



AJY MIRROR

A Quarterly Newsletter of
AMA JANGALA YOJANA

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CONTENTS

Editorial	01
Cover Story	02
Snapshot of Activities	02
Success Story	09

EDITORIAL



Ama Jangala Yojana (AJY) is an endeavour of the Govt. of Odisha to promote sustainable forest management practices in the state and strengthening of livelihood base of the forest fringed communities. The program has successfully embarked 4th year of journey as on 31st March, 2020. This journey is with learning, solution and has lots of success stories in these four years. Generally, the last quarter of any year is the most crucial period to take new initiatives besides stabilisation of earlier accomplishments. Our committed team efforts have enabled the program to reach out successfully to about 3720 Vana Suraksha Samities in 23 forest divisions spread over length and breadth of Odisha. The protection, conservation, awareness creation, capacity building and livelihood enhancement of forest dwellers are some of the priority areas of the project implemented during these four years.

Forests contribute significantly to the lives of the people in the forest rich districts of Odisha. We, in convergence with various programs under Ama Jangala Yojana put our utmost effort to ensure sustainable livelihoods for the forest fringed communities with protection and optimum utilization of natural resources. In spite of many natural disasters and climatic variability in Odisha, we always function as a constructive catalyst for sustainable development of the forest dependent communities and lower down the carbon footprints in our state.

This issue of AJY Mirror brings out glimpses of the important activities and events accomplished under the program of Ama Jangala Yojana in the state. Wherein the events like Adivasi Mela (State level Tribal Exhibition), World Forestry Day celebration and other activities at Division level are reflected. In addition a number of convergences, participatory and voluntary activities done by the VSS members have been brought out in this edition.

There are countless success stories of income generation initiatives of various VSSs. In this issue of AJY Mirror, efforts have been made to bring few such success stories.

I take this opportunity to extend my wishes to all the VSS members, all the DMUs and hope the similar results in the years to come.


Dr. Sudarsan Panda, IFS
Project Director, OFSDS

AJY has accomplished a journey of 4 years for sustainable forest management in participatory mode by walking hand in hand with 3720 VSSs & 8619 Women SHGs. In this journey the focus was to protect the forest and provide alternate livelihood to the people, and to a large extent the journey is successful so far. This has been made possible through convergence with other departments such as Rural Development, Panchayatiraj and Agriculture & Farmers' Empowerment Departments.

SNAPSHOTS OF ACTIVITIES IN THE QUARTER

1. Participation in the State level Adivasi Mela-2020:

The annual tribal fair, popularly known as Adivasi Mela being organized by the ST & SC Development, Minority and Backward Classes Welfare Department, Government of Odisha is a unique event for socio-cultural integration among tribal and urban people in Odisha. This is one of the oldest and colorful festivals of all 62 tribes and 13 Primitive & Vulnerable Tribes in Odisha which showcases art, culture, music, tradition, artifacts, crafts

and economic exchange among rural and urban people. This apart, there is an exhibition for about 15 days starting from 26th of January every year that provides a platform for display, publicity and sale of a range of rural, tribal and forest products those are prepared by the self help groups, cottage industries and rural micro enterprises across the state.

The VSSs, EDCs and 20 Self Help Groups (SHGs) from within the OFSDS project areas of AJY

belonging to 12 forest Divisions showcased their achievements and used this platform to promote their products, brands and messages to the public through the display of their exhibits in the stalls. The product based display of the materials have attracted many researchers and marketing agencies, which may be helpful for defining a new way of marketing of the new entrepreneurs with the initiatives of OFSDS.



Inauguration of the Stall by the Project Director, OFSDS



Display of products and inner view of OFSDS Stall at Adivasi Mela-2020

2. World Forestry Day:

The International Day of Forests, popularly known as World Forestry Day has been celebrated on 21st

March, 2020 in all DMUs under Ama Jungle Yojana across the state amid the shadow of COVID 19.

Awareness generation activities were carried out on the benefits of forest resources and eco system along with how to protect, conserve, regenerate and sustain resilience against climate change effects on nature among all stakeholders of forestry sector. Protection of forests from fire was the major theme during this year. All the activities were carried out maintaining social distance among the members. Glimpses of the program have been given in the photographic presentation.



Celebration of World Forestry Day at Angul Forest Division

3. State level review meeting of AJY Activities through Video Conferencing:

Under the able leadership of our newly joined dynamic Project Director, special focus was given to re energize the AJY team to work with solidarity, honesty and utmost integrity. The review meeting of the entire AJY team across the state was held on 6th January, 2020 at NIC, Bhubaneswar basing on a 12 point agenda note.

The objective of the meeting was to take a stock of the AJY programme across the state and to resolve some of the issues with the Divisional Management Units for smooth implementation of the programme. Dr. Sudarsan Panda, Project Director of OFSDS,



Review meeting through video conferencing

Dr. Meeta Biswal, Addl. Project Director (AJY, OFSDS), Mrs. Pusazhule Mekro, Addl. Project Director (A&F), Mr. Sudarsan Behera, DPD (A&F), all SMSs and other staff were present in the meeting. In addition, all AJY DMUs

were represented by their respective DFOs and RCCFs (23 Divisions and 4 Circles) in the respective district NICs, discussing the achievements and arriving at a common resolution.

HIGHLIGHTS OF ACTIVITIES UNDER AMA JANGALA YOJANA

A. Forestry Activities:

Despite global pandemic of COVID 19 in the last fortnight of the quarter, our committed field staff and work force have proved their potentiality in implementing the program in an uninterrupted manner. The mandatory forestry

activities like fire protection, cleaning, SMC works, survey and demarcation, maintenance work and construction of VSS buildings were given priority in all 23 Divisions under AJY. The objective was to provide wage employment

to the tribal people in addition to usual forest protection activities. Emphasis was given on regular conducting of VSS meetings in all 3720 VSSs under AJY across the state to accelerate the interaction among the community members.

SOME OF THE ACTIVITIES ACCOMPLISHED DURING THIS QUARTER ARE GIVEN BELOW:

1. Survey, Demarcation and Pillar Posting:

Survey and demarcation is one of the preparatory works under AJY Scheme which is followed after site selection of each VSS. Survey and demarcation is undertaken in the areas assigned to each VSS for coverage under the scheme. During the year, all 540 new VSSs were assigned with a treatment area of about 50 hectares where Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) without gap plantation is taken up. The target for Survey, demarcation and pillar posting was completed for 22342 Ha of forest area assigned to 540 newly selected VSSs under 20 Divisions. The work has been accomplished successfully in all target VSSs with accurate GIS mapping.



GPS Reading for boundary area demarcation at Mandasila VSS, Deogarh Division



Pillar posting at Nuamunda & Majurdima VSS, Deogarh Division



Temraguda VSS, Jeypore Division



Kotaguda VSS, Malkangiri Division

2. ANR Activities:



Silvicultural operations in designated forest area under Biru Purunasahi and Kaliakata VSSs, Angul Division



Cleaning work at Epamanpadu VSS, Koraput Division



Cleaning and climber cutting at Karangamal VSS, Bamra WL

Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) is a key intervention to convert a degraded forest to a more dense forest with low investment. In the AJY divisions, ANR interventions are done in VSS areas with a major thrust on regenerations. Cleaning, high stump cuttings, fire line maintenance, soil and moisture conservation measures etc are some of the major ANR operations. Most of the scheduled activities were completed on time in this quarter.

3. Prevention and Control of forest fire:



Fireline work in Khinda, Karabira and Dahibara VSS under Angul Division

Fire protection is one of the thrust areas of AJY. This involves timely creation of fire lines, awareness generation and engagement of fire watchers. These activities are done with the active involvement of VSS members and Forest Department staff and this has translated into exemplary success stories of Fire Management.

4. Maintenance of Block Plantation:



Nandiguda VSS, Koraput Division

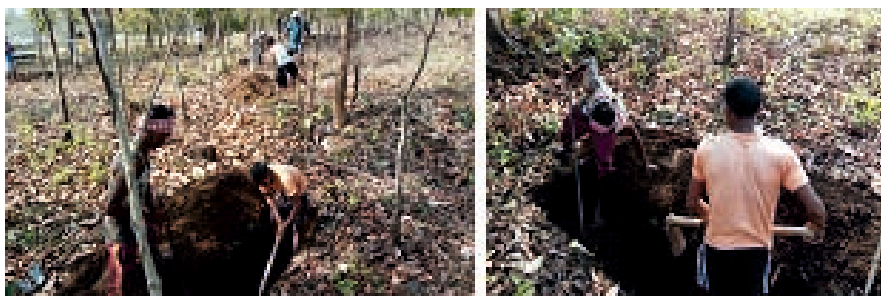


Pradhaniput VSS, Koraput Division

Block plantation by suitable tree species was made in 1010 Hectors of area during initial 3 years of project intervention under Ama Jangala Yojana. Maintenance and after care activities of plantation has been carried out for the previous block plantation patches in the subsequent years.

5. SMC Activities:

Soil moisture conservation activities to recharge the sub soil water and enhance the water table play vital role in forest management for restoration of degraded forest. Therefore Soil and Moisture Conservation (SMC) measures have been identified as one of the important component under AJY in the degraded forest areas. The SMC measures help in conserving fertile top soil, enhancing soil moisture regime and arresting surface run off for reducing erosion. Staggered trenches within the forest area, Drainage Line Treatment (DLTs), Loose Boulder Check Dams (LBCDs) are some of the major SMC activities completed during the reporting period.



Staggered trenching in the assigned area at Nirapani VSS, Deogarh Division



Staggered trenching in Asanpani & Bijadihi VSSs, Deogarh Division

6. Completion of VSS Building:

AJY provides a platform for community interaction, a place for operationalisation of livelihood activities and a work place to keep up the records of VSS and a shelter during natural calamities. AJY facilitates construction of VSS building of about 400 sq. Ft. It is heartening to share that 96 such buildings are completed in this quarter. Some of the buildings are theme based, architectural marvels and display extra ordinary artistic works within the premise.



7. Community Mobilization:

One of the major components envisaged in the programme is community mobilisation and strengthening of community institution. Formation and strengthening of VSS, preparation of village micro plan using participatory rural appraisal tools, capacity building and convergence with line departments for right based entitlements and schematic benefits are some of the essential activities being carried out.



VSS Meeting at Ambapal Nuasahi and Burti VSSs, Angul Division

8. Capacity Building Initiatives:

As a major component of AJY, capacity building programs in various thematic areas have been organized for the FMU staff and VSS members in the project area. This

includes capacity building of VSS members on livelihood promotion, VSS management and enhancement of employable skills. The following picture depicts some

of the major initiatives. All 540 VSSs have been trained through capacity building programs on their roles, responsibilities and VSS management aspects.



FMU Level Capacity Building Training in Bamra WL Division



DMU Level Capacity Building Training in Deogarh Division

9. Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) & Microplanning:

PRA & Microplanning is a community based empowering process for preparation of road map for development and management of forest and to address the livelihood opportunities of the forest dependent communities. Micro plans have been prepared in a participatory manner in all VSSs involved in AJY. The micro plan at VSS level covers the development plan for sustainable forest management and other livelihood needs for the communities.



Microplan Preparation, Barab VSS, Bamara (WL)



Sunapur VSS, Paralakhemundi Division



Brahmapura VSS, Angul Division



Kundeipali VSS, Kalahandi-N Division

10. Livelihood Initiatives:

Securing the income and livelihoods and providing wage based employment to the poor and needy community members is a big challenge. However our committed team members have made extraordinary effort to make it happen, in spite of many challenges. This was made possible through convergence initiatives taken up by the AJY team to ensure schematic benefit to the VSS and SHG members. The effort initiated at various levels has been showcased in the pictures below.



IGA -Mushroom Cultivation, Seegarh VSS Under Deogarh Division



Broom Harvesting and Processing, Haripada VSS, Bamra(WL)



IGA-Pisciculture Through Talkundi VSS, Deogarh Division



Bamboo based Livelihoods Improvement, Barhmapur VSS, Angul Division



Iga- Organic Vegetable Cultivation through Convergence with ITDA, Majurdima VSS, Deogarh



Back Yard Poultry Support through PBDA Convergence – Ballidih VSS, Deogarh

11. Other Convergence Initiatives:

Cross sector convergence is one of the important mandates of Ama Jungle Yojana. During the reporting period, many activities have been undertaken in convergence with various departmental schemes and programs, out of which linkage of VSS members with PM Ujjwala Scheme for LPG connection with Chullah and CFL Bulb was most important for ensuring cooking gases and lighting equipment to forest fringed households. There are about 680 numbers of new connections ensured during the last quarter in 12 Forest Divisions.



Ujjwala Gas Distribution at SARIA VSS



Ujjwala Gas Distribution Kalahandi (N) Divn



Distribution of LPG Gas Kapundi VSS Keonjhar Division



Ujjwala Gas Distribution, Khariar Divn



Ulisirka VSS

CREATING REPLICABLE MODELS FOR OTHERS TO FOLLOW.....

Ulisirka is a tribal dominated village under Narla FMU of Kalahandi North DMU consisting of 215 families, having population of about 715. Out of which 126 families belong to ST, 45 to SC and 44 to other categories. Agriculture and MFP collection are the primary source of income for the residents of the village.

Ulisirka VSS was formed in the year 1999 as per JFM Resolution, Government of Odisha. An area of 50 Ha forest land was assigned to the VSS within Narla RF for protection. The VSS was reconstituted during 2016-17 under AJY Scheme with State VSS Code No. AJY-Y15-P03-KHN05-2034. Since then the P-NGO team is in regular interaction with the villagers and conducts regular meetings with VSS members. Due to inclusion of the VSS under AJY programme, the villagers got engaged in various forestry activities undertaken in the scheme and are linked with various agencies for improvement of their livelihoods.

Activities carried out by VSS:

Since inception, the VSS members are sincerely working for conservation of forest resources assigned to them for protection and regeneration. They are protecting the assigned forest area in a planned manner against felling, fire damage and other interferences. Whenever a biotic interference is noticed in the assigned area, they immediately bring it to the notice of local

officials and Departmental Staff/ Range office to resolve the issue democratically. During the fire season, they are showing tremendous courage to tackle the situation with the help of Forest Department Staff for which the incidence of forest fire has been reduced up to a large extent over past years.

Major Initiatives of the VSS Ulisirka for alternative Livelihoods:

The VSS has put exemplary effort for ensuring alternative livelihoods for the members. Among those, collection and primary level value addition of Kenduleaf,

Sal Leaf, Sal seeds, Mahua Flowers, Mahua Seeds, Char seeds, Tamarind are major MFPs. By selling Kenduleaf to the Forest Department, they used to earn a good

amount of cash every year. They also make good quality Sal-leaf plates and sell it in the nearby markets. Due to their sincere efforts, the Forest and Environment Department, GoO have decided to support them with multiple plate making machines, which will help them to improve their income.

In the other hand, the P-NGO Gramya Vikash Sangathan has played a catalytic role and put its full effort in organizing members for improving their livelihoods and collective marketing. The P-NGO team frequently meets the villagers of Ulisirka and helps them in availing benefits under various schemes of Government, such as PM Ujjwala Yojana, Swachha Bharat Mission, old age pension scheme, KALIA Yojana etc.

For income generation of the VSS Members and SHG groups, one automatic paper plate making machine and three sewing machines have been provided out of

the contingent fund of Ama Jangala Yojana.

The VSS and SHGs are being trained at DMU Level regarding use and maintenance of the machines. Now the villagers are producing about 400 to 500 paper plates every day and selling it in nearby markets. The villagers have done a great achievement in marketing their produce in the Kalahandi where they earned profit of Rs.20,000/- by marketing their products.

The villagers have decided to utilise some portion of their income for welfare activities in the village. The SHG group who have been provided with sewing machines are also earning a good amount by engaging themselves in stitching of garments in their village. This essence of this successful intervention has spread to others VSSs and replication at different levels planned.

By the use of the paper plate machine and sales strategies they adopted, the VSS members have proved that they can be able to manage large volumes of



Demonstrating the quality of Leaf Plates by the VSS Members



Participation of Ulisirka VSS in district level exhibition

business activities through group initiatives, if sufficient infrastructure support for production enhancement can be made from the departmental funds. This initiative will also provide employment to many rural women and under employed youths of the village.

In addition to this, the VSS “Ulisirka” has been awarded 1st prize for their best performance for implementation of various activities under Ama Jungala Yojana in the annual ‘Sameekshya-2019’ held at Bhubaneswar.



Gandhiguda VSS

EARNING LIVELIHOODS IN HARMONY WITH NATURE

Gandhiguda is a small village located at the valley region of a series of hills, physically separating them from the mainstream, within the jurisdiction of Balda Forest Range under Koraput Forest Division. The village is having a population of 143 with poor living conditions and least expectations. The basic need of the community such as road connectivity, safe drinking water and education is a far dream, let alone other amenities and infrastructure. Walking a long distance to fetch potable water consumes half of the day and lots of energy of the



tribal women of the village. Practically they lead their life in nature’s way, happy and joyful, yet struggling a lot to meet both ends. Their struggle for sustainable income



Diversified cropping options introduced in the village for income enhancement

and livelihoods is a never ending process, which is barely visible to outside and the administration.

Incidentally, one day they during a survey by the field staff of AJY, the villagers expressed their grieves and concerns over many issues. Soon after, a meeting was convened in the village on behalf of the project following a request by the villagers to include the village under Ama Jangala Yojana. The villagers made a collective pledge to bring a visible change to the existing scenario of their living status and ecology. The FMU chief of Balda Range extended all possible support to villagers for collectivizing and fulfilling their expectations through the P- NGO and local Panchayati Raj institution.

The p-NGO (IAEET), which is having a deep knowledge of community mobilization and grass root implementation, started a comprehensive socio-economic and resource survey and made a brief development plan which was recommended to various block level departments including Panchayat Samity for implementation. In the beginning, the first ever intervention in the village was made through the Department of Agriculture & FE with the introduction of farming system approach by providing various kinds of support like improved seeds, implements and other crop diversification supports and services.

In addition to paddy, many high value non-paddy crops and inter crops were also grown in the village during the last cropping season such as Ground nut, Chilli and

other vegetables, Yam, turmeric, Niger, Ivy gourd and spine gourd, all grown in a zero cost natural farming method. This gave a boost to their household income to an extent of Rs. 30000/- to 50,000/- annually which was beyond their imagination a few years back.

The most successful effort they have ever made is the Mango and Coffee plantation in an area of about 34 acres with the collective support from Horticulture and Forest Departments. Being the initial periods of fruiting, the gross profit of the compact patch plantation is about Rs. 70,000/- which also adds to the income of the family members of the village.

Additionally, due to the collective effort by all stakeholders including the project community, the village is now empowered with drinking water facility, domestic toilets and a RCC road inside their village, all within a year time. Their constant and collective effort along with nature loving attributes could fetch them short term income opportunity and long term benefits, which has laid an example for other tribal communities in the similar geography.



Coffee and Yam intercropped with Silver Oak in 24 acres of a compact patch

Please send your
comments and inputs to:

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