



SGP The GEF
Small Grants
Programme



Biodiversity Conservation



Climate Change

Strengthening Conservation and Livelihoods in Kumbhalgarh WILDLIFE SANCTUARY IN SOUTHERN ARAVALIS, RAJASTHAN



Govt. of India
Ministry of Environment, Forest
& Climate Change



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FOUNDATION FOR ECOLOGICAL SECURITY

CEE

Centre for Environment Education



PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary, located in southern Rajasthan, forms an ecotone between the hill forests of the Aravali hill ranges and the Thar Desert located to the west. It is home to several threatened and significant flora and fauna, such as *Sterculia urens*, *Schrebera swietenoides*, *Toona ciliata*, *Jasminum grandiflorum*, *Caesalpinia decapetala*, Starred Tortoise, Marsh Crocodile or Mugger, Long-billed Vulture, White-rumped Vulture, Grey Junglefowl, Aravalli Red Spurfowl, Pangolin, Sloth Bear and the Leopard.

The hills and forest serve as a barrier, checking the eastward extension of the desert to the east that is more fertile. There are 22 villages within the Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary and 138 villages along the periphery primarily inhabited by tribal communities (Garasiya and Bhil 4 Gameti) critically dependent on forests for food, fodder, water, timber and firewood.

Collection and sale of forest produce from forests in the buffer as well as from within the Protected Area contributes to critical cash incomes for most of the households. The rivers and streams originating in the Sanctuary support the livelihoods of the communities not only in the immediate vicinity of the Sanctuary but also further down the path of the streams.

FES approached GEF/UNDP SGP, CEE to develop a partnership project in the forests within and in the periphery of the Kumbhalgarh

Name of the Organization:
Foundation for Ecological Security (FES)

No. of Beneficiaries:
1800 households (primarily the Bhil and Garasiya tribes inhabiting 7 revenue villages). The landscape is within and around Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary in Southern Aravalis, Rajasthan GEF/UNDP SGP

GEF/UNDP SGP Grant:
Rs.23,00,000/-

Co-financing Accessed:
Rs.79,43,012 (National Bank of Agriculture and Rural Development 4 NABARD, District Administration, Forest Departments. Rs.20,78,000 from MNREGA, Rs.30,68,000 FES and others.

Project Time Period:
April 2010 to April 2014

Project Partners:
Gogunda Panchayat Samiti-Udaipur, District Collector- Udaipur, Departments of Forests, Agriculture and Animal Husbandary, Rajasthan, Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Udaipur, CIAE&T, Udaipur, NABARD.

Wildlife Sanctuary to protect and restore their biological value, the ecological services they provide and the vital role they play in the livelihoods of the communities dwelling in these forests since many generations.

PROJECT GOAL

Conserve forests and biodiversity within and in the vicinity of Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary and build robust community institutions capable of effectively participating in the formal management mechanisms of the Sanctuary.

PROJECT STRATEGY

The project adopts a comprehensive approach on the following lines. Building robust community institutions at the habitation/village levels as platforms for collective decision-making for forest protection and restoration; Developing package of livelihood practices to eliminate excessive dependence on forests to meet cash needs; and synergizing different programs and schemes such as, the Watershed Development Program and the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) to strengthen planning and implementation processes, focusing on improved conservation and local livelihoods.

PROJECT PROCESS

A systematic process approach adopted to achieve the objectives:

- Organizing and **strengthening institutions** in all the project villages with Bhil and Garasiya tribes in the region.
- Formation of **smaller networks** comprising community representatives and linking them to the existing Federation to facilitate discussions on landscape level issues.
- Building dialogue** with the community in 7 core villages and 18 dissemination villages, sharing information on progress and activities.
- Facilitating the communities** in developing and revisiting perspective plans as well as annual work plans to incorporate appropriate eco-restoration activities for implementation through the ongoing watershed project.
- Identifying potential leaders**, particularly among the youth to strengthen their capacities through specific training modules.



PROJECT ACTIVITIES

- Survey of 25 villages and assessment, including livelihood analysis of the dependent communities;
- Created 30 village institutions in all the 25 villages (900 farmers) with specific by-laws developed for each. Nearly 300 village meetings held over 3 years in the project.
- Constituted Eco Development Committees in selected 7 villages;
- Constituted a Federation of 10 Panchayats of community representatives, Panchayati Raj Institution members, officials from different line departments to ensure improved governance of the Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary and its buffer areas.
- Improved crop varieties, e.g. maize (pratap makka 3); GM6 and Aravali varieties of wheat introduced to 90% farmers. 140 farmers have adopted the practices.
- A total of 30 women SHGs have been strengthened and linked to banks; Rs.6,15,210 saved by women in all SHGs in 3 years; more than 570 women members involved on regular savings/meetings. B Nearly 55 households involved with Poultry, local breeds of RIR and Girija were tried in villages. Each household has benefited by Rs.3,500 to Rs.7,500 per month. Poultry training also given to the local tribal men and women. 10 local resource persons including men and women trained in improved goat rearing practices in convergence with NABARD-IGWDP. 11 persons accessed funds for goats from banks and SHGs.
- 1300 ha of common lands in Panchayats treated through co-financing from NABARD-IGWDP. Construction of Gully Plugs, stone weirs undertaken.
- Exposure visit organized resulted in multiple health benefits for women. Nearly 100 fuel-efficient cook-stoves constructed.
- Demonstrated improved farm-varieties of maize, wheat, and chickpea undertaken with 140 farmers in 7 villages.
- Deepening of 13 wells to provide critical irrigation to nearly 50 farmers . This has led to double cropping with wheat/mustard and maize crops.





POLICY IMPACTS

- The lessons from the project on people's involvement, local institution building have been regularly shared with the Forest Department. This significantly influenced the Forest Department to select FES as a project partner in the implementation of Rajasthan Forestry Biodiversity Project in Kumbhalgarh, Phulwari-ki-Nal, Jaisamand and Todgarh Wildlife Sanctuaries in the Udaipur Wildlife Division and Sitamata and Bassi Wildlife Sanctuaries in the Chittorgarh Wildlife Division.
- This project provides an opportunity for local communities in the periphery of the Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary to craft a role for themselves in the formal management mechanisms of Protected Areas.
- With support from GEF/UNDP SGP, the local NGO, FES has been engaged in assisting the communities in organizing and strengthening Eco Development Committees and women SHGs for effective governance and management of forests and other natural resources in the villages in and around the Sanctuary.
- More efforts are continuing to create more people's institutions and link them with market based systems for their local products, e.g. honey, jamun, mangoes, etc.



POLICY IMPACTS

Social: Evolution of village institutions in all the project villages as platforms for discussions on larger land use plans particularly management of forests in the buffer area of the Sanctuary, improved management of other common lands and effective planning and implementation of eco-restoration activities. 25 local leaders identified and trained on a range of issues for poultry; watershed development has given a new ray of hope. This knowledge has been recognized by the village communities by approaching them.

Economic: Nearly 200 households have earned from a range of actions for nearly Rs.2,500 to Rs.3,000 per month in 2-3 years from the onset of the project. New opportunities through livelihood actions have also increased related opportunities. This is, however, just the beginning; much more is anticipated with additional Government of Rajasthan partnership.

Environmental: B 13 wells deepened benefitting nearly 50 farmers, Treated more than 1300 ha land resulting in higher yields of crops, and also 760 ha area brought under double cropping. B More than 200 farmers assisted in taking up improved agro-forestry practices on nearly 200 ha of land with support of NABARD-TDF and SGP. B Small gully plugs (58); earthen bunds (9,000 meters), and stone weirs also constructed to protect soil and water .



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