

COMMUNITY BASED TOURISM PROJECT

QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT

PERIOD: APRIL – JUNE, 2024-25

BACKGROUND:

The Himmotthan Society, Dehradun, has been working on a Community Based Tourism (CBT) Project with the financial support of Make My Trip Foundation (MMTF) and TATA TRUSTS (TEDT), in Uttarakhand, as a pilot project. The project is now being implemented in three clusters named Jadipani cluster, Makkumath cluster, and Ransi Cluster, former being in Tehri Garhwal and the latter two in Rudraprayag district respectively. The project was termed from November, 2021 to June, 2024. Aimed at creating a replicable, scalable and sustainable tourism business model in the rural settings of Uttarakhand, offering authentic cultural, natural and architectural heritage experiences as experiential tourism products, with complete management and ownership of the local communities and their institutions.

The major components of the project aligned towards its aim, in order to curate some authentic experiences are, development of traditional homestays in the selected villages, training the villagers as the community guides, and establishment of media units (local youth trained as photographers and film-makers), and developing a community run café cum museum and studio, in the cluster towards generation of sustainable employment opportunities.

The business generation under the project in the last quarter, i.e., January to March, 2023-24, remained negligible due to the low season activities, for no snowfall and more of dry cold in the regions. Hence, in the period, the project completed six homestays in the Makku village of Makkumath cluster, and initiated three other homestays in the cluster for development. In the Jadipani cluster, the process of homestays registration was pressed for completion, and the promotion of business activities for homestays and Guiding trails was initiated.

QUARTER HIGHLIGHTS:

In the first quarter of FY 2024-25 (April – June), the activities were concentrated on leveraging the project developments towards revenue generation for the communities. As the quarter housed the summer season in its later half, the Homestays and Community Guides were promoted for business activities, and systems were introduced for smooth and quality operations. Pending homestays were developed in the Makkumath cluster. Ransi cluster was incorporated in the project as the third cluster. Baseline survey been conducted in the cluster villages to draw accurate tourism related conclusions.

ACTIVITIES:

Jadipani cluster:

Homestays: All the physical development activities have been completed in the cluster with completion of community café, named as Nathuli café. Homestays, Guides and Media trainings were completed in the last year and all have been functional since then. The Homestays are making business revenues through the local and online marketing. All the homestay units been listed with online platforms like Booking.com and few other small startups as well.

Operational monitoring and quality check of the homestays is being done through Guest registers, bill books, feedback registers, and maintenance checklists. Each homestay is being supported & monitored closely for smoothening the operations, and improving on the services and experiences delivered to the guests, by Him Vikas Cooperative.

Community Guides: The Community Guides are growing individually in terms of popularity among local hotels and resorts, number of guided trips taken, hence in business earnings. The guides are coming up with their own small initiatives to enhance their earning and boost the customer experiences by providing local delicacies on the trails, and clubbing the experience of jungle trails with village walks and hands on experience of couple of household choruses. The community trails have also been listed alongside the homestays with online platforms, for more visibility. The collaterals have been designed for the offline and online marketing of the community experiences. The Guides have also been equipped with the bill books and feedback registers.

Community Café: The Nathuli Café (community café) has also operationalized and attracting visitors from resorts, hotels, and also among locals alike. The small weekly and monthly events are being organized at the café for gaining the initial footfall and marketing the café widely in the region. The café is primarily offering local cuisines made and served by the local community women only, alongside the local farm produces as souvenirs.

Makkumath Cluster:

Homestays: Four units of homestays were completed in this quarter, and operationalized at the same time. All the homestay units have been listed to online platforms like Booking.com and few other online portals have also been approached for the same. Good business revenues are being generated by the homestay owners through online bookings. A volunteer from community encouraged to develop a separate website (<https://apnugharmakku.in/>) with some guidance and requested community support, separately for the homestays and other tourism products.

Operational monitoring and quality check of the homestays is being done through Guest registers, bill books, feedback registers, and maintenance checklists. Nayi Kiran Cooperative incorporated for constant support, management, and monitoring of the tourism activities in the cluster.

Community Guides: For Community Guiding, 16 more members were trained with additional training in collaboration with RSETI (Rural Self Employment Training Institute) in the Ushada (cluster office). And couple of Guides have made good earnings in this season, while the rest were engaged with their other routine choruses. Most of the trained Community Guides working full time in the tourist season of Chopta-Tungnath trek, few are yet to start as their expertise is only in community trails.

Third Cluster:

Ransi Cluster in the Madhu Ganga valley of Ukhimath Block, has been incorporated under the project as the third cluster, with due procedure of approvals after the discussion meetings with both the funding organizations (Make My Trip Foundation and Tata Trusts). The cluster was proposed on the basis of the immense tourism potential in the region due to presence of Madhmaheshwar Temple, the second Kedar, and other numerous treks, hiking trails, traditional architecture villages, raw Himalayan lifestyle, dense jungle trails housing variety of floral and faunal species.

The five villages included in the cluster are Ransi, Gaid-Bashti, Raunlek, Gaundar, and Uniyana. As these villages are majorly involved in the tourism and associated activities for the livelihoods. Further a raw visual survey was performed in the region observing the involvement of the numerous families in the unorganized homestays, guiding, muleskinners, and Dhabawalas, and other supporting jobs. The basic structure of the activities has been planned for the cluster, like skill building and nurturing the community resources, mapping and curating the experiential tourism activities locally, capacity building of existing homestays through trainings, upgradation, and marketing support, and additional advance trainings of the existing tourism workforce like first-aid, social media marketing, and exposure visits.

Lately, a formal baseline survey has been completed in the cluster and the data is being compiled for the interpretation. On the basis of the findings, the activities will be tailored and executed to completion in the first three months of the No-Cost Extension period.

Other Activities:

A separate website is being developed for the collective promotion of the tourism activities under the community-based tourism project in all its clusters and social media pages are in process for wider and quicker reach. Also, the regional tour operators are being approached to increase the online and offline tie-ups for boosting the business for community.

Revenues, performances, quality measures of Homestays, Community Guides, and Trails are being monitored and tracked on weekly basis.

Community Café developed in Jadipani cluster is routinely organizing fares and events for promotion and gaining initial footfall, highlighting traditional cuisines, culture and farm produces as souvenirs.

Trainings: Advance and follow-up training of homestay owners to improve guest handling, quality services, and conflict management, are in schedule. Additional training sessions shall be on first-aid, and social media marketing, to enhance their sustainability and professionalism.

Similarly for Community Guides, follow-up and additional trainings on Guiding etiquettes, first-aid, social media marketing, and exposure visits, to boost their professionalism and support their self-sustainability.

Moreover, the teams in both the clusters are working on incorporating existing homestays in the respective regions to widen the network and increase the varieties and cater to larger groups of tourists.

KPIs OF THE PROJECT:

Following is the Key Indicators of the Project for the financial year 2024-25, being bifurcated on quarterly basis.

Indicators (KPIs)	Overall Project Target	Achievement till March 2024	Annual Target 2024-25	Achievement				Cumulative Achievement
				2024-25				
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Cumulative Tourism Trainers and Experience Anchors Created/Trained (No.s)	24	33	0	16	-	-	-	49
Cumulative number of local community members enrolled in Khoji groups tasked with documentation of tangible and intangible culture (No.s)	30	43	0	0	-	-	-	43
Cumulative number of architectural design guide based on traditional heritage (No.s)	1	1	0	0	-	-	-	1
Cumulative number of tourist accommodation rooms added (No.s)	22	16	4	4	-	-	-	20
Cumulative number of tourism experiences offered (No.s)	16	16	0	0	-	-	-	16
Cumulative number of community institutions including "All Women's Travel & Tourism Agency" (No.s)	3	2	2	0	-	-	-	2
Cumulative Number of House-holds earning incremental tourism income of Rs. 24,000 during the project duration Job Opportunities/Livelihoods Generated (HH)	300	107	130	43	-	-	-	150
Cumulative Rs. Lakhs of Tourism and allied online income/ spend at destination through community / institutions (Rs.)	100	9.96	30	11.88	-	-	-	21.84
Cumulative No. of Destination level Tourism Plans enumerating the Business model (No.s)	2	2	0	0	-	-	-	2

PROJECT PICTURES:



Community Café building completed



Nathuli Café wall painted with traditional murals



Jadipani Community Café furnished interior



Events hosted in Nathuli Café, Jadipani



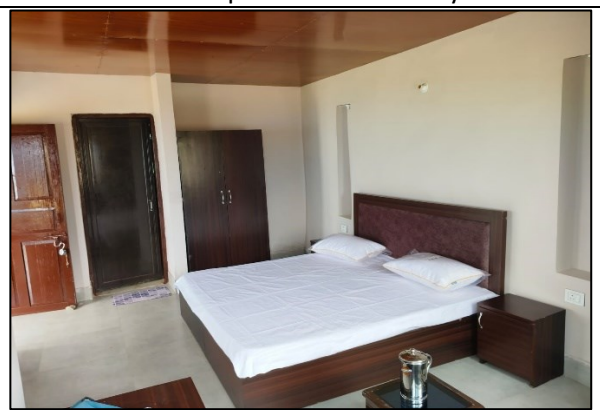
Guests on Jadipani Trails with Guides



Guests in Jadipani for community lunch



Traditional Homestay in Sari completed



Makku Homestays 6 units completed



Homestay in Gaid-Bashti completed



Guest Registers, Bill Books, & Feedback



Guide Training completed with RSETI in Ushada



Guests in Makku Homestays

FURTHER ACTION PLAN:

The major developments have been completed in two of the project clusters, and the third cluster adopted in this quarter shall be major focus for development in the next quarter. The former two clusters will be prioritized for business growth and expansion, while implementing the learnings from them in the third cluster as a guiding measure. Hence, the project in upcoming period in the third, will be mobilizing the community members towards orientation and trainings on skill building of the community resources for developing them into hosts and custodians of the local resources and heritage.

Under the project, following activities will be of key focus while maintaining the timeline granted as per the viability of the local community:

Training of Community Resources: Skill building & nurturing the interpretational skills of identified community resources, for Guiding and Photography-Filmmaking, and training them as custodian guides and hosts, towards creating tourism-based livelihood plans. Capacity building of the community members and the existing tourism work force, enabling their effectiveness and efficiency for better utilization of resources at hand.

Curating Experiential Tourism Activities: Mapping of landscape, heritage and culture, towards development of regional level tourism products. Curating the local trails, seasonal activities, and traditional lifestyle into the interpretational tourism experiences. Development of the regional level tourism products pertaining to traditional cuisines, regional fairs & festivals, lifestyle places & events, trails, refining the folklores, etc. Curating the identified activities into experiential tourism products for a typical city dweller.

Support to Homestays: Capacity building through training, support, and upgradation of existing struggling/low grade homestays by infrastructure, registration, and marketing. Encouraging natives to create a sustainable eco-system of tourism activities, by adapting the hosting culture as an alternate and respectful livelihood measure.

Additional Trainings and Exposure Visits: Existing homestays, Guides, and Tourism workers to be given trainings of first-aid, and social-media marketing, with exposure visits to other community setup tourism destinations & models.

With the above-mentioned plan, the project is aiming to be the guiding force in redefining the local tourism industry in the clusters, ensuring a sustainable future while retaining the symbiotic relationship of local communities with the nature.
