AGARBATTI ROUND STICK MAKING PROJECT

This is a forest-based livelihood project started in Gadchiroli Forest Circle and is basically an extension of the Agarbatti Project. Currently the agarbatti round sticks being used in Wadsa Agarbatti Project are being imported from Vietnam and being supplied to the ladies at the agarbatti centres. The present endeavor is to generate local employment through replacing imported stick by indigenously processed sticks. Gadchiroli is a district which has abundant supply of Bamboo in the forest. This bamboo considered as green gold for the poor is a potential source of income generation in Gadchiroli. Since the last 30 yrs BILT(Ballarpur Industries Limited) has been exploiting bamboo annually for supply for its paper industries and the forest department for local supply under nistar. Owing to the presence of bamboo in the district it was decided to establish our own Round Stick Manufacturing Unit for manufacturing the agarbatti round sticks. The first such unit was established in Kurkheda Range of Wadsa Forest Division. The machines were imported from Taiwan and the unit is in operation since June 2013.
Once the bamboo has been cut and brought from the jungle to the unit, the Agarbatti Round Stick Making process is completed in 8 steps namely:

1. **Cross Cutting**: This is the first stage where the long bamboo is initially cut into round pieces of 28 inches.
2. **Splitting**: Here the round pieces are split into 6 to 8 pieces vertically based on the girth of the bamboo.
3. **Sliver Making**: The splits are then passed through the sliver machine to extract thin 1.5mm sized long splits.
4. **Round Stick Making**: The splits are now converted into round sticks of 1.3 mm diameter.
5. **Sorting**: The round sticks are now sorted according to length and made into bundles.
6. **Sizing**: As per the market demand the sorted sticks are cut into length’s of 9 inches.
7. **Polishing**: These sticks are now polished by rubbing against each other to get a smooth finish.
8. The finished product is now packed into bundles of 1kg each and supplied to the Agarbatti centers.
In Wadsa Forest Division Community Forest Rights (CFR’s) have been given in several villages under “The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers Act” of 2006. Under these rights the village community has right over 33 NTFP(Non-Timber Forest Produce) including bamboo. In this backdrop, we linked
up the project with the local villages where Community Forest Rights have been given and people have access to bamboo.

After discussing with the villagers and convincing them about the feasibility of the project it was decided that the **Cross-cutting** and **Splitting** will be done by the villagers from bamboo cut from their area at their leisure at their homes and they will sell the splits to us at a rate of Rs. 6/kg. Training was imparted regarding usage of the tools and techniques, a cross cutting machine was installed in the village and people were given splitters.
As shown the people voluntarily went to the jungle brought the bamboo to a common point made splits and sold us the same. As worked out on an average each person earned around Rs. 400 to Rs. 500/ day in this project. Also women actively participated in this project as splitting can be done by the women too.
Last year this was started in a village Yarandi where the people supplied 20 tonnes of splits and earned Rs. 1 lakh. This year several villages have come forward to work in the project and supply splits to the centre. The work has also spread to other divisions of Gadchiroli Forest Circle including the interior villages of Sironcha and Bhamragad. Currently the Agarbatti Round Stick Unit is employing 100 people wherein they are provided employment year round. By involving the local people in the project we have achieved the following objectives:

1. Continuous supply of Bamboo to the Round Stick unit.
2. Substantial income to the village people.
3. Use of locally available bamboo for the welfare of the local people.
4. Supply of locally made sticks to the Agarbatti centres and thus reducing import of sticks.
5. Spreading awareness among the people about the value of forests around them and the need to protect them.
6. Idling time of women and youth converted into productive time.
7. Change in perceptions about the Forest Department Officials by the community.
8. Steps taken for bamboo resource regeneration.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Date of Operation</th>
<th>Total People Employed</th>
<th>Splits Supplied as on Oct 14</th>
<th>Round-Sticks Made</th>
<th>Man Days Created</th>
<th>Income Generated</th>
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