Coming in the wake of Japan-India summit meeting held in December 2011, where Japanese Prime Minister H.E. Mr. Yoshihiko Noda and Indian Prime Minister H.E. Dr. Manmohan Singh made a joint declaration to strengthen economic relations and cooperation between both the countries. On March 29, 2012 Japan and India signed on soft loans of approximately 134,288 million yen (INR 8317 Crores) for third phase of Delhi Metro and Conservation of Forest and Biodiversity in West Bengal, to be extended by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the official donor agency of government of Japan. The signing of the loan agreement marks 60 years of Japanese – Indian cooperation and heralds a new chapter in economic and political relationship between the two countries. The loan agreement was signed here in Delhi by Mr. Shinichi Yamanaka, Chief Representative of JICA India office and Mr. Prabodh Saxena, Joint Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Government of India.

Out of the total loan of 134,288 million yen, 127,917 million yen (INR 7922 Crores) would be given to Delhi Mass Rapid Transport System Project, Phase-3 and the balance 6,371 million Yen (INR 394 Crores) for West Bengal Forest and Biodiversity Conservation Project. The loan to Delhi Mass Rapid Transport System Project, Phase-3 would have repayment period of 30 years with grace period of 10 years and would carry a soft interest of 1.40% and 0.01% for consulting services and this project would be executed by Delhi Metro Rail Corporation Ltd. The West Bengal Forest and Biodiversity Conservation Project would have repayment period of 40 years with grace period of 10 years and carry nominal annual rate of interest of 0.65% and 0.01% for consultancy and the project would be executed by West Bengal Forest Department, Government of West Bengal.

“This loan agreement signifies the importance Japanese government gives to India’s overall growth and prosperity. The loan for Delhi Metro would go a long way in further expanding the metro network in Delhi and NCR thus providing comfortable, safe, punctual and environmental public transport to large number of NCR residents.

Similarly the loan for Forest and Biodiversity Conservation Project in West Bengal would contribute to environmental regeneration and promotion of eco tourism thus benefiting the local population immensely.

JICA in future too will continue to contribute for economic growth and poverty reduction in India with JICA’s various schemes such as ODA loans, technical cooperation and grant aid”

Mr. Shinichi Yamanaka,
Chief Representative,
JICA India Office
Government of Japan gives grant to UNICEF for Polio free India

The grant to be routed through JICA

Recently India was declared as a non-polio-endemic country but now greater vigilance is required as there is a risk of this epidemic reviving back. So in further display of its continuous objective of keeping India Polio free, the government of Japan, signed an agreement with UNICEF to provide a grant aid of 120 million yen (INR 73 Crores) for the project of eradication of poliomyelitis from India on March 26, 2012. The Grant Agreement was signed by Mr. Shinichi Yamanaka, Chief Representative of JICA India, and
Since 1995, with support from global/national partners and donors, the Government of India has been implementing National Immunisation Campaigns to vaccinate all under 5 children in the country. As a result, the polio cases in India reduced dramatically from 5,881 cases in 1994 to 741 cases in 2009 (46% of the world polio cases). The number of the polio cases reduced further: 42 cases in 2010 (4% of the world polio cases) and 1 case in 2011. Having the last case of Polio in India on 13th January 2011, India has made significant progress in its journey towards polio eradication; India completed one year without any Polio case in January 2012. During Polio Summit 2012, WHO declared India to be taken out from the list of Polio Endemic Countries. However, this does not mean that war against Polio has been won as size of India's population will always present risks and in addition neighbouring countries like Pakistan and Afghanistan continue to report cases of Wild Polio.

Role of JICA in eradication of Polio from India

Since 1996, Japan has provided grant aid to UNICEF towards support to the Government of India’s campaign to eradicate polio from the country. As a result, the polio cases in India reduced dramatically from 5,881 cases in 1994 to 741 cases in 2009 (46% of the world polio cases). The number of the polio cases reduced further: 42 cases in 2010 (4% of the world polio cases) and 1 case in 2011. Having the last case of Polio in India on 13th January 2011, India has made significant progress in its journey towards polio eradication; India completed one year without any Polio case in January 2012. During Polio Summit 2012, WHO declared India to be taken out from the list of Polio Endemic Countries. However, this does not mean that war against Polio has been won as size of India's population will always present risks and in addition neighbouring countries like Pakistan and Afghanistan continue to report cases of Wild Polio.

There is no cure for Polio but it can be prevented by administration of regular dosage to children under 5 years of age. Japan remains committed for this year to keeping India polio free and I congratulate the Government of India, UNICEF,WHO and all dedicated partners and stakeholders on the tremendous achievement of Global Polio Eradication Progress and wish all the best to the Government of India for their massive and collective efforts to maintain Polio-free India.

Mr. Shinichi Yamanaka, Chief Representative, JICA India Office

Speech by the Government of India: (L) Dr. Monir Islam, Director-Family Health Research of WHO/SEARO; (M) Dr. Nata Menabde, Representative, WHO India; (R) Dr. Ajay Khera, Deputy Commissioner Immunization, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India
Could you introduce your background and elaborate activities under this project?

I joined Forestry Agency, Government of Japan in 1988. I had been working as a forest officer mainly in the area of National Forest Management at central level as well as regional & district level. I’ve also worked in the same capacity in other countries.

As a JICA Expert, I have been working with Director, Forest Education, Principal and Faculty Members of CASFOS, Dehradun under the guidance of MoEF.

The project for Capacity Building of State Forest Training Institutions and Central Academy for State Forest Service (CASFOS) is aiming at improving in-service training for State Forest Service (SFS) Officers as well as providing assistance in improving training for Forest Frontline Staff. It is a five-year project. In the first three years, the major activities were conducting Training Needs Assessment (TNA) for SFS Officers, developing in-service training modules, implementing these revised modules and monitoring them.

For TNA, the project team conducted feedback survey on participants of in-service training courses at CASFOS, Dehradun. It was the first time to conduct such an extensive TNA for SFS Officers in India. Simultaneously, the project team held a series of conferences/workshops with other training experts, subject experts, senior officers from State Forest Departments and State Forest Training Institutions, etc.

How was your experience with premier forestry institutions of India?

“Discipline, thy name is CASFOS.” This is a symbolic phrase emphasized by the Principal of CASFOS, Dehradun. I am impressed by the highly disciplined attitude of SFS officer trainees in the induction training course.

In India, the induction training for SFS officers is for two years as the educational background varies from botany to mathematics but in Japan, forestry officers are recruited from forestry related background and hence the training is for five to ten days. The social, environmental and cultural conditions in both the countries are quite different but forest officers share the common principle of Sustainable Forest Management. Officially and unofficially interacting with officer trainees and in-service SFS officers has been a very valuable experience for me. I have learnt a lot about forest management and duties of forest officers in India.

How do you see the opportunities and challenges of training for SFSs and frontline officers?

CASFOS, Dehradun, CASFOS, Coimbatore and CASFOS, Burnihat provide induction training as well as in-service training for SFS Officers. In-service Training Courses have been conducted since 1980s - for almost three decades.

The in-service training system has been established in India and the Central Government provides opportunities to in-service SFS Officers. The chances are there for SFS Officers to update and refresh knowledge and skills through these Training Courses.

The challenges for these SFS Officers as per my observation would be to take the opportunity to attend the Training Courses and utilize the knowledge and skills accumulated in their respective workplace. The training is not for the sake of training. It is for improving Sustainable Forest Management in India.

Any memorable moments during your stay in India?

During my stay in India for three years, I visited different parts of India. Each and every place has provided a unique & memorable experience in its own right. Although the most cherished memories shall always be those of my time spent in Dehradun where I got to not only benefit my career skills but also got to participate in various events of CASFOS such as Sports Meets, Cultural Festivals, Convocation, etc.

When I was attending these events, I felt as if I was a part of CASFOS, Dehradun. I am extremely grateful to the Principal and Faculty Members of CASFOS, Dehradun for providing such great opportunities and for making us feel at home.