

Evaluation Report

Name of the project

Community Based Herbal Gardens project at Keshabpur, Jessore

Implementing entity

Integrated Development Organization (IDO)



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Executive summary:

Integrated Development Organization (IDO) in cooperation with Arannayk Foundation has been implementing a project titled “Community Based Herbal Gardens” in Sagardari area of Keshabpur upazilla of Jessor district. Objectives of the project are following:

- Conservation of indigenous and endangered medicinal plants
- Promotion of commercial cultivation of medicinal plants
- Promotion of primary health care through growing medicinal plants in the home garden
- Monitoring and supervision at Kabilpur and Hasanpur village.

This evaluation report was prepared based on information gathered from project documents, project reports and visits to project sites. Stakeholders (project staff, participants, community leaders, beneficiary group members etc.) of the project were interviewed for their perceptions on project activities and the future of the project as well. The evaluator visited, assessed and verified physical achievements of the project mentioned in the progress report.

Initially the project was scheduled to be implemented in fifteen villages but due to water logging conditions and other unfavourable situations the project activities were confined in two villages, namely Kabilpur and Hasnpur. Two hundred households of each of these villages have been given five medicinal plants of Amloki, Horitoki, Bohera, Arjun and Chuijhal for their homestead plantation. During the evaluation it was observed that about 50 to 60 percent of the homesteads have no medicinal plant surviving that was planted under the provision of the project. In the other 40 to 50 percent homesteads about 50 percent medicinal plants are surviving. Ten institutions (schools and madrasas) compounds of these villages have been planted with different medicinal plant species. Most of the institution’s plantations have been badly damaged except one which is protected by boundary wall. Overall the situation of Kabilpur village is the worst and the situation of Hasanpur village is little better. In general, people’s attitude towards the project activities was not satisfactory.

The organization is weak and there is no chance of significant improvement of the project and hence the project may be discontinued at the earliest.

Introduction:

Keshabpur upazilla of Jessor district is now vulnerable to natural disasters like over flooding. Due to bad drainage situation and siltation of Kapodakkho river the area remains water logged for considerable time of a year. In general the people of the project are poor and don not have many alternatives for their livelihood. Different types of herbal/medicinal plants like Amloki, Horitoki, Bohera, Neem, Arjun, Ashfal, Ulotkambol, kodbel, Deowa, Bashok, Shuli, Chuijhal, Nishinda etc which were available in the area have now decreased for biophysical and socio-economic reasons. Medicinal plants have good market demand and value. Growing medicinal plants can be an alternative source for income generation of the project area. The aim of the project is to cultivate medicinal plants of market value and demand and thereby improve livelihood and improve bio-diversity.

This evaluation was carried out to find out the relevance, adequacy and sustainability of the outcomes of the project in relation to its objectives. Different techniques (such as participant observation, focus-group discussion, physical assessments and verification) were employed in the field to collect information from different types of stakeholders.

Context and objectives of the project:

The main objectives of the project are:

- Conservation of indigenous and endangered medicinal plants
- Promotion of commercial cultivation of medicinal plants
- Promotion of primary health care through growing medicinal plants in the home garden
- Monitoring and supervision at Kabilpur and Hasanpur village.

Project activities and outcomes:

Objective 1: Conservation of indigenous and endangered medicinal plants

Following activities have been done under this objective:

- ✓ Participants and other village households have been made aware about the conservation through group meetings
- ✓ Essay competition was arranged in schools
- ✓ Reporters of local and national newspapers were taken to project area and reports were published
- ✓ Establishment of trifalla village
- ✓ Distribution and fixing of name plates of different medicinal plants for public information
- ✓ Community awareness raising programme

Participants were found to be aware of the objectives but not really motivated. They are reluctant to show their medicinal plants and have shown resentments against project personals.

Objective 2: Promotion of commercial cultivation of medicinal plants

- Besides project participant's homesteads no commercial plantation was found. Only a few participants have used Chuijhal commercially.

Objective 3: Promotion of primary health care through growing medicinal plants in the home garden

- Evaluator met one person named Md. Mithu in Hasanpur village, who is working as a herbal physician (Kabiraj) and has cultivated medicinal plants in his homegarden. He is enthusiastic in herbal health care and running a herbal medicine shop.

Objective 4: Monitoring and supervision at Kabilpur and Hasanpur village.

- Project personnel have claimed that they have visited the project sites regularly and monitored and supervised project activities regularly. But the evaluator has an impression of lack of supervision and monitoring of project activities which is evident from the annual progress report and the field visit.

The following tables describe present situation of the project activities undertaken:

Situation of homestead plantations of two villages are bad and overall average survival at present is shown here.

SL	Location	Number of Species	No of plants given	Average rate of survival
1	Kabilpur village	05	05	30%
2	Hasanpur village	05	05	40%

Situation of institutional plantations are even worse. The evaluator has visited six institutions out of ten and the approximate survival is shown here.

S1	Location	Number of Species	No of plants given	Average rate of survival (%)
1	Burihati Mohila dakhil madrasha	25	30	90
2	Burihati Muktijuddha college	25	25	35
3	Burihati Govt primary school	25	25	20
4	Burihati High school	25	25	20
5	Sagagdari technical collage	25	25	-
6	Sagagdari Govt primary school	20	20	-
7	Sagagdari Madhu polli	25	33	50
8	Sagagdari Gust house	25	25	40
9	Hasanpur Mohala Madrassa	25	53	-
10	Hasanpur technical Highschool	25	25	-

Impacts:

The project has created little awareness among participants but has not been able to raise awareness among the mass community. There is no significant improvement in cultivation, production and use of medicinal plants in the project area.

Sustainability Potentials:

For the sustainability of such project activities there should have been a very thorough and pragmatic baseline survey to identify feasibility and interests of people about medicinal plants.

Recommendations:

Overall the project has not been successful in regards to its objectives. According to project officials, prolonged water logging caused severe damage to the plantations. Site selection should be done more carefully if the project has to be extended. Besides, processing and marketing of medicinal plants should be taken in to consideration.