

IPSI Case Study Summary Sheet: Integrated participation of institutional stakeholder for upliftment of rural livelihood through sustainable harvesting and market linkages of NTFPs and Agri products



Photo: IORA Ecological Solutions Pvt. Ltd.

The project was focussed to develop an integrated approach for long term development and livelihood improvement of forest dependent communities through sustainable harvesting of commercially important NTFP species, development of market linkages and value chain of selected NTFPs and Agriculture crops. Ghughri block in the tribal district of Mandla in Madhya Pradesh was chosen as the area for the proposed study and implementing proposed interventions. A total of five villages was chosen where farmers were found to be primarily dependent on forest resources i.e. fuel wood, fodder, NTFP and its collection as a source of livelihood. Self Help Groups were selected as a project unit and with their consent Community Interest Groups were developed in identified villages i.e. (i) Group of Agri-business (ii) Group of NTFP collectors and (iii) Group of Fodder and Milk business.

During the course of the project, resource assessment work and selection of species for developing value chain and market linkages were carried out for both NTFPs and Agri-crops. Ecological survey in the forest area was completed to obtain the status of forest resources. In addition, Four Cell Analysis and Rapid Market Assessment tools were also adopted for identification and selection of species. Based on the availability of these species and dependency of communities; two NTFP species - *Cassia tora* and *Terminalia chebula* was chosen. Similarly, agri species were also identified and selected through developed indicators and a village selection questionnaire. Based on the results - Kutki (little millet) and Flax seeds (linseed) were chosen. Additionally, a vegetable variety of green pea was introduced in the project area. After harvesting of the crop, the benefit was shared among the community members responsible for the harvest and collection. Training was imparted to the user communities to enhance their skill and capacities.

Development of value chain of NTFPs such as *Cassia tora* and *Terminalia Chebula* and Agri products such as Kutki (Little Millet) and Flax seeds have motivated the farmers to adopt a collective marketing approach and earn premium amounts for their produce. Under fodder activities Azolla tanks were developed in the backyard of farmers who expressed interest in being part of the proposed intervention. In addition, traditional hydroponic techniques were also popularised among rural communities for growing green fodder throughout the year. Similarly, root slips of perennial grass species were also introduced in the backyard of farmer's houses. Efforts were also made to develop milk routes and link milk groups with existing milk federation in project area.