

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT Year 2013-14

Uttarapath Sewa Sanstha



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Message from the desk of Chief Executive

It gives me great pleasure to introduce our annual report of Uttarapath Sewa Sanstha for the year 2013-14 which highlights our initiatives, learnings and achievements over the course of the past one year. The report showcases the various campaigns, projects and programmes we implemented over the past year, offering a panoramic view of our activities to the reader. The development initiatives under various programs have resulted in socio-economic enhancement of Himalayan rural communities, residing in remote locations.



Our project on livelihood promotion and its Management, in association with Tata Trust, Mumbai, NABARD culminated in a fruitful impacts by reviving traditional livelihood in Himalayan mountain villages where communities don't have other option of livelihood and it is pushing and pulling migration trend. While some of the progressive farmers have created milestones to others that if available natural resources are managed in a systematic way by using modern and low cost technologies, agriculture fields can yield gold. However, a lot need to do for the sustainability of these development initiatives by awaring farmers on market dynamics of agriculture commodities and strengthening farmers to make them competitive in the market. The learning from these programs is that a common quote i.e. 'The person who is not doing anything is doing agriculture' need to be changed by making agriculture profitable as well as sustainable. Since culture emerged from agriculture when man started cultivation thousands years back and with the seasonality of agriculture, culture came into existence, this approach can play vital role in conservation of natural resources, culture with the prosperity of local communities.

It has been a busy and satisfying year for Uttarapth, as we continue to grow and mature as an organisation. Our horizons have broadened and we have gained new experiences which have both widened and deepened our understanding of social realities. In this process of growth, our partners have had a vital role to play, and I extend my sincere gratitude to Jamshedji Tata Trust (JTT), Tata Education Trust (TET), National Agriculture Bank for Rural Development (NABARD), Agriculture and Horticulture Department for their unstinting support.

I would also like to especially thank the Board of the Uttarapath Sewa Sanstha for their guidance and support commitment of our team members, upon whose efforts the foundation of our success is built. We look forward to a new chapter in our journey to the development next year.

*Rajendra Pant
Chief executive*

About organization

Uttarapath Sewa Sanstha (USS) is an Indian NGO registered under the Society Registration Act and is a District Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand based grass root development growing organization promoted by a group of development professionals & social activists in 2002. Since then organization has been working in Uttarakhand State since 2002 with the dual objectives of conservation and empowerment of marginal communities through enterprise development. These objectives are derived from the premise that, when local communities secure economic and managerial control over their natural resources and have access to necessary information and technical and financial support, they will have the incentive to work actively toward the long-term conservation of these resources.

This premise continues to inform USS strategy to assist village communities in the Himalayan state of Uttarakhand in conserving their natural resources and biodiversity while developing economic opportunities through non-timber forest product and other agriculture based enterprises, utilizing natural resources in an equitable, economically and environmentally sustainable manner. Presently it has reached to the 1700 families in the most backward and remote 146 villages of 04 blocks of Pithoragarh district. The direct coverage in agriculture improvement programme is with an additional indirect reach to 1000 families through various other outreach programmes.

As it is proved that women are the backbone of hill economy, where male folk migrate to the cities in the search of job and women are left in the villages. So USS focuses the marginal communities to generate alternative systems of livelihood. As the social fabric in mountain is strongly bounded so works toward strengthening of community based organizations (CBOs) play critical role in natural resource management so one of the core area of the organization is to build the capacity of these village based institutions like Van Panchayats (VPs), Mahila Mangal Dals (MMDs), Yuvak Mangal Dals (YMDs) and Panchayat Institutions so that they could have managerial control over natural resources and biodiversity of local regions.

Uttarapath Sewa Sanstha has derived its mission statement as *"To generate alternative systems of livelihood for the poor and marginalized, leading to their economic and social empowerment as well as improved quality of life in poverty pockets and regions of absolute poverty in India."*

GOALES

- Promoting economic development through small enterprises combined with the strengthening of village community institutions.
- Through training and capacity building, expanding local capacity to take up income generation activities and small enterprises.
- Strengthening community based institutions – Van Panchayats, Mahila Mangal Dals, and Self Help Groups to increase their capacity in managerial control on natural resources
- Increase awareness of local community on health, education, environment, technologies, improved practices and services for sustainable enterprise development.
- Conservation of local culture, value and beliefs system and promoting eco tourism

Coverage area: District Pithoragarh

Programs / Activities

Promotion and strengthening of community based organization

Self Help Groups



Trainings and capacity building programs are conducted for the households to organize them into SHGs. Groups are trained and their capacity is built on operational and financial capabilities. So far USS has promoted 110 SHGs and these groups are engaged in saving and credit activities. Groups are linked to the bank and have a regular saving. This year organization has trained more than 1052 members of self help groups engage in agriculture an allied activities. Details of the SHGs/JLGs and other community based institutions by the end of this is given below.

SN	Particulars	Total No.	Membership	Total Saving (In Lakhs)
1.	Self Help Groups	110	1052	6.33 Lakhs
2.	Farmer Clubs	59	1343	-
3.	Joint Liability Groups	38	152	
Total		207	2547	6.33

Farmer Clubs



By the end of this financial year 59 farmer clubs has been promoted in project villages by the support of National Agriculture Bank for Rural Development (NABARD). The purpose of the organizing primary producers into famrers organization is to provide them a common platform to access input services from line departments. Trainings and agricultural inputs are provided to the farming community through liasioning with line departments and as an output of this program government development schemes has been extended to the remote villages of District and farmers have been aware about the modern practices of agriculture as well as government schemes..

No. of farmer clubs promoted so far	No. of farmers associated with the club	Services of the departments being accessed by farmers
59	1343	Banking services, Agri inputs, livestock development and veterinary services, technical inputs from horticulture department and KVK.

Joint Liability Groups (JLGs)

Under another NABARD supported program, joint liability groups have been promoted to have access over financial services of banks to developing enterprises in villages. Being agrarian community, the agriculture and its allied sectors are the main source of income of the farmers so most of the farmers have opted goetry as a livelihood and invest into it.

No of Joint Liability Groups (JLG)	Amount of loan accessed by members from Bank	Preferred enterprise
24	52 Lakhs	Goatery
15	24.30	KCC- Agricultural inputs
Total: 39	Total: 76.30 Lakhs	

Trainings and technical services are provided to the enterprising farmers through convergence with line department and as an impact of this initiative; many farmers are earning good income and improved their life quality. It has spread a positive message among the farming community and many farmers are coming forward to take up enterprise development work. While some of the farmers are accessing loan to invest into agriculture sector and earning good income by growing cash crops. Fury

Van Panchayats (VPs)

In Uttaranchal whereas only about 10% of the mountain region area is officially under cultivation, the rural population actually uses about 60% of the total area for sustaining local livelihoods. Most of this non-cultivated land falls in 67% of the total area legally notified as forests. 6 In this context whether the legal regime governing forest preservation and use in the State addresses the demand for forest resources to meet human needs and concern for their sustainability shall explored in some detail later.

Sl.	Name of village	Block	VP (ha)
1	Kamtoli	Kanalichhina	125
2	Bhandarigaon	Kanalichhina	75
3	Muwani	Kanalichhina	124
4	Surouli	Kanalichhina	40
5	Tarakun	Kanalichhina	25
6	Gobradi	Didihat	130
7	Digouthi	Didihat	70
8	Naini	Berinag	115
9	Pilakhi	Berinag	44
10	Pipaltad	Berinag	130
11	Sini	Munsyari	45
12	Chama	Didihat	70
13	Khateda	Didihat	100
14	Chousala	Berinag	125
15	Tushreda	Berinag	70

In this year USS started a new program named 'Tree Farming' supported by Tata Education Trust (TET), Mumbai to revive traditional resource management system of villages by strengthening Van Panchayats. The program envisages to conserve the resources through onservation and natural resource management. This program is being implemented in 16 villages of remote villages of Kanalichina Block of District Pithoragarh.

LIVELIHOOD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Vegetable production



Local farmers were engaged in traditional crops resulting in meager income while in many of the villages have irrigation facility. Through Small Grant Progm supported by Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, Mumbai USS initiated Livelihoods activities with women Shgs introduced improved variety seed of cash crops and built capacity of local farmers to yield more income from agricultural activities. Through the support of line departments like agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry etc USS conducted series of trainings to the farmers on agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, organic cultivation, agriculture marketing, IPM, IPNM and on other various topics. The main purpose of these technical trainings is to increase technical

know-how of farmers on modern agriculture practices and increasing their agriculture based income. Field level technical trainings have resulted in adoption of improved and modern technologies by large numbers of farmers and getting good income from farming activities. The status of the vegetable production program in the year 2013-14 has reached to the new level and detail has been given below.

SN	Particulars	Unit	Qty
1.	Farmers growing vegetables	No.	781
2.	Area under vegetable production	Hact	25
3.	Major vegetables being grown by farmers	-	Onion, pumpkins, Potato, tomato, capsicum, cabbage, cauliflower, Radish and Pea

Spices production

Work in this sector was started after a careful assessment of livelihood pattern of the farming system and need of the farmers to increase their income with the support of Jamsetji Tata Trust, Mumbai. The findings of assessment indicated that production of certain can address the issues like labor intensive agriculture, menace of wild animal in agriculture land and low volume and high price of the agricultural commodities. Particularly in hill farming, cultivation of turmeric, ginger and garlic has several benefits such as it is less labour intense, quite remunerative to cultivators, allows for decentralized processing and eliminates the problem faced by field crops being destroyed by wild animals thus reopening the cultivation of fields that had previously been abandon.



From an initial small numbers of 250 producers today the programs has been working with more than 1300 producers by involving them in cultivation of spices. Presently farmers are selling their farm produces into local markets through a regional supply chain. As a future strategy of the organization is to organize the production system and developing infrastructure for processing and product development by promoting producer organization.

Crops	Area under crop in Ha.	No. of farmers growing
Turmeric	35	1342
Ginger	10	740
Garlic	5	523
Total	50	2605

From the above table it is evident that the activities has resulted economic impact directly and indirectly it has resulted certain impacts on income of the farmers. The spices sub-sector is a introduced 3 years back and it has gained wide acceptance by the local community with in this short span as a recognized livelihood option in the mountains.

ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRY DEVELOPMENT

In this year, USS helped dairy farming to evolve from subsistence to a commercial activity with 143



women dairy farmers in 56 villages. These women producers are selling fresh milk in the local market and some of the farmers are associated with ANCHAL dairy. Under the NABARD supported Joint Liability Group (JLG) program, 272 households are being organized into 62 JLGs to have access over finance to invest into dairy sector. A para-vet has been developed in the project area through convergence with Uttarakhand Livestock Development Board (ULDB) to provide artificial insemination services to improve the breed of low milking cattle. The future strategy of the organization is to develop business development services under dairy promotional program as it is one of the most demanding

intervention by local community and more than 95 percent dairy producers are women. USS takes up plantation work every year and fodder species saplings are planted in private and community land to address the issue of fodder scarcity, one of the obstacles in dairy development program in mountain. Also convergence has achieved with Veterinary Department for the veterinary services and this year more than 4300 cattle were vaccinated and 1234 cattle were treated. Similarly through convergence with Agriculture Department vermin compost

Natural Timber Fiber Products (NTFP) Development Program

As Bamboo is a versatile group of plants which is capable of providing ecological, economic and livelihood



security to the people. Importance of the crop as a source of raw material for industrial and domestic use with its growing demand all over the country necessitated its cultivation in farm lands as well. Keeping in view the conservation issue a new program has been initiated with the help of Tata Trust and the main purpose of the program is to promote develop and disseminate technologies through a seamless blend of traditional wisdom and modern scientific knowledge to generate employment opportunities for skilled and unskilled persons, especially unemployed youth in villages. Area has huge potential for

Bamboo promotion and traditionally large numbers of households are engaged in bamboo related artisan work.

Through the support of Tata Trust, Bamboo promotional program is being implemented in 15 selected villages where traditionally bamboo is harvested for domestic and commercial purposes. The program has dual purpose to manage the existing resources and develop biomass for bamboo handicraft. Presently 790 households from 15 villages has been covered and resource development work is being carried out through Van Panchayats.



OTHER DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

Women empowerment and formation of Mahila Sangathan



Uttarakhand some of the worst gender ratios, indicating gross violation of women's rights are found and the situation is further worsened by lack of awareness among women. Pithoragarh is one of the districts in Uttarakhand where female ratio is very poor. So USS focuses on awareness building by organizing awareness programs through the support of USNPSS, Almora. 12 informal sangathan of women has been promoted in the area with a membership of 428 working women.

Keeping in mind higher mother mortality rate (MMR) and infant mortality rate (INR) in remote villages, USS organizes trainings and awareness programs to bring awareness about the neo natal care, mother health and reproductive child health.

Adolescent education and awareness

Through the support of USNPSS, Almora groups of adolescent girls are promoted in remote villages to educate them on health, hygiene and social issues. Regular trainings are organized to the adolescent girls on life skills, education and career. So far 528 girls have been organized into 8 Kishori Sangthan (Adolescent girls groups).

The purpose of the program is to change the mindset of adolescent girls of these remote villages so that they could come forward into the main stream of development



Convergence with line departments

One of the core strength of the organization is having good relations with line departments and consequently many farmers have been benefitted by linking them to the developmental schemes of governments and private agencies. This year also convergence developed with many line departments and the details of the convergence has been given in below table.

SN	Line Department	Area of Convergence
1.	Agriculture Department	Improved seed, tools, vermin compost pits and other inputs. Promotion of system of rice intensification (SRI) technology with Paddy crop. Water harvesting prgm (fish pond, vermin pits, poltery, polyhouse) (Value 25 lakhs)
2.	Horticulture department	Trainings, Inputs and 1045 fruit plants
3.	Department of Sericulture, Govt of Uttarakhand (DOS) /Center Silk Board (CSB), Govt. of India.	12 Farmers are doing rearing of Mulberry Cocoon and 6 farmers have accessed rearing houses (Value 4.44 Lakhs)
4.	Veterinary Department	Vaccination of 4123 cattle and treatment of 2463 animals

5.	Uttarakhand Livestock Development Board (ULDB)	One artificial insemination center developed in project area and planning is to development 3 more centers.
6.	MGNREGA	Plantation of fodder species in common land and fencing
7.	Bankers	Financial Inclusion and financial literacy.
8.	KVK	Technical inputs and 3 project villages has been adopted by KVK for the promotional of cereals and oilseed crops



Through convergence with agriculture department, 6 multipurpose water storage tank of 3.0 Lakh Liter capacity have been constructed in 4 villages where farmers are getting benefitted by this initiative. The result of the water harvesting



tank is perceptible in the form of fishery and crop diversification. These water tanks have served the purpose of life saving irrigation during the lean period and generated total 20 Ha. Command area. Similarly low water consuming and less labour intensive technique of paddy cultivation called System of Rice Intensification (SR) introduced with selected farmers and significant result in yield have been reported by farmers.

PATH FORWARD

The future strategy of the organization is to introduce community owned business models through farmer producer organizations (FPOs) into the area and promoting new livelihood sector such as sericulture. As area has potential to promoting Mulberry and Munga silk and presently 12 farmers are engaged in rearing of Mulberry Cocoon through the convergence with Department of Sericulture (DOS) and Center Silk Board. These farmers are getting technical inputs from DOS and USS is facilitating the process.

Recently strategic planning of the organization was conducted to set the milestones and it has been set that;

1. Production system has to be organized and farmer production organizations have to be promoted to promote community owned enterprises.
2. Sericulture sector has to be promoted in the area through liaisoning with DOS and CSB.
3. Area of working has to be extended to the other parts of Uttarakhand and
4. Agriculture and allied sector based livelihood activities need to be promoted by developing infrastructure for processing and product development.