



Centre for People's Forestry
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EVOLVING STRATEGIES FOR HOLISTIC
DEVELOPMENT
OF CHENCHU COMMUNITY
WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON
CONSERVATION OF ECOSYSTEM
IN NSTR WITH MULTI STAKEHOLDER
PARTICIPATION

WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS

21ST & 22ND JANUARY 2010
HYDERABAD INDIA



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ABOUT CPF

Centre for People's Forestry is a professional NGO working in community forestry in the State of Andhra Pradesh and Orissa. It also plans to initiate works in Jharkhand in the near future. It was registered as a Public Trust in 2002, prior to which it belonged to the JFM wing of Centre for World Solidarity. CPF, as an organisation, came into existence to make the deserving forest dwelling/dependent communities realise their entitlements within the framework of forest policies, especially the 1988. CPF strives to develop and ground sustainable forest management mechanisms for enhancing livelihood security of the marginalised sections, especially women, tribals, Dalits and other resource poor among these communities. Placing livelihood enhancement of the communities affront in all its initiatives, CPF has been identifying and attending to the specific needs of the communities and NGOs in its working areas.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS



Background

Objectives of the Workshop

Participation

Workshop Schedule

Inaugural Session

Technical Session I: Sharing Experiences of CHELE project

Technical Session II: Experiences from Other Tiger Reserves

Technical Session III: Identifying and Prioritizing issues on Livelihoods, Conservation, Policy and other Development issues in NSTR

Technical Session IV: Strategies

Concluding Session

Annexure

BACKGROUND

Nagarjunasagar Srisaillam Tiger Reserve renamed as the Rajiv Gandhi National Sanctuary is spread over an extent of 3,568sq.km and is the only Tiger Reserve in Andhra Pradesh. It was established in 1978 and elevated to the status of "Tiger Reserve" in the year 1983. This sanctuary area falls in five districts namely, Mahabubnagar, Kurnool, Prakasam, Nalgonda and Guntur. The sanctuary is an abode for floristic and faunal diversity. The reserve is dry deciduous mixed forest along the river Krishna.

This Tiger Reserve is inhabited by the primitive tribal group called "Chenchu", who live in groups of huts called 'Gudem/Penta'. Most of them still remain either hunters or gatherers and practice the barter system of economy. The predominant community is "Chenchu" followed by Lambada and Erukula. There are 115 Chenchu Penta (Villages) in the tiger reserve in which Eco Development Committees (EDCs) have been constituted.

"Livelihood Enhancement through sustainable and safe practices of Rock Bee Honey Harvesting through GO-NGO collaboration (CHELE 2006 - 2009)" funded by SDTT is a collaborative project (APFD, ITDA, GCC and NGOs) formulated to exclusively address the livelihoods of Chenchu honey harvesters in NSTR. In the process, some of the traditional skills of Chenchu honey collectors have been honed along with introduction of scientific method of honey harvesting and hygienic method of extraction which have paved the way for the Chenchu honey collectors to earn better income. In addition, this has also encouraged a major portion of unemployed Chenchu youth to return to this profession. Simultaneously, NTFP collectors, especially Chenchu women are being trained on sustainable NTFP collection and value addition to enhance their income levels. In the process, the Chenchu youth are groomed as resource persons to address the needs of the community and forest. As a result, there is improved understanding among the Chenchu community and other stakeholders in the NSTR to work towards improving the health of forest and the Chenchu community.



OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOP

1. To showcase the best practices and share the learning's of the CHELE project with regard to sustainable collection of wild honey and other NTFPs.
2. To facilitate cross learning on livelihood and conservation practices among stakeholders of other tiger reserves.
3. To identify and prioritize issues related to holistic development of Chenchu community and conservation of ecosystem in NSTR and develop strategies for addressing the same.

PARTICIPATION

Participation included officials from the forest department, tribal welfare department, Girijan Co-operative Corporation, academia, representatives from NGOs, representatives from other tiger reserves and Chenchu community representatives. A detailed listing of all the participants at the workshop has been reflected in Annexure I.



WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

The workshop was divided into six sessions which included

- a.) Inaugural session
- b.) Technical Session I: Sharing Experiences of CHELE project
- c.) Technical Session II: Experiences from Other Tiger Reserves
- d.) Technical Session III: Identifying and Prioritizing issues on Livelihoods, Conservation, Policy and other Development issues in NSTR
- e.) Technical Session IV: Strategies
- f.) Concluding Session

Further each session was sub-divided into various presentations and discussions. Through these various sessions, the participants worked towards identifying issues and developing strategies for the next phase of the proposal. A copy of the workshop schedule has been enclosed as Annexure 2.

INAUGRAL SESSION

The workshop commenced with Mr. C. Vasu, Senior Programme Officer, CPF warmly welcoming all participants and guests to the workshop. He went on to invite the guests Dr. Urmila Pingle, Managing Trustee, CPF, Dr. Kameshwar Rao, Trustee CPF and Dr. Suvama, Director Andhra Pradesh Forest Academy (APFA) to the podium and requested Dr. Urmila Pingle, Managing Trustee, CPF to chair the Inaugural session.



The Chenchu community representatives presented a song welcoming the participants to the workshop.

Dr. Urmila Pingle asked the dignitaries and the Chenchu community representatives to light the lamp. A round of self introductions followed.

Please contact CPF for copies

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