

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT Year 2014-15



Uttarapath Sewa Sanstha



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Message from the desk of Chief Executive

It gives me great pleasure to introduce annual report of Uttarapath Sewa Sanstha (USS) for the year 2014-15 which highlights our initiatives, learnings and achievements over the course of the past one year. The report showcases the outcomes and impacts of the projects and programmes and the report offers a panoramic view of our activities to the reader. The development initiatives under different programs have impacted the lives of the people in many ways and this report describes the achievements and learnings of USS.

Project on conservation linked livelihood promotion, in association with Tata Education Trust, Mumbai, agriculture and its allied based enterprise development programs through support of National Agriculture Bank for Rural Development (NABARD), Commercial Tree Plantation Program with the help of National Seed Corporation Limited (NSCL) and Women Empowerment initiatives from Uttarakhand Sewa Nidhi culminated in a fruitful impacts by reviviving traditional livelihood, building capacities of local people, social development of women in Himalayan mountain villages where communities don't have other option of livelihood and it is pushing and pulling migration trend. Still a lot need to do for the sustainability of these development initiatives by building capacity of farmers on market dynamics of agriculture commodities and strengthening farmers to make them competitive in the market. So this year we have been able to promote a farmer producer organization (FPO) to organize production and marketing of agri produces by organizing unorganized farmers into federation through the support of NABARD.

It has been a satisfying year for USS, as we continue to grow and mature as an organization and our horizons have broadened and we have gained new experiences which have both widened and deepened our understanding on 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), National Seed Corporation Ltd. (NSCL), Uttarakhand Biodiversity Board and all line departments for their unstinting support.

I would also like to especially thank the Board of the USS 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

CHAPTER- I

About organization

Uttarpath Sewa Sanstha (USS) is an Indian NGO registered under the Society Registration Act and is Uttarakhand based grass root development organization promoted by a group of development professionals in 2002. Since then organization has been working in Uttarakhand with the dual objectives of conservation and socio-economic 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.

Uttarpath 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."*

GOALS

- 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: 182 villages in three District Pithoragarh, Almora and Pauri Garhwal

CHAPTER- II**Program and activities****Promotion of 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 170 SHGs and 80 more self help groups are in the process of formation and bank linkages through help of NABARD and Tata Trust, Mumbai. Groups are engaged in saving and credit activities and are linked to the bank. So far organization has trained more than 1184 members of SHGs on microfinance. Details of the SHGs, promoted by USS are given below.

SN	Particulars	Total No.	Membership	Total Saving (In Lakhs)
1.	Self Help Groups	170	1184	8.36 Lakhs
2.	Farmer Clubs	69	1150	--
3.	Joint Liability Groups	69	276	-
Total		308	2610	8.36

Promotion of Farmer Clubs

Similarly 69 farmer clubs with a membership of 1150 have been promoted in project villages by the support of National Agriculture Bank for Rural Development (NABARD) to have access over development schemes of government's 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 extended to the remote villages of District Pithoragarh.



No. of farmer clubs promoted so far	No. of farmers associated with the club	Services of the departments being accessed by farmers
69	1150	Banking services, Agri inputs, livestock development and veterinary services, technical inputs from horticulture department and KVK.

Promotion of Joint Liability Groups (JLGs)

One of the major achievements of USS is to promote 69 Joint Liability Groups (JLGs) through the support of NABARD. The purpose of promoting JLGs is to increase the access of farmers over finance so that farmers could have finance to developing enterprises in villages since agriculture and its allied sectors are the main source of income of the farmers but due to lack of capital farmers are unable to invest into the primary sector to initiate enterprise development programs in rural area. The major indicator of the success of the program is to avail a loan of Rs. 1.27 crore by farmers and goatery found to be the most preferable activity.

No of Joint Liability Groups (JLG)	Amount of loan accessed by members from Bank (in Crore)	Preferred enterprise
24	52.00	Goatry
45	48.05	KCC- Agricultural inputs
Total: 69	Total: 1.05 Crore	

Trainings and technical inputs are provided to the enterprising farmers through convergence with line department and as an impact of this initiative; many farmers have initiated enterprise and earning good income. It has spread a positive message among the farming community and now farmers are coming forward to take up enterprise development activity.

Training on income generation activity and enterprise development

Increasing capacities of local communities to harvest, process and market the local resources in sustainable way is one of the core objectives of training and capacity building. Under the different livelihood promotional projects, producers are selected from self help groups and their capacity is built to produce quality products. Inputs and technical support is provided to the producers through convergence with line departments and technical institutions. The agricultural produces of primary farmers are linked to the local market through a regional supply chain and market platform is provided to the farmers.



However, in a recent development, Farmer Producer Organization (FPO) has been promoted in project area by involving primary producers to organize production and marketing of agri produces. The program is being supported by National Agriculture Bank for Rural Development (NABARD).

- **Exposure visit of farmers**



Regular exposure visit of the farmers are organized to different institutions to enhance capacity of farmers. This year exposure visit was organized to Pantnagar Kisan Mela and Agaz Federation, District Chamoli, and CHEA Organization, Nainital, Uttarakhand, which are the successful models of Bamboo and Ringal value chain in the area. Farmers of the project area visited the model and came to know about the bamboo and ringal value chain. Farmers visited the van panchayats and community land where plantation have been taken up and further interacted with the artisans, working in the functional value chain. The visit motivated farmers to

take up more plantation in coming season and to take initiatives for bamboo and ringal value chain development in the area.

CHAPTER- II**Livelihood programs****Vegetable and cash crop production**

Local farmers were engaged in traditional farming resulting in meager income from agriculture and increased drudgery of women farmers. Under Small Grant Program of Sir Dorabji Tata Trust (SDTT), Mumbai, USS had initiated cash crop production and promoted low cost modern technologies with women SHGs' members and services i.e. training and capacity building, improved seed, modern cultivation practices and technologies of cash crops were provided to the farmers to increase income from farming activities. Also through



convergence with line departments such as Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry etc series of trainings were conducted to the farmers on organic farming, agriculture marketing, IPM, IPNM and inputs like seed and technologies for pulses and grains provided. Field level technical trainings have resulted in adoption of improved and modern technologies by large numbers of farmers and farmers have diversified agriculture system by adopting vegetable and cash crops and pulses.

SN	Particulars	Unit	Quantity
1.	No. of farmers	No.	1351
2.	No. of villages	No.	121
3.	Vegetables crops	-	Turmeric, Ginger, Potato, Cabbage, Pea
4.	Pulses	-	Soyabean, Arhar, Lentil
5.	Area under crops	Ha.	22

As a result of the program, more than 1351 farmers are engaged in cash crop like turmeric, ginger, onion, potato, tomato, capsicum, cabbage, pea etc. Also increase in production of pulses has been noticed in project area. Agri produces of the famers are being sold in the local markets through local supply chain and it has reduced the role of mediators who used to have maximum margin. Farmers have been aware about crop diversification and using modern agriculture practices to yield more income from farms. As a result of the program, approximately 22 hectare area has been brought under cash crop production. Similarly System of Rice Intensification (SRI) was introduced with 36 farmers in 12 villages.



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 more than 1300 producers by engaged in cultivation of spices. Presently farmers are selling their farm produces into local markets through a regional supply chain but now farmers have been federated into cooperative and efforts are being made to organize the marketing system. In this direction, a cooperative has been promoted in project area through the support of NABARD with a initial membership of 55 farmers.



Dairy development

USS helps dairy farming to evolve from subsistence to a commercial activity with 207 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, 276 households have been organized into 69 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 and cattle health services to the farmers. Under different programs, 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 so far approximately 4500 cattle have been vaccinated and more than 1500 cattle treated.

Non Timber Fiber Products (NTFP) Development Program

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. Through support of Tata Education Trust (TET), USS had started 'Tree Crop Farming' program to revive traditional resource management system of villages by strengthening Van Panchayats and provide them employment opportunities.



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 is 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. The main purpose of the program is to promote 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.

Program is being implemented in 15 selected villages where bamboo is naturally available and is harvested for domestic purposes. The program has dual purpose to manage the existing resources and develop biomass for bamboo handicraft and presently 790 households from 15 villages are being covered under this program.



Nursery development and Bamboo plantation



To meet the requirement of sapling for next year plantation, 2 Nos. of nurseries have been developed in two different locations and seed of Strictus and Bambusha Dandaculas variety has been sown. Germination rate of the seed is better and an approximate 20-25 thousand healthy sapling is ready for the plantation.

As mentioned in earlier report that Bamboo plantation was done in 5 selected van panchayats and total 7438 Nos. of saplings of Himaltonii was planted in these selected sites including community land through mobilization of Van Panchayats. Regular meetings with CBOs and training and capacity building initiatives of the project have resulted in an average of 83 percentage survivability. A brief about the survivability has been given in below table.



Particulars	No. of plants planted	No. of plants surviving	Survivability percentage
Van Panchayat area	4628	4160	89
Community land	2810	2188	78
Total	7438	6348	



Visit of external resource person is organized time to time to have insight to increase the survivability of the plants and as per the their recommendations the gap filling wok will be done in the coming plantation season. Similarly plantation of Bamboo was done in community land and as a result of training and capacity building initiatives, people have come forward to adopt and replicate the bamboo in their own land while earlier people have misperception about bamboo plantation. The demand of the local community has

increased and so far 2810 saplings of bamboo have been planted by community in their private land i.e. farm bunds, fallow land and pasture land.

Plantation of commercial tree (Tree Crop Farming)

Keeping in mind the backwardness of the agriculture in hills and meager income of the farmers, plantation of commercial tree has been promoted. Under this initiative 28884 saplings of Tejpatta, Walnut, Bheemal, Mulberry, Kathmoda, Queral and other ornamental plants planted in ommunity land to meet the requirement of fodder and fuel and increase the income of the farmers in coming days. AS Tejpatta is a commercial tree and in future in will help significantly in



increasing the income of the farmers since



Uttarakhand state is one the few states to supply Tejpatta. The details of variety wise plantation and survivability is given below.

Through the support of National Seed Corporation Ltd. (NSCL) and Tata Education Trust (TET) plantation of multipurpose commercial trees like Tejpat, Mulberry, Kathmoda was planted in community land and the details is in the following table.

Table: Details of tree plantation through support of Tata Education Trust, Mumbai

SN	Particulars	Type of land	No. of plants planted	No. of plants surviving	Survivability percentage
1.	Mulberry	Private land	2642	2261	85
2.	Bheemal	Private land	789	618	78
3.	Tejpatta	Community/Private	3754	2159	56
4.	Walnut	Community/Private	486	308	63
5.	Kathmoda	Private land	200	168	84
6.	Queral	Private land	1013	833	82
Total			8884	6347	448

Silver Oak, Devdar, Batain, Oak, Amaltas, Padam were planted in community land. This was the part of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and program was implemented in three districts of Uttarakhand State viz Almora, Pithoragarh and Pauri Garhwal.

SN	Name of the site	Type of Land	No. of tree
1.	Silver Oak	Van Panchayat	7000
2.	Devdar	Van Panchayat	6000
3.	Padam and Amaltas	Community	7000
Total			20000

CHAPTER- III**Marketing of rural produces: Farmer Cooperative Model**

Presently farmers are selling their produce to the local markets in



semi processed form and opportunities are being explored for developing processing units so that farmers could be able to market finished product through an organized



marketing system. A farmer cooperative has been formed and

registered under Self Reliant Cooperative Act 2003 through support of NABARD. Farmer cooperative is being strengthened to develop their managerial capacity in organized marketing system. Presently farmers are selling their farm fresh produces and semi processed products through regional supply chain



and some of the farmers are selling through mediators. The plan for future is to set up processing unit for finished products of spices and pulses. Under NABARD supported Promotion of Farmer Producer Organization (FPO) program, self reliant cooperative has been promoted in project area and now plan is to increase membership of members of cooperative.

Under this program, a processing and value addition unit has to be developed in project area where value addition and processing operations would be operated to convert farm produces into finished products. After packaging, branding and labeling operations, secondary and tertiary market will be explored to penetrate the finished products. This initiatives will create a milestone in the project area and farmers would be able to realize better price of their produces. Initially with a membership of 55 farmers, cooperative has been promoted and in coming days the membership will achieve maximum numbers.

Organized marketing system will provide a platform to the producers to sell their produces and it will bring back the agriculture into main stream in project area.

CHAPTER- IV**Women empowerment and girl education**

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. Similarly, Pithoragarh is one of the districts in Uttarakhand where female ratio is very poor. So USS focuses on organizing awareness of community on concerned issues through the support of Uttarakhand Sewa Nidhi and so far 12 informal sangathan of women has been promoted in the area with a membership of 428 working women who will work as a pressure groups in the regions to bring awareness among community. In training and capacity building

initiatives, following areas are covered to increase the awareness of women on following issues;

- Jal jangal jameen
- Panchayati raj
- Health and Education
- Education
- Human rights
- Right to Information
- Drug addiction
- Women literacy center

Under the program Women Literacy Centers are established in the villages to increase awareness on higher mother mortality rate (MMR) and infant mortality rate (INR) in remote villages, awareness programs are organized 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 training are organized to the adolescent girls on life skills, education and career. So far 662 girls have been organized into 8 Kishori Sangthan (Adolescent girls groups) to increase their awareness about;

- Health
- Education
- Vocational training
- Social evils
- RTI



The purpose of the program is to change the mindset of adolescent girls of remote villages so that they could come forward into the main stream of development. Under this program Gram Siksha Kendra are opened in the villages to provide a platform to the adolescent and women to increase their knowledge and awareness about vocational courses, career opportunities and other life aspects.

CHAPTER- V**Convergence with line departments and recent development**

One of the core strength area 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. The details of the convergence is 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. 06 Water harvesting ponds, 09 vermi compost pits (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) and a presently 43 farmers have been selected to award rearing houses.
4.	Veterinary Department	Vaccination of 4123 cattle and treatment of 2463 animals and 212 castration cases were done.
5.	Uttarakhand Livestock Development Board (ULDB)	One artificial insemination center developed in project area and planning is to development 3 more centers. 42 AI.
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
9.	GB Pant Agriculture University of Technology	Participated in Kisan Mela in GB Pant University.
10.	Center for Aromatic Plant, Govt. of Uttarakhand	Training and inputs to the farmers for cultivation of Aromatic Plants like Rose and Lemon Grass.

Association with Uttarakhand Biodiversity Board, Govt. of Uttarakhand

Recently USS has been associated with Uttarakhand Biodiversity Board, Govt. of Uttarakhand for conservation linked development program under which documentation of flora, fauna, natural resources and people knowledge has to be done through participatory approach. The purpose of the program is to document the natural resources, available in the village and develop a strategy to conserve and protect it through developing plan with the National Biodiversity Conservation Authority, Govt. of India. For this purpose a team of technical experts is associated with the organization to work on this program with the closed cooperation of Department of Forest, Govt. of Uttarakhand. Under the program, People Biodiversity Register (PBR) has to be developed in selected villages. The program is aligning with the vision and mission of the organization and it would help USS to achieve its objective of conservation linked development.

CHAPTER- VI**Facilities available with the organization**

- One training hall with a capacity of 50 participants at a time
- Two motor bikes
- Laptop-2
- Desktop-2
- Printer-3
- Projector
- Camera
- Generator set
- GPS system

Our partners are;

- Sir Dorabhji Tata Trust (SDTT)
- Jamshed Ji Tata Trust (JTT)
- Tata Education Trust (TET)
- National Agriculture Bank for Rural Development (NABARD)
- Center Silk Board (CSB) and Department of Sericulture (DOS)
- National Seed Corporation Ltd. (NSC), Govt. of India
- Uttarakhand Biodiversity Board, Govt. of Uttarakhand
- Uttarakhand Sewa Nidhii
- Gorakhpur Environmental Action Group (GEAG), WEA (Women's Earth Alliance, America)
- Central Himalayan Environment Action (CHEA)
- ICIMOD, NEPAL
- Uttarakhand Livestock Development Board (ULDB) Govt. of Uttarakhand
- PAN Grass Root, Ranikhet
- Line departments, technical institutions and financial institutions