

Project Update: July 2014

The project is progressing smoothly as per the workplan and several activities have been implemented in the field. Some important highlights are given below

1. Establishment of fences and tree shelters

Establishment and major maintenance of fences were carried out. Twelve plots (six fenced and six unfenced) of sizes 10 m x 10 m were established. To carry out this study and to promote the conservation of brown oak, 500 oak seedlings were raised in the nursery and about 200 seedlings have been planted in the forests with strong involvement of rural communities. One hundred protex pro/gro solid tube tree protectors were procured and placed over the seedlings to protect the individual oak from grazing animals. Several other seedlings were intentionally left unprotected to serve as a control. Apart from protex tree shelters, locally fabricated wooden seedling protectors are also used to test the efficiency of different conservation measures. Data recording on seedling height, number of leaves and collar diameter had been completed. The third treatment involving iron mesh tubes will be established in the coming weeks.

2. Educating the importance of brown oak conservation to communities and involving them in the conservation works

Working closely with the local communities, the most important thing is to educate them on the importance of brown oak forests and the conservation strategies that could promote the establishment and growth. A 2-day workshop cum training has been organised to firstly educate and share their views and experiences and secondly, train them on plantation techniques so that they can be involved actively in project plantation activities. As a side event several interviews were conducted (from the participants as well as visiting the villages) to get information on the livestock population, contribution of livestock to their livelihood and plans they have on livestock farming in future. Based on the data gathered, a presentation was made to the researchers of Forest Research Program, Department of Forests and Park Services, focussing particularly on the progress of the project and concerns of the brown oak forest conservation.



Photo 1 & 2: Educating rural communities on importance of oak forests and gathering information from them



Photo: 3 Hands on training on plantation of seedlings and Photo 4: fencing trials to exclude grazing by big animals.



Photo: Different treatments for the promotion of brown oak regeneration. Photo 5: Control, 6: Protex seedling shelters 7: Locally made wooden tree shelter.