

***Shamparka - Ghorbari o Pranbaichitra Kendra***  
(Relationship - Shelter and Biodiversity Centre)  
Sundarban Village, Ranirbandar, Dinajpur, Bangladesh

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Advisors

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Mr Joss Brooks, Ecologist, Pichandikulam Bio-resource Centre, Auroville, India  
Dr Robert L. P. Hodgson (Rural Housing and disaster issues), UK

Aim of the center

- This will provide the opportunity for hands-on experiments related to shelter and biodiversity issues in the village
- It will generate appropriate educational materials on rural housing and environmental issues

Project 1

**Participatory action research for developing aesthetically pleasant planting design options by the rural roadsides in Dinajpur**

Supported by

Initially the project will be supported by the researchers and the local people of the village. Later on the local people will take the responsibility. The researchers signed an agreement with the Chairman of Union Parishad of Sundarban village where the researchers can use 1.5 km of roadsides (Bankali bazaar to Azit Roy's homestead) for the purpose for 15 years.

**Objective:**

- To develop planting design options in different habitat conditions by the roadsides
- To create aesthetically pleasant environment through appropriate planting
- To create and repair habitat for local wildlife (visible) by the roadside

**Tentative outcome**

- The research will generate list of planting design options and combination of plant-communities considering habitat conditions.
- It will question perception of planting aesthetics of different groups of people (e.g. urban-rural people, men-women-children-elderly, different religious and economic background, etc) which might provide a wider understanding on the issue. It might generate a different perception of aesthetics which is ecologically balanced.

- It will create a positive impact on local microclimate and local ecosystem.
- It will reduce soil erosion.
- It might create opportunities to introduce wild fruit-bearing plants which are locally native and/or threatened to supply food for local wildlife and for children.
- It might generate an appropriate knowledge base on plants and planting design through synthesis of traditional and academic knowledge base which might create awareness among people of other places of Bangladesh.
- It might initiate a plant nursery which will contain necessary plants and seeds for the purpose.
- It might become a source of certain medicinal plants
- It might become a source of natural building materials such as bamboos and tall grasses

#### Photographs (8-9 June 2007)



The road with spontaneously grown vegetation



Cultivation of natural building materials by the road



Spontaneously grown vegetation



Plantation started from Bankali bazaar, beginning of the road



Planting flowering trees by the road



Barren *char* land of *Atrai* river in the end of the road

#### Note the current success:

- After learning the intention of the project the Chairman of the Union Porishad signed the agreement and repaired the damaged part of the roadside.
- To make use of early rain of this year the researchers bought and planted (with the help of the local people) around 200 flowering and fruit-bearing native plants. After a week one person, lives by the road, donated 140 numbers of betel nut plants of 4-5 feet height. Another person is willing to donate and plant *orhar* on the newly repaired part of roadside which will prevent soil erosion and fix nitrogen in soil.