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AJY MIRROR

A Quarterly Newsletter of
AMA JANGALA YOJANA

January-March, 2023

Volume – 6 ■ Issue - IV

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- Brief account of the major achievements of Ama Jangala Yojana during the Project Period (Cover Story)
- Activities carried out during the present quarter
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PROJECT DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

Ama Jangala Yojana has completed the 1st year of its extension period. During this period, many initiatives on sustainable forest management & livelihood improvement of the forest fringe dwelling communities have been taken. Community mobilization for forest fire prevention and control has been a special drive during the period.

The core objective of the scheme is to ensure restoration of the degraded forest on one hand and augment the livelihoods of the forest fringe dwellers on the other. Till March, 2023 total 4,601 numbers of VSSs in 23 Forest Divisions have been covered for restoring 2,29,518 ha of assigned forest area under ANR and creating 1005 ha of Block Plantations with active participation of the local communities. In addition to this, Rs. 714.72 Crores have been mobilized during the Project period through convergence with Line Departments benefitting 4.2 lakh households and 25,83,810 beneficiaries.

During the financial year 2022-23, the maintenance activities in 95,787 Ha of assigned area covering 1964 VSSs have been carried out, in which ANR with gap over 19,775 Ha & ANR without gap plantations over 75,812 Ha have been taken up. Under inter-sectoral convergence, the project could implement various activities amounting to Rs. 172.28 crores to benefit 5,40,060 beneficiaries during the current year.

The present quarter of the year (January-March) was a very eventful period of the year for implementation of the scheduled forestry and community development interventions. Extra effort has been taken for protecting the Assigned Forest area from fire incidences during the long prevailing dry spells. It was indeed a daunting task.

A brief description of the activities and events accomplished till March, 2023 has been compiled and placed in this issue of AJY Mirror for reference of all stakeholders. In addition to this, exemplary VSS efforts have been narrated as success stories of livelihood and convergence initiatives in this issue. I hope, all the AJY Divisions will continue their innovative works for the forest fringe dwelling communities in future.

Dr. Meeta Biswal, IFS

PCCF (Projects) & Project Director
OFSDS

"What we are doing to the forests of the world is but a mirror reflection of what we are doing to ourselves and to one another"



BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS OF AMA JANGALA YOJANA DURING THE PROJECT PERIOD

Ama Jangala Yojana is being implemented in 22 Territorial and Wildlife Divisions of the State with an objective to promote sustainable forest management and alternate livelihoods for the forest fringe dwelling communities in the State. All the activities are being carried out with active participation of local community based institutions called Vana Surakshya Samities (VSSs) in Joint Forest Management (JFM) mode.

After completion of the initial tenure of the Project on 31st March, 2022, the Government of Odisha has extended the Scheme up to 2024-25. By the end of the financial year 2022-23, total 4,601 numbers of VSSs have been covered under the Scheme and 2,30,523 ha of Assigned Forest Area have been restored, in which ANR-

Without Gap restoration, ANR-With Gap Plantation and Block Plantations have been carried out. In addition to this, Rs. 714.72 Crores have been mobilized during the Project period through convergence with Line Departments benefitting 4.2 lakh households and 25,83,810 beneficiaries.

During the Financial Year 2022-23, the maintenance activities in 95,787 Ha of assigned area covering 1964 VSSs have been carried out, in which ANR with gap over 19,975 Ha & ANR without gap plantations over 75,812 Ha have been taken up.

A brief account of the major achievements during the Project period is presented in the following table.

Activities	Target	Achievements
The List of Divisions under AJY (2016-17 to 2022-23)	Bonai, Deogarh, Jeypore, Keonjhar, Keonjhar (WL), Parlakhemundi, Rourkela, Angul, Balasore WL, Phulbani, Koraput, Rayagada, Balliguda, Bamra WL, Bargarh, Bolangir, Khariar, Kalahandi(S), Kalahandi (N), Malkangiri, Nabarangpur, Redhakhhol and Satkosia WL	
No of FMUs/ Ranges Covered	135	
No of VSS Covered	4,601	
No of women SHGs under the Project	14,263	
No of Households Covered under the project	4.2 Lakhs	
ANR (Without Gap plantation)	23 Divisions, 4601 VSS, 2,09,568 Ha	23 Divisions, 4601 VSS, 2,09,543 Ha
ANR (With Gap plantation)	18 Divisions, 446 VSS, 20,000 Ha	18 Divisions, 446 VSS, 19,975 Ha
Block Plantations	12 Divisions, 87 sites, 1005 Ha	12 Divisions, 87 sites, 1005 Ha
Construction of VSS Building during 2021-22	512 Nos	512 Nos
Construction of VSS Building during 2022-23	100 Nos	Construction under Progress.
Capacity Building Training	--	7997 No of Trainings, 2,39,922 participants
Livelihood Promotion & Community Development through Convergence Initiatives	4601 VSS & 14,263 SHGs	4601 VSS, 14,263 SHGs, Beneficiaries covered- 25,83,810 and total funds mobilized Rs. 714.72 Crores

ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT DURING THE PRESENT QUARTER

Community Mobilization

Vana Suraksha Samities (VSSs) and women Self Help Groups (SHGs) are the major grass root level institutions to implement various activities in the project Divisions. Therefore, strengthening of these institutions has been focused under AJY program. Conducting regular VSS meetings, capacity building trainings for the community members, livelihood promotion through inter-sectoral convergence with Line Departments are the prime activities conducted during the present quarter.

In addition to this, 14,263 women Self Help Groups have also been linked with various Income Generation Activities under inter-sectoral convergence with various Line Departments. AJY team is instrumental in conducting regular VSS meetings and facilitating all the community development activities and Income Generation Activities in the VSS areas.



GB meeting at Gamhardi VSS, Redhakhol Division



EC Meeting at Jharbelda VSS, Keonjhar Division



GB meeting at Rukhatola VSS, Redhakhol Division



EC Meeting at Kujajiguda VSS, Nabarangpur Division



VSS monthly meeting at Jhariapada VSS, Balliguda Division

Maintenance of Assisted Natural Regeneration

Assisted Natural Regeneration (with & without gap plantation) are considered as effective methods to restore degraded vegetation under Ama Jangala Yojana. During the present quarter, maintenance of ANR (with & without gap plantation) has been carried out in 22

Forest Divisions. This includes 19,975 ha of ANR with gap plantation covering 445 VSSs sites under 18 Forest Divisions and 75,812 ha of ANR without gap plantation covering 1964 VSSs under 22 Forest Divisions.



ANR with gap plantation at Gopinathpur VSS of Keonjhar Division



ANR_Plantation monitoring at Sundhiguda VSS, Jeypore Division



ANR with gap plantation at Ghatgumar VSS of Jeypore Division



ANR with Gap Plantation at Pikaradi VSS of Phulbani Division



Maintenance work of ANR with gap plantation at Kaunrikala Patrasahi VSS of Keonjhar Division



Casualty replacement work at Dupenkonda ANR With Gap Site, Malkangiri Division

Prevention and Control of forest fire:

Protection of forests from fire incidences is one of the prime objectives of AJY. Timely creation of fire lines, engaging fire protection watchers and conduct of fire awareness measures are the activities that have been taken up during the project period under vigilant observation by the Forest Department and Project personnel under

AJY. As a result, the VSSs have shown exemplary results in forest fire prevention and control in spite of soaring summer temperatures and long prevailing dry spells during the present quarter. The Advisor, Ama Jangala Yojana also expressed his satisfaction and reported that no fire incidence has been observed in the Assigned Forest areas under AJY VSSs which he had visited.



Fire Line creation work at Sindhigaon ANR site, Jeypore Forest Division



Forest fire prevention meeting at Koshibata VSS, Jeypore Division



Forest Fire Prevention Awareness meeting at Kamering VSS, Paralakhemundi Division



Fireline work at Naktimada VSS, Nabarangpur Division



Forest Fire prevention Rally at Dhodra VSS, Nabarangpur Division

Renovation of Soil & Moisture Conservation Structures:

Soil moisture conservation measures are meant to conserve rain water, recharge ground water, arrest run-off, enhance percolation, retain moisture across the forest floor and check soil erosion which promotes growth of forest vegetation Hence, Soil & Moisture Conservation

measures (SMC) are one of the vital components under AJY. During the year 2022-23, renovation of staggered trenches within the forest area, Loose Boulder Check Dams (LBCD) are some of the major SMC activities carried out in 95,787 ha. of Assigned Area of the Project Divisions.



Renovation of Staggered Trench at Champajhola VSS, Malkangir Division



LBCD work at Tegadapali VSS, Malkangir Division



Renovation of staggered trench at Madkamiguda VSS, Malkangir Division



Renovation of staggered trench at Muribahal, Bolangir Division

VSS Buildings-cum- IGA Facilitation Centres:

VSS Buildings-cum- IGA Facilitation Centre is a multi-purpose platform for community interaction, a place for operating livelihood activities, 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 about 400 sq. ft. in selected VSSs. During the Project period (up to 2021-22), 512 Nos. of VSS Building-cum- IGA Facilitation Centers have been constructed and handed over to the concerned VSSs. In addition to this, constructions of 100 Nos of VSS Buildings-cum- IGA Facilitation Centre are under progress.



VSS Building-cum-IGA Facilitation Centre, Mukundpur VSS, Keonjhar Division

Livelihood Promotion through Convergence with Schemes of Line Departments

Livelihood promotion of the forest fringe communities through various income generation activities is an important component of Ama Jangala Yojana. It has been envisaged to facilitate livelihood and income generation activities for the people living in forest fringe villages through convergence with Schemes of Line Departments. The communities covered under AJY have been linked with various socio-economic, welfare and income generation Schemes under Line Departments. There is a remarkable change in the livelihood scenario of the tribal communities over the last few years. Livelihood activities, skill development of rural youth, support to individuals/groups for entrepreneurial activities, construction/repair/renovation of roads, water bodies and other community assets, drinking water supply, linkage to Govt. welfare schemes, construction of individual houses

and MGNREGS based activities have been made possible through Inter-sectoral Convergence. Additionally, support for village infrastructure development has been accessed from various Departments through this initiative with minimum project investment. The success of the convergence in AJY is evident from the fact that, during the year 2022-23, the project could implement various activities amounting to Rs. 172.28 crores to benefit 5,40,060 beneficiaries. The scheme has successfully brought convergence from 39 Departments including MGNREGS, Mission Shakti, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY), KALIA Yojana, Swachha Bharat Mission, Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana, National and State Horticulture Mission, State Millet Mission, CSR and other funds.



Production and sale of Vermicompost by the VSS members, Sologada VSS, Keonjhar Division



Sale of Vermicompost by Bhalughara Sahi VSS, Keonjhar Division



Sunflower cultivation with Solar Pump irrigation at Kenduguda VSS of Jeypore Division



Mushroom Farming by Dambapur VSS members, Paralakhemundi Division



Fruit bearing tree distribution to S. Laupur VSS members, Paralakhemundi Division



Water cane distribution to vegetable farmers at KVK, R. Udayagiri, Paralakhemundi Division



Latitude: 21.238643
Longitude: 84.638261
Elevation: 217.85±4 m
Accuracy: 2.2 m
Time: 09-01-2023 11:57

Powered by NoteCam

Distribution of low smoke core carbon Chulla at Redhakhol Division



Ujjwala Gas distribution and demonstration at Redhakhol Division



Marigold Cultivation at Tilakpadi VSS, Phulbani Forest Division



Pigeon pea Seed distribution to Tabinpadar & Lambagudri VSS members, Phulbani Division



Latitude: 19.398371
Longitude: 82.420655
Elevation: 619.22±7 m
Accuracy: 18.7 m
Time: 25-03-2023 08:49

Note: Cattle Vaccination programme at Muduliduda VSS, Jatabal Beat of Jatabal Section

Powered by NoteCam

Vaccination drive for domestic animals by Nabarangpur Division



Latitude: 19.77872
Longitude: 82.145695
Elevation: 693.97±198 m
Accuracy: 2900.0 m
Time: 27-02-2023 13:53

Note: mushroom cultivation by SHG Members Beheda VSS

Powered by NoteCam

Mushroom Cultivation by SHG members under Beheda VSS, Nabarangpur Division



Latitude: 18.187662
Longitude: 81.739324
Elevation: 156.28±12 m
Accuracy: 11.3 m
Time: 22-10-2022 11:01
Note: Supal vss

Powered by NoteCam

Vegetable seed distribution at Supal VSS, Malkangir Division



Latitude: 18.098941
Longitude: 81.657008

Powered by NoteCam

Vegetable seed distribution at Undurkonda VSS, Malkangir Division



Latitude: 18.069097
Longitude: 81.743988
Elevation: 125.17±6 m
Accuracy: 6.6 m
Time: 30-08-2022 11:56
Note: Kanaguda vss

Powered by NoteCam

Distribution of Land Patta to Kanaguda VSS members, Malkangiri Division



Latitude: 18.22946112°N
Longitude: 81.57095632°E
Elevation: 176.62 m
Accuracy: 3.9 m
Time: 07-05-2022 22:52
Note: Telamouda vss SHG

Powered by NoteCam

Training to SHG members on IGAs at Telamguda VSS, Malkangiri Division



Latitude: 20.91809
Longitude: 83.52111
Elevation: 198.88±26 m
Accuracy: 3.2 m
Time: 02-03-2023 14:12
Note: Negipali vss

Powered by NoteCam

Poultry Farming in Negipali VSS, Bolangir Division



Apiculture by Ghuchipali VSS members, Bolangir Division



Latitude: 21.822981
Longitude: 84.455419
Elevation: 328.05±8 m
Accuracy: 6.6 m
Time: 01-04-2023 14:49
Note: patatocaltivation Jayanarayan Naik at Katupali Kuchinda WL Range

Powered by NoteCam

Potato cultivation by Katupalli VSS members, Bamra WL Division



Latitude: 21.559835
Longitude: 84.346829
Elevation: 264.19±6 m
Accuracy: 5.4 m
Time: 04-04-2023 16:33
Note: Power tiller received at Kendemal vss by Baikuntha Padhan jamankira wirange.

Powered by NoteCam

Power tiller support through convergence at Kendemal VSS, Bamra WL Division

NEWS IN BRIEF

Observation of World Forestry Day, 2023

The International Day of Forests, known as World Forestry Day has been celebrated on 21st March, 2023 in all Divisions under Ama Jangala Yojana across the State. During this week, Protection, Conservation and Regeneration of Forest Resources and development of resilience against

climate change effects on nature were the major themes of dissemination among the stakeholders of the forestry sector. Protection of forests from fire incidences was the major focus during this year owing to the wide-spread forest fire incidences across the State.



World Forestry Day celebration at Jeypore Forest Division



Latitude: 19.143264
Longitude: 82.324215
Elevation: 884.85±4 m
Accuracy: 14.4 m
Time: 03-21-2023 10:57
Note: Van Divasa 21 March



State Forestry Award being honored to Shri Chinmaya Kumar Pradhan, Forest Guard of Bolangir Forest Division on occasion of World Forestry Day, 21st March-2023



Latitude: 20.707475
Longitude: 82.814407

Felicitating Eco-Club members at Phulkimunda Panchayat High School, Harishankar under Bolangir Forest Division



Latitude: 19°48'15"
Longitude: 83°7'1"
Elevation: 272.68±22 m
Accuracy: 12.0 m
Time: 21-03-2023 11:25
Note: Celebration of world Forestry Day 2023 of Karilapat Sanctuary Range

World Forestry Day celebration at Kalahandi South Forest Division



Biju Pattnaik Award for Forest Protection and conservation to Judingjore VSS, Kalahandi South Division

Participation of OFSDS in 15th Kalinga Herbal Fair, 2023

OFSDS participated in the '15th State Level Kalinga Herbal Fair' from 10th -16th February, 2023 organized by the State Medicinal Plants Board, Government of Odisha. This was a unique event for showcasing and selling of traditional herbal products by various stakeholders. Apart from this, there were technical sessions throughout the entire days of exhibition. The event provided a platform

for publicity and sale of a wide range of traditional forest products by our VSSs and SHGs. The VSSs, EDCs and Self Help Groups (SHGs) from the Project areas used this platform to promote their products, brands and identity through public display. On this occasion, OFSDS was awarded the 1st prize for best stall under Govt. category, which was quite inspiring for all stakeholders of AJY.



Participation of OFSDS in 15th Kalinga Herbal Fair, 2023



PCCF (Projects) & Project Director, OFSDS receiving the best stall award in Government category from Hon'ble Minister, F,E&CC, Odisha.



Hon'ble Minister, Forest, Environment & Climate Change, Odisha visiting OFSDS Stall



View of the OFSDS Stall in 15th Kalinga Herbal Fair, 2023

Participation of OFSDS in Adivasi Mela, 2023

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 Odisha which showcases the art, culture, tradition, crafts and economic exchange among rural, especially tribal and urban people.

OFSDS participated in the Adivasi Mela-2023 organized from 20th February to 2nd March, 2023. The VSSs, EDCs and Self Help Groups (SHGs) from OFSDS project area showcased their achievements and used this platform to promote their products. The unique product based display of the materials attracted many researchers and marketing agencies which may be helpful for our stakeholders for marketing in future.



Participation of OFSDS in Adivasi Mela, 2023



OFSDS Stall in Adivasi Mela, 2023



Display of products in OFSDS Stall during Adivasi Mela, 2023



Joining of Shri Narayan Pattanaik as Advisor, Ama Jangala Yojana in the rank of Secretary

The Government of Odisha appointed Shri Narayan Pattanaik as Advisor, Ama Jangala Yojana Programme in the rank of Secretary since January, 2023. He has visited different Project VSSs covered under AJY Divisions to review the interventions under Ama Jangala Yojana. He has expressed his satisfaction over

the implementation of Forest Protection, Regeneration and Livelihood Promotion initiatives under the Scheme. He has also expressed his pleasure over the fact that no fire incidence has been reported in the Assigned Areas of AJY VSSs which he has visited. His field visits have deeply inspired the local villagers.



Meeting with VSS members at Tentuli VSS under Angul Forest Division



Visit to ANR without gap site at Khajuribani VSS, Keonjhar WL Division



Discussion with Officials at Gayalmunda ANR-With Gap Site, Keonjhar WL Division



VSS members explaining the Micro planning process at Khajuribani VSS



Review of Soil & Moisture Conservation (SMC) Activities at Tentuli VSS, Angul Forest Division



VSS members with the AJY team at their Vermi-compost unit- Bhalughara VSS of Keonjhar Division

SUCCESS STORIES

A number of successful stories have been created under convergence initiatives through Ama Jangala Yojana. Most of them are related to livelihood improvement and community development which showcase our achievements through convergence. There are also a number of extra ordinary VSS achievements in protection and conservation of forest resources. Some of them are highly appreciable and regarded as milestones for holistic development of the community. Some of such efforts have been placed here for wider dissemination.

BREAKING THE VICIOUS CYCLE OF POVERTY THROUGH AJY INITIATIVES- A STORY FROM BOLANGIR FOREST DIVISION

The interior pocket of the Muribahal Range is infamous for its poverty-stricken population, featuring as a migration-prone area on the pages of the news papers. Devoid of adequate irrigation facilities, it is difficult to provide employment avenues to the labour force throughout the year. In search of employment opportunities, the labor force migrates to nearby States, often leaving the well-being and education of their children to chance. As a result, people in the BPL category are often caught in a vicious cycle of poverty.

In order to uplift the socio-economic conditions of the forest fringe dwellers, the Divisional Forest Officer, Bolangir had assigned the task of motivating the people through Self Help Group and VSS in that area. In this process, the AJY Team has identified several SHGs in the locality and has taken up a series of interactions for the motivation of VSS members and SHG groups for carrying out livelihood promotion interventions. As a result, the community members were able to earn substantial income through various vocations of their choice. Here are two inspiring stories of successful women entrepreneurs who have set example in income generation after a lengthy fight against poverty.

Bijayani Pradhan, a member of the Brahmani VSS under Bolangir Forest Division and an active SHG member, played a pivotal role in educating others about earning a livelihood in their native land through various Governments sponsored Schemes. Bijayani and her husband usually migrate to Andhra Pradesh during the lean agricultural period of the year which is for about six-months. With the motivation by AJY team, she was able to express her potential with the help of SHG funds and Schemes available with line Departments such as Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Husbandry. A strong commitment along with easily available labor forces in the locality and use of appropriate agricultural technology have fetched her a great success in crop production.

For last two years, Bijayani is taking up multiple crops such as paddy, vegetables and banana cultivation over 5 acres of land in a very systematic approach. She has used both traditional and High Yielding Variety (HYV) seeds for this purpose to avoid risk factors associated with climatic exigencies. As a result, she was able to earn an additional income of Rs.2.5 lakhs from vegetable and banana cultivation only, leaving paddy for her home consumption. She has successfully brought out her family from the clutches of utter poverty and debt. Her field has been recognized by the Odisha Livelihood Mission as the best 'Farm School' for the marginal farming communities to learn, link and leverage agriculture based livelihood model in the locality.



The inspiring story of Bijayani covered in media



Crop fields of Bijayani Pradhan

One more example on mobilizing and educating the village dwellers on sustainable livelihood promotion has been set by Mrs. Baidehi Pattanaik, a lead woman farmer from Tentelkhunti VSS under Bolangir Forest Division. She has achieved remarkable results by turning her 2 acres of wasteland into a thriving vegetable farm, which has adorned the pages of many newspapers. With the handholding support from AJY team, Horticulture Department and the P-NGO team of the AJY, she has adopted innovative practices in vegetable production, organic manure preparation and tissue culture banana cultivation to increase her family income to an extent of

Rs. 50,000 per cropping season.

In addition to this, she has been mentoring other farmers to 'earn from own land to stop migration'. Mrs. Pattanaik has successfully grown vegetables like chili, broccoli, garden pea, beans, bitter gourd, cabbage and tomato etc through completely organic practices. She has used only compost, vermi-compost and pot manure to boost her crop production. She has also gathered enough knowledge in production technology of vermi-compost and vermi-wash for which she has been recognized as a district level trainer by Odisha Livelihood Mission. She is

now venturing into a plant nursery to raise various forest and non-forest seedlings.

The struggle she has made to reach at this level is very inspiring for others to prosper through positive attitude. As hard work and devotion are always recognized and rewarded, Smt. Bijayani Pradhan and Smt. Baidehi Pattanaik have been honored with the State-level Krushak Award in 2022 from the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Odisha, adding another feather to their cap. The efforts and dedication of Bijayani Pradhan & Baidehi Pattanaik speak much of the transformation through Government Schemes, especially Ama Jangala Yojana amid massive labor migration in the District.



ଦାମନଗଡ଼ର ସପକା ଚାଷୀ ଦମ୍ପତି

ପଢ଼ିଆଜମିରେ ଫଳାଇଛନ୍ତି ସୁନାର ଫସଲ

କୋରାପୁଟର ଦାମନଗଡ଼ ଜିଲ୍ଲାର ଚାଷୀ ଦମ୍ପତି ସମ୍ପର୍କରେ ଏକ ଲେଖା ଥିଲା। ସେମାନେ ଆମା ଜଙ୍ଗଲ ଯୋଜନାରେ ଚାଷ କରିବା ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିଥିଲେ। ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଫସଲର ଉତ୍ପାଦନା ବୃଦ୍ଧି ପାଇଥିଲା। ସେମାନେ ଏହାକୁ ଏକ ଉତ୍ତମ ଉଦାହରଣ ଭାବରେ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିଥିଲେ। ସେମାନଙ୍କ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମର ବିବରଣୀ ଏଠାରେ ଦିଆଯାଇଛି।

ଉଦ୍ୟାନ, କୃଷି, ବନ ଓ ଜଳମୂଳିକା ଫଣ୍ଡର ସହଯୋଗରେ ସାବିତ୍ରୀ

ସେମାନେ ଏହାକୁ ଏକ ଉତ୍ତମ ଉଦାହରଣ ଭାବରେ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିଥିଲେ। ସେମାନଙ୍କ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମର ବିବରଣୀ ଏଠାରେ ଦିଆଯାଇଛି।

CONVERGENCE FOR MUTUAL COOPERATION - A COLLECTIVE EFFORT FOR FOREST PROTECTION IN LAXMIPUR RANGE OF KORAPUT FOREST DIVISION

Everyone is getting direct or indirect benefit from Forests and Natural resources. Hence, protection, conservation and sustainable use of the resources should be the primary responsibility of all the stakeholders. It is difficult for the Department alone to protect the Forests from manmade disasters like forest fires. Hence, all the stakeholders, starting from the grassroots to the roof top should come forward for the greater cause. Here is a story of an innovative approach of collective forest protection measures by Laxmipur Range under Koraput Forest Division by which the fire incidences could be reduced substantially. This story also inspires other Division to adopt similar strategy to fight against forest fires.

Forest Fires have been the burning issue for the Forest Department. A long prevailing dry spell has further aggravated the situation. In spite of maintaining close surveillance and engaging fire fighting teams, the forest fire incidences could not be zeroed down in many forests of the State. The protection and precaution measures adopted at VSS level have proved to be insufficient efforts for this huge devastation. In this backdrop, the Vana Surakshya Samities under Laxmipur Forest Range under Koraput Forest Division organized a Range Level Forest Fire Awareness Program on 08.02.2023 where consensus evolved for effective involvement of more stakeholders in forest protection activities. Representatives of all Vana Surakshya Samities and Woman Self Help Groups were present in the programme and were assigned

with specific responsibilities for forest protection during peak fire seasons. They were also oriented on how to discharge their assigned duties sincerely and timely to protect the trees, humans, animals and birds from the forest fires. Besides, Officials from other Line Departments and local PRI representatives were invited to share their suggestions for protection of Forests from fire incidences. It was observed that, in the Assigned Forests under Laxmipur Range, the fire incidences are mainly due to natural reasons such as lighting falling on dry trees during western wind, rubbing of dry branches during hot summer and high wind flow during dry spells. There are also manmade fires such as stubble burning, burning under Mahua tree for flower collection, smoking habits etc. In addition to the above, the Podu or shifting

cultivation is practiced in many parts of the Range area which is mainly carried out by cutting and burning plants and bushes along the hill slopes.

After identifying the root cause of the fire incidences, the entire assigned areas under each VSSs were segregated into different fire zones according to the gravity and frequency of fire incidences in the past. Each zone was assigned to a specific task force for close surveillance and adopting prompt measures against forest fire incidences. They were also trained to take precautionary and quick remedial measures in case of any such threatening incidences are noticed.

The result of this exercise was very impressive. The awareness rallies, meetings and street plays conducted across the forest fringe villages could substantially reduce the cases of Podu cultivation in the Range area. The Forest Officials along with all the Line Department Officials under the Block joined together and performed as key

informants for fire incidences through their respective field level functionaries. There was a collective drive for forest fire control in this region through which the entire region was under control. Later, the ODRAF team of Koraput District was also involved in forest fire prevention at Dasamantpur Section under Laxmipur Forest Range to supplement the works of fire protection squads engaged in this section during a peak fire outbreak. As a result of which, a major fire incident could be avoided. The members of Woman Self Help Groups have performed key roles in awareness building, fire line creation and local level surveillance. In this special drive, as many as 80 Vana Surakhya Samities and 20 Women Self Help Groups were involved in forest fire prevention activities.

The story is worth sharing with other DMUs as an extra-ordinary concerted approach for forest fire prevention through collective effort and shared responsibilities.



Fire Prevention meetings with the VSS members and other stakeholders



Orientation Training to the Fire Fighting Task Force

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