

Annual Report

2024-25



**Society for People's Action and Rural Development in Himalayan Area
(SPARDHA)**

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During the year 2024-25, the society was engaged in Bee keeping related activities as well as manufacturing of handmade paper from dry pine needles at its Pine processing unit based in Kosi, Almora in collaboration with GB Pant National Institute of Himalayan



Environment (GBPNIHE). The ongoing project 'Developing beekeeping as a sustainable livelihood for marginal women farmers in hill districts of Kumaon region' supported by 'GB Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment (GBNIHE)' under its thematic area Integrated Eco-development Research Programme was one such research project being implemented in two villages each in district Nainital and Almora.

These villages are 1) Chitai –Pant 2) Chitai- Tiwari 3) Chandrakot, and 4) Kalakhet. The project was taken up after detailed survey and interactive meetings with village communities. Total 20 women farmers (5 from each village) were selected in 4 villages for beekeeping from the economically lowest stratum among the community.

The objective of the project Beekeeping project is to enhance the skill, knowledge and capacity building of 20 women farmers to earn a viable income from beekeeping, and at the same time to strengthen or protect the biodiversity of the region through development of beekeeping and pollination



services as sustainable livelihood practice. The organisation frequently visited the project sites during the year and provided the beneficiaries with technical knowhow from time to time, as bee keeping can not be learnt within the four walls of a room only through lectures, it requires hands on knowledge to go ahead with this age old practice. The basic requirement for the practice is to attentively observe and understand the behavior of the honey bees, as they are one of the most organized species on the earth.

The women farmers were provided with two rounds of technical training (3- day each)



during the year in district Almora and Nainital separately. The master trainer with extensive experience in the field made them learn the rudimentary technical aspects of Bee keeping such as colony division, developing queen cell, colony displacement, catching swarms and seasonal management of

live bee colonies/ bee hives for their development to the best of the potential.

Under the project SPARDHA did a survey of business centers in the nearby areas identifying traders and organizations convincing them about the consistent supply of natural honey (Indica Cerena) within a year or so, if things go as planned. Thus organisation –SPARDHA helped the project beneficiaries in establishing marketing channels. The organisation is also supporting the beneficiaries to participate in the trade fares to reach out to maximum number of marketing giants as prospective buyers.

The networking forums provided beneficiaries with relevant information pertaining to beekeeping business. The project is also supporting beneficiaries to participate in trade fairs to attract other buyers.

A team of about 25 people, from among the community under the Community Development Programme of Sector Headquarters, *Sashtra Seema Bal* (S.S.B.), Almora, visited honey processing unit to get exposure to the processing of honey for value addition. The team members underwent a 3-hour lecture session on bee keeping for motivation and clearing their peculiar doubts related to Bee keeping. Next Mr Deep Chandra Bisht, chief functionary, SPARDHA explained to them the whole process of honey processing followed by bottling and branding. They were also taken to the other allied units like carpentry unit, wax sheet unit etc.



The women bee keepers were also trained on the improved drip method technique of honey harvesting that does not allow the honey to be crystallized and can fetch better



prices in the market. Also, they were trained on selling Chunk Honey (cutting blocks of 2 x 2 inch directly from the frames including wax) that has also high demand as it is consumed raw. These target BPL families have now a skill to scale up the bee keeping enterprise that will lead to the establishment of “Honey Village”.

Students from GB Pant University of Agriculture & Technology also got associated with SPARDHA for 50 days for in-plant training.

During the 50-day period, the student gained hands-on knowledge on different aspects of the Society. The student got engaged with the community the organisation was working with and also enhanced his/her understanding about the concept of Self Help Groups and their working mechanism. She learnt the whole process of honey processing and value addition and also interacted with the beneficiaries of Integrated Eco-development



Research Programme (IERP) project being implemented by SPARDHA and supported by GB Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment.



The organisation also contributed to environment protection by collecting dry pine needles from the forest reducing the chances of forest fire and from these dry pine needles. The pine needles were collected by Self Help Group members providing them with an income.

The organisation kept doing research & development for developing dry pine needle products and as a result prepared different items out of this such as- envelopes, tabletop calendars, visiting cards, invitation cards, file covers and carry bags etc.



Besides, SPARDHA was represented by Mr Deep Chandra Bisht (Chief Functionary) and delivered talks at various forums at different places held during the year 2024-25:



- Participated as panelist in 19th Uttarakhand State Science & Technology Conference “ Water Security in Himalaya: Science of Water Resource Management” organized on 28th November 2024 by Uttarakhand Council of Science & Technology (UCOST), Dehradun at Nityanand Hall, Doon University, Dehradun.

- Participated in “National Consultation: Shaping the Vision and Plan for the Childline

Network ” on 11th -12th December 2024 organised by Hello Childline Network (a core group of Childline NGOs) at the United Service Institution of India, Rao Tula Ram Marg (Opposite Signals Enclave), Vasant Vihar, New Delhi.

- Participated in National Science Day 2025 as a member of Jury organized on 28th Feb 2025 on the occasion of National Science Day at Manaskhand Science Centre, Almora.



- Participated in “State Level One-Day Workshop to Address Gender Inequality and Eliminate Barriers that Prevent Women from Reaching their Full Potential” on 19th March 2025 organised by STOP- The Ramola Bhar Charitable (R.B.C) Trust.

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