

The Year of 2015

Annual Report

Of

BIRAM

(Boudhi Investigate and Research Assembly of Men)



BIRAM

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Structure and Approach

The Annual Report contains brief statement of all projects implemented by BIRAM during January 2015 to December 2015. The interventions, table and strategy of presentation have been drawn in accordance with the quarterly reports of every project.

The qualitative aspect of the projects has been pictured as broad as possible which will fulfill the needs of our partners and well wishers.

The main core contents of the Annual Report are organized in two complementary parts for drawing a clear picture of the Sustainable Development Component as much as possible:

- A) The first part is brief description of the BIRAM;
- B) The second part states the project activities with the financial statement of the project.

Part - A

Introduction

The Boudhi Investigate and Research Assembly of Men (BIRAM) is a not for profit organization. It is established in 1st January 2006 and the main founder is Mr. Khokan Mani Chakma. It has 11 (Eleven) executive members and 20 (Twenty) general body members as total 31 (Thirty One) members by the common minded, all members are Indigenous peoples in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) of Bangladesh, based on the provisions of the Salvation and Reconciliation among the creatures and species, which seeks to contribute to the conservation of biodiversity, land right, community empowerment in CHT as well as countrywide. The BIRAM is registered with the Joint Stock Companies & Firms, Bangladesh under societies Act XXI of 1860, Registration number S-1557(146)/08 and date 3rd March 2008.

The mission of BIRAM is to practice, research and facilitate the conservation, protection, restoration, sustainable use of tropical forests, wetland conservation, watershed management, indigenous peoples land right, community empowerment in CHT as well as in Bangladesh, which provide a wide range of benefits to mankind and creatures, by providing direct technical, financial or other support to qualified communities or organizations or entities.

Vision and Mission

Together with its donor agencies and support organizations, the BIRAM envisions that the salvation and reconciliations of the all creatures and species, biodiversity resources, natural resources, watershed, indigenous land right, community empower are maintained in a sustainable manner by BIRAM and responsible stakeholders through collective efforts, providing access and benefits to local communities, national economy and the humankind at large in an equitable manner.

Vision of the BIRAM is

- be a good agency in direct implementing and financial and technical support to the stakeholders or organizations engaged in activities relating to salvation and reconciliations of all creatures and species, natural resources management, indigenous land right, community empowerment;
- be a good leader for intervening and monitoring all social activities; and
- be a technical support and financial support provider in the all sector.

Mission of BIRAM

Mission of the BIRAM is to practice, research and facilitate the conservation, protection, restoration, sustainable use of tropical forests, wetland conservation, watershed management, indigenous peoples land right, community empowerment in CHT as well as in Bangladesh, which provide a wide range of benefits to mankind and creatures. The BIRAM main objectives are the following:

- Dedicated to empower salvation and reconciliations of all creatures and species.
- Dedicated to natural resources conservation, wetland conservation, watershed management, indigenous peoples land right, community empowerment activities by successfully promoting and accomplishing.
- Dedicated to develop and take activities of land purchase / acquisition for conservation as BIRAM' own or others.
- To develop conservation network, partnership among the NGOs, the Government and the private sector concerning natural resources conservation, wetland

conservation, watershed management, indigenous peoples land right, community empowerment or others.

- To facilitate capacity development of stakeholders to ensure sustainable alternative income and employment opportunities for local communities particularly for the poor whose lives depend on natural resources.
- To generate sufficient complimentary funding in order to provide financial grants / support to qualified organizations engaged in activities aimed at natural resources conservation, wetland conservation, watershed management, indigenous peoples land right, community empowerment.

Operations

The BIRAM maintain (BIRAM dedicated to purchase / acquisition land for conservation), direct implement and serves as a catalyst to the protection and sustainability of practice, research and facilitate the conservation, protection, restoration, sustainable use of tropical forests, wetland conservation, watershed management, renewable energy, health, education, indigenous peoples land right, community empowerment in CHT - Bangladesh.

The BIRAM provides financial grants or other support to qualified organizations or entities, as listed below, engaged in activities aimed at protection and sustainability of practice, research and facilitate the conservation, protection, restoration, sustainable use of tropical forests, wetland conservation, watershed management, renewable energy, health, education, indigenous peoples land right, community empowerment in CHT as well as Bangladesh:

- Non-government, environmental, developmental, educational and indigenous people's organization(s) and such other related organization(s) active in Bangladesh ;
- Scientific, academic and professional organization(s);
- Other appropriate entities active in Bangladesh ;
- In exceptional circumstances, the Government of Bangladesh, its departments and organizations.

The BIRAM coordinates its project related activities and provides the needed technical and financial support to stakeholders, partner implementing NGOs, community based organizations and the private sector. Moreover, it monitors the progress of all its supported programs. Forward looking assessments are be made incorporating the lessons learned and experiences gathered by the intervention programs.

Partners

The BIRAM works with a wide range of public, NGO and private sector partners. NGO partners, community based organizations and the private sector are the main target groups. The Forest Department, Bangladesh Forest Research Institute and other key governmental organizations and the private sector including herbal companies, tea estate and eco-tours operators are possible and potential partners.

Executive Board Members

Name	Sex	Designation	Profession	Remarks
Mrs. Manisha Chakma	Female	President	Social worker	
Khokan Mani Chakma	Male	Chief Executive	Social worker	
Sudatta Chakma	Male	Executive Secretary	Social worker	
Pradeep Chakma	Male	Executive (Finance & Admin)	Social worker	
Locon Chakma	Male	Executive (Dev.)	Social worker	
Tarun Chandra Chakma	Male	Executive (Logistic)	Social worker	

Miss Sima Chakma	Female	Executive member	Social worker	
Mrs. Pravati Chakma	Female	Executive member	Social worker	
Mrs. Swarna Priya Chakma	Female	Executive member	Social worker	
Miss Madabee Chakma	Female	Executive member	Social worker	
Mr. Jummadhan Larma Todega	Male	Executive member	Social worker	

Part – B

Minjiri Estate Biodiversity Conservation and Climate Adaption project (MBCCA)



Introduction:

Minjiri Estate Biodiversity Conservation and Climate Adaption project (MBCCA) is located in Toilafang village under two unions as Lotiban union of Panchari Upazila, Khagrachhari and Bornal union of Matiranga upazilla, Khagrachari. The area of the MBCCA forest is approximately 1,000 acres including buffer zone. Traditionally it is a community and individual land and has no legal land tenure. The MBCCA forest is a naturally growing heterogeneous forest composed of multi-storied structure of trees, shrubs and herbs along with bamboo groves. Since 2013, this MBCCA forest has been protected by 165 families of Toilafang areas villages. The topography of the whole area comprise of valleys of agricultural fields and big hills of homestead garden and timber plantation. BIRAM is implementing them with the financial support of benovolent supporters from July 2013 to

December 2015 aiming to conserve the biodiversity and long-term sustainability of the biodiversity resources, adaption of the MBCCA and of the livelihood of the associated communities. Within these three years, BIRAM supported them by facilitating in natural resource management as well as samall scale IGA selection, group formation and distribution of resources to promote their livelihood. We are almost slowly beacuse lack of funds.

Challenges for FY 2015

□□**Involving the communities of adjacent area:** We are facing always of MBCCA is sharing the boundary with few villages as Kathalmuni Para, Moratola Para, Singcha Para and Toilafang village and these villages are connected by roads and channels. Most of the villagers involved in shifting cultivation near to the MBCCA area which could be a threat to the conservation of the biodiversity. So, it is necessary to increase awareness among the community about importance of natural forest for conservation of water resources, negative impact of monoculture and shifting cultivation and dissemination of information about technological development of permanent cropping system for instance multi storied fruit gardening. But the community may expect resources or project benefits when we start to expand the awareness activities among the community which could be a challenge for the project activities. Moreover, there may be a misunderstanding arise among the communities of Kathalmuni Para, Moratola Para, Singcha Para and Toilafang village.

□□**Management committee:** Still we are under processing for form a management committee of MBCCA area. But problem may arise among the community if they could not accept the policy of the allocation of the resources.

□□**Implementation of the management plan for the MBCCA and overall landscape:** As the community does not have the previous knowledge on systematic management of the resources, the accurate implementation of the management plan through the community could be a challenge. It is also probable that the communities may have more interest in different income generating activities than that of activities related to the conservation of the MBCCA areas.

□□**Encouraging to permanent cropping system:** Even though BIRAM started to motivate and involve the shifting cultivars into permanent cropping system through providing mixed fruit and timber species, it is challenging to increase the participants especially shifting cultivars who do not have any other income source than shifting cultivation. As the multi fruit gardening is a long term process and does not provide income within short period of time they may not encourage to this cultivation technique. Moreover, it would be hard to move some farmers to some to permanent cropping system who are practicing shifting cultivation near to the MBCCA.

The objectives that were addressed during implementing the project are as follows:

1. Strengthening the community based management system of the MBCCA areas.
2. Promotion of sound watershed management practices among the local communities and ensure for drinking water of the project areas.
3. Enhancing economic opportunities for the forest dependent families through alternative IGAs and access to capital.
4. Creation of enabling environment for the MBCCA community for the sustainable management of the MBCCA and for their livelihood improvement initiatives.

Strategies and activities adopted during the period are as follows:

- 1) **Awareness raising activities :**

a) Community meetings: Twelve monthly community meetings and one annual general meeting with the MBCCA community conducted to increase awareness about the sustainable management of the forest, watershed and critical areas, necessity to organize the community for managerial and organizational development.

b) Day observation: 5 June was international environment day. Again among them to increase awareness of this day, BIRAM arranged rally, discussion with the guests and free seedling distribution at MBCCA areas

2) Organizational and managerial development activities:

a) BIRAM facilitated the community through meetings, focused on group discussion and provided necessary resources in organizational and managerial development.

3) Enrichment plantation:

Again BIRAM introduced 5 indigenous endangered species into the MBCCA forest considering the conservation purposes. Planted 10,000 plants at MBCCA areas.

4) Support the community through resources and different capacity building activities:

There are different scopes of income generating activities to promote the livelihood of the community even though the communities are enjoying agriculture as their main occupation. Because of unawareness and lack of organizational development the community did not have any savings to support their demand of supporting livelihood. Based on the demand of the community for supporting their livelihood, in this FY BIRAM again organized training on grafting and modern fruit culture. Depending on some criteria for instance no cultivable land, low income, active participation in different activities of MBCCA conservation and management, 50 families were supported with mixed fruit and timber species.

Major achievements in relation to the objectives:

Objective 1:

Strengthening community based management system of MBCCA areas:

□□ A study was carried out to evaluate the impact of project activities on forest product extraction using a structured questionnaire through focus group discussions in the study area.

Presently, there is no illegal logging, hunting, cultivation and encroachment observed in the MBCCA areas.

On the other hand, in homestead forest there is no direct impact of project activities observed on the purpose of forest product extraction from the homestead gardens. However, the extraction mostly confined for household consumption rather selling except very few household in the village. Timber is harvested annually but bamboo harvesting depends on demand basis.

Certain positive impacts observed on the activities of the homestead area where plantation activities have increased in the area. It might be occurred because of time demand or because of the promotional activity of the project.

Last□□ year, to develop a management plan for the MBCCA, BIRAM had facilitated the community to develop a resource map of the village including the MBCCA.

Objective 2:

Promotion of sound watershed management practices among the local communities of the project area :

The community awareness about the importance of the MBCCA forest and its conservation and sustainable management is increasing.

Some parts of MBCCA open area were covered with different indigenous, endangered, medicinally important and wild fruit species. In this plantation period there were over 6,000 plant seedlings of fruits, vegetation, different indigenous, medicinal and timber plant were planted.

□□ Cleaning and weeding of the planted seedlings in the MBCCA on last plantation period had done successfully.

□□ Last year only two farmers were motivated to plant soil binding plant species and fruits. They planted mango, malta, litchi, amra and bamboo. In this year encouraged by them other farmers also showing interest to plant same.

Objective 3:

Enhancing economic opportunities for the forest dependent families through alternative IGAs and access to capital :

This year also we are not able to provides IGAs activities as lack for funds. The BIRAM and its benovolent members are facing serious financial crisis.

Objective 4:

Creation of enabling environment for the MBCCA community for the sustainable management of the MBCCA and livelihood improvement initiatives:

□ BIRAM is successfully facilitating the community in natural resource management as well as distribution of resources to promote the livelihood of the community.

Challenges for FY 2016

- **Encouraging to permanent mixed fruit cropping system:**

Whereas mango and litchi culture is more profitable and rapid return of the invest, most of the people showed interest in monoculture of these two fruits than mixed fruit culture. Though some of the villagers are showing interest in mixed fruit culture, it will be a challenge to keep their interest in mixed fruit culture and also create interest to others.

- **Continue the activities:**

It is hard to start a social work with a community, motivate them about their development, bring them in development stream from various kinds of dilemma, conservativeness. It is more harder to continue the custom. Because this is a common human nature that they start a practice with a great interest and after few days lost their interest gradually, meanwhile they take themselves away from their responsibility. In this project there will be a challenge to keep them unitedly and continue the program smoothly.

- **Proper monitoring:**

In this year, most of the members will not aware of conservation so, it will also be a challenge to monitor them properly.

Annual plan for FY 2016

Objectives	Activities	Time (Jan. 2016 – Dec. 2016)			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Obj. 1. Strengthening community based management system of the MBCCA areas	1.1 Awareness-raising among the members of MBCCA community and adjacent villages on the environmental values of the MBCCA through community meetings, workshops, exposure visits, posters etc.	√	√	√	√
	1.2 Formation a management committee.				√
	1.3 Facilitating monthly meeting of the executive committee members along with the participation of advisers for planning the subsequent activities				√
	1.4 Organizational development and management capacity building training of the MBCCA committee members				√
	1.5 Facilitation and accompaniment support to the MBCCA members in fortnightly/ monthly meeting and other activities	√	√	√	√
	1.6 Implement and update the MBCCA management guidelines by the members through different activities and community meetings				√
	1.7 Follow-up and monitoring of community members compliance to the MBCCA management guidelines and activities	√	√	√	√
	1.7 Checklist of important plant species and end of the project survey of stocking and bio-diversity (flora, fauna) in the MBCCA				√
	1.8 Baseline and end survey				√
Obj. 2 Promotion of sound watershed management practices among the local communities of the project area	2.1 Awareness campaign and information dissemination through community meetings, workshops, exposure visits, posters, calendar, day observation etc		√		
	2.2 Motivation, providing support with planting materials and knowledge to the farmers practicing shifting cultivation		√		
	2.3 Cleaning, weeding and monitoring of enrichment and boundary plantation	√	√	√	√
	2.4 Plant nursery development	√	√	√	√
	2.5 Community mobilizing and input support for planting of soil-binding and water-conserving plant species (based on indigenous knowledge) on the slopes of water streams and road sides		√		
Obj. 3 Enhancing economic opportunities for the forest dependent	3.1 Identification of suitable IGAs based on the evaluation of success of IGAs and marketing opportunities and interest, existing skills and social acceptability of the participants				√

families through alternative IGAs and access to capital	3.2 Motivation and support marginal people to multi storied fruit gardening of the project area	√	√	√	√
	3.3 Facilitation and accompaniment support to the IGA groups in fortnightly/ monthly meetings				√
	3.4 Participants training on selected IGAs				√
	3.5 Setup IFGs (2/3 numbers)				√
	3.6 Farmers training on soil & water conservation				√
Obj. 4. Creation of enabling environment for the MBCCA community for the sustainable management of the MBCCA and for their livelihood improvement initiatives	4.1 Participation of BIRAM staff (and MBCCA representatives) in development coordination forums at Upazila and district level	√	√	√	√
	4.2 Staff training on accounting and relevant skills (i.e., facilitation skill, watershed management and IGA selection				√
	4.3 Workshop/ meetings with the local government bodies, line agencies and community leaders				√

Conclusion:

During the fiscal year of 2015 of the implementation period of the project, BIRAM successfully conducted all the activities as per target and the probable output also achieved. It takes certain time to get a feedback after initiation of any policy or management activity and it is necessary to support the community for increasing the social acceptability. In that sense, it is necessary to provide support to the community to increase the acceptability of any kind of decision or implementing management policy. From the beginning of the project, BIRAM is providing its kind support to the community in management and organizational development. In conclusion, facing all the above probable challenges BIRAM needs to work closely with the community with support and necessary skills to reach the target goal of securing long-term sustainability of the biodiversity resources of the MBCCA areas and of the livelihood of the associated communities during the next period of time.

BIRAM Library project

BIRAM Library project at Naran Khaiya, Khagrachhari Sadar 4400, Khagrachhori Hill Tracts, Bangladesh.

Funded By: BIRAM own and its friends' fund

Objectives:

Here is ICT activities are very low but the children and youth need for ICT. We want to achieve:

A. Skill on ICT for school children and peoples for alternative learning and education;

- B. Service facilities through ICT on poverty reduce, zero hunger, health, quality education, gender equality, clean water & sanitation, renewable energy, economic growth, inequalities, sustainable cities, supply chain, climate action, life on land, peace & justice and networks;
- C. Communities empowerment and capacity buildings; and
- D. Sustainable environment and security on ICT.

Aims of the Project:

The Chittagong Hill Tracts is most backward regions in Bangladesh. Most of the inhabitant of Khagrachari Hill District are poor and indigenous. Most of the peoples engaged with agriculture. Here is ICT trainings is very low but the youth need to get ICT trainings and internet browsing effectively for job placement. It's not only for youth also for all. No such ideas library in here. So, we want to: - 1. Youth skill up; 2. Free ICT access for all. 3. Gear up for ICT. Computers, internet modem, books, library construction and alternative income generating activities for library (for long term sustainability) will be used.

Duration:

Permanent (Starting date: 01/07/2012)

Value: BDT1,000,000 (approx.)

Social Enterprise Lending Support (SELS) project

Social Enterprise Lending Support (SELS) project at Khagrachari Sadar 4400, Khagrachhari Hill Tracts, Bangladesh.

Funded By: BIRAM own and its friends' fund

Scope:

(i) Distribution low rate loan for businesses to the youth. (ii) Gear up social enterprise. (iii) Helping youth step in the job market and business. (iv) Train up to the youth.

Aims of the Project:

(i) Widely introduce of social enterprise to the communities. (ii) Capacity building of the Indigenous peoples. (iii) Adopt business technology.

Duration:

Permanent (Starting date: 01/08/2012)

Value: BDT 3,000,000 (approx.)

-The End-