



The Focus

Small is Beautiful

Rakhi Turi, a housewife of a slum in Bolpur town is also the member of Bholapukur 1 small saving and credit group. Her husband Bikash Turi is a rickshaw puller. His monthly earning is Rs. 1650 which is not at all enough for their 5 headed family. This Schedule caste family is also listed in BPL list of the Government. Rakhi was in search of work, but could not find any.

At that time DRCSC intervened there with the vermicompost making venture supported by Innovative Challenge Fund, KUSP. While we were in search of beneficiaries, we found Rakhi Turi and her group. Their group Bholapukur 1 small saving and credit group also showed their interest to this venture.

The project aimed to form 5 groups with 15 women members in each group. These groups would be collecting the vegetable wastes from the bolpur markets and make vermicompost commercially.

The women of Bholapukur 1 group decided to construct pits to make vermicompost on the land of an organization in Jamuboni called 'Support'. DRCSC had a threadbare discussion with the executive committee of Support and an agreement was also signed by which the project started. The women members got training on how to make vermicompost. The males of the families also extended their help to collect vegetable wastes from markets. The women started collecting straws, cow dung etc. They started to make vermicompost with the high quality vermis. They all decided the name for their product also 'Basundhara Vermi Compost'. The total production for the first month was 400 kg from 2 vats. Now the time was to take initiative for selling their product. It was decided that the mar-



ket price will be Rs. 10 per kg. After sale Rs. 1000 will be saved in the bank account to make pits in future. The rest will be distributed equally among the members. Rakhi Turi could spend 1-2 hrs a day after her regular household work. She earned Rs. 200 in the first month. Her husband also had some extra earning by renting his rickshaw for collecting raw materials and campaigning for this project. Rakhi Turi was very happy as she was able to earn some extra income by spending her extra time and acclaimed that the business will made much larger by them in future.

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Mini Harekarakamba, celebrating diverse approaches to learning

Harekarakamba, is an unique education festival, which celebrates diverse approaches to learning. It tries to perceive 'education' beyond its usual meaning, it focuses much on learning, be it in the classroom or out of the classroom. It focuses creation of knowledge rather than swallowing information.

DRCSC organized a series of mini Harekarakambas in various schools and institutions like Oriental Seminary School of

major role of participation along with the local school pupils and teachers who came as visitors to enjoy. The program spanned between 11 A.M. - 3 P.M.

Along with the number of stalls, an interactive film show was screened in the adjoining hall. The entire atmosphere took a festive look as the day advanced, with songs, rhymes, recitations, mimics and joyful shrieks from the children. The interactive stalls includes puzzles, toy from waste, story telling, gardening, puppetry, crafts from newspaper, environmental activity, psychological and mind games etc. This was to showcase some of the interactive ideas which can be used in the classroom to make the learning process more joyful and creative.

The organizers returned with a beautiful feeling, as even the smallest of the kids queued with utmost patience for making a paper puppet or a soft stick toy. The sincerity and honesty of the children majority of whom belonged to the deprived-uncared segment of the society, enchanted all and was the best feeling of the day.

Community Managed Food Forest

With the degeneration of forests and other ecosystems, income source of poor families have gradually withered away, resulting in acute scarcity of food and malnutrition. Added to their woes, is the extinction of the wide variety of indigenous trees that not only fetched food and fruits (tuber, root, different types of weeds, juice etc) for the rural poor but also provided fodder for the livestock. Condition worsens among the landless and poor families and they are left in a helpless state during and in the aftermath of natural calamities. They are at a higher risk, as they don't have a social or financial backup support system, in order to overcome the adversities of a disaster. At times, external support in terms of material relief reaches them but, its not

a sustainable means for combating the situation and reducing disaster risks.

In the food forest model, groups of landless or rural unemployed collectively take available fallow lands on short term lease and plant a wide variety of eco-systematically suitable multi-purpose trees i.e. a judicious combination of various trees, shrubs, creepers/ climbers, grasses, tubers - that acts as a huge food reserve with high tolerance against natural calamities which provide food, fuel and fodder, those that are good for making quality furniture coupled with seasonal production. If there is waterbody, fish and duck keeping are added options. This model has been successful in warding off the crisis created by disasters and also creates a scope for a supplementary income of the group members from pisciculture, poultry and duckery.

At the same time, afforestation by intensive mixed planting would resist global warming, conserve biodiversity on the one hand and will create an asset for the landless.

The food forest was first introduced among the poor and landless families of Khoskadampur village (Gram Panchayat Kankalitala, Block-Bolpur Sriniketan, District Birbhum of West Bengal) in 2004. DRCS organized landless poor from the community to discuss with the PRI on getting land on condition that revenue generated from the use of land between govt. and the community at ration of 25 : 75. Guided by the earlier experiences that the successful plantation is possible, if the user communities are involved in selecting species, raising, and planting seedlings, protecting the saplings harvesting and distribution of produce every steps were made participatory. The saplings were protected and nurtured by the group members over the years and they are reaping the fruits and other produces, which is equally shared among the members, especially during and after natural calamities when no other food is available. Vegetables, pulses, oilseeds, etc. is also cultivated as interim-crops are planted which not only serve the day today requirements of food of human beings but also meet the fodder need of the livestock. To sustain the efforts, food forest has been integrated with poultry and duckery.



Community Charging station at Narayanpur village

Narayanpur Village has 16 households belong to scheduled tribe community, without any electricity connection. The source of home light is kerosene, the price of which varies from Rs.30/ltr. - 40/ltr, and the light intensity is only 10 lumen. One Solar Lantern is given to the each household. And a community solar lantern charging station has been established at the village with two 60W solar panel. 2 Circuit boxes are been given so that 16 lanterns can be directly charged at a time.

Environmental Impacts:



In the households generally kerosene lantern are used for lighting purpose and monthly kerosene consumption of one such lantern is 2 lt-2.5lt. Though the quality and intensity of illumination Solar Lantern is far better than that of a Kerosene Lantern but considering the demand of light at different places at the same time one kerosene lantern is taken to be substituted by one solar lantern.

So amount of Kerosene substitution per month per family: 2 -2.5 Lt.

Amount of CO₂ emitted in burning 1 Lt of Kerosene: 2.5 Kg. Amount of CO₂ emissions reduction in 16 Family per year: 960-1200 Kg (~ 1 Carbon Credit).

Now each family is saving about Rs.70-100 per lamp. For maintenance of the entire system and for future community assets relating to energy (Mainly

Solar Lighting) the community have agreed to save 25 Rs per month per family.

Social Impacts:

As the quality illumination of the Solar Lantern is quite better than kerosene lantern mainly for studying purpose.

Community has also started an evening coaching centre at the village which would surly increases the level of education in the village.

This lantern has also decreased the monthly demand of kerosene oil for each family that will ensure that families not have to buy kerosene from the open market



with exceptionally high price rather availability from the Public distribution systems will be enough for them.

Successful execution of the systems will ensure a better cooperation between the community and the financial resources (group saving) of the community is been diverted to GHG emitting source (Kerosene) to a more environment friendly sources (Solar or other renewable sources).

The economical balance sheet

DRCSC's Contribution

Cost of 2 Solar Panels (@ 9000.00/-)	18000.00
Cost of frame for installing the solar panel	1500.00
Cost of 2 Circuit Boxes and wire for charging multiple solar lantern	1500.00
Cost of 16 Solar Lanterns (@ 900.00/- per Lantern)	14400.00
Cost of carrying 16 Solar Lanterns from Kolkata to Narayanpur	6000.00
Total DRCSC's Contribution	41,400.00

Community contribution Contribution

Installation Charge of 3 solar panels at the roof of a one storied building (4 Labors @ 50.00/-)	200.00
Material and labor charge for fixing the structure to the roof	500.00
Painting and material charge of Iron Structure for Solar panel	100.00
Total Community Contribution	800.00

Happenings



■ **Seed Festival**
Celebrating the year of biodiversity, we organized 'Beej Utsav' (Seed and Biodiversity festival) on 19th Nov. 2010 at

YMCA, Kolkata to find the way out for saving farmers, indigenous seeds and farming practices. It had exhibition of indigenous seeds, organic vegetable and processed organic food, farmers' experience



sharing, honoring resource farmers from across the state who are involved in sustainable agriculture etc. Government officials, representative of farmers union, local farmers from all around West Bengal gathered in this occasion. Details www.drcsc.org

■ **Project Evaluation**
DRCSC was entrusted to evaluate and hold guiding comments for partners of Indienhilfe in Birbhum and JICA (through Shaplaneer) in Khulna, Bangladesh.

■ **Parliamentary Committee**
Anshuman Das, Secretary DRCSC was invited to present before the central parliamentary committee on agriculture with the eminent scientist TK Bose, RN Basu and Anupam Paul on issues of GM.



■ **Kisan Swaraj Yatra**
Kisan Swaraj Yatra, an outreach effort from Sabarmati to Rajghat (from October 2nd to December 11th) - a call to join forces to save Indian farming and farmers and to promote self-reliant farming was a bus yatra that started at Sabarmati Ashram on Gandhi Jayanti to traverse through 20 states of India before it reached Rajghat on December 11th 2010, being organised under a broad informal banner called ALLIANCE FOR SUSTAINABLE & HOLISTIC AGRICULTURE (ASHA). DRCSC was actively involved in the process and lead the Yatra in West Bengal with KJKS and Basudha Vigyan Bithi during 18-20 November. For details www.kisanswaraj.in. and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mf03Ycp0Ezg>

■ **Mainstreaming of Gender and HIV-AIDS**
As an effort to mainstream issues of gender and HIV, DRCSC organized mainstreaming workshop with eminent resource persons to look deep in to the existing policy and activities of DRCSC.

■ **Book fair**
Like every year, we put up stall at Book Fair with a special focus on anti GMO campaign.



■ **Brainstorming Session at Mal**
Away from the madding crowd of Kolkata, DRCSC staffs took a 3 day off to brainstorm on future actions at Mal Junction at North Bengal in April.

■ **State consultation**
DRCSC organized a 'State Level Consultation on Revisiting Food Security' held on 28th August, 2010 at Academy of Fine arts where eminent scientist and speakers like RN Basu, TK Bose, Subhendu Dasgupta, Manab Sen, Harilal Nath, Pradip Sen etc were present in the occasion to share their views. For detail report www.drcsc.org

■ **Exposure trip**
12 young staffs of DRCSC visited Deccan Development Society, Centre for Sustainable agriculture and Auroville. On the



other hand, exposure for Government Officials has been organized in DRCSC field site of Birbhum and Patharpratima.

■ **DRCSC activity evaluation**
DRCSC activity evaluation was done by Dr. Shiraz Wajih of GEAG. He remarks in his conclusion "DRCSC is to be highly appreciated for the good work it has done in the project for the reduction of poverty and food security of marginalized communities through low external input and integrated agriculture, natural resource management and the supporting activities like extension, information dissemination, research, documentation etc. Well done, indeed."

Announcement

To build an audience of alternative thought provokers, to share on alternative development movement a space or platform is earnestly needed. In this context, it's a grand communique that DRCS has opened an alternative bookshop in Kolkata at our Dhakuria premises on 21st February, 2011 at the precious moment of International Vernacular Day. We showcase here a wide array of alternative books, periodicals, documents, compact discs etc from home to national level respectively. We cordially invite you to join this venture along with your friends.

New Productions



Debacle

A special issue of Debacle has been published on Climate Change. This issue of the English quarterly focuses on impact of climate change

on West Bengal, India, what has happened in COP-15, impact of climate change and the new national policy etc.

Ja ja shekha Joruri

This book covers the curriculum on basic functional literacy.



Prak Prathomik Siksha Sahayika



This manual is on the curriculum of pre-primary education. What are the things children should learn before entering into a primary school

is described here.

Shaping land to shape life - film

This is the story of 5 integrated small farms in the coastal district of Purba Medinipur which is characterised by the problems of salinity and water-logging and at the same time scarcity of water during the dry season. These farmers have



addressed these problems successfully by adopting sustainable agriculture and the principles of integration and posed as an answer to the questions of their viability, their possibility of providing year round nutrition security for the family, their possibility of increasing production, self sufficiency of the farmers and the reasons for their not getting extended further.

Food forest - film

There exist a wide variety of indigenous trees that supply food & fruits which are rich in nutritional value but fetches very low or no price when taken to the market. They have



high tolerance value and can withstand natural calamities. These trees have an important role to serve in the biovariety web. Many of these are on the way to extinction or are already lost. This film projects the story of a successful integrated model where the near extinct varieties of trees, short term crops of vegetables, pulses, oilseeds, fish, duck, chicken have been incorporated that has brought about food security for 19 families and has also secured their livelihood to a certain extent.

For information, training, ideas, books, films, techniques on alternative development through natural resource management contact

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