkage is seldom considered in the study of biodiversity conservation. This is possibly due to the fact that its impact is known/understood only in the long term and is thus difficult to apprehend any impact in a short period of three years. In this study ecologic-economics factors of NTFPs were linked up to get a better result. More employment was generated in non-NTFP sector which to great extent reduced NTFP collection. For instance, During June 2007, NTFP sector provided 13% of the total monthly income which was only 4% during March 2010. It was found that density of the NTFPs in the study area has increased, indicating improvement of biodiversity. For example, the density of shrubs was 411 during 2008 which increased to 432 during 2009.

Similarly, the minimum time taken for collection of NTFPs in the study area has reduced from 5.32 hours in 2003 to 4.01 during 2009. The study indicates that an increase in income from non-NTFP sources results in a reduction in the collection of NTFPs from the forest area. This is mainly due to the fact that collection of NTFPs is a time consuming, laborious, tiresome and low returns from unit effort of NTFP collection. If there are job opportunities outside the NTFP sector, they prefer to do.

- II. Did this project link the practice of **sustainable livelihoods** to a GEF focal area? Describe the strategies employed, indicating what works and what does not.

One of the focal points of the project work was to enhance the income from forestry (excluding NTFP sector) and non-forestry sources. It was visualized that more income from forestry could be generated through forestry operations and semi-processing. The research team attempted to get funds from all possible sources to enhance the job opportunities of the tribals, such as, income from National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme of the Central Government, labour in forestry operations (like fire prevention and tourism activities), income from agricultural sector, in addition to NTFP collection. The income from non-forestry sources and NTFP collection constituted 70 and 30 percentages respectively during project period which was on the reverse during pre- project period in the study area.

There was a plan to undertake semi-processing of NTFPs on a large scale. Unfortunately, the fund was not enough to undertake this activity. A research proposal to undertake semi-processing of selected NTFPs was submitted to Department of Science and Technology in 2007 with a budget of Rs. 20 lakhs. This project got sanctioned only by the end of 2009 with a budget of Rs. 7.5 lakhs, with focus only on the collection and marketing of honey. Thus, this component of the project could not be carried out properly.

- III. Is this a **community-driven** project? How was community implementation and ownership of project achieved? How did this contribute to project success? Also, indicate pitfalls and tactics to be avoided. Explain issues regarding to community participation and ownership of roles and issues.

This was visualized as a stakeholder-driven project and not a community driven project. Since, the project was implemented in the forest areas, where tribals have no ownership, the question of community ownership does not arise. However, the stakeholders, especially tribes and Forest Department officers extended full support to the project. As mentioned earlier, there was a PFM programme organized by the Forest Department. But the Federation and the tribal societies were active in collecting NTFPs since its inception during 1980's. The tribals collected NTFPs for both the agencies. In the best interests of PFM activities organized by the Forest Department, they were initially reluctant to give permission to these agencies to collect NTFPs from the forest areas. This often led to a rift between the Forest Department and Tribal Societies and the Federation (which was under State Co-operative Department). Quite often this was solved with political interference. In our case, we brought all the stakeholders together for the experiment and sort out the problem amicably. We could also develop a high sense of co-operation among the tribal people which would help them to organize the new programmes for conservation and increase of income.

IV. Was there a **capacity-building** component in this project? How were local capacities enhanced? How did it contribute to project success? Also what links have been established for them to sustain this as a process

There was a very strong capacity building component in the project. One of the selected tribal communities, viz., the Bet Kurumans, are basically artisans. As part of the project we organized a series of training programmes for them on bamboo handicraft. The training programs have helped them to improve their traditional skills. New designs and products have been introduced to them. The trained people have organized a society which carried out production and marketing of handicraft items in various festivals. However, the quality of the products, their diversity as well as the productivity of the group need to be improved further to reach economically sustainable levels. This requires handholding supports for a still longer period. Similarly, we organized training programme on sustainable honey collection and the beneficiaries here were the Kattunaicken community. This helped create awareness on the need to curtail destructive methods of honey collection. The results of the capacity building training on honey collection is expected to be consolidated through the DST project. Another attempt made in the area of

capacity building has been the training on eco-tourism carried out under co-financing from KFRI. Training and demonstration was also organized on nursery development, ecotourism and mushroom cultivation.

- V. Has this project increased **public awareness** of local and global environmental problems? Describe how this was done, and whether people are making use of the new knowledge. With which concerned departments/ stakeholders' links have been established?

The project was confined to the study area and the selected people. No attempt was given for wider publicity among local people. In fact there was no such programme in the original proposal also. However, Officers of the Forest Department, Panchayath, tribal societies and other government officials in the nearby areas were aware of the goals of this project. The project could create awareness among the tribals regarding the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable management of NTFPs which are essential for their livelihood. As part of the project work a number of small workshops have been organized on the subject and guidelines on sustainable methods of collection of NTFPs have been issued. Tribals were given practical trainings too. The research team had regularly monitored their methods of collection (of plants and plant parts) in the forest areas. It was heartening to note that majority of the tribals followed the appropriate guidelines.

- VI. How did women and men participate in planning, implementing, and evaluating the project? Did project proponents plan a **gender focus**? Or did it evolve in the course of project implementation? What are some of the issues that came up in this regard?

Women's participation in various meetings organized by the research team was significantly high. They showed more interest in certain activities like nursery development, planting and bamboo handicraft work. Generally, the women do not actively participate in honey collection (due to their inability to climb on trees) and tourism activities. In all training programmes, women were very active. By and large, the gender problems among the selected tribals were very less. In our project activities we tried to give maximum employment to women as they invariably spend their wage for the welfare of the family.

- VII. Was this project run by **indigenous people** or involve significant participation by indigenous people? In this context, discuss ethnic, cultural, and historical factors that affected project design, implementation, and results. Discuss the impacts that the project has made in the area.

The conservation of biodiversity of NTFPs through active participation of its major stakeholders was the major focus of the project. The Indigenous People are the active stakeholder, participants and the direct beneficiaries. Two indigenous communities, namely, the Bet Kuumas and the Kattunaickens, were the active stakeholders of the project. Both the communities practiced community living and kept their traditions, customs and cultural practices which often adversely affected the project work. For instance, if there is a death in the hamlet, it is a custom for all in the hamlet to participate in the funeral which lasted for several days. Similarly, they do not work during festive seasons. Such practices hindered the development of NTFP processing activities.

- VIII. How has the **sustainability** plan and/or prospects been addressed? What aspects of the project design, project implementation, or other factors enhanced sustainability? How could other projects or country programmes use this experience to promote sustainability?

We planned to link the entire activities of the project with Forest Development Agency (FDA) in the Forest Division which is an apex body of Participatory Forest Management Units and a major funding source. The Forest Department had a plan to start Forest Development Agencies in the state as early as 2007. Unfortunately, the programme was not started till the end of this project. Thus we could not link up the same with FDA. In continuation of this project, as was mentioned earlier, another project on sustainable collection and marketing of honey is being implemented. In this project, capacity building of tribals in the field of scientific collection and marketing of honey is taken up. A seed money for initial purchase of honey from the collectors and equipments required for honey processing were given freely which is reported to have reduced the financial problems of tribals significantly. The selected hamlets are located near the tourism zone and the tribals were encouraged to work as guides and other helpers. It is planned to open an eco-store with the help of the Forest Department which would help to enhance the income of the tribes. The state government has announced that the FDA would be inaugurated during June 2010. When it is started, all these programmes will be linked up with FDA.

- IX. How the project received **co-financing**? If so, indicate sources and amounts. Which project components did the co-financing support? How was the co-financing obtained? Describe how links to other donors or agencies were made, networking strategies, and negotiations. Also indicate pitfalls and tactics to be avoided.

Co-financing was obtained from two sources: Uravu, Kerala Forest Research Institute. The Uravu and KFRI contributed Rs 10,000, Rs. 1,50,000 respectively. This fund was mainly spent for organizing workshops and training programmes. KFRI has funds for organizing training and the Scientists who have associated with this project contacted the Director, KFRI for obtaining the fund. The three KFRI scientists worked in this project without claiming salary during the project period.

- X. Is this project suitable for **replication** in other communities or regions? Could it be up-scaled to a medium-sized GEF project? Please indicate any plans in this regard. How would you like this to be addressed and financed?

This concept of the project is suitable for replication in other parts of the tropical regions where destructive methods of collection of NTFPs are prevalent, provided location specific constraints are understood and factored into the project. A major factor that needs to be addressed is that tribal people in Kerala are going through a period of turmoil due to socio-economic instability and unfavorable/adverse government policies. For instance, the tribal land question in Kerala remains unsettled, creating much instability among the communities living within forest lands and depending on forest resources for their livelihood. The institutional mechanism for regulating NTFP collection and processing is burdened with conflicts between PFM and the Federation of cooperative societies. In such a situation, attempts to evolve alternative livelihood sources for the tribal people need to be thought of as a sufficiently long-term program addressing several factors. In order to ensure sustainability of NTFP processing as an alternative, for example bamboo craft, requires a continuous focused program covering several aspects such as skill development, improvements in awareness on products and markets, betterment of tools and technology, gaining access to resources, markets and finances, developing managerial and organizing skills among the beneficiaries, addressing the welfare needs of the communities etc.

Considering all these factors, as well as the logistical difficulties in managing the project in a location far off from the centre of activities of Uravu, (namely, the Kalpetta Block in the district where Uravu has successfully coordinated the evolution of a cluster of bamboo artisan groups),

our organization does not intend to scale up the present project to a medium size GEF project. However, Uravu intends to submit an independent project to GEF for consolidating its efforts to use bamboo for creating sustainable rural livelihoods in Wayanad district over the last 12 years.

- XI. Were there links between this project and the overall **GEF**? How were these links achieved? How have they benefited the GEF/SGP? How have they benefited the GEF? How did GEF/SGP help the NGO/ Communities to ‘leverage better resources from various other sources’

The GEF gives high importance to the programmes of biodiversity conservation and livelihood improvement of the down-trodden people. This study links up these two aspects in the study area. NTFP constitutes 30 to 40 percentage of total biodiversity in forests in Kerala. The unsustainable extraction of NTFPs due to the inherent poverty of the forest dependent community is one of the reasons for its decline. However, no study is available on the relationship between income increase and biodiversity conservation of NTFPs in Kerala. This study indicates that increase of income particularly that from non-forestry sources is essential for biodiversity conservation. Thus, this may be an important study in GEF’s biodiversity conservation programme.

This programme has helped the tribals in two ways: (i) an awareness could be created among the tribals that unsustainable extraction would affect biodiversity conservation which in turn will affect their future income and livelihood, and (ii) the project work was carried out with the active participation of the tribals and about 70 per cent of the project fund was spent among them as wage. To that extent it has helped to increase their income. Further, this project helped to get fund from other sources (Department of Science and Technology, Forest Department, National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme, KFRI, and Uravu) for capacity building and employment generation.

- XII. Has this project influenced **government policy**? Explain what the government policy is, how it has been affected, and the role and nature of GEF/SGP influence.

The following are some of the suggestions of the project and the policy makers can consider these while formulating policies in the NTFP sector in Kerala.

The sustainable use of NTFPs precedes conservation of biodiversity. The impending danger of irreversible loss of species, leading to biodiversity loss is resultant of the unsustainable extraction/harvest of the NTFPs. The study finds that the sustainability of NTFPs depends upon the sustainability of forests and vice versa. Further, there is a close linkage between sustainable use of NTFPs and socioeconomic status of the gatherers. PFM activities are prevalent in NTFP sector in the state, but the participants are only tribals and the Forest Department. In view of the study results and reviewing problems in the ecological, economic and the present management systems of NTFPs, it is suggested that adoption of participatory management, involving the Stakeholders (tribals, societies, Federation, medicinal manufacturing companies, among others) is the better option to solve the problems and conserve biodiversity in the sector.

The livelihood security of the collectors should be strengthened and uplifted by encouraging them to undertake various income-generating activities in and outside the purview of the forest. The tribals will have only less interest in the collection of NTFPs (it is a distress duty because of low income and hardship) when more jobs are available in the non-forestry sector.

It was observed that the higher the income and benefit sharing the higher the participation of the stakeholders PFM activities, indicating a perfect positive correlation between these factors. Also, opportunity cost of labour and participation in the PFM programme showed a perfect inverse relationship. The study indicated that effective implementation of NTFP based participatory management programme would enhance the income of the tribes thereby uplifting the socioeconomic status resulting in reduced and sustainable collection of NTFPs, which is imperative for conservation of biodiversity in the study area.

- What were the principal impacts, lessons learnt from the project?

Basically this is a research project, aiming to test a hypothesis that an increase of income from non-forestry sources would reduce the collection of NTFPs which is essential for conservation of its biodiversity. In order to test this, a series of activities and programmes, aiming to enhance the income of the tribal people, were organized in the study area. By and large, it has benefited to the tribes in two ways: increase of income and capacity to earn income. The tribals in the study area are capable of raising nursery, producing bamboo handicrafts and familiar with sustainable collection of NTFPs. Financial help to develop a nursery school for the tribal children was also extended. Medical camp was organized to improve their health conditions. Even tribes are very

much interested in participatory research. One lesson we learned is that community based projects are good for improving the socioeconomic conditions of downtrodden people.

- What were the principal deficiencies/ missing gaps in the project?

The grant obtained from GEF was not sufficient to carry out the capacity building activities under the project to the required levels..

Even at the end of the project, only two installments of the grant were received. This posed problems in funding various activities of the project for which advances had to be mobilized from the Technical Partner, Kerala Forest Research Institute. This resulted in delaying some activities.

- What are the products generated by the project: (ex: Publications, Brochures, Videos, CDs, educational materials, models, infrastructure, awards, marketable goods, etc.)

The following two research papers have been published:

Muraleedharan,P.K. and Anitha,V.2009. Bamboo handicraft industry in Kerala State of India: Problems and Prospects. Paper presented in : Proceedings of VIII World Bamboo Congress Held at Bangkok during 16-19, September 2009. 7: 48-59

Muraleedharan, P.K. and Anitha,V. 2009. Conservation and sustainable management of NTFPs through stakeholder participation. Paper presented in the workshop: Biodiversity Conservation with stakeholder Participation, Organised by United States-India Educational Foundation, (USIEF) during 6-9 October 2009 at Cochin. Proceedings being published.

A draft brochure on project activities have been prepared and sent to CEE for publications

A project report on scientific aspects of the project is being prepared

- Assessment of impact of project in the GEF focal area:

There are only very few studies on biodiversity and sustainable management of NTFPs. Thus, this will be an addition to this group. The ecology-economics linkage and the relationship between increase of income of collectors and biodiversity conservation, among others are some of the features of this study. Thus, this study is an addition to GEF's thematic area of biodiversity

- Press/ media coverage / links established in the project to other similar initiatives / networking with other NGOs

The Project area being located far off from towns, the programs could not be covered in the media.

- Future plans (if any) to continue, expand, or replicate project activities:

As explained above, we do not intend to replicate this project or to scale up the project in the present project locality. However we wish to submit a project for consolidating the activities carried out by our organization in the Kalpetta Block of Wayanad district where we have established the Kalpetta bamboo cluster (for more details please see www.bamboocluster.org) with a view to improve the management systems of the cluster and develop a business model out of livelihood improvement programs conducted so far.

- Additional information if any in terms of awards and certificates of merit, etc:

Nil

- What advice would you give to other organizations designing similar projects?

This type of project requires committed workers who must be willing to live with the tribes during the project period. They have to record each and every development in the area. Basically, the tribal people at least in Kerala have less initiative and thus they have to be motivated continuously.

7. Financial report of SGP expenditures (please attach audited utilization certificate)

S.No	Budget Category/Head	Approved Budget	Cumulative Expenditure	Balance (if any)
1.	Manpower/labour	431200	448270	
2.	Training/Seminar	0	12500	
3.	Others (Specify)	0		
4.	Project Activities	758824	771208	
5.	Travel Cost	204639	235005	
6.	Communication & administration	72000	43047	
7.	Documentation & reporting	20000	3409	
8.	Monitoring & Evaluation	40000	25400	
9.	Contingencies	37176	25000	
	Total	15,63,839	15,63,839	Nil

Report submitted by:

Name: Mr. Surendranath C

Title: Uravu Indigenous Science & Technology Study Centre

Signature

Date