

Booklet on Success Stories of Community based Forest Conservation and livelihood Generation Initiatives

Nursery

Eco-Tourism

NTFP based FPO

Forest Conservation Project



Malabar Giant Squirrel (*Ratufa Indica*), State Animal of Maharashtra

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Draw Down agriculture initiatives by Shashwat Trust, Manchar

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Shashwat Trust, Manchar

Abbreviations

NTFP: Non-Timber Forest Produces

FPO: Farmers Producer Company

IIT: Indian Institute of Technology

SHG: Self-Help Group

PAs: Protected Areas

IUCN: International Union for Conservation of Nature

PESA: Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas Act, 1996

FSSAI: Food Safety and Standards Authority of India

NOC: Non-Objection Certificate

WLS: Wildlife Sanctuary

JFMc: Joint Forest Management Committee

VEDC: Village Eco-Development Committee

CEO: Chief Executive Officer

ICS: Industrial Control System

Local Synonyms

Karna Khatta: The Wild Orange plant species

Ropvatika: Nursery

Gadi Wafa: Soil bed

Hirda Fruit: Wild Medicinal fruit (*Terminalia chebula*)

Karvand: Wild berries plant (*Carissa carandas*)

Nachani: Finger millet (*Eleusine coracana*)

Paddy field, Ahupe village



Shashwat

Shashwat Trust, popularly known as Shashwat was founded in 1996. It is engaged with the extremely marginalized and deprived tribal communities such as the Katkari's, Thakars and Mahadeo Kolis displaced by a series of dam projects constructed on the rivers in Ambegoan, Khed and Junnar Talukas of district Pune. Its Mission is to empower the tribal communities to address their concerns related to their entitlements, livelihood, human rights and social justice.

Shashwat's distinctive competence lies in working with the poorest tribal communities viz. Katkari's, Thakars, Mahadeo Kolis in developing their livelihood strategies viz. sustainable agriculture, fishery, farm and non-farm micro-enterprises. Shashwat also has substantial experience in advocacy and effecting policy changes for claiming the rights and entitlements of these communities. For example Shashwat successfully advocated the need for including the traditional 'Padkai' system of farm based soil and water conservation in the Maharashtra Employment Guarantee Scheme. Similarly it successfully advocated the fishing rights over dam reservoir to the displaced tribal communities.

Shashwat is a professionally managed organization founded by late Shri Anand Kapur an engineer from Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) and Late Mrs. Kusum Karnik an environmentalist. It has a governing body of 7 professionals from varied fields with a keen interest in social development. 4 of its members are women. It has a well established system of governance and management tuned to donor compliance and compliance of all the statutory requirements. Presently it has a staff of 109 of which 51 are women, 7 being in decision making positions. It has a well articulated human resource policy oriented towards staff capacity building, motivation and high result expectancy.

Shashwat believes in a transparent, democratic and accountable service delivery system enabling participation of all stakeholders geared towards raising the effectiveness of its programmes. Shashwat also believes in the policy of 'working together' and hence is engaged with multi-stakeholder platforms and building linkages with varied government and non-governmental institutions which has helped in making its programmes successful and sustainable.



Shashwat Trust, Manchar has successfully implemented a community-based forest conservation project with financial support from the Global Nature Fund, Germany, during the period 2022–2025. The primary goal of the project was to restore degraded private forest lands using reforestation tools such as plantations and nurseries, while also generating long-term income opportunities for local communities. The project adopted a holistic approach by integrating ecological restoration with sustainable livelihood development through initiatives like eco-tourism and Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFP)-based cooperatives. These efforts aimed to actively involve local communities and lay the foundation for a long-term, sustainable forest conservation strategy across the landscape.

One key component of the project was the **development of eco-tourism** in the villages of Mhatarbachiwadi and Ahupe. At each site, two Self-Help Groups (SHGs) consisting of 15 families were formed to manage and develop eco-tourism infrastructure, all located on private land. Initial site development, including weed removal and construction of platforms around trees, was carried out by SHG members. Fully equipped campsite facilities were established at both locations, each with the capacity to accommodate 50 visitors at a time. These sites are now fully operational and open to tourists, offering a sustainable model of community-led nature tourism.

Trees are an extremely important part of nature as they are referred to as providers of oxygen. Trees play a crucial role in maintaining environmental balance; they provide habitats for various wildlife species and birds. Planting trees is essential to stabilize our environment and maintain temperature. Tree plantation has many benefits; they provide shade, fruits, and food for herbivorous animals. However, over the past few decades, deforestation has led to a significant increase in forest degradation, causing distress to wildlife. Tree planting is highly recommended to reduce soil erosion caused by heavy rains."Tree planting is our duty towards nature."Recognizing the urgency of conserving trees, every year, through sustainable institutions, tree plantation projects have been undertaken from 2022 to 2025 in Ambegaon Khed taluka's Mhatarbachiwadi, Falode, Phanaswadi, and Palkhewadi villages, totaling 55 acres and planting a total of 13,150 saplings. The institution has undertaken tasks such as digging pits, recharging pits, and planting saplings, ensuring protection of saplings from grazing animals by fencing, and installing drip irrigation systems powered by solar pumps to provide water during summer.

Another major focus was the establishment of **NTFP-based processing units** to strengthen local livelihoods. The tribal communities in the project area traditionally collect a variety of forest produce, including honey and medicinal plants. Among these, the collection of Hirda fruits holds significant importance due to its medicinal value and strong market demand. Recognizing this potential, the project developed a business mechanism to enhance income through the formation of the Kusumanand Farmers Producer Company Ltd. and the creation of seven SHGs across seven villages. Two centralized NTFP processing units were established in Ambegaon Hall and Taleghar, equipped with essential infrastructure such as electricity, solar power systems, and solar dryers. Additionally, the facilities were furnished with two decorticator machines for Hirda de-husking, one pulverizer for Hirda powder production, and other tools including packing machines, automatic stitching machines, and containers for honey packaging.

The third critical pillar of the project was the **nursery initiative**, designed to promote community empowerment and environmental sustainability. This component trained women members of SHGs in nursery management, plant propagation, and basic entrepreneurship. Each group aimed to produce saplings worth at least ₹30,000 annually, generating sustainable income through linkages to local markets and reforestation programs. The nurseries also targeted the production and planting of saplings worth ₹55,000 annually to restore degraded lands and enhance biodiversity. This initiative serves as a replicable model for integrating environmental conservation with community-based livelihood programs, highlighting the importance of inclusive and ecologically responsible sustainable development.

The project received financial support from GNF Germany, with an additional 15% of the total budget contributed by Shashwat Trust and Mercedes-Benz India, Chakan Branch.



Development of
**Community Based
Eco-Tourism
Centres**

1

Success Story

Why Eco-tourism is required for in and around PAs:

Eco-Tourism is defined as “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of the local people”. Eco-Tourism, when practiced correctly, is an important economic and educational activity. It has the scope to link to a wider constituency and build conservation support, while raising awareness about the worth and fragility of ecosystems in the public at large. Such tourism is low-impact, educational and conserves the environment while directly benefiting the economic development of local communities, i.e., the tribal and other traditional forest dwellers living in and around these fragile landscapes of the tiger reserve. Unplanned tourism in such landscapes without taking into account its carrying capacity can destroy the very environment that attracts such tourism. Eco tourism must provide more than mere enjoyment, it must foster changes in the attitude and behaviour of tourists about the protection of the natural resources.

Objectives of the Activity:

- Highlight the heritage value of India's wilderness and protected areas.
- Build environment & cultural awareness and respect.
- Facilitate the sustainability of ecotourism enterprises & activities.
- Provide livelihood opportunities to local communities and benefit sharing.
- Use indigenously locally produced and ecologically sustainable materials for tourism activities.
- Wilderness conservation in ecologically sensitive landscapes.
- Capacity building of local communities in planning, providing and managing ecotourism facilities.
- Conservation, education and training.
- Proper monitoring and evaluation of the impact of ecotourism in the protected areas from time to time, through the Local Advisory committee as constituted by the State Govt.

Definitions of Eco-tourism

Ceballos-Lascurain is generally accepted as the person who coined the term ecotourism. He defined ecotourism as:

Tourism that involves traveling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated areas with the specific objective of studying, admiring, and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals, as well as any existing cultural manifestations (both past and present) found in these areas (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1991, p.25).

The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) defines ecotourism as:

Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people. (TIES, 1990)

Merg (1999) mentions that since the publication of Martha Honey's book "Ecotourism and Sustainable Development" has made her definition an accepted standard. Martha Honey presents her definition as:

Ecotourism is travel to fragile, pristine, and usually protected areas that strive to be low impact and (usually) small scale. It helps educate the traveler; provides funds for conservation; directly benefits the economic development and political empowerment of local communities; and fosters respect for different cultures and for human rights (Honey, 1999, p. 25) 2

From Martha Honey's definition the following criteria emerge for a venture to be classified as eco-tourism:

- Involves travel to natural destinations
- Minimizes impacts
- Builds environmental awareness
- Provides direct financial benefits for conservation
- Provides financial benefits and empowerment for local people
- Respects local culture
- Supports human rights and democratic movements

Fulfilling all these conditions is a tall order. However any ecotourism venture should keep these as a target and attempt to meet as many of these criteria as possible to the extent possible.



Semi-evergreen type of forest



Indian Pangolin (*Manis crassicaudata*)



Sambar (*Rusa unicolor*)

Overview of the area

Bhimashankar Wildlife Sanctuary is situated on the crest line of the Northern Western Ghats (or Sahyadri) and was declared as sanctuary by the Government of Maharashtra on 16th September, 1985. It lies between 19° 01' to 19° 13' N latitude and 73° 28' to 73° 37' E longitude at an altitude ranging between 340 m and 1208 m above mean sea level. It covers 130.78 sq. km of forested area in three districts of Maharashtra State i.e. Pune, Raigad and Thane covering few villages in its boundaries (see Map-1). The Sanctuary is one of the five wildlife sanctuaries of the Northern Western Ghats in Maharashtra. Practically unbroken high ridge of the Western Ghats passes north south through this sanctuary. It is composed of basaltic lava flows of the Deccan trap (Pande, 2005). The sanctuary includes spurs running towards eastern plains and steep slopes and valleys towards West in the Konkan region. The important physical features of this sanctuary are ridges, hill slopes, peaks, spurs, valleys, rocks, pools, plateau, cliffs, gorges, ravines, rocky and sandy stream basins (Gole, 2000; Islam and Rahmani, 2004). The highest peak in the sanctuary is 'Nagphani' situated at 1208 m above mean sea level. Three rivers mainly Bhima, Goneri and Ghod originate from this sanctuary (see MAP-2). There are also number of streams, small ponds and lakes like Ahupe lake and Hanuman tale. At the western edge of the sanctuary there is a famous temple of Bhimashankar or Lord Shiva, which is regarded as one of the twelve Jyotirlingas (as sacred places of Lord Shiva temples) in the country. The temple is situated at a height of 900 m from mean sea level (Palande, 1954).

Rainfall and Temperature:

Annually Bhimashankar Landscape received the between 4000 mm and 6000 mm ranges rainfall. The mean lowest and highest temperatures recorded during the year are 7° C in winter and 36° C in summer respectively. There is high velocity of wind particularly from December to February and at higher elevations, heavy fog during monsoon months.

Biogeographical Zone:

The Bhimashankar Wildlife Sanctuary falls within one of the ten Biogeographic Zones of India, i.e. code 5 Western Ghats Zone and under the biogeographic province-5B Western Ghats Mountains.

Forest Type:

The forest of Bhimashankar WLS is classified in to subtype 2A/C2, i.e. West Coast semi-evergreen forests cover 99 % of the sanctuary area. As per ZSI report 2009, vegetation of the sanctuary mainly divided in to evergreen, semi-evergreen and dry deciduous forest. Deccan plateau ridge covered by moist evergreen forest. The river Bhima, Ghod and Goneri catchment area has supporting tall evergreen forest. On the gentle slopping areas between the hill slopes and streams basin there are open grasslands patches in all over the sanctuary supports the scrubs and herbaceous plants. And it is a main grazing grounds for wild herbivores. The forest surrounding by Temple only representatives of virgin evergreen type forest in Western Ghat.

Biodiversity:

Bhimashankar wildlife sanctuary is the biodiversity hot spot in northern Western Ghat of Maharashtra state. It is famous for state animal Malabar Giant Squirrel, also known as "Bhimashankari Khar". It is the home of several rare and endangered species of flora and fauna like, Common leopard, Sambar deer,

Mouse deer, Indian Pangolin, Leopard cat, rusty spotted cat and many other species. According the ZSI report-2009, yet 66 species of mammals, 236 species of birds, 54 species of reptiles, 24 species of Odonata and 65 species of Butterflies were reported.

Floral diversity if the sanctuary is magnificent divers as per botanical survey of India documented 444 species belongs to 107 families of which 355 species of dicotyledon, 89 species of monocotyledon and one species are gymnosperm. 26 species are very rare and conservation important species are reported from the sanctuary area.

Tribes and Culture:

Main tribes of the area is Hindu Mahadev Koli community, which is worshiped the lord shiva. And name of this community resembling to Bhimashankar. Along with the Mahadev community other tribes also resident of the area is Thakar and Katkari mainly resides in the Konkan region.

Main occupation of the all local community are agriculture and collection of NTFP especially Hirda and other Medicinal herbs. Traditional medicinal knowledge of the local tribal is remarkable.

Hindu Mahadev Koli's are mainly forest dwelling community, traditionally they are worshiped the nature from thousands of years, they are closely attached with nature. They mainly worshiped the Kal Bhairavnath, Van-Deveta (Forest god), Wagoba (Tiger God) and Varsubai (goddess of forest, representing Varas tree). Before the declaration of sanctuary hunting was the part of their lifestyle, but after announcement of sanctuary, their lifestyle changing slightly.



Community meeting for project planning

Collection of Secondary Data

The initial phase of the project involved extensive data collection to establish a foundational understanding of tourism patterns and site potential. This process began with gathering **secondary data** related to tourism influx, seasonal variations, and popular tourist destinations. The information was sourced from multiple avenues, including discussions with the local community, village leaders, representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and hotel owners.

These stakeholders provided valuable insights into the existing tourism landscape, highlighting trends in visitor numbers, peak seasons, and preferred locations. Their input helped assess the **current status and potential of tourism development** in the area. Additionally, historical tourism data, government records, and available reports were analysed to understand past tourism patterns and project future growth.

Identification of Potential Tourism Sites

Following the secondary data analysis, a systematic field survey was conducted to identify and evaluate potential eco-tourism sites. The primary objective was to assess the feasibility of developing sustainable tourism destinations while preserving the natural environment.

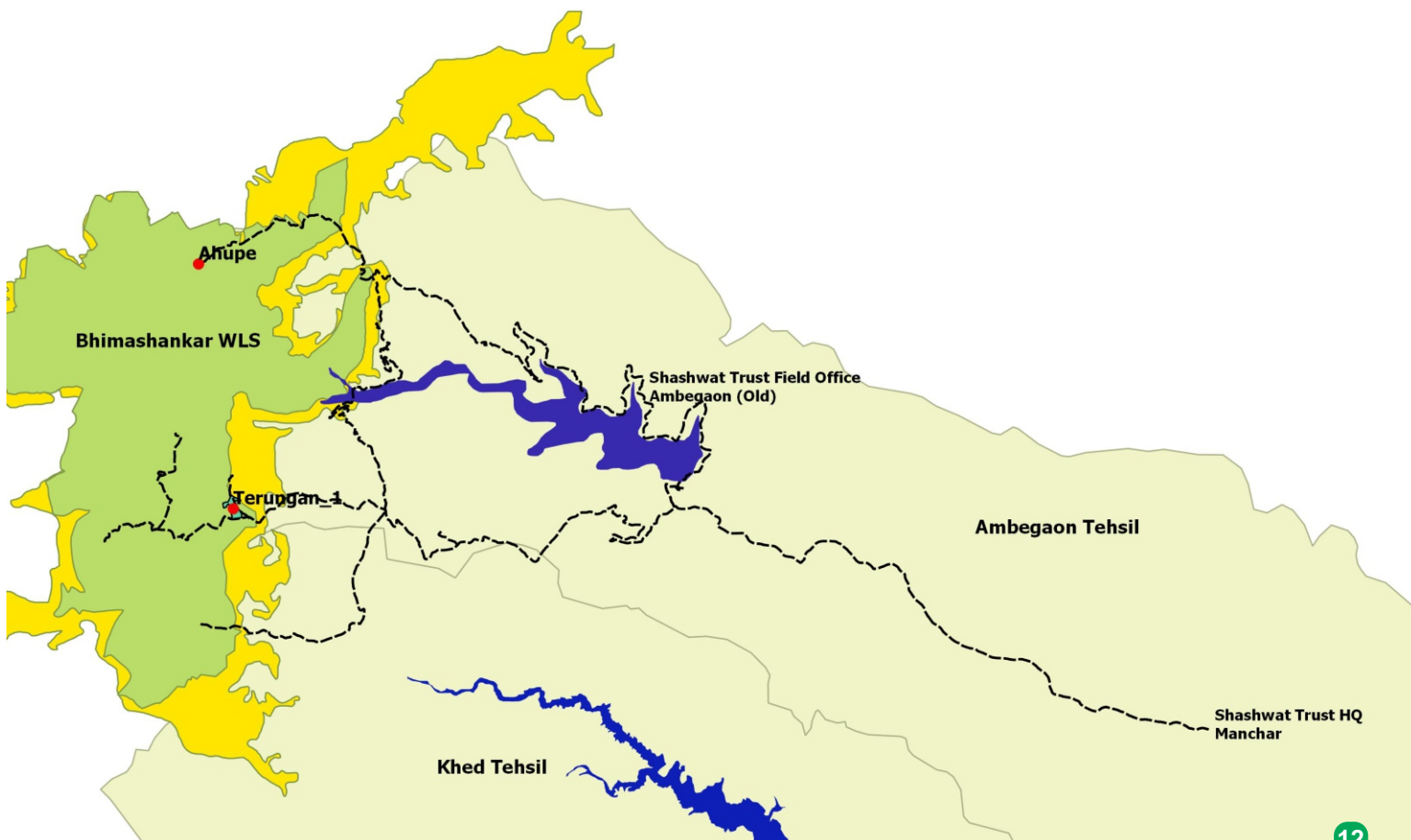
During site visits, several key factors were taken into consideration, including:

- **Accessibility:** The presence of a well-connected road network or the potential for future infrastructure development.
- **Water Sources:** Availability of reliable water resources, as they are essential for both tourism and environmental sustainability.
- **Electricity Connectivity:** The feasibility of establishing electrical infrastructure without causing significant ecological disruption.
- **Natural Landscape & Vegetation Cover:** The site's ecological appeal, including forest density, biodiversity, and the overall aesthetic value that contributes to the wilderness experience.

Based on these criteria, two locations were identified as having significant potential for **eco-tourism development**. These sites demonstrated the necessary prerequisites for sustainable tourism, offering a blend of **scenic beauty, biodiversity, and accessibility**.

The detailed findings, including geographical coordinates and topographical analysis, are provided in **Map-1** along with specific descriptions of each site's unique characteristics. These sites have been earmarked for further development in alignment with eco-tourism principles, ensuring a balance between tourism promotion and environmental conservation.

Map showing the location of eco-tourism centres in project area





Site-1: Shekaru community eco-tourism site, Mhatarbachiwadi

The selected site was chosen based on its high tourism potential, primarily due to its close proximity to the revered **Shiva Temple**, which is one of the **twelve Jyotirlingas**—sacred shrines of Lord Shiva. Thousands of devotees and tourists visit this temple annually, making it a significant religious and cultural hub. The site is strategically located approximately **10 kilometers before the temple**, situated along the main pilgrimage route. This positioning ensures a steady flow of visitors, offering an ideal opportunity for eco-tourism development.

Land Ownership and Existing Habitat Conditions

The identified site is owned by the **local tribal community**, which has historically resided in the region and played a key role in the preservation of traditional knowledge and ecological resources. Before its selection for eco-tourism, the site was classified as **degraded forest land**, characterized by sparse tree cover, rocky terrain, and patches of vegetation. The area exhibited signs of deforestation and habitat degradation but still retained the potential for ecological restoration and sustainable tourism development.

Ecological Significance: A Haven for the Indian Giant Squirrel

One of the key factors influencing the selection of this site was its rich biodiversity. The **Bhimashankar Wildlife Sanctuary**, where the site is located, is renowned for being home to the **Indian Giant Squirrel (*Ratufa indica*)**, locally known as "**Shekaru**." This species holds immense ecological importance and is classified as **critically endangered on the IUCN Red List**. In recognition of its ecological significance, the site was named after this iconic species, emphasizing the need for conservation-oriented tourism.

Infrastructure and Basic Amenities

Despite its remote setting, the site benefits from a well-developed infrastructure that makes it suitable for eco-tourism initiatives:

- **Road Connectivity:** The site is accessible via a well-maintained road network, ensuring ease of transportation for visitors.
- **Electricity Supply:** The local tribal community has successfully managed the electricity supply, ensuring a basic level of infrastructure readiness.
- **Water Availability:** The site has a reliable source of drinking water, which is essential for sustaining both visitors and eco-tourism activities.

The combination of religious tourism, ecological significance, and existing infrastructure makes this site an ideal candidate for eco-tourism development. With proper planning, conservation measures, and community involvement, the site holds the potential to become a model for sustainable tourism, benefiting both the local economy and biodiversity conservation.

Devrai Community Eco-tourism Centre & Tent Stay

Kamalja Mata Women Self-Help Group, Ahupe



Foundation Ursula Merz



Site-2: Devrai Community Eco-Tourism Site, Ahupe

The **Ahupe village**, located in the northern part of the **Bhimashankar Wildlife Sanctuary**, is a destination renowned for its breathtaking landscapes, lush mountains, dense forests, and vibrant tribal culture. This picturesque village is a well-known attraction for adventure enthusiasts, nature lovers, and cultural explorers.

Tourism and Trekking Appeal

Ahupe is particularly famous among **trekkers and adventure seekers**, especially during the **monsoon season**, when the landscape transforms into a mystical paradise. During this time, visitors from Mumbai and nearby regions embark on challenging treks, ascending from the **Konkan side** to reach Ahupe. The journey is marked by **stunning waterfalls, mist-covered valleys, and panoramic mountain views**, offering an unforgettable experience.

Apart from its natural beauty, the village is also a **cultural hub**, where tourists can experience the **traditional tribal lifestyle** and savor **authentic local cuisine**, which is one of the main attractions for visitors.

Ecological Significance and Wildlife Attractions

Ahupe is surrounded by **semi-evergreen forests**, which serve as a **biodiversity hotspot** and a haven for wildlife enthusiasts. These forests are home to numerous species of birds, making the site particularly popular among **birdwatchers and nature photographers**. Additionally, there are several **natural sites** within the forest where visitors can observe wildlife in their natural habitat.

Naming the Site: Devrai – The Sacred Grove

Considering its rich natural and cultural heritage, the site was carefully selected for eco-tourism development. One of the most distinctive features of this region is the **Ahupe Sacred Groves**, which are among the **oldest and most revered** in the area. Sacred groves, locally known as "**Devrai**", hold deep spiritual significance for indigenous communities and are traditionally protected forest patches that have remained untouched for centuries.

In honor of this ancient tradition and to promote **community-led conservation**, the site has been named "**Devrai Community Eco-Tourism Site**." This initiative not only celebrates the region's **cultural and ecological legacy** but also ensures that tourism development aligns with principles of **sustainability and environmental preservation**.

The **Devrai Community Eco-Tourism Site** at Ahupe presents a perfect blend of **adventure, culture, and conservation**. Its breathtaking landscapes, challenging trekking routes, rich tribal heritage, and exceptional biodiversity make it an ideal eco-tourism destination. By

developing this site responsibly, we aim to provide visitors with an immersive experience while ensuring that the local community benefits from sustainable tourism practices.

Eco-tourism, by definition, is a form of **nature-based tourism** that not only promotes environmental conservation but also serves as a sustainable source of **income generation for the local community**. The overarching goal of this project is to ensure the **preservation of forests and wildlife habitats** while simultaneously enhancing the **livelihood opportunities** for the indigenous population.

However, achieving these objectives is impossible without the **active participation and engagement of the local community**. Recognizing this need, a **comprehensive community engagement strategy** was developed to foster long-term involvement and economic sustainability. The strategy was implemented through a structured approach, ensuring that the community plays a central role in the planning, execution, and management of the eco-tourism initiative.



Steps Taken for Community Engagement

1. Community Consultations and Discussions

To effectively communicate the **project's vision, goals, and benefits**, a series of **community-level consultations** were conducted. These discussions took place at both **village and block levels** to ensure widespread participation.

- **Group Discussions:** Open forums were organized to introduce the project concept, address concerns, and gather feedback from community members.
- **Individual Meetings:** In addition to group discussions, **one-on-one meetings** were held with individuals who expressed a keen interest in actively participating in eco-tourism activities.
- **Socio-Economic Survey:** A **village-level socio-economic survey** was conducted to assess the financial status of the households. This provided a **baseline for selecting beneficiaries**, ensuring that the program targeted the most economically disadvantaged families in need of sustainable livelihood opportunities.

2. Identification of Beneficiaries

Following the community discussions and survey analysis, the next step was to **identify and select beneficiaries** for the eco-tourism initiative. The selection process was conducted **transparently and inclusively**, ensuring that those with the highest potential and need were given priority. The selection criteria included the following key factors:

A. Willingness and Commitment

- Running an eco-tourism venture requires a **business mindset, long-term dedication, and active participation**.
- The first and foremost selection criterion was **the willingness of individuals to engage in eco-tourism development** and contribute to the site's maintenance and operation.
- Candidates needed to demonstrate a **strong commitment to learning, adapting, and working towards building a sustainable eco-tourism enterprise**.

B. Economic Status

- The initiative primarily focused on providing **long-term income opportunities** for **marginalized families**.
- Beneficiaries were selected based on their **financial vulnerability**, prioritizing individuals and families with **no stable source of income** who primarily depend on **forest resources and seasonal agriculture** for subsistence.
- By providing an alternative livelihood through eco-tourism, the project aimed to **reduce dependency on unsustainable forest exploitation**.

C. Involvement in Forest Conservation

- Preference was given to individuals already **actively involved in conservation efforts** within the community.
- Those who had participated in **forest conservation programs, reforestation initiatives, or the protection of private forest lands** were considered ideal candidates.
- Special consideration was given to individuals who had taken part in **afforestation projects, tree plantation drives, and sustainable land management practices**.

The success of the **eco-tourism project** is deeply rooted in the **active involvement, commitment, and ownership** of the local community. Through structured discussions, socio-economic evaluations, and transparent beneficiary selection, the initiative ensures that the **most deserving and dedicated members** of the community are empowered with sustainable livelihood opportunities.

By integrating **nature conservation with income generation**, the project not only enhances **local economic resilience** but also fosters a **sense of environmental stewardship**, ensuring the long-term protection of forests and wildlife habitats.

Formation of Cooperatives and Self-Help Groups (SHGs)

Selection of Beneficiaries

Through a meticulous and transparent selection process, a total of **15 members** were identified for each eco-tourism site. These individuals were chosen based on predefined **eligibility criteria**, ensuring their commitment to the project's long-term sustainability. The selection process emphasized **economic need, willingness to participate, and involvement in conservation efforts**, ensuring that those most dedicated to the initiative were given the opportunity to benefit.

Establishment of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) for Legal and Financial Governance

To ensure the proper management and sustainability of the eco-tourism initiative, each site required a structured **legal and financial framework**. To achieve this, a **Self-Help Group (SHG)** was formed for each location. The SHG serves as the primary organizational body responsible for **site management, financial transactions, and decision-making**.

The following steps were undertaken to formalize and operationalize these SHGs:

1. Formation and Structuring of the SHG

- Each eco-tourism site had its own **dedicated SHG**, comprising **15 selected members** from the community.
- A **hierarchical governance structure** was established, including roles such as **President, Secretary, and Treasurer**, to ensure smooth functioning.

2. Legal Registration and Compliance

- The SHGs were formally **registered under the relevant cooperative society or self-help group regulations**, providing them with legal recognition.
- Necessary **documentation and compliance procedures** were completed, ensuring adherence to government guidelines for community-based enterprises.

3. Opening of Bank Accounts and Financial Management

- A **dedicated bank account** was opened for each SHG to manage **funds, revenue, and operational expenses**.
- The banking system was designed to ensure **transparency, accountability, and ease of financial transactions**, allowing members to **deposit earnings, access loans, and reinvest in site improvements**.

4. Capacity Building and Training

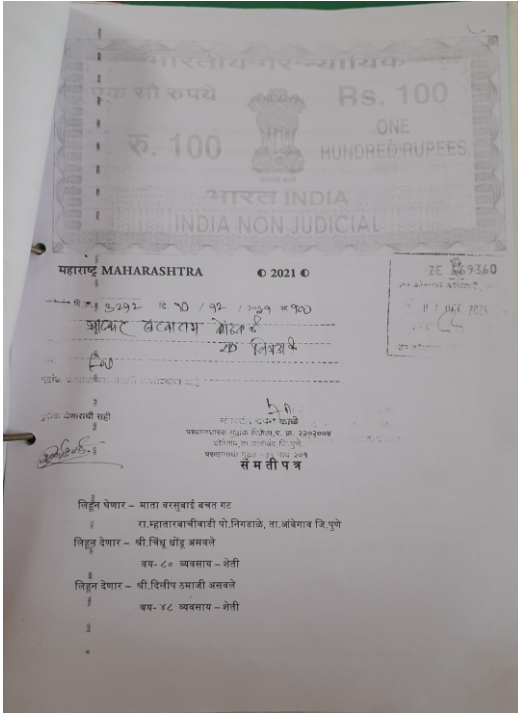
- To empower the members with the necessary **financial literacy, business management, and eco-tourism operational skills**, a series of **training sessions and workshops** were conducted.
- Members were educated on **budgeting, bookkeeping, customer service, sustainable tourism practices, and resource management**.

The formation of **Self-Help Groups (SHGs)** provided a **solid legal and financial foundation** for the successful operation of eco-tourism sites. By ensuring **collective decision-making, economic empowerment, and sustainable site management**, the project has laid the groundwork for long-term community-led tourism development.

With **legal recognition, financial security, and skill development**, these SHGs are positioned to not only manage the sites efficiently but also contribute to **community welfare and conservation efforts**, reinforcing the project's overarching goals of **environmental sustainability and economic upliftment**.



Ensuring proper legal compliance and obtaining necessary permissions are critical steps in establishing a sustainable and legally recognized eco-tourism initiative. The project required multiple **documents, agreements, and permits** to facilitate smooth operations while adhering to **legal, environmental, and regulatory frameworks**. The key documentation and permits obtained for the project include the following:



3.1 Land Agreement with the Landowner

Since the eco-tourism sites are located on community-owned or privately held land, it was essential to establish a **formal agreement between the project and the landowners**. A legally binding **land lease or usage agreement** was drafted and signed between the stakeholders to ensure:

- **Clear ownership rights and responsibilities** for both parties.
- **Defined terms and conditions** regarding the duration of land usage, financial arrangements, and revenue-sharing mechanisms.
- **Commitment to eco-friendly and sustainable practices**, ensuring the land remains protected from over-exploitation.
- **Conflict resolution mechanisms**, outlining steps to address potential disputes between the landowners and the eco-tourism management team.

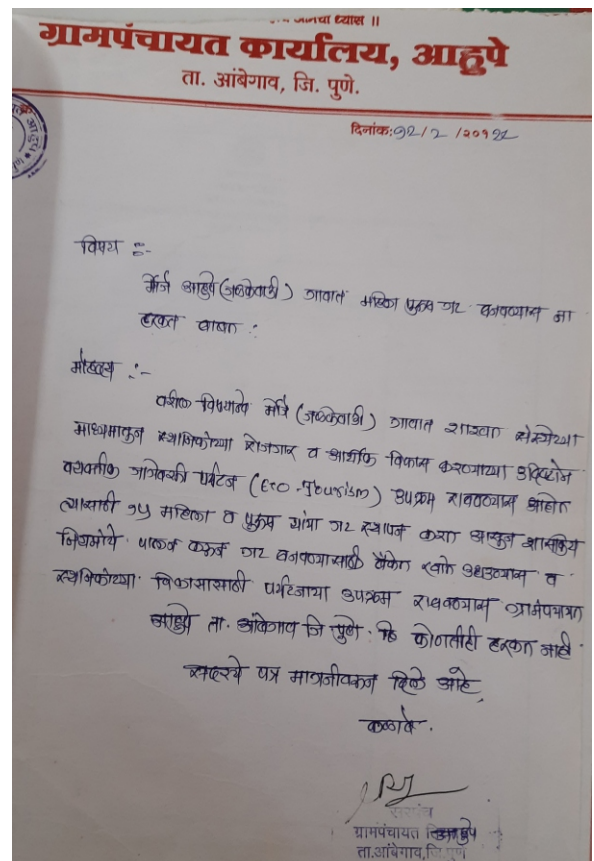
This agreement provided the foundation for legally operating eco-tourism activities while maintaining **transparency and trust** between the local community and project stakeholders.

3.2 No Objection Certificates (NOCs) from the Local Gram Panchayat (PESA Compliance)

In accordance with the **Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA), 1996**, which empowers local self-governance in tribal and rural areas, it was necessary to obtain a **No Objection Certificate (NOC)** from the **Gram Panchayat** before initiating any tourism-related activities. The NOC ensured:

- **Approval from the local governing body**, confirming that the project aligns with community development goals.
- **Consultation and consent of local tribal communities**, in adherence to PESA regulations, which emphasize participatory decision-making.
- **Legal validation for eco-tourism operations**, ensuring compliance with regional land-use policies and environmental protection laws.
- **Recognition and support from local administrative bodies**, which is crucial for long-term sustainability and operational legitimacy.

Obtaining the NOC was a **critical step in community-driven eco-tourism development**, fostering a sense of **ownership and participation** among the local population



3.3 FSSAI Certification for the Restaurant

As part of the eco-tourism initiative, a **community-run restaurant** was proposed to serve visitors with locally sourced and traditional cuisine, thereby enhancing the cultural experience and generating income for local families. To ensure **food safety and compliance with health regulations**, the project obtained certification from the **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)**. This certification guarantees that:

- The restaurant adheres to **hygiene and food safety protocols**, ensuring the well-being of customers.
- All food products meet **national quality standards**, including proper sourcing, preparation, and storage of ingredients.
- The restaurant follows ethical business practices and maintains **accountability in food handling and service**.
- The eco-tourism site gains **credibility and trust** among visitors, leading to better customer satisfaction and repeat tourism.

By securing the FSSAI certification, the project ensured that **eco-tourism not only promotes conservation and cultural heritage but also upholds the highest standards of safety and quality** in hospitality services.

Conclusion

The acquisition of **land agreements, NOCs from the Gram Panchayat, and FSSAI certification** was a fundamental step in establishing a **legally compliant, community-inclusive, and sustainable** eco-tourism model. These documents provide a **strong legal foundation**, enabling the project to function efficiently while ensuring **local participation, environmental sustainability, and adherence to regulatory standards**. By following these procedures, the project reinforces its commitment to **responsible tourism, economic empowerment, and biodiversity conservation**.



Registration Certificate
Government of Maharashtra
Food And Drug Administration
Food Safety and Standards Authority of India
Registration Certificate under FSS Act, 2006



/ Registration Number: 21523038002491



<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Name and permanent address of Food Business Operator (FBO) Address of location where food business is to be conducted / premises Kind of Business Photo Identity Card 	<p>KALAMJAMATA SWAYAMSAHAAYATA MAHILA BACHT GAT Jalkewadi , Ahupe , Ambegaon, Pune, Maharashtra-410509</p> <p>Jalkewadi, Ahupe, Ambegaon, Pune, Maharashtra - 410509</p> <p>Restaurants</p> <p>N/A</p>	
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This registration certificate is issued under and is subject to the provisions of FSS Act, 2006 all of which must be complied with by the petty food business.

Place / Pune	Registering Authority:
Issued On / 05-11-2023 (New Registration)	Date : 05-11-2023 21:25:40
Valid Upto: 04-11-2028 (For details, refer Annexure)	User Id : 107754
	License Issued On : 05-11-2023 21:25:40

Annexures:


- [Product Annexure](#)
- [Validity Annexure](#)
- [Registration Id Card](#)

Note:


- Application for renewal of Registration Certificate can be filed as early as 180 days prior to expiry date of Registration Certificate. You can file application for renewal or modification of Registration Certificate by login into FSSAI's Food Safety Compliance System(<https://fscos.fssai.gov.in>) with your user id and password or call us at 1800112100 for any clarification.
- This Registration Certificate is only to commence or carry on food businesses and not for any other purpose.
- This is computer generated Registration Certificate and doesn't require any signature or stamp by authority.
- This Registration Certificate is allowed to conduct food businesses activities having annual turnover upto Rs. 12 Lacs only.

Page 1 of 4

Product Annexure



Registration Certificate
Government of Maharashtra
Food And Drug Administration
Food Safety and Standards Authority of India
Registration Certificate under FSS Act, 2006



/ Registration Number: 21523038002491
Detail(s) of Food Item

[Note: Only standardised food products are allowed to be manufactured as per the list available on FoSCoS.]

Other than Manufacturer Unit	
Sl. No	Name of the food category
1	01 - Dairy products and analogues, excluding products of food category 2.0
2	03 - Edible ices, including sherbet and sorbe
3	07 - Bakery products
4	08 - Meat and meat products, including poultry and game
5	10 - Eggs and egg products
6	12 - Salts, spices, soups, sauces, salads and protein products
7	14 - Beverages, excluding dairy products
8	15 - Ready-to-eat savouries
9	16 - Prepared Foods
10	18 - Indian Sweets and Indian Snacks & Savouries products

Page 2 of 4

Developing an **eco-tourism site** requires a well-structured **planning and layout strategy** that balances **sustainable infrastructure development with environmental conservation**. The goal is to create a **functional, visitor-friendly, and ecologically responsible** space that provides **seamless access, safety, and comfort** for tourists while preserving the **natural landscape, biodiversity, and cultural heritage** of the region.

The site development process is divided into two key phases:

4.1: Layout Planning

The **layout planning** phase involves **strategic zoning** of the eco-tourism site to ensure proper utilization of space while minimizing environmental impact. This stage includes:

1. Site Zoning and Land Use Planning

The site is divided into different **zones** based on functionality and ecological sensitivity:

- **Entry and Welcome Area:** A designated space for visitor reception, information desks, ticket counters, and basic amenities.
- **Accommodation Zone:** Eco-friendly cottages, homestays, or tented campsites designed using **sustainable materials** such as bamboo, wood, or locally available resources.
- **Recreational & Activity Areas:** Spaces allocated for **nature trails, guided treks, wildlife observation points, and cultural performances**.
- **Dining and Retail Zones:** A section for restaurants, food stalls, and souvenir shops that promote **locally made handicrafts and organic food products**.
- **Conservation Buffer Zone:** A restricted area for **wildlife protection, afforestation, and natural ecosystem restoration**, ensuring that tourism activities do not disturb the native flora and fauna.

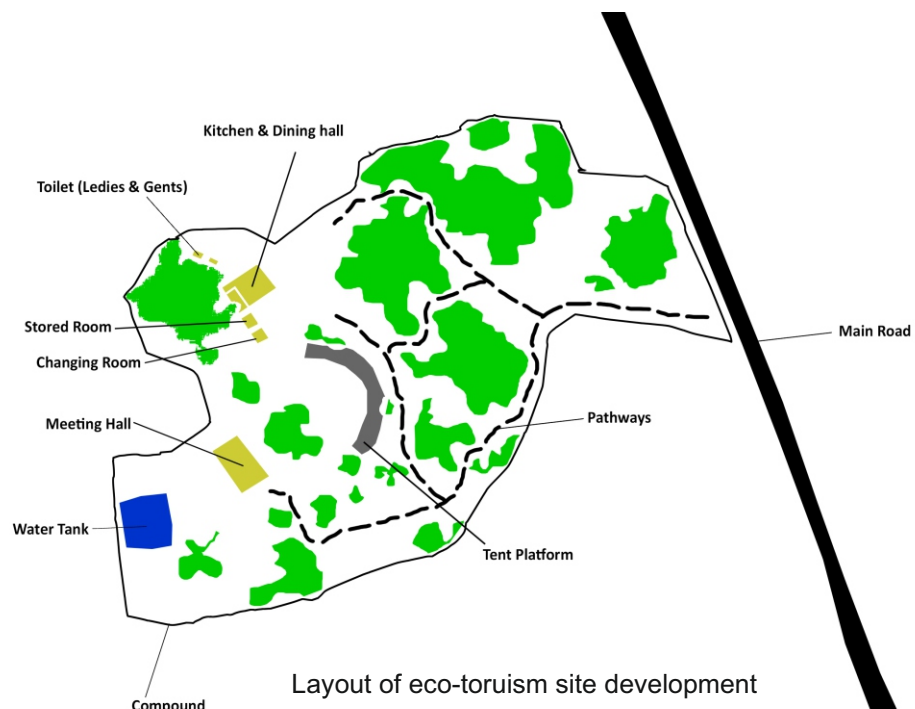
2. Environmental Impact Consideration

- **Minimal land alteration:** The layout is designed to blend with the **natural topography** to reduce deforestation and land degradation.
- **Eco-sensitive pathways:** Walking trails, cycling paths, and boardwalks are planned to allow visitors to explore the site **without disturbing the ecosystem**.
- **Waste Management Plan:** Designated areas for **waste segregation, composting, and recycling** to maintain a **zero-waste environment**.
- **Renewable Energy Integration:** Identifying locations for **solar panels, rainwater harvesting systems, and bio-toilets** to promote self-sufficiency.

3. Accessibility and Mobility

- **Designing clear access routes** for visitors, ensuring roads and trails are properly marked.
- **Barrier-free pathways** for elderly visitors and people with disabilities.
- **Parking areas** strategically placed to avoid congestion and pollution near the core eco-tourism zone.

Outcome: A well-planned **eco-tourism layout** that enhances visitor experience while maintaining ecological balance.





4.2: Infrastructure Development

Once the **layout is finalized**, the next phase involves the **construction and establishment of essential infrastructure** while ensuring sustainability.

1. Eco-Friendly Accommodation & Facilities

- **Traditional and sustainable architecture:** Using **local materials** such as bamboo, wood, stone, and thatch to construct cottages and huts that blend seamlessly with the environment.
- **Energy-efficient structures:** Incorporating **solar panels, passive cooling techniques, and rainwater harvesting** for self-sufficiency.
- **Low-impact construction methods:** Avoiding concrete-heavy buildings and adopting **modular or raised structures** to reduce land disruption.

2. Essential Amenities and Services

- **Drinking Water Supply:** Installation of **community-managed water filtration systems and borewells** for clean drinking water.
- **Eco-Sanitation Facilities:** Construction of **bio-toilets and composting toilets** to prevent pollution.
- **Electricity and Lighting:** Setting up **solar-powered street lights and motion-sensor LED lighting** to minimize energy use.
- **Waste Disposal Units:** Establishing a **waste collection and segregation system** to maintain cleanliness.

3. Recreational and Interpretation Facilities

- **Nature Trails & Wildlife Viewing Points:** Construction of **elevated viewing platforms, watchtowers, and guided nature trails** for birdwatching and wildlife observation.
- **Eco-Cultural Centers:** Establishment of a **small museum or interpretation center** showcasing local history, tribal culture, and biodiversity information.
- **Community Spaces:** Creating **open-air auditoriums and seating areas** for storytelling sessions, tribal performances, and eco-awareness workshops.

4. Security and Visitor Safety Measures

- **Emergency Response Centers:** Setting up **first-aid stations and medical support units** for visitor safety.
- **Signage & Navigation Boards:** Placing **eco-friendly signboards, maps, and information panels** to guide tourists.
- **Fire Safety and Disaster Preparedness:** Installing **fire extinguishers, emergency exits, and natural disaster response systems**.

5. Sustainable Transportation & Mobility

- **Designated Hiking Routes:** Developing well-marked **trekking paths and wooden walkways** to prevent soil erosion.
- **Controlled Visitor Traffic:** Implementing a **carrying capacity limit** to avoid overcrowding and resource depletion.

The **planning and infrastructure development** of the eco-tourism site focus on creating a **harmonious balance between tourism, nature, and community benefits**. By adopting **sustainable design principles**, eco-friendly construction materials, and modern conservation techniques, the site ensures that visitors enjoy an **authentic, immersive, and responsible tourism experience** while **safeguarding the ecological integrity of the region**.

This comprehensive approach guarantees that the eco-tourism initiative remains **economically viable, environmentally sustainable, and socially beneficial** for generations to come.



The success of the **eco-tourism initiative** depends not only on sustainable infrastructure and planning but also on the **capacity and preparedness of the local community** managing it. Since all **selected members** belong to the **local tribal community**, they **lacked prior experience** in eco-tourism operations, hospitality services, and business management. Therefore, **capacity building and leadership development** became a **high-priority activity** to ensure the community could run the initiative independently and sustainably over the long term.

To address the skill gaps, a **structured training program** was designed, focusing on **knowledge enhancement, skill development, and confidence-building**. The training priorities were categorized based on the **specific requirements of the eco-tourism business** as outlined below.



.5.2: Workshop on Hospitality and Professional Attitude

Objective:

To equip SHG members with **essential hospitality skills** and help them develop a **professional and welcoming attitude** toward tourists, ensuring high standards of service.

Key Topics Covered:

- **Customer Service and Communication Skills:** Training in **politeness, effective communication, and conflict resolution** to enhance visitor satisfaction.
- **Guest Handling and Cultural Sensitivity:** Understanding the **expectations of domestic and international tourists** while maintaining **respect for tribal traditions**.
- **Accommodation and Housekeeping Management:** Learning the best practices for **cleaning, organizing, and maintaining eco-friendly lodges or homestays**.
- **Guided Tours and Storytelling:** Teaching members how to share **local folklore, traditions, and ecological knowledge** in an engaging way.
- **Ethical Tourism Practices:** Emphasizing **responsible tourism behavior**, ensuring minimal environmental impact, and preserving cultural integrity.

After this workshop, SHG members developed **confidence and professionalism**, enabling them to create a **welcoming and enriching experience** for tourists while preserving their **tribal heritage and environmental values**.

The **capacity-building program** played a crucial role in preparing SHG members to **run the eco-tourism initiative effectively and independently**. By focusing on **biodiversity conservation, culinary expertise, and hospitality skills**, the project not only empowered the **local tribal community** but also ensured the **long-term sustainability of the eco-tourism venture**.

With these newly acquired skills, SHG members are now well-equipped to manage the site, provide **high-quality services**, and **generate sustainable livelihoods**, transforming their community into a **model for responsible and community-driven eco-tourism**.

5.1: Workshop on Biodiversity and Forest Conservation

Objective:

To educate SHG members about the **ecological significance** of their region, the importance of **forest conservation**, and how **eco-tourism can be harmonized with environmental protection**.

Key Topics Covered:

- **Understanding Local Biodiversity:** An introduction to the **flora and fauna** of the region, including information on **medicinal plants, wildlife, and endemic species**.
- **Eco-Tourism and Conservation:** How **sustainable tourism practices** can contribute to the **protection of forests and wildlife habitats**.
- **Threats to the Ecosystem:** Identifying issues such as **deforestation, habitat loss, and climate change**, and learning **community-led conservation strategies**.
- **Wildlife Interpretation and Nature Guiding:** Training members to act as **eco-guides**, educating tourists about the **natural and cultural heritage** of the region.
- **Sustainable Resource Management:** Best practices for using **forest resources responsibly** without harming the ecosystem.

After this workshop, SHG members developed a **deep appreciation for their environment**, enabling them to act as **eco-tourism ambassadors** who educate visitors while actively participating in **forest conservation efforts**.





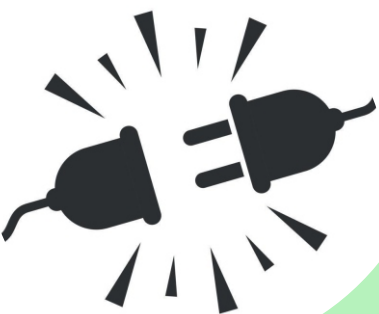
Investment Cost

Labour cost for Site Development (Construction, Site preparation etc)

Approx. INR 2,30,000/-

Infrastructure Development Cost (Kitchen, Dining Hall, Toilets, rooms etc.)

Approx. INR 5,50,000/-



Lighting Installation Cost (Electric connection, internal lighting system)

Approx. INR 1,20,000/-

Equipment Purchasing Cost (Tent, Kitchen utensils, Table & Chairs etc.)

Approx. INR 1,30,000/-



Business/Income generation

Income Generated from Tent Stay

Approx. INR 97,000/-

Income Generated from Food

Approx. INR 1,50,000/-



Net Profit & Benefit Sharing

Total Income Generation
Approx. INR 2,50,000/-

Total Regular expenditure on maintenance
Approx. INR 50,000/-

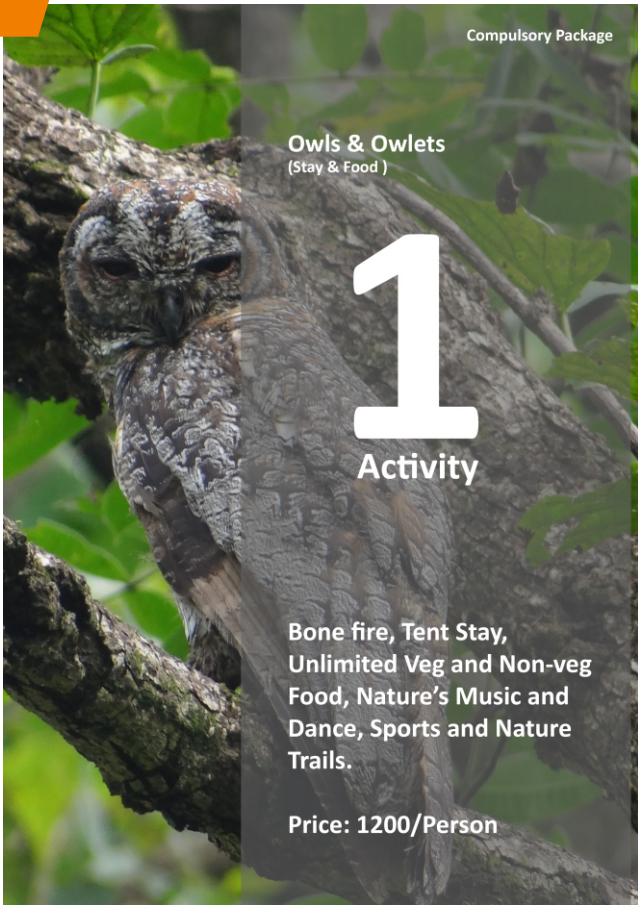
Total Employment Generation (Mandays)
Avg. 340 days

Total Employment Generation (Amount)
Avg. INR 70,000/-

Net Profit
Avg. INR 1,30,000/-

50% of the total net profit has been allocated towards site upgrades to enhance infrastructure and service capabilities. 20% has been reserved for the procurement of provisions required for upcoming bookings. The remaining balance has been distributed among all team members, with allocations determined based on individual performance and attendance metrics.

Note: The above economic estimates are based on the business activities conducted in Mhatarabchawai over the course of one year and represent the average annual income.



Compulsory Package

Owls & Owlets
(Stay & Food)

1

Activity

Bone fire, Tent Stay,
Unlimited Veg and Non-veg
Food, Nature's Music and
Dance, Sports and Nature
Trails.

Price: 1200/Person



Squirrels & Butterflies
(Jungle Exploration and jungle walk)

2

Activity

This package is designed for
the Naturalists, The Wildlife
Enthusiast, Birders and
Nature Photographers with
guided walk in the forest.

Price: 500/Person



Peacock and Quills
(Sightseeing and tourist spot visit)

3

Activity

There are many places in and
around the Bhimashankar
temple, this activity designed
especially for families want to
explore the location around
the temple. (Konkan Kada,
Hanuman Tale, Bombay Point,
Vanaspati Point etc.)

Price: 600/Person



Eagle & Vultures
(Trekking)

4

Activity

This activity is designed for
hardcore trekkers and adventurous
individuals. In the Bhimashankar
landscape, there are two trekking
destinations (forts): Padargad (near
Bhimashankar temple) and
Siddhgad (near Ahupe eco-tourism
site). Both treks are categorized as
challenging."

Price: 600/Person

Community Eco-tourism Centres & Camping
Mhatarbachiwadi & Ahupe



28 May to 15 June 2023

FIREFLIES

Festival & Camping
Bhimashankar

For more details please contact : +91-7020879544/+91-9403939801/+91-9420283031/+91-9309065998

Community Eco-tourism Centres & Camping
Mhatarbachiwadi & Ahupe

June-October

MONSOON TREK

BHIMASHANKAR



For more details please contact : +91-7020879544/+91-9403939801/+91-9420283031/+91-9309065998

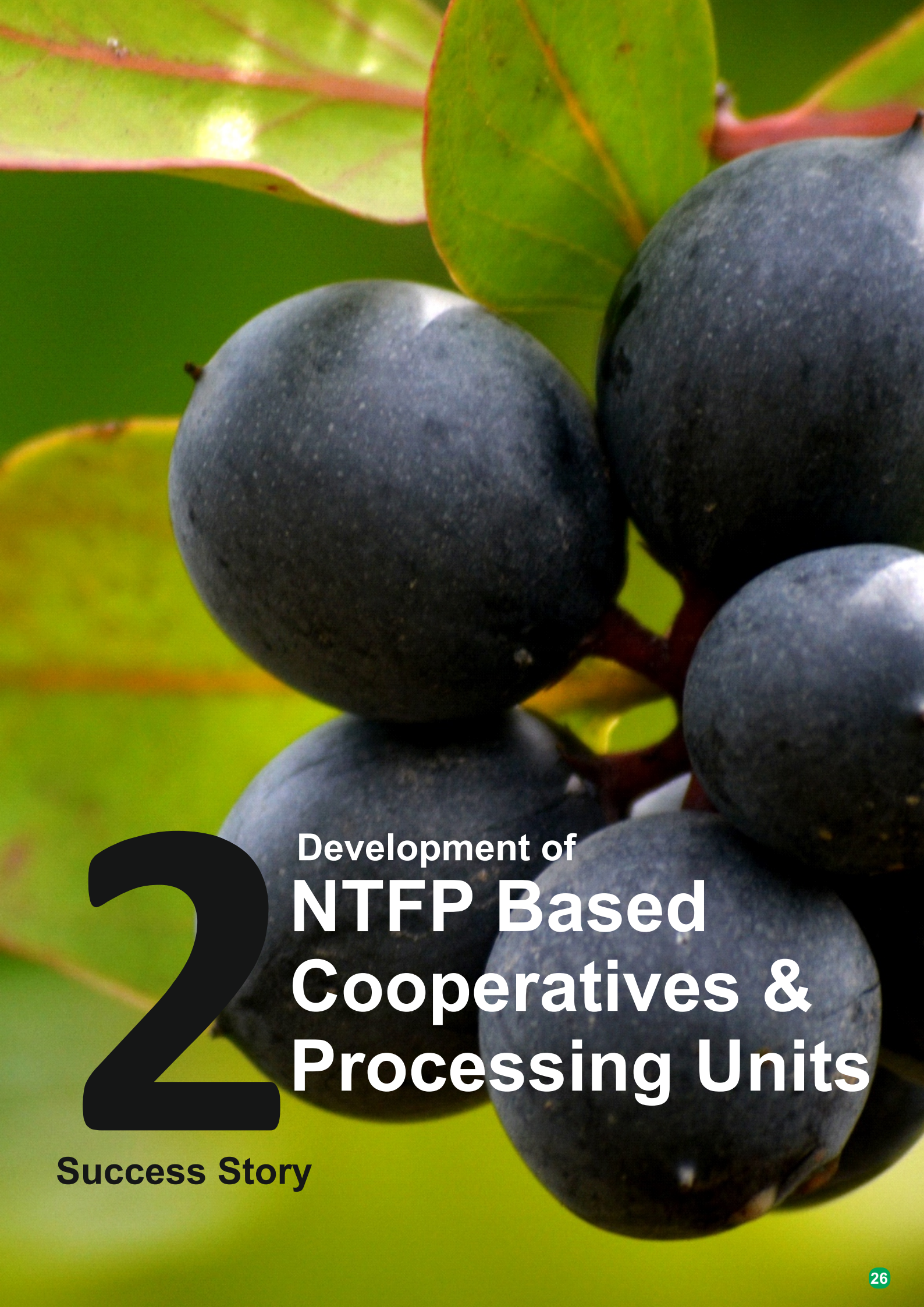
Community Eco-tourism Centres & Camping
Mhatarbachiwadi & Ahupe

Monsoon season

Wild Vegetable

Festival & Camping

For more details please contact : +91-7020879544/+91-9403939801/+91-9420283031/+91-9309065998



2 Development of NTFP Based Cooperatives & Processing Units

Success Story



Dried Hirda Fruit

1.1: Introduction

In Bhimashankar landscape tribal's don't have the much employment opportunities in village especially, women. Aim of our project is to create the sustainable avenues for the tribal women to address the issue that they will get the livelihood opportunities and helping in financial stability of family. Our activity it would be create the greater opportunities for the poor and marginal tribal communities in Bhimashankar WLS particularly the women by enhancing their skill, awareness, knowledge and bringing in linkage to market with creating the awareness of conservation of local wildlife.

Through our project developing the employment opportunities for the strengthening of tribal women as well as young generation, our role is mobilizing the training and linkage of marketing, developing of the skill and most important our mainly focus on the development of local leadership to long term community sustainability.

In the existing scenario the villagers sell out whatever they collect the product from the forest to the local vendors and in weekly haats in a very low price, the non timber forest products form an integral part of tribal life. Bhimashankar landscape is the good source of the NTFP which are the useful raw materials for the many industries such as medicine, dyes, biofuels, oils, food products, gums etc. sustainable NTFP cultivation and processing it leads to generate the employment and economical development of villagers and to stop the worst migration of the villagers. For that required, the capacity building of the SHG, JFMCs and VEDC at village level and create and established the small scale cottage industries either forest based or non forest based, it is the key role activity in enhance the struggling life of the tribal peoples in Bhimashankar.

Although, local tribal community have been collecting many forest produces like honey and medicinal use full plants and herbs, in all the collection of Hirda fruits is the main NTFP. Hirda tree density is very good in malki and forest areas. Every year during the summer season, all locals engaged in this activity. Hirad fruits have good market value due to its medicinal properties and it has long been considered a prime remedies for many diseases like digestive problem and help full to improve immune system The fruits are used internally in the treatment of constipation, digestive and nervous complaints, diarrhoea, dysentery, intestinal worms, haemorrhoids, rectal prolapse, abnormal uterine bleeding and inflammation, vaginal discharge, involuntary ejaculation, coughs and asthma. he fruits contain a range of medically active constituents including anthraquinones, tannins, chebulic acid, resin and a fixed oil. A crude extract of the fruits inhibited cancer cell growth, with chebulinic acid, tannic acid and ellagic acid as the most inhibitory phenolics.

The ever-growing global population and heavy demand for herbal products increasingly strain our natural resources. Commercial overexploitation is one of the major threats to the stocks of medicinal plants in wild. Around 95% of medicinal plants are collected from wild and more than 85% of the wild collections are made through destructive harvesting. Conservation of such ecological important plants are equally important along with sustainable harvesting and to give economical benefits to local community.

Our proposed activity if mainly focus on to developed community based sustainable modal for harvesting of Hirda and to make byproduct for value addition practice for get more economical benefits to local people. Selling of Hirda fruits directly to vendor is the general practice in this region, and it is sometimes leads to exploitation of local tribal due to the lack of awareness. Rate of hirda fruits is decided by vendors in nearest market. Throughout this activity we are not trying to developed only processing unit in the region but also developed local leadership to take leads to economic development of tribal society with long term vision.

To establish a long-term, sustainable plan for non-timber forest product (NTFP)-based income generation, the active participation of the local community was prioritized as a foundational aspect of the project. Recognizing the need to bridge existing gaps in collection, processing, and market access, a series of consultations were organized at multiple levels—community meetings, village-level gatherings, and focused in-house discussions with NTFP collectors, landowners, and other stakeholders.

These participatory meetings helped identify high-potential villages in the Bhimashankar forest region, where NTFP collection was both culturally ingrained and economically viable. Based on the insights gathered, women's Self-Help Groups (SHGs) were formed in these target villages. The SHGs were equipped with essential training and financial support to ensure their effective functioning and sustainability.

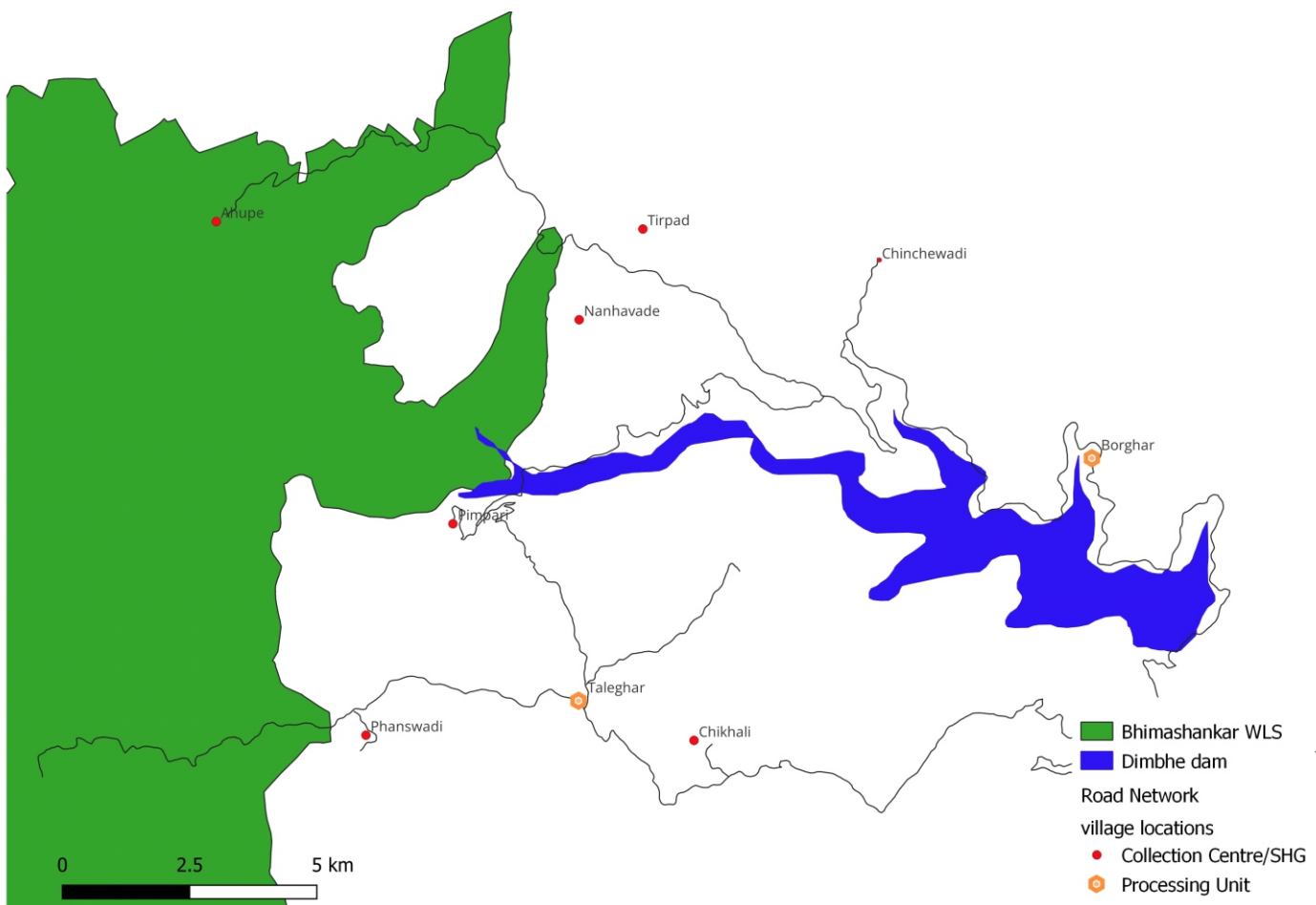
The primary role of the village-level SHGs was to procure raw NTFPs—such as *Hirida* (*Terminalia chebula*) fruits and wild honey—directly from local collectors. To maintain the integrity and quality of the raw materials, SHGs undertook preliminary processing steps, including careful sorting, cleaning, and sun-drying. These quality-control measures were essential to preserve the value and marketability of the products.

To facilitate value addition, standardized packaging, and broader market outreach, a Farmers Producer Company Limited (FPC/FPO) was established. Two strategically located processing units were developed under this initiative, each equipped with the necessary infrastructure for handling, processing, and packaging of various NTFPs. Importantly, these units are managed and operated by trained women from the SHGs, ensuring continued community ownership and empowerment.

To ensure the smooth and accountable operation of the FPO, a board of directors was constituted, comprising local representatives and experienced stakeholders. This governing body is responsible for overseeing all operations, financial management, compliance, and strategic planning related to the FPO.

By integrating traditional knowledge with modern value chain development, the project not only creates sustainable livelihood opportunities for forest-dependent communities but also fosters a model of inclusive development rooted in local participation and ecological stewardship.

Map showing the locations of the SHGs and processing unit in the project area



The Bhimashankar forest area is endowed with abundant natural resources, serving as a crucial source of income for the local community. However, the community faces challenges due to the low prices fetched for their forest produce in local markets, exacerbated by the lack of direct access to broader markets, which allows middlemen to exploit them. Furthermore, the absence of primary value addition mechanisms results in their products commanding low prices.

In response to these challenges, Shashwat Trust, Manchar, established the Kususmanand Farmers Producer Company Ltd. in 2024. The directors of this Producer Company are drawn from the local community and include members of self-help groups engaged in various livelihood activities supported by the organization. To enhance local economic opportunities, the FPC has facilitated the formation of 7 women self-help groups across different villages. These groups are responsible for sourcing and purchasing local raw materials, primarily collected from private forests.

To process these Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs), the FPC has established two processing units managed by the women self-help groups. Currently, the FPC focuses on three main categories of value-added products:

1. Fresh from the Forest:

- Wild Honey
- Hirda Husk
- Hirda Powder
- Herbal Tea

2. Fresh from the Kitchen:

- Nachani (Finger Millet) Laddu
- Nachani Biscuit
- Nachani Satv (Porridge)
- Mango Pickle
- Karavand (Carissa Carandas) Pickle

3. Fresh from the Farm:

- Local Rice
- Millet
- Various ready-to-cook flours (Idli, Dokla, Chakli, etc.)

Through these initiatives, the FPC aims to create sustainable livelihoods, empower women through self-help groups, and ensure fairer prices for locally sourced products. This holistic approach not only adds value to the forest and agricultural produce but also strengthens the socio-economic fabric of the tribal communities in the region.

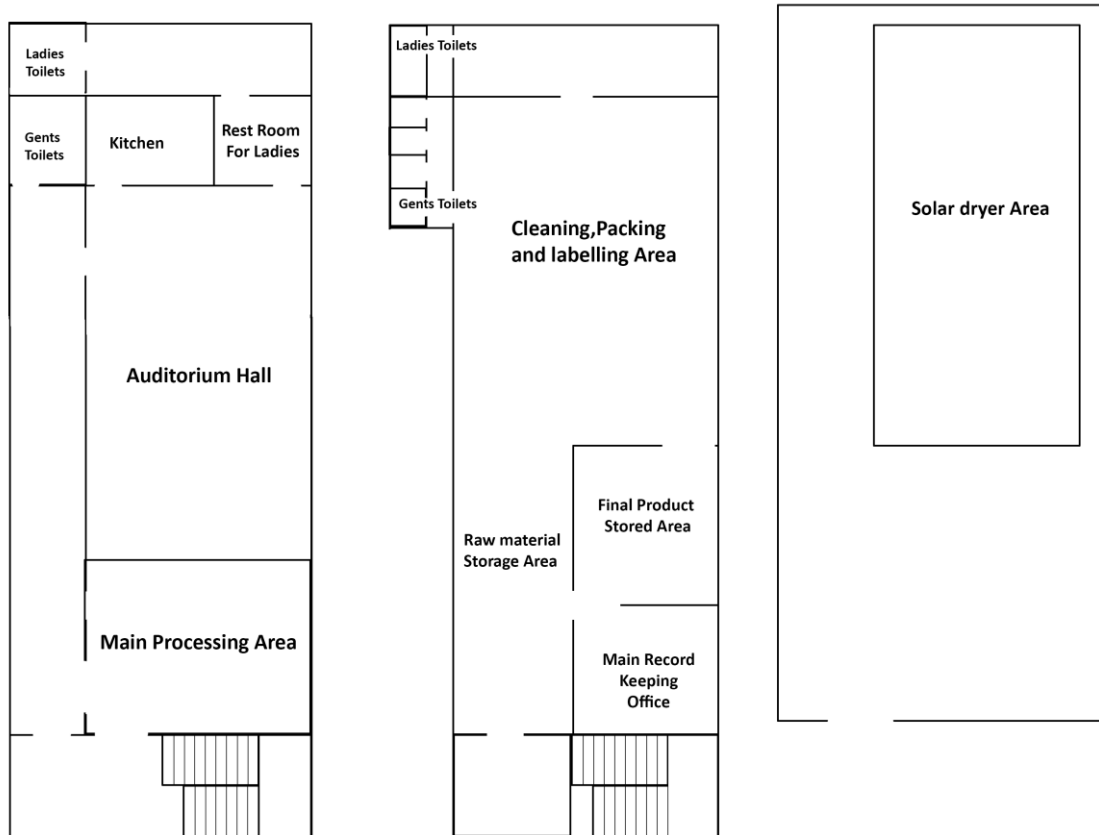


Layout of the NTFP Processing Unit

To establish the Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFP) processing unit, Shashwat Trust has repurposed an existing double-storey building located in Old Ambegaon. This building, previously used as a training center, was deemed suitable for adaptation to meet the specific infrastructure needs of the project. In alignment with the objectives of the initiative, the upper floor and one designated room on the ground floor have been allocated to the Kusumanand Farmers Producer Company (FPC) for setting up the processing unit.

To ensure smooth operations and efficient workflow within the unit, the space has been carefully redesigned and modified. The layout now includes clearly demarcated zones such as the **machinery installation area**, **raw material storage section**, **processing and packaging area**, and a dedicated **office space** for administrative functions. Each of these zones has been planned to meet operational efficiency, hygiene standards, and ease of access for workers, especially members of the Self-Help Groups (SHGs) managing the unit.

The restructured layout facilitates seamless movement of materials from storage through processing to packaging, while also allowing space for proper record-keeping and supervision. This functional and practical design supports the long-term sustainability of the unit and enhances the capacity of the local community to manage and scale NTFP-based enterprises. A detailed layout plan of the processing unit has been prepared and is available for reference.



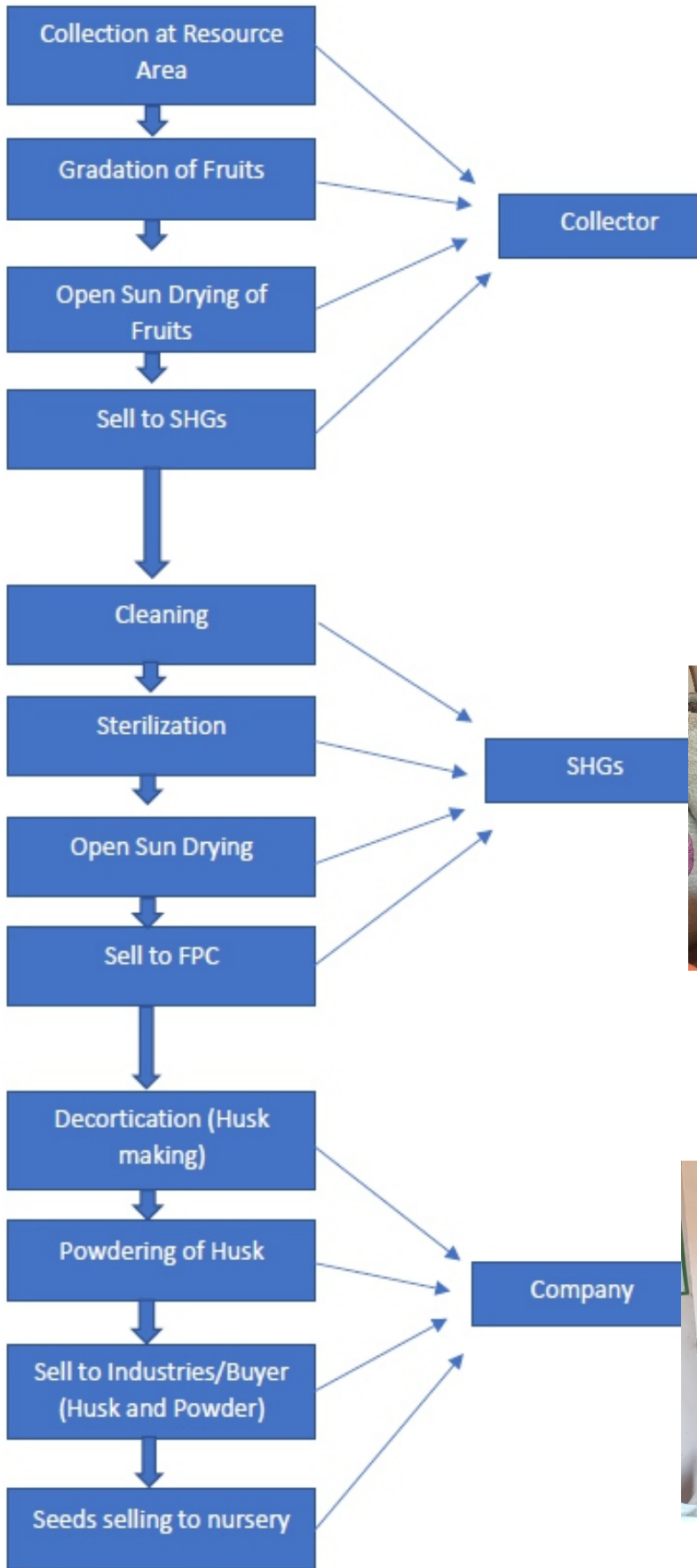
Layout of the NTFP Processing facility at Ambegaon



Solar Dryer for NTFP



Installed Solar Powered



Collection, Processing, and Packaging of NTFP Products

Collection

The collection of raw materials for the NTFP processing unit is carried out by local tribal communities, with a strong focus on quality and sustainability. Women-led Self-Help Groups (SHGs) play a central role in this process. The raw materials—primarily Hirda (*Terminalia chebula*) fruits and wild honey—are gathered from privately owned forest lands belonging to tribal collectors. Before procurement, the quality of the collected material is thoroughly assessed by an expert committee comprising subject matter specialists and project representatives. Only high-quality produce meeting the required standards is approved for purchase.

SHG members are responsible for the initial handling of the collected materials. This includes primary cleaning to remove debris and impurities, followed by sun drying to reduce moisture content and ensure the longevity of the material. This pre-processing is essential to maintain the quality of the raw products during storage and transportation. Once the material is adequately dried, it is carefully packed and transported to the designated processing unit for further value addition. In the case of wild honey, it is directly procured from SHGs and transported without additional pre-processing, due to its sensitive nature and risk of contamination during handling.

Processing and Packaging

At the processing unit, a trained team of women—primarily from the SHGs—oversees the material inspection, quality control, and further processing. Upon arrival, all materials undergo a secondary quality check where items are sorted—high-grade material is selected for processing, while any substandard or spoiled material is discarded. If required, additional sun drying is carried out at the unit to ensure optimal moisture levels before mechanical processing begins.

The processing of Hirda fruit, a key NTFP in the region, is conducted using specialized decorticator machines. These machines efficiently separate the seeds from the husk. The seeds, which are viable and of good quality, are set aside for use in nursery operations, promoting circular use of resources. The husk, valued for its medicinal properties, is packed in food-grade bags to ensure hygiene and preserve product integrity. Detailed records and documentation are maintained at every stage, from raw material intake to final packaging, ensuring traceability and compliance with quality assurance protocols.

Each product processed at the unit follows a standardized procedure designed to maintain high quality and purity. This includes hygienic handling, proper labeling, storage in controlled conditions, and preparation for distribution. The entire workflow—from collection to packaging—not only guarantees product excellence but also creates sustainable income opportunities for the local tribal population, especially women, thereby strengthening the community-based forest economy.



3.1 Resource Area

Number	Compliance	Status	Remark
1.1	Collectors are identified, registered and trained		Compulsory
1.2	The ownership area is identified, de-marketed the boundary		Compulsory
1.3	Resource density and its extension is identified		Compulsory
1.4	While demarcating the resource area, the site of farm house, cattle shed, cow dung pit and waste dumping ground were avoided		Compulsory
1.5	Within the ownership boundary the resource collection area is identified and boundary is de-marked		Compulsory
1.6	The identified resource trees are wild, naturally grown and not planted		Compulsory
1.7	The Available resource was dually classified on the grounds of possible source of contamination collection practices and resource sustainability		Compulsory
1.8	The resource was Geo-Tagged and Colour coded for easy identification in the field		Compulsory
1.9	Prepared the resource map with all necessary details.		Compulsory
1.10	The resource trees from demarked area were not lopped and pruned		Expected change
1.11	The resource trees were not facilitated with fertilizers, water and pesticides.		Compulsory
1.12	The leaf litter from the resource area is not harvested or burnt		Expected change
1.13	Harvesting of the brushwood underneath the resource trees is practiced once in three years.		Expected change
1.14	The tree species other than the resource trees were not harvested or lopped		Expected change
1.15	The honey bee colonies in particular Apis floria, Apis dorseta, Apis indica and trigona species were not found any sign of harvesting from the de-marked area.		Expected change
1.16	The saplings of resource trees or any other species were not found planted in the specified collection site.		Compulsory

3.2: Collection and Handling of Fruits

Number	Compliance	Status	Remark
2.1	The registered and trained collectors were involved in collection of the resource		Compulsory
2.2	Before onset of collection, the collectors were made aware with collection limit		Compulsory
2.3	The Resource was collected from the accepted trees separately		Compulsory
2.4	The resource collected from rejected trees was well labelled, documented and stored separately		Compulsory
2.5	The naturally matured fruits fallen on the ground or on the shed net tied underneath the tree were only collected.		Compulsory
2.6	The fruits were not harvested by hand picking or shaking of branches or beating of branches by sticks		Expected change
2.7	The fruits were not collected from the trees which are secured for conservation purpose and well-marked with green colour.		Compulsory
2.8	Before collecting the fruits, the care was taken the clean the hand with clean water.		Compulsory
2.9	While collecting the fruits, the fruits were kept in a clean cloth bag.		Compulsory
2.10	The collected fruits were dually graded before sun drying as fresh fruits, semi dried good quality fruits and partially deteriorated fruits.		Compulsory
2.11	The graded fruits were then separately sun dried on the dedicated shed net racks to avoid possible contaminations from the livestock, pet animals and dust.		Compulsory
2.12	The documentation of day-to-day collection is maintained in the dedicated record book.		Compulsory
2.13	The immature fruits (Bal haritaki) were not harvested from demarked collection site.		Expected change

3.3:Packaging, Labeling and Storage

Number	Compliance	Status	Remark
3.1	The well sun dried fruits were packed in a clean gunny bags of 35 kg capacity.		Compulsory
3.2	The packed gunny bags were well labelled in a prescribed format		Compulsory
3.3	The packed gunny bags were kept on a elevated platform in a clean place.		Compulsory
3.4	The storage of fruits was kept separately in a room divide of other storage of farm produce, fertilizers and pesticides		Compulsory
3.5			

3.4: Transportation

Number	Compliance	Status	Remark
4.1	The care was taken to use dedicated and clean transportation vehicle divide of any other possible storage of contaminants		Compulsory
4.2	The details of sells and transports were dually maintained in the dedicated record book.		Compulsory

3.5: Record keeping

Number	Compliance	Status	Remark
5.1	Details of collector's registration, collector ID and training		Compulsory
5.2	Details of resource area, resource map and resource trees		Compulsory
5.3	Collection and handling record book		Compulsory
5.4	Stock, transportation and sells book		Compulsory

To ensure the smooth and effective functioning of both the processing unit and the affiliated cooperative activities, a structured and accountable governance framework has been put in place. At the core of this framework is a **Management Committee** comprising **10 members**, which includes **5 Directors** and **5 additional members** from the broader **Director Body**. This committee is responsible for strategic oversight, operational decision-making, and ensuring that the organization remains aligned with its goals and vision.

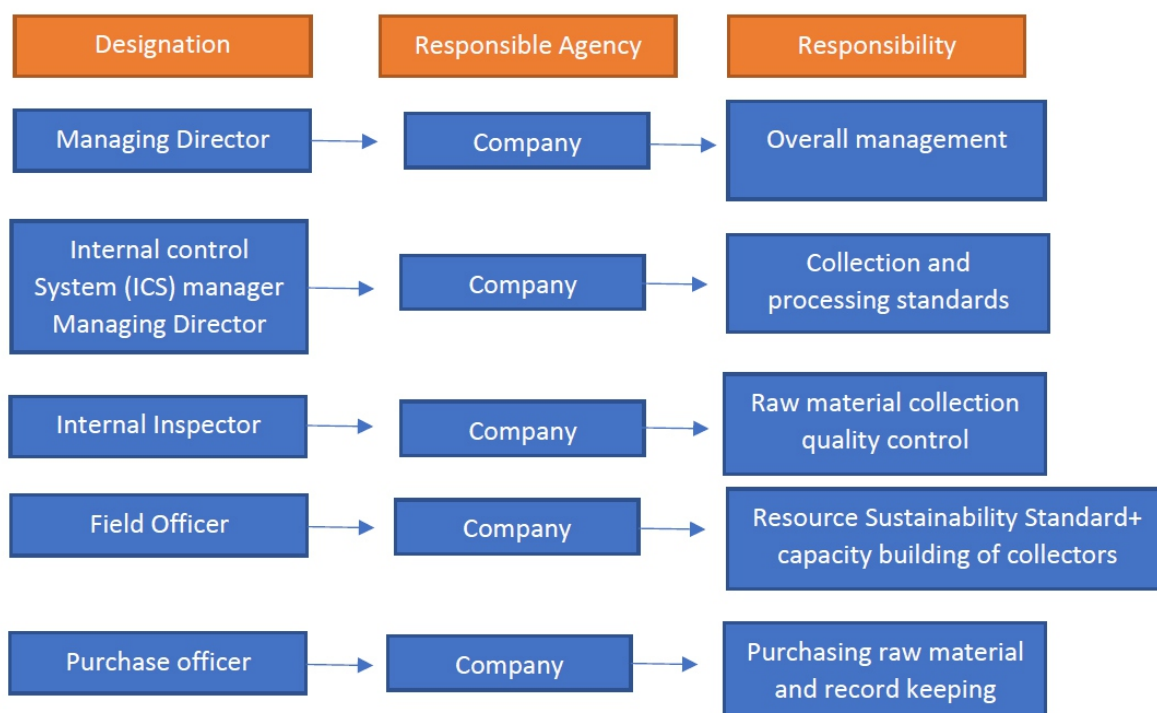
Within the committee, **two Directors have been entrusted with signature authority**, allowing them to authorize financial transactions and official documents on behalf of the organization. However, **all critical decisions are made collectively** by the full Director Body to maintain transparency, democratic functioning, and inclusiveness. These decisions are finalized through **regularly scheduled meetings and open discussions**, where all members contribute their insights and votes.

To manage the day-to-day affairs of the organization, the committee has appointed **Chief Executive Officers (CEOs)**. These executives play a pivotal role in the administration and operational continuity of the organization. Their key responsibilities include:

- Managing financial accounts and ensuring proper bookkeeping.
- Maintaining detailed operational records and documentation.
- Monitoring ongoing projects and reporting performance metrics.
- Providing the Management Committee with periodic updates on financial status, operational progress, benefits, losses, and any emerging issues.
- Ensuring compliance with internal policies and external regulatory requirements.

The responsibilities within the organization are carefully **distributed across multiple tiers**, forming a robust, decentralized management system. This begins at the grassroots level with the **Self-Help Groups (SHGs)**, which play a vital role in mobilizing local participation and production. Each SHG has designated roles and is supported by coordinators who report to mid-level management. From there, oversight continues through processing units, quality control teams, logistics coordinators, and finally, to the **senior marketing and sales teams**, who are responsible for brand outreach, market penetration, and customer engagement.

This tiered structure ensures accountability, clarity in communication, and efficient execution of tasks across all levels of the organization. A comprehensive breakdown of roles, responsibilities, and operational workflow is provided in the section below.





Fresh from wild

Hirda Husk & Powder



Fresh from wild

Hirda Herbal Tea



Fresh from wild

Karvand Pickle



Fresh from wild

Mango Pickle



Fresh from wild

Wild Honey & Honey Powder



Fresh from Kitchen

Pre-mix (flour)



Fresh from Farm

Rice & Millets



Fresh from Kitchen

Nachani Biscuit & Nachani Satva



5.1 Scope of the Project

Consideration

Period of Collection	October-November-December
Period of Fruit handling	November-January
Period of processing	February- Mid May

Collection

Average collection of fruits/collector/season	100 Kg
Average collection of good quality fruits/tree	2-3 Kg
Average no. of collectors/ family	3

Processing

Effective working hours	6 hrs
Effective working day/Season	50
Machine capacity	100 kg/Hrs
Percent of Good quality fruits in collection	65%
Average percent of husk from good quality fruit	60%
Seeds	40 %

Overall Projection

Min. resource tree per Family	150
Average collection per family(65% Good fruit and bad 35% fruits)	300 kg
Max. fruit handling capacity of processing unit/Season	30,000 kg
Avg. no. of hirda trees per SHG	1000
Avg. No of collectors/SHGs	20
Avg. collection of hirda fruits per SHG	2000 kg
Proposed no. of SHGs	10
Grand total of good quality fruits for processing	20,000 kg

Cost estimated for 1000 kg Hirda fruit	
Non-recurring cost	Amount
Plant and Machinery	
Item	Amount
Decorticator Machine	1,80,000
Weighing machine	5,000
Other tools (tray, packing material)	5,000
Building/shed	0
Total	1,90,000
Operating Cost	
Raw material (Rs. 15/Kg)	15000
Labour cost (5 rs/Kg)	5000
Marketing & Transportation	2000
Electricity	1000
Total	23000
Working capital (1 months operating cost)	23000
Capital Investment	103000
Total Recurring cost	23000
Monthly Production(kg)	
Husk (60 %) Kg	600
Seeds (40%) Kg	400
Cost of Husk(Rs 40/Kg)	33000
Cost of Seeds (Rs.5 /Kg)	2000
	35000
Profit	12000
Total income to the group	17000

5.2 Marketing

All of our products are currently sold in the local market, with the exception of our main offerings: Hirda husk and wild honey, which we distribute to vendors based in cities. Members of our Self-Help Group (SHG) actively participate in various exhibitions and programs aimed at establishing retail outlets to sell their products. This proactive engagement helps them showcase their offerings, reach broader audiences, and foster economic opportunities within their communities.





3

Development of Nurseries

Success Story

Nursery is a part of the main project **Community-based Forest Conservation and Livelihood Generation**.

To run a nursery, one finds information about various strategies that have been practiced for many years in both domestic and foreign countries.

In a nursery, the origin of quality saplings, grafts, and seeds is nurtured and conserved scientifically and methodically, brought together from various propagation methods in a synchronized manner. A nursery may also have special classifications for specific plants — for example, ground covers, shade plants, or rock garden plants, grafted trees for gardens, fruit trees, or timber trees for afforestation. Some seasonal stocks are also prepared.

The discovery and use of **gutti grafting** were first made in the country of China on the litchi tree. It is mentioned that between 384 BCE to 322 BCE, the use of wet grafting was known in China. In India, gutti grafting on guava and litchi fruit trees has been practiced for several decades in the nurseries of Muzaffarnagar and Darbhanga.

In the 12th century, there is a mention of **Chhath grafting** in the *Dnyaneshwari*. Similarly, in India, the technique of propagation from tuberous roots has been known since the time of the *Ramayana*. Likewise, from 100 to 1000 CE, the art of **approach grafting** was known to the Chinese. In Europe, during the period between 1300 to 1500 CE, the study of **wedge grafting** and **budding techniques** was observed. In mango fruit trees, the art of approach grafting was first introduced in India by the Mughals, while the art of budding in mosambi (sweet lime) was promoted by the Portuguese.

In South India, attempts were made to prepare mosambi saplings by budding on **Id limbu** (a variety of lemon) stumps, while in North India, mosambi was prepared by budding on **karna khatta** (wild species of citrus rootstock). From that time onward, the planting of grafted saplings began.

This clearly means that the efforts to run nurseries have been known to mankind for many years, and humans have continued to try to make use of them.

In rural and urban areas, the nursery is emerging as a major source of livelihood and business.

Definition of Ropvatika (Nursery):

1. A place where new saplings are produced, nurtured, and sold is called a *Ropvatika* (nursery).
2. A place where fruit tree saplings are propagated and carefully nurtured for a certain period is called a *Ropvatika* or *nursery*.





2.1 Introduction

Shashwat Trust, established in 1999, is a grassroots non-profit organization dedicated to addressing critical issues related to health, education, environmental conservation, and sustainable livelihoods. With a commitment to integrated rural development, the organization has continually worked to empower marginalized communities, particularly in tribal and underdeveloped areas.

Recognizing the intrinsic connection between environmental stewardship and livelihood generation, Sustainable Sanstha initiated a community-based nursery project as a strategic intervention. This initiative aims to combine ecological restoration with socio-economic empowerment, especially for rural women. The project is a part of a larger vision to promote sustainable forest conservation and provide meaningful employment to women in environmentally fragile regions.

The project is being implemented with financial assistance from two key partners: the **Global Nature Fund (Germany)** and **Mercedes-Benz India Pvt. Ltd., Chakan**. Their support has been instrumental in transforming this vision into a tangible, community-driven action plan.

2.2 Project Rationale

The targeted region for the project is the western tribal belt of **Ambegaon Taluka** in Pune District, Maharashtra — an area that faces high levels of economic vulnerability and environmental degradation. The majority of the population here depends on seasonal agricultural labor, with limited access to steady income sources.

In response to this, Sustainable Sanstha identified the promotion of community nurseries as a dual-benefit solution — enhancing green cover through sapling production and plantation, while also creating livelihood opportunities for women from Self-Help Groups (SHGs). Two villages, **Chikhli** and **Terungan**, were selected for project implementation based on need assessment and community readiness. In each village, a group of 15 women was formed, making a total of 29 active participants, who would collectively manage and operate the nurseries.

2.3 Project Objectives

The nursery project has been designed with the following core objectives:

- 1. Empowerment through Enterprise:** To establish and manage plant nurseries through trained women members of Self-Help Groups, enabling them to develop skills in nursery management, plant propagation, and basic entrepreneurship.
- 2. Income Generation and Market Linkage:** To ensure each group produces saplings valued at a minimum of ₹30,000 per year, generating sustainable income through the sale of quality saplings to local markets and reforestation programs.
- 3. Environmental Restoration:** To produce and plant a combined total of saplings worth ₹55,000 annually from both nurseries, specifically targeting degraded lands for ecological restoration and improved biodiversity.

This innovative initiative seeks to serve as a model for integrating environmental conservation with community livelihood programs, reinforcing the idea that sustainable development must be inclusive and environmentally responsible.





Meeting with Member of SHG about Nursery management

3.1 Core Group Meeting

A meeting was organized by *Sustainable Sanstha* involving all key stakeholders of the nursery project, including field workers, the project coordinator, the treasurer, and trustees. In this meeting, comprehensive details of the nursery project were shared with all participants. Roles and responsibilities were clearly defined, and tasks were allocated accordingly. Since women's participation and their employment were central to the nursery project, it was decided to conduct multiple surveys to identify suitable locations. Information gathering about various villages was initiated, along with instructions to conduct social and economic surveys.

3.2 Village Meetings

To launch the nursery project, meetings were conducted in ten villages to disseminate detailed information about the project. These meetings focused on explaining the project objectives, its potential benefits, and direct employment opportunities for women. Villages with greater interest and a higher number of women willing to participate were shortlisted for final selection.

3.3. Site Inspection

A physical inspection was carried out in the shortlisted villages to assess essential factors for implementing the nursery project. These included water availability, sufficient open space, road access, electricity connections, village approval, no-objection certificates from landowners, transportation access, and feasibility of a sales network. All these aspects were thoroughly examined during the site visits.

3.4 Site Selection

Based on the site inspections and evaluations, **Chikhli** and **Terungan** were finalized as the locations for establishing the nursery project.

3.5 Gram Sabha (Village Assembly)

Village assemblies were conducted in both Chikhli and Terungan to formally introduce the project. Detailed project information was presented, emphasizing the employment opportunities that would be created for local women. The selection of these two villages for the project was confirmed during these assemblies. Minutes of the discussions were documented and submitted to *Sustainable Sanstha*.

3.6 Community Participation

Separate meetings were held with 40 to 50 women from Chikhli and Terungan villages to encourage community involvement and gauge interest in the project.

3.7 Socio-Economic Survey

A comprehensive socio-economic survey was conducted in both selected villages, covering all households. Based on the findings, 40 to 50 women from economically weaker families were invited for a focused group discussion. These discussions helped identify women who had a genuine interest in forest conservation, nursery work, and community development. Priority was given to women from ordinary backgrounds who demonstrated willingness and enthusiasm for the project.

3.8 Formation of Groups

From the socio-economic survey results, one group of 15 women was formed in each village.

- In **Chikhli**, the group was named *Vanarai Nursery Women's Group*
- In **Terungan**, the group was named *Shivshakti Nursery Women's Group*

All women in both groups were given detailed information about the nursery project. With the women's consent, group leaders—including a president, secretary, and director—were elected. A bank account was opened for each group, and an official group seal was also created.



Member of SHG working in Nursery

4.1: Documentation

All necessary documents required for establishing nurseries in the villages of **Chikhli** and **Terungan** were collected. These included:

1. **Consent Letter from Landowner**
2. **No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the Gram Panchayat**
3. **Agreement between Sustainable Sanstha and the Women's Group**

4.2: Women's Capacity Building

To ensure effective nursery operations, capacity-building initiatives were undertaken for the women in the nursery groups. Expert trainers from the **Krishi Vigyan Kendra (Agricultural Science Center), Narayangaon**, were invited to conduct on-site training sessions.

The training focused on:

- Nursery management practices
- Soil testing
- Pest and weed control
- Basic operational planning and nursery maintenance

Workshops were organized to provide in-depth, practical guidance. All participating women were educated on foundational nursery concepts, including:

- Preparing income and expense records
- Maintaining attendance registers
- Systematic record-keeping and documentation

These efforts collectively contributed to enhancing the women's skills and building their capacity to manage the nursery as a sustainable micro-enterprise.



Training workshop for Nursery members about nursery management



Site Preparation

To implement the nursery project, land was selected in the villages of **Chikhli** and **Terungan**. Site leveling was carried out with the help of local laborers and JCB machinery. At **Chikhli**, 15 gunthas of land were leveled, and at **Terungan**, 20 gunthas were leveled completely.

Area Details

- **Village Name:** Chikhli
 - **Dimensions / Fencing:** 100 x 150 feet
 - **Total Area:** 15 gunthas
- **Village Name:** Terungan
 - **Dimensions / Fencing:** 150 x 135 feet
 - **Total Area:** 20 gunthas

A financial target was set to generate ₹50,000 worth of saplings from the Chikhli nursery and ₹1,00,000 from the Terungan nursery.

Fencing

To protect the saplings from animals and to prevent trampling, **barbed wire fencing** was installed on all four sides of both nursery sites to ensure safe and healthy plant growth.

Layout

- At **Chikhli**, a **shed measuring 20x20 feet** was constructed using metal sheets to store materials.
- An area of **2 gunthas** was reserved for soil and manure storage.
- Specific space was designated for creating **raised nursery beds** for small saplings.
- A **gate** was installed to secure the nursery premises.

Water Management

Since water availability is crucial for nursery operations:

- A **solar-powered motor pump and pipeline system** were installed to draw water from a pond excavated by the organization.
- Water is stored in nursery tanks and managed by laborers for daily use.
- To ensure an adequate supply, a **sprinkler irrigation system** was implemented.
- During summer months, arrangements were made to supply water via **tankers** as needed.



6.1 Soil Procurement

When purchasing soil for the nursery, it is essential not to use only one type. A **mixture of soils with different properties** should be procured, particularly soil that ensures **proper water drainage**. Around the nursery beds, **green nets and windbreaks** should be installed to protect the saplings.

6.2 Fertilizers

For healthy growth of saplings, the following types of **well-decomposed organic fertilizers** should be used:

- Farmyard manure
- Compost
- Leaf litter
- Paddy husk
- Neem cake
- Poultry manure

6.3 Procurement of Plastic Bags

Nurseries require plastic bags in **various sizes**, and they must be **pre-punched** to allow for drainage and prevent root rot.

6.4. Soil-Fertilizer Mixing

The soil and fertilizer should be mixed in proper proportions to ensure balanced nutrients for the saplings.

6.5. Filling Bags

The prepared soil mix should be filled into the pre-decided sizes of plastic bags and neatly arranged.

6.6 Raised Beds (Gadi Vaphas)

For certain plants, **raised nursery beds** should be prepared in designated areas to ensure healthy root development.

6.7. Bed Preparation

Beds measuring **2.5 to 3 feet in width** should be made. Plastic sheets should be spread on these beds before arranging the bags. Bags should be placed in **a single row (approximately 10 bags per row)** to make it easier to **count and manage the saplings** quickly.

6.8 Seed Sowing

- Soil mixed with compost should be filled into bags for sowing.
- When purchasing seeds, preference should be given to **local and high-demand species** that are suitable for sale.
- Seeds should be **soaked or treated as required** and then sown into the bags.
- The bags should then be **arranged systematically on the nursery beds**.

6.9 Seasonal Sowing

Seed sowing should be done according to season:

- **Monsoon (June–July):** Mango, Guava, Jamun, Amla, Jackfruit, etc.
- **Post-Monsoon (October–November):** Lemon, Terminalia chebula (Hirida), Amla, Guava, Indian gooseberry (Bhenda), Cashew, Custard Apple, Papaya, etc.

Sowing should be done depending on **availability and seasonal viability**.

6.10 Sapling Care and Protection

- **Diseases:** Young saplings are vulnerable to fungal, bacterial, and viral diseases, especially under adverse climatic conditions. Timely interventions help protect plant health.
- **A. Insects and Pests:** Saplings are prone to insect attacks on roots, stems, and leaves. Appropriate **insecticides** must be used to control infestations.
- **B. Adverse Weather:** Storms, hail, cold waves, and extreme heat can damage saplings. **Protective shelters** must be installed to safeguard plants.
- **C. Weeds:** Excessive weed growth can hinder sapling development. Regular **weeding** is necessary.
- **D. Theft:** To prevent theft of nursery stock, **fencing should be secured on all sides**, and a **watchman should be appointed** at the gate.

Cost estimated for 50,000 Saplings/Year

Nonrecurring cost	Amount
Land Development	50,000
Land Rent/Year	20000
Compound	100000
Installation of Solar Motor Pump	350000
Pipeline and irrigation setup	100000
Construction of the Store room	100000
Nursery Equipment's	50000
Light Connection	10000
Total	780,000
Operating Cost	
Purchase of Soil	30000
Purchasing of fertilizers	25000
Plastic bags	15000
Tarpaulin	7000
Pesticides	15000
Purchasing of Seed	7000
Labour cost	150000
Other Maintenance	25000
Total	274000
Working capital (Year operating cost)	274000
Capital Investment	1,054,000
Total Recurring cost	274000
Annual Production (No. of Saplings)	50,000
Rate per sapling	Rs.10 / Sapling
Total production (Rs)	500000
Profit per plant	4.52
Net Profit	226000
Total Income to the group	376000



To operate a nursery, **various essential tools and equipment** are required. In fact, these tools form the core infrastructure of a nursery. Without them, conducting daily nursery operations is not feasible. The necessary materials include (to be listed in detail in the next section).



Different sizes of Plastic Bags



Trowel



Secateurs



Spray Pump



Tub



Spade



Hand Cart/Push Cart



Water Storage Tanks

A. Inward-Outward Register

This register should record the small saplings purchased for the nursery and the saplings sold. It can be used to determine the total number of saplings available in the nursery and to get information about the profit earned from sold saplings.

B. Bill Book

This book should be used to regularly record the purchase and sale transactions related to the nursery (purchases/sales).

C. Labor Register / Attendance Register

Various types of work are carried out in the nursery such as mixing fertilizers, filling bags, preparing beds, sowing seeds, weeding, water management, moving bags, spraying pesticides, grafting, etc. For these tasks, laborers are needed. Depending on the requirement, laborers are hired to complete the work on time. The labor register should record these details with dates and times, making it easier to calculate and pay wages.

D. Stock Register

All materials purchased and used for the nursery should be recorded in this register. At the end of the year, the records should be reviewed and updated accordingly.

E. Accounts Register

The group's passbook and checkbook should be used to keep the bank records updated.

F. Visitor Register

The thoughts and feedback of all visitors to the nursery should be recorded in this register. This helps in getting encouragement and guidance for running the nursery from various people's opinions and suggestions.

G. Meeting Register / File

Various challenges, planning of work, women's training, wage determination, women-specific programs, water management, plant care measures, time planning, and task allocation—these topics should be documented in the meeting register or file along with signed meeting papers.

Regular Monitoring

Even though the nursery is run by groups of women, it is essential to have supervision and control over many aspects. Capacity building of women should be done through various training sessions. Educational tours can enhance their knowledge and build confidence. They can openly participate in discussions to resolve nursery-related challenges. This builds a strong mental foundation for running the nursery. Regular communication fosters closeness and a sense of ownership, encouraging more dedicated work. Therefore, monitoring and supervision are extremely important.

In accordance with the original project design, the initiative was structured to span a three-year implementation period with clearly defined goals and objectives. Throughout these three years, Shashwat Trust executed all activities diligently and successfully, ensuring steady progress and impactful outcomes.

A critical component of the project's long-term success was the smooth transition and handover of responsibilities to the local community, ensuring sustainability beyond the project timeline. From the outset, project staff actively engaged with community members, Self-Help Groups (SHGs), and other key stakeholders to foster a deep understanding of the project's objectives. This participatory approach helped build local ownership and trust, thereby facilitating a seamless and effective transition of responsibility to the community.

To ensure an organized and transparent handover process—while also promoting equity among SHG members—Shashwat Trust developed and implemented a comprehensive Activity Handover Policy. The details of this policy are outlined below:

Activity Handover Policy**Documentation and Asset Review:**

Prior to the formal handover, all relevant documents, financial records, and inventories were reviewed and reconciled to assess the current status of each activity. This process ensured transparency and provided a clear starting point for the SHGs.

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU):

A formal MoU was signed between Shashwat Trust and the respective SHGs. This agreement outlines the terms of the handover and specifies operational responsibilities, rules of governance, and commitments from both parties.

Monthly Review Meetings:

SHGs are required to hold monthly review meetings to discuss all matters related to the handed-over activities. These meetings are inclusive and encourage active participation from all members, ensuring that every voice is heard. A representative from Shashwat Trust will attend these meetings to provide guidance and support as needed.

Financial Accountability:

SHGs must maintain updated financial records, including income and expenditure registers. Shashwat Trust field staff will conduct monthly site visits—typically during the last week of each month—to review the records and ensure compliance with financial management protocols.

Collective Decision-Making:

All major decisions regarding the activity must be made collectively through group meetings. Minutes of these meetings are to be formally documented and submitted to the Shashwat Trust office for review.

Marketing and Promotion Support:

Shashwat Trust remains committed to assisting SHGs with marketing efforts. The Trust will continue to provide coordination and support to help promote products and connect groups with potential markets and opportunities.

This structured approach is designed to empower community members with the skills, knowledge, and confidence necessary to sustain and grow the initiatives established during the project. Through this collaborative transition process, Shashwat Trust reinforces its commitment to long-term impact and community-led development.





Forest Conservation Project



Foundation Ursula Merz

