



**A Group for
Eco-Development Initiatives:
Profile for Advisory & Consultancy Services
India & South Asia**

INTRODUCTION

The Group for Eco-Development Initiatives has under its fold a Trust under the Indian Trust Act named “Keystone Foundation” and “Keystone” - a registered partnership. Both work primarily in the areas of Natural Resources Management & Rural Development and is based in Kotagiri, Nilgiris District of Tamil Nadu.

Each compliment and support the other. Consultancies till today have contributed to build the Foundation and its diverse activities in the Hill district of Nilgiris. The Foundation in return has provided an active platform for sharpening skills and enriching insights into development and environmental issues from the field. This has been the symbiotic relationship.

Mathew John, Pratim Roy and Snehlata Nath have founded The Group. The specific subject areas where **Keystone** provide useful insight are:

Rural Development

- a. Formulation, monitoring & evaluation of development projects
- b. Identification of training needs and assessment in development projects

Natural Resource Management

- a. Forest-based micro-enterprises with indigenous communities
- b. Natural resource management plans for protected areas
- c. Inventory search of natural resource utilization patterns, socio-economic surveys and market analysis.

Training

- a. Organizing training and study tours in the field of environment and development with specific reference to honeybees and beekeeping culture.

Marketing

- a. Practical information on rural marketing enterprise and mechanisms of setting up a profitable production unit.

GEOGRAPHICAL REACH:

India

1. Himachal Pradesh
2. Madhya Pradesh
3. Tripura
4. Tamil Nadu
5. Karnataka
6. Uttar Pradesh

South Asia & South East Asia

1. Nepal
2. Bangladesh
3. Sri Lanka
4. Philippines
5. Malaysia

NETWORKS

Keystone works closely with many other organizations and is also a member of some important forum.

- a. LEISA - Low External Input Sustainable Agriculture
- b. IFOAM - International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements
- c. APIMONDIA - Association of World Beekeepers Federations. Keystone is a member of the Standing Committee of the Commission on Rural Development.
- d. NTFP – Exchange Program: Keystone is a member of the Steering Committee of this network, which is spread over South and South-East Asia.
- e. Bees for Development, U.K
- f. Organic Certification Asia

GOVERNMENT LINKAGES

Keystone works closely with the Nilgiris District Administration, State Forest Department of Tamil Nadu and with the local civil authorities. It has been nominated to the Planning Committee of the District Rural Development Agency.

ASSIGNMENTS/CONSULTANCIES

INTERNATIONAL

1. Assignment in Nepal & Bhutan on Indigenous Honeybees of the Hindu-Kush Himalayas. Developing a micro-enterprise with rural people and formulating guidelines for a research study on Giant Rock bee honey collection system, commissioned by ICIMOD, Kathmandu. (Aug-Sep 2000)
2. Stakeholders Workshop from Hindu Kush Region to finalize new programme on `Indigenous Honeybees and Communities
The workshop consisted of academic, development and government agencies working with bees and beekeeping in the Hindu Kush region of the Himalayas to share their country experiences and identify their stake in the new 4-year, Austrian government supported programme. (Nov 1998)
3. Formulation Mission for a Programme Proposal for Austroprojekt, Austria.
To elaborate a proposal for ICIMOD, Nepal (funded by Austroprojekt, Austria) on beekeeping - Indigenous Honeybees in the Himalayas - A community based Approach to Biodiversity and Productivity. (Oct 1998)
4. Honey Harvesting Workshop
As a resource person for this workshop, `Maximizing Honey Harvest from Indigenous Honey Bees at Palawan, Philippines. It was organized by NATRIPAL, a province-wide Federation of Indigenous Communities of Palawan. (April 1998)
5. Evaluation of ICIMOD Beekeeping Project, Nepal, April 1998. To review the work done over the last five years, visiting remote sites, inspect technologies and draw up a new programme for the next phase, funded by Austroprojekt, Austria. (April 1998)
6. Thanapara Project Evaluation
This rural development project in Thanapara, Rajshahi district of Bangladesh, had been funded and managed by the Swallows in Sweden for the past 20 years. The project comprised a handicraft section, a primary school and a village development project. The evaluation focused on socio-economic and management issues. (Nov-Dec 1993)
7. Evaluation of the Swallows - Proshika (NGOs) Beekeeping Programme in Bangladesh for the Swallows in Sweden. To assess the socio-economic benefits of a newly tested technology, the ecological analysis of the new hive design and the management and organizational aspects of the project between the NGOs. (March 1993)

NATIONAL

1. SGSY (Swaranjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana) Programme - Nilgiris District, Tamil Nadu

An Evaluation of the SHGs for the District Collector, which have been provided the revolving fund from the banks. Involved visiting 150 groups and discussing with the groups their understanding of programme, financial handling, loan repayment, etc. and looking at viable economic activities that can be taken up by these groups. (May-June, 2001). Entrepreneurship development programme training to the lead NGO business leaders of the district, Dec 2001.

2. Madhya Pradesh Women in Agriculture Project

This project was an AusAID (Australian Aid) funded project to formulate with the Madhya Pradesh Government a project detailing the issues and stake of women in agriculture. It included extensive survey and village visits and coordination with district administration and other NGOs part of an International team to formulate this new program. (Aug-Sept 2000)

3. Health & Education Survey

Survey of existing Health (cardio-vascular related problems) & Education (computer related) status in the towns of Erode, Salem & Tirupur for Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services, Mumbai as part of planning of investments in these two sectors by the World Bank. (Aug & Sept, 2000)

4. Evaluation of CENCORD, an NGO working in Coimbatore Hills, Tamil Nadu

A project supported by AusAID - Performance evaluation of the work with tribal communities in setting up a forest based co-operative society and future recommendations. (Jan 2000)

5. Watershed Management - Situation Analysis in Madhya Pradesh, AusAID

Watershed Management in Madhya Pradesh and future areas of possible interventions - field work, analysis of data and presentation to the State Government, Bhopal. This project links up to the existing Rajiv Gandhi Watershed Mission of the Government of Madhya Pradesh. (March & Nov 1999)

6. Tripura Tribal Development Project Evaluation

The assignment was to assess the project by the Rubber Board to introduce rubber crop in the state, especially with the tribal population. The project has a tribal development component that looked at income generation options and group savings and credit for the rubber producer societies. The assignment evaluated its present status and suggested changes. (January 1999)

7. DANIDA Water and Sanitation project, Tamil Nadu

The assignment was to assess the work completed till now (1996-2000), under this project, in Cuddalore and Villupuram Districts, detail out the critical constraints and suggest relevant changes to speed up the current implementation phase. (June 1998)

8. Training of Trainers Programme

This training programme was for the Beekeeping Personnel of the Department of Industries & Commerce, Govt of Karnataka under the FAO Assisted Apiculture Development Project). It was designed to enable the personnel to look beyond the present systems of beekeeping & extension methods and look at new ways and ideas. (April & July 1998)

9. Inspections for Organic Plantations, Institute for Market Ecology(IMO), Switzerland. To inspect the plantations of tea in Darjeeling, West Bengal and The Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu as per the organic standards of IMO and recommend their certification. (Mar 1998-July 1998)

10. Income Generation Workshop

As a resource person for this workshop, `Income Generating Programmes of EZE Partner Organizations in Andhra Pradesh & Tamil Nadu at Hyderabad. It was organized by EZE, Bonn & Centre for World Solidarity, Hyderabad to serve as allow the NGO partners of EZE to orient their projects on sound economic principles. (November 1997)

11. Evaluation of Gram Seva Samaj, Surat

Technical and financial evaluation of the organization and their network partners, in Surat and Valsad districts of Gujarat. The evaluation involved an analysis of the present funding strategy, the projects being funded, the beneficiaries and the overall impacts of development work since the past 20 years. It also set out priorities for both the funding agency from Sweden and the partner groups. (January 1997)

12. Evaluation of Tribal Development Society, Thirukalukundram in Tamil Nadu

- supported by Swallows in Northern Finland. To find means of supporting the organization on a long term - to assess the organizations efforts in starting a pilot brick-making unit (Jan 1997)

13. Joint Evaluation of UNICEF aided CDD-WATSAN strategy

This assignment evaluated the Control of Diarreoahal Diseases B Water & Sanitation (CDD-WATSAN) strategy being implemented by UNICEF in 16 states all over the country. This study evaluated the work in Mysore district, Karnataka and covered the programmes being implemented through the government machinery. This included discussions and meetings with the villagers and all the concerned Government departments overseeing the water and sanitation, health and education programme. (Dec 1996)

14. Andhra Pradesh Cyclone

An independent appraisal of the post-disaster situation in the affected coastal districts of the state. The information provided a number of agencies with unbiased information to formulate their priorities. (November1996)

15. Gomti Action Plan, Lucknow

The project addressed issues of community participation and ability/willingness to pay for the provision of infrastructural services in the area of water and sanitation. This is part of a large

programme of Overseas Development Administration (ODA) to support the cleaning of River Gomti and provide sewage disposal water treatment facilities for the city. (Mar & Oct 1996)

16. Joint Evaluation of Kassar Trust, Almora

An NGO, working in the Kumaon Himalayas for the past 10 years. The organization works on a range of issues but mainly relating to water. (June 1995)

17. Natural Resource Survey of Himachal Pradesh

As full-time consultants, on this project funded by NORAD. The project was a unique joint initiative of 5 Non-Governmental organizations to (i) assess the present status and use of natural resources in the state, (ii) point out potential activities based on the available resources, especially those that can be initiated by NGOs, (iii) identify degraded areas that need immediate eco-restoration work, (iv) identify networking needs. This was done with the active participation of all government departments - revenue, forest department. (April-November 1993)

DONORS OF KEYSTONE FOUNDATION (1993-2001)

- * The Swallows in Sweden, Lund
- * Aus AID, Australian High Commission, New Delhi
- * DFID, British High Commission, New Delhi
- * Swiss Development Cooperation B InterCooperation, Bangalore
- * Hill Area Development Program, Government of Tamil Nadu, Ootacamund
- * The Ford Foundation, New Delhi
- * Winrock International, India
- * India Foundation for the Arts, Bangalore

CLIENTS/PARTNERS OF KEYSTONE (1993 -2001)

- ICIMOD, Kathmandu
- Ministry of Agriculture, Royal Government of Bhutan, Thimpu
- Bees for Development, United Kingdom
- NORAD, Norwegian Agency for Development, Norwegian Embassy, New Delhi
- Khadi & Village Industries Board, Government of Tamil Nadu, Chennai
- Tamil Nadu Forest Department, Chennai
- Natripal, Palawan, Philippines
- South & South East Asia NTFP Network (supported by IUCN, Netherlands)
- Apimondia B World Association of Beekeepers Organizations, Italy
- Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services, Mumbai
- Taru Leading Edge, New Delhi, Hyderabad

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