Vetiver Based
Women Micro Enterprise

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Background

- PDS Organic Spices- organic farming, research and development, organic products processing and marketing for the empowerment of small and marginal farmers in the Western Ghats region of Idukki district, Kerala.
- A unit of Peermade Development Society, an NGO established in 1980.
- Western Ghats –
  - Biodiversity hotspot & fragile ecosystem
  - Hilly area & sloppy terrain
  - 90% small and marginal farmers
  - highly affected by climate change.
  - Droughts, Soil erosion and resultant acidity
- Spices – Pepper, Ginger, Cardamom, Clove, Nutmeg, Turmeric
- Financial dependency of women
Soil Health Regeneration - the root for climate change mitigation and food security

Well managed soil;
- Reduce emissions
- Increase C sequestration
- Mitigate the impacts of climate change like flood, soil erosion, drought etc.
- Good water holding capacity
- Contains High organic matter
- Good microbial population
- Leads to sustainable yield and income
Focus of Soil health - Not soil fertility but soil biodiversity

In the steep terrains of Western Ghats, some farmers have been using Vetiver plant as an effective mechanism against soil erosion.

PDS Organic Spices integrated this model to its regenerative agriculture practices

Vetiver slips has been developed in own nursery and widely distributed to the farmers

Encourage them to plant it throughout the contours

- Prevents erosion and traps sediments
- Conserves soil moisture
- Increasing soil carbon sequestration
- Bio-control mechanism against some pests
- Good mulching material
Integrating Vetiver to the spice value chain as a women Micro enterprise

- PDS Organic Spices decided to integrate Vetiver programme to the spices value chain as a Women empowerment initiative to ensure sustainability
- Invited 7 trainers from Thailand to train weaving techniques to 25 women during January 2012 through a seven days training programme
- Follow-up trainings were conducted for one year regularly and the women were supported to improve their weaving skills
The women group has entered into social contract with farmers to grow and supply Vetiver leaves. Exposure visit to a women handicraft unit making screw pine baskets was arranged during 2012.

3 women take lead roles of unit co-ordinator, training coordinator and quality control.

The women have identified 52 new women from 3 villages and trained them in making Vetiver baskets.

10 such trainings has been conducted by the group during April – August 2013.
Vetiver Micro-Enterprise

- Formed a Joint Liability Group and strong institutional set up has been created with the technical and managerial capacities of the women have been built.
- In consultation with Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (CIMAP) in Lucknow and Bangalore, new varieties that are suitable for making handicrafts are purchased and planted in PDS.
- A Vetiver craft making centre was built, which enabled the women to work in a systematic manner.
- PDS Organic Spices purchasing the boxes from the group and marketing as spice gift box.
**Recognitions**

- Received International Micro Entrepreneurship Award from Paris - 2014
- Group members were invited to the International conference on sustainable livelihood, Milan, Italy in 2015.
Conclusion

- **Major markets** – Tourism Industry, Organic & Natural products shops, National and International events, Institutional & corporate giftings.
- Each member earning INR 3000-3500 per month
- **Sustainability** – Ecologically sound, Socially just and Economically viable.
- **Ecolo-Economisation model** – Convert Ecological conservation activity to an Economic activity to ensure sustainability in all levels.

Thank you