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# AJY MIRROR

A Quarterly Newsletter of  
AMA JANGALA YOJANA

January - March 2021

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## EDITORIAL



Ama Jangala Yojana has completed its 5<sup>th</sup> year of successful journey as on 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2021. The project could be able to establish exemplary results during the present year in spite of many upheavals. Being the last quarter of the year, it 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 4.15 lakh households under 4,605 Vana Suraksha Samities in 22 forest divisions across 15 districts of Odisha. The protection, conservation and regeneration of forest resources along with awareness creation and capacity building are some of the priority areas of the project activities implemented during the present year. Most importantly, addressing the livelihood issues of the forest fringe dwellers by enhancing the scope for alternative means of earning through convergence initiatives was the prime focus of the project during the period. In addition to these, the response of the AJY team to address the ground issues of Covid-19 pandemic situation is praiseworthy.

The present issue of AJY Mirror brings out a brief description of the important activities and events carried out under Ama Jangala Yojana in the state during the period January-March, 2021. In addition to this, a number of convergence activities, participatory and voluntary activities done by the VSS members have been brought out in this edition. There are also many success stories of income generation initiatives at VSS and individual levels through project initiative. In this issue of AJY Mirror, efforts have been made to bring a few of such success stories for wider dissemination.

I take this opportunity to extend my best wishes to all the VSS members, DMU level staff and all the stakeholders, and hope that they will be more involved and participate actively in all the interventions under AJY.

**Dr. S. Panda, IFS**  
PCCF & Project Director, OFSDP

*AJY has completed a journey of 5 years towards sustainable forest management in participatory mode. In this journey, focus was to protect and regenerate the forest resources and to provide alternate livelihood to the people living in and around the forest areas. To a large extent the journey is successful so far. This has been made possible through the cooperation and coordination among 4,605 Vana Suraksha Samities, 14,025 Women Self Help Groups, 15 Partner NGOs and the project staff across 22 Forest Divisions of Odisha. Most importantly, the convergence efforts with Line Departments such as Rural Development, Panchayatiraj, Agriculture & Farmers' Empowerment, RWS&S and Petroleum & Natural Gas has gained momentum to address the absolute need of 6,46,024 beneficiaries during the year 2020-21. Some of the important achievements during the quarter, January-March, 2021 have been reflected in the respective chapters.*

## A. Forestry Activities:

The last quarter of the year was very crucial for all sorts of forestry activities under AJY. Accomplishment of planned activities, protection of forests from fire hazards, planning for the upcoming year, preparedness for plantations in the coming season and community mobilization during the peak period of global pandemic, COVID 19 was really challenging for the frontline workers of the project. However, our committed field staff and work force have proved their potentiality in implementing the program in an uninterrupted manner. The basic forestry activities like survey, demarcation and pillar postings, fire protection, ANR activities, SMC works, maintenance works and construction of VSS buildings were given priority in all 22 Divisions under AJY. Emphasis was given on regular conduct of VSS meetings in all 4605 VSSs to accelerate the interaction among the community members and vis-a-vis for timely implementation of project activities and to generate income for the forest fringe dwellers in the recessive economic situation.

### Some of the activities accomplished during this quarter:

#### 1. Survey, Demarcation and pillar posting:

Survey and demarcation is the preparatory works under AJY Scheme following site selection, which is undertaken in the areas assigned to each VSS for coverage under the scheme. During the year, all 885 new VSSs were assigned with a treatment area where Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) with and without gap plantation is taken up. The Survey, demarcation and pillar posting works was completed for 42,887 Ha of forest area assigned to 885 newly selected VSSs under 22 Divisions with accurate GIS mapping.



Demarcation & Pillar posting at Sartul EDC, Baliguda Division



Survey, Demarcation & Pillar posting at Radanpalli VSS, Malkangiri Division

#### 2. ANR Activities:

Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) is a key intervention to restore a degraded forest with minimum investment. In the AJY divisions, ANR interventions are done in VSS areas with a major thrust on regeneration with and without gap plantation. Till the present year, ANR operations were confined to only Silvicultural operations without any plantation in the gap areas. However, owing to a major strategic decision, ANR with gap plantation in 20,000 ha of

area was proposed in 18 Forest Divisions (453 VSSs) during the year 2020-21 as 0<sup>th</sup> year. Preparatory activities such as site selection, boundary demarcation and nursery raising for ANR with gap plantation (with 200 seedlings) have been completed in all those 453 sites. In the other hand, regeneration, cleaning, high stump cutting, climber cutting and fire line maintenance are some of the routine operations scheduled during the quarter in all 885 VSSs (453 for ANR with gap & 522 for ANR without gap plantation). All the above activities were completed on time.



*Cleaning work at Baleswar VSS, Telkoi Range of Keonjhar Division*



*Post Silvicultural view of assigned forest area, Kankeri VSS of Kalahandi South Division*



*Seedling raising at Jatiaguda VSS Nursery, Jeypore Division for ANR with gap plantation during 2021-22*



*Seedlings at Mantriamba Nursery, Jeypore Division for ANR with gap plantation*

### 3. Prevention and Control of forest fire:

Protection of forests from fire incidences is one of the prime objectives of AJY. This involves timely creation/maintenance of fire lines, awareness generation among local people and engagement of fire watchers in the forest areas. These activities are done with the active involvement of VSS members and Forest Department staff. This year, due to several local factors clubbed up with complete absence of summer shower, fire incidences have occurred in many resourceful forests of the State. This could be handled by commendable contributions of the proactive VSS members and responsive AJY team.



*Forest fire control measures at Tileimal VSS, Rairakhol Division*



*Fire line creation at Gadigaon VSS, Jeypore Division*

#### 4. Soil & Moisture Conservation Activities:

Soil moisture conservation activities are meant to preserve rain water, recharge ground water, arrest run-off, enhance percolation, retention of moisture across the forest floor and check soil erosion which promotes growth of forest vegetation. Hence Soil & Moisture Conservation measures (SMC) have been considered as one of the vital component under AJY. During the period under report (January-March, 2021), staggered trenches within the forest area, treatment of drainage lines, loose boulder check dams with and without wire mesh are some of the major SMC activities carried out in the project Divisions.



Wire Mesh LBCD at Medinipur VSS, Keonjhar Division



Wire Mesh LBCD at Badakhol VSS under Rairakhol Division



Staggered Trench digging at Bairagipadar VSS, Jeypore Division



SMC renovation work at Dandasingha VSS, Deogarh Division

#### 5. VSS Office Cum Meeting Place:

VSS building is a platform for community interaction, a place for operating livelihood activities, a work place to keep up the records of VSS and a shelter during natural calamities. Provision has been made under AJY for construction of VSS building of 400 sq. ft. in selected VSSs. 56 numbers of such buildings have been completed during this year.



VSS Building at Karanasahi, Paralakhemundi Division



VSS Building of Manigiri VSS, Keonjhar (WL) Division

## 6. Community Mobilization:

Community mobilization is the essential part of sustainable forest management. One of the major components envisaged in AJY is community mobilisation and strengthening of community institutions. Formation, reconstitution and strengthening of VSS, preparation of village micro plans using participatory rural appraisal tools, capacity building and convergence with line departments for need based entitlements and schematic benefits are some of the essential activities being carried out during this quarter. PRA & Microplanning is a community based empowering process for preparation of road map for development and management of forest resources and to address the livelihood opportunities of the forest dependent communities. Micro plans have been prepared in a participatory manner in all 885 new VSSs taken up under AJY during 2020-21. The development plan for sustainable forest management and other livelihood needs for the communities are covered in the quarter. Micro-plan documents have been verified at PMU and sent to the Divisions for necessary modifications. All the micro-plan documents have been approved by the respective Gram Sabhas and the final copies are kept at respective places.

## 7. Capacity Building Trainings:

As a major component of AJY, capacity building programs in various thematic areas have been organized for the project staff and VSS members. This includes capacity building of VSS members on livelihood promotion, VSS management, forest protection and enhancement of employable skills. The following picture depicts some of the major initiatives. All 885 VSSs have been trained through capacity building programs on their roles, responsibilities and VSS management aspects.

## 8. Livelihood Promotion:

Securing the income and livelihoods and providing wage based employment to the poor and needy community members is a big challenge during the post Covid scenario. 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.

Cross sector convergence for community development is one of the important mandates of Ama Jangla Yojana. During the reporting period, many activities have been undertaken in convergence with various departmental schemes and programs, out of which linkage with PR Department for generating wage based employment is quite remarkable.

During the year, convergence worth of Rs. 108.48 Crores benefitting about 6.46 lakh beneficiaries have been reported through various livelihood and community development activities.

## B. HIGHLIGHTS OF THE EVENTS IN THIS QUARTER

### 1. Participation in the State Level Herbal Fair-2021:

The state level annual herbal fair known as 'Kalinga Herbal Fair-2021' was organized in the IDCO Exhibition ground during 16<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 2021 by the State Medicinal Plants Board, Government of Odisha This is a unique event for showcasing and selling of traditional healing products and practices among various stakeholders. Apart from this, there were technical discussion sessions throughout the entire days of exhibition. This also provides a platform for display, publicity and sale of a range of traditional tribal and forest products those are prepared by the self help groups, cottage industries and rural micro enterprises across the state.



*Inauguration of the OFSDS Stall  
By Shri Prem Kumar Jha, IFS, Addl. Project Director, OFSDS*



*SHG members selling their traditional products in OFSDS Stall*



*Dignitaries on the dais during the valedictory evening of Kalinga Herbal Fair-2021*



*Felicitation to OFSDS for best stall arrangements*

The VSSs, EDCs and 12 Self Help Groups (SHGs) from the OFSDS project areas showcased their products and used this platform to promote their products, brands and identity to the public through the display of their exhibits in the stalls.

In this occasion, OFSDS was honoured the 1<sup>st</sup> prize for best stall arrangement and sale during the Kalinga Herbal Fair-2021 which is quite inspiring.

## 2. World Forestry Day:

The International Day of Forests, popularly known as World Forestry Day has been celebrated on 21<sup>st</sup> March, 2021 in all project Divisions under Ama Jangla Yojana across the state amid the prevailing COVID 19 pandemic situation. Awareness generation activities were carried out on the necessity & benefits of forest resources and eco system along with means & ways to protect, conserve, regenerate and sustain resilience against climate change effects on nature among all stakeholders. All the activities were carried out maintaining social distance among the members. Glimpses of the program have been given in the following photographic presentation.



*Awareness programme during World Forestry Day at Jharabereni VSS, Angul Division*



*Awareness Rally during World Forestry Day at Barkote FMU, Deogarh Division*

## 3. Governing Body meeting of OFSDS:

The 31<sup>st</sup> Governing Body meeting of OFSDS was held on 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2021 in virtual mode through Video Conferencing with the chairmanship of the Addl. Chief Secretary to Government, Forest & Environment Department, Odisha. The Project Director, OFSDP as the Member Secretary, representative from the Director, NRLM and other GB members were present in the meeting. The progress of implementation of activities under Ama Jangala Yojana for 2020-21, the financial progress and the budget estimate for the financial year 2021-22 was presented in the meeting. The Governing Body, after thorough deliberation, approved the audit report of OFSDS for the financial year 2019-20.

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

A review meeting of AJY activities across the state was held on 18.03.2021 at NIC, Bhubaneswar. The objective of the meeting was to take a stock of the AJY programme and to resolve some of the issues with the Divisional Management Units for smooth implementation of the programme. Dr. Sudarsan Panda, PCCF & Project Director of OFSDP, Shri Prem Kumar Jha, Addl. Project Director, Mr. Sudarsan Behera, DPD (A&F) and Subject Matter Specialist (IME) were present in the meeting. In the other side, all AJY DMUs were represented by their respective DFOs and RCCFs in the respective district NICs for discussing the achievements and arriving at a common resolution.



Review of AJY Activities through VC on 18.03.2021

### Mushroom Cultivation in Convergence with Horticulture Department; A success story of Dasaguda VSS.

**STORY : 01**

Dasaguda, a small tribal village situated in Tikabali Block of Kandhamal District, comprises of 30 households. The population of the village is 110. All of them belong to tribal community and below poverty line. Agriculture & Horticulture are the only occupation of the villagers. Total cultivable land in the village is 61 Ha. They meet their livelihood from paddy & vegetable cultivation as well as collection and sale of forest produces. The Forest Department constituted Vana Surakhya Samiti (VSS) under Ama Jungle Yojana (AJY) in the year 2018-19 in the village.

During interaction with the villagers, the Forest Dept staff and P-NGO team noticed that there are four numbers of SHGs in the village, out of which only Sarala SHG, consisting of 11 members is very active and the members are keenly interested to do some activities for their livelihood. Then they were mobilised by our staff for mushroom cultivation as there is heavy

demand of mushroom in the locality. Then the Forest Department Staff and P-NGO team consulted with Horticulture Department. The Horticulture Department staff came forward to impart training to the SHG members and guide them for mushroom cultivation.

Initially Dhingri mushroom cultivation was taken up by the SHG members during the year 2020-21 by which they could be able to get a net profit of Rs. 26,600/- within a month time, which insisted them to adopt it as a sustainable source for earning their livelihoods. The achievement is quite inspiring for all other villagers and neighbouring villages.

It is seen that other SHGs and even the individuals of Dasaguda and neighbouring villages are carrying forward mushroom cultivation as a sustainable livelihood option.



## VSS in to the Green and Clean drive; Success Story of Chappar VSS under Koraput Forest Division

STORY : 02

Chappar is a tribal village under Koraput Forest Division. The village is situated at a distance of 5 KM from Koraput Town. There are 115 families in the village and formed a forest protection group. They protect their neighboring forests from fire hazard & timber mafias.

During 90s, the village was surrounded by green forest cover. The villagers were able to have required forest produce, medicinal plants and tubers from the nearby forests. A few households were doing cultivation and others were engaged mostly in collection and sale of NTFPs to earn their livelihood.

As time passed, scarcity of forest resources was felt by the villagers owing to shifting cultivation by nearby villagers. This promoted forest fire and poaching of wild animals during Benta. The acute scarcity of fuel wood was felt very badly. The villagers could realize that the crisis they are passing through is only because of depletion of natural forests.

To combat the challenges, the villagers decided and formed Vana Surakshya Samiti (VSS) under Ama Jangala Yojana in coordination with the Forest Department & the Partner NGO, IAEET. Thereafter various activities under the project have been carried out in the village to protect and improve the forest cover with utmost care and cooperation by the VSS members.

A recreation point with a botanical garden and urban plantation has been developed by the Forest Department at Patadevi Dangara, just 2 km away from the village. Considering the interest and contribution of Chappar VSS members in eco-restoration and their cooperation with the Department, the Divisional Forest Officer, Koraput, has decided to handover 2 numbers of stalls constructed near Patadevi Dangar to Chappar VSS. Visitors usually come to Patadevi Dangar daily in the Morning & Evening hours to enjoy the beauty of urban plantation and botanical garden created by Forest Department. This current year is the last year of maintenance work of the urban plantation in the Patadevi Dangara. The Divisional Forest Officer, Koraput has decided to hand over the plantation area to Chappar VSS after completion of maintenance work. The VSS members have set up a tea and snacks stall allotted to them. In the present time, Chappar VSS has left a unique impression in the district and set an example for others for their unique initiative.



Please send your  
comments and inputs to:

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