

## Restoring Degraded Ecosystem Through Capacity Building

The forest and tree cover in the state of Uttar Pradesh is 9.06%, which is below the national average of 23.57%. It is observed that the forests are in degraded condition and have poor quality since the open forest cover out of the forest area is 57.5%. The forest areas in UP are mostly located in southern part of the state and in Terai region. The local people including SCs and STs in these areas depend on forests, partly or fully, for their livelihood and forest based livelihood options available are limited in the State. It causes degradation of the forests. This further reduces the potential of the forests to meet the demands of local people from them. Moreover, it is very essential to improve the alternate livelihood options of the local people in order to reduce poverty. Climate change has contributed a lot in reducing the forest based livelihood options thus it is the need of the day to focus on this issue in a sophisticated manner.

Therefore, Government of Uttar Pradesh conceived a time bound intensive interventions in form of **Uttar Pradesh Participatory Forest Management and Poverty Alleviation Project (UPPFMPAP)** that empowers forest dependent communities and also conserves forests.

The UPPFMPAP is under implementation in the 20 forest divisions spread over 14 districts of the state of Uttar Pradesh, viz., **i) Terai** (5 districts), **ii) Bundelkhand** (5 districts); and **iii) Vindhyan** (4 districts). The project targets to benefit some 800 JFMCs and 140 EDCs. The project is funded through a soft loan provided by the **Japan International Cooperation Agency, JICA** (formerly Japan bank for International Cooperation). It aims at restoring degraded forests, augmenting forest resources, improving livelihood and empower the local forest dependent communities.

The empowerment is sought to be achievement by promoting sustainable forest management including JFM plantation and community development, thereby improving environmental quality and alleviating poverty.

Training Program Conducted			
Sr. No.	Theme of Training	Duration	No. of Participants
1.	Training on Community Organizing, Micro-Planning & Annual Implementation Planning ( <i>Two Batch</i> )	6	53
2.	Training on JFMC/EDC Management ( <i>Three Batch</i> )	6	85
3.	Training on Livelihood Security Enhancement & Income Generation Activities ( <i>Three Batch</i> )	10	93
<b>Total</b>			<b>231</b>

The project, though managed by UP Forest Department, the implementation involves engagement with

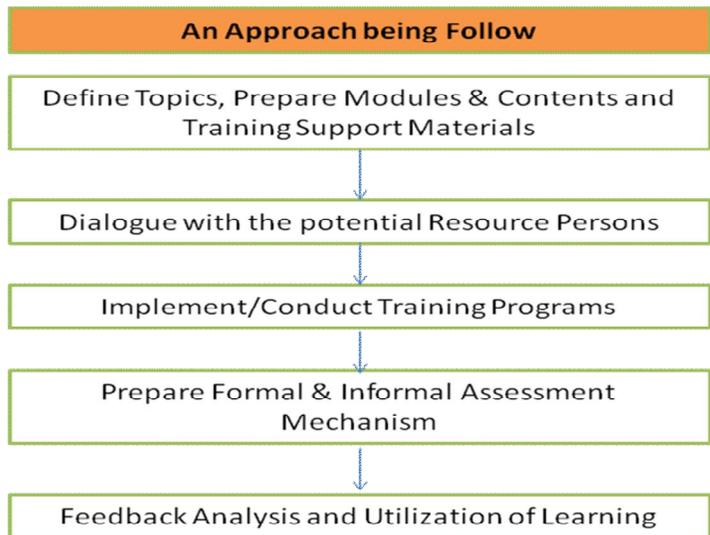
diverse stakeholders. **NGOs are one of the prominent stakeholders that the PMU has identified.**

*Capacity building of the NSOs and PNGOs already identified by the PMU is important component of the project as the trained human resources from these organisations will in turn ensure empowerment of the targeted communities in their respective areas.* Therefore, the PMU has identified credible capacity building institutions to undertake these training programmes. For Bundelkhand region the partner is TARA Livelihood Academy, which is an enterprise of Development Alternatives Group. Training programs are being conducted from TARAGram Orchha Campus.



An innovative mechanism is developed to train the NGO personnel who are from diversify fields and experiences as well as their roles in the project. It was a mix of classroom sessions by the subject experts, group exercise & presentations, exposure visits to the related fields etc. At one side smaller group discussion help participants analyze their thoughts and sharing the same with the larger group has helped them in getting the clear picture and correlation with the field realities. Topic theory which was followed by field visit had got a lot of importance in terms of utilization of the learning and doing the required corrections.

The capacity building of the work force from various NGO partners has helped them in organizing community for the project implementation, preparing annual

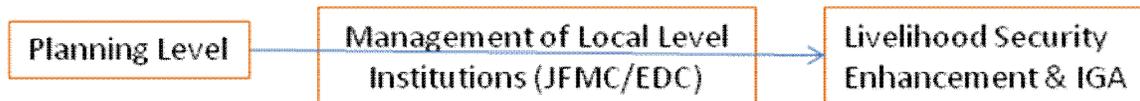


implementation plan & micro plan, management of Joint Forest Management & Eco Development Committees and ensuring Income Generation Activities of these groups. This has been realized by not only the work force (NGOs) involve in it but quality of the work is very well visible at the PMU level (while they are reporting) as well as result can be seen at the implementation level.

Training programs are held for the longer durations, 6-10 days depending on the topics and are the residential programs. Due to residential training program, participants get a lot of time to interact with each other and share their learning, experiences and challenges in project implementation. Also the longer duration helped participants to analyze the learning and got an opportunity to discuss its effectiveness at the ground.

This is the first time in the history when large numbers of NGOs are involved in any Govt. projects and I believe that was the base for JICA to fund to Govt. of U.P. forest department. Due to the innovative designs of the project and involve the civil society organizations at the large scale will lead project towards success for sure.

Knowledge and skills gained during the project by the NGOs is getting transfer to the local institutions, JFMC or EDC via different mechanisms in order to strengthen them to ensure livelihood opportunities for the Forest User Group (FUG). It will not only provide them the better livelihood options but also reduce the migration. As capacity building and trainings are an integral part of the project thus happening at different levels as per the need.



*Excellence is an art won by training and habituation. We do not act rightly because we have virtue or excellence, but we rather have those because we have acted rightly. We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit.*

**Aristotle**