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AJY MIRROR

A Quarterly Newsletter of
AMA JANGALA YOJANA

January-March, 2024

Volume – 7 ■ Issue - IV

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PROJECT DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

Ama Jangala Yojana is in the last year of its extension period. Many initiatives on sustainable forest management and livelihood promotion of the forest fringe dwelling communities have been taken during the Project period of Ama Jangala Yojana. Community mobilization for prevention and control of forest fire has always been a challenging task. But it has been successfully tackled with active participation of the communities.

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, 2024 a total of 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. 962.48 Crores have been mobilized during the Project period through convergence of Schemes of the Line Departments benefitting 4.2 lakh households and 30,72,976 beneficiaries.

The present quarter (January-March, 2024) was a very eventful period of the year for implementation of the scheduled forestry and community development interventions on one hand and to protect the assigned forest area from the widespread fire incidences on the other. Extra effort has been taken for protecting the Assigned Forest Area from fire incidences during the long prevailing dry spells and excessive heat wave situation in the State.

AJY has been doing exemplary work on forest centric community development and livelihood promotion of the forest fringe dwelling communities. The activities and events accomplished during the project period has been compiled in brief and placed in this issue of AJY Mirror for reference of all stakeholders. In addition to this, exemplary efforts of VSSs 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"



MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS OF AMA JANGALA YOJANA DURING THE PROJECT PERIOD

Ama Jangala Yojana has been implemented in the State with an objective to promote sustainable forest management and alternate livelihoods for the forest fringe dwelling communities in 23 Forest & Wildlife Divisions. 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 (2016-17 to 2021-22), the Scheme was extended up to the year 2024-25. By the end of the Financial Year 2023-24, total 4,601 numbers of VSSs have been covered under the Scheme and 2,30,523 ha of Assigned Forest Area

including ANR-Without Gap restoration, ANR-With Gap Plantation and Block Plantations have been restored. In addition to this, Rs. 962.48 Crores have been mobilized during the Project period through convergence with Line Departments benefitting 4.2 lakh households and 30.73 lakh beneficiaries.

During the year 2023-24, the maintenance activities in 69,737 Ha of Assigned Area covering 1424 VSSs have been carried out, in which ANR with gap over 19,925 Ha & ANR without gap plantations over 49,812 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 2023-24)	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, Redhakhol 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	612 Nos	612 Nos
Capacity Building Training	--	9171 No of Trainings, 2,75,117 participants
Livelihood Promotion & Community Development through Convergence Initiatives	4601 VSS & 14,263 SHGs	4601 VSS, 14,263 SHGs, Beneficiaries covered- 30,72,976 and total funds mobilized Rs. 962.48 Crores

ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT DURING THE PRESENT QUARTER

i) Community Mobilization

The major grassroots institutions under AJY are the Vana Suraksha Samities (VSSs) and women Self Help Groups (SHGs) which are intended to implement various activities in the project Divisions. Therefore, strengthening of these institutions has been focused under AJY program, especially during the extension phase. Conducting regular VSS meetings, capacity building trainings for the community members, livelihood promotion through inter-sectoral convergence with Schemes of Line Departments and engaging the VSS and

SHGs in prevention and control of forest fire incidences are the prime activities carried out during the present quarter.

About 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.



VSS GB meeting at Tentulikhunti VSS, Kalahandi South Division



VSS GB meeting at Gamhardi VSS, Redhakhhol Division



VSS G.B. meeting at Badabahal VSS, Bamra WL Division



VSS GB meeting for Livelihood Planning at Suakati VSS, Keonjhar WL Division



Meeting with SHG members at Karalapasi VSS, Keonjhar Division



VSS EC meeting at Dumdumi VSS, Bolangir Forest Division



VSS level meeting on forest fire prevention at Kotpad Range, Jeypore Division



Forest fire prevention oath taking at Keonjhar Division

ii) Maintenance of Assisted Natural Regeneration

Assisted Natural Regeneration (with & without gap plantation) are considered as the most effective regeneration 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 19,925 ha of ANR with gap plantation covering 445 VSSs under 18 Forest Divisions and 49,812 ha of ANR without gap plantation covering 1424 VSSs under 22 Forest Divisions.



ANR Maintenance work at Kandiguda VSS, Keonjhar Division



ANR Maintenance work at Bhulkabahal VSS, Deogarh Division



Weeding and soil working at Gopinathpur VSS, Keonjhar Division



ANR with Gap Plantation at Remalasa VSS of Deogarh Division



ANR Plantation monitoring at Sundhiguda VSS, Jeypore Division



Cleaning work of ANR without Gap site at Badapichula VSS, Keonjhar Division



ANR With Gap Plantation at Handibhanga VSS under Keonjhar Forest Division



iii) Prevention and Control of forest fire:

Protection of forests from fire incidences is one of the prime objectives of AJY. Forest fire incidences not only affect the forest resources and ecology, a number of houses belonging to forest fringe communities also reportedly get damaged due to fire menace as they live in close proximity

of the forests. Forest fire incidences are more common in the tropical deciduous forests of Odisha during the leaf shading months, i.e. from January-May each year where AJY is under implementation. In addition to this, the long prevailing dry spell and excessive heat wave during the present quarter has resulted in a conducive atmosphere for fire incidences. In fact, AJY covers about 1/4th of the total numbers of VSSs

of the State. Hence, the role of AJY stakeholders in forest fire management is very crucial.

The forest fire management under AJY involves timely creation & maintenance of fire lines, awareness generation among local people, involvement of local public and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) in early detection, message dissemination and control of forest fires in the assigned areas, and engagement of fire watchers in the forest areas assigned to each VSS. These activities are performed with the active involvement of VSS members and Forest Department staff. The awareness generation through meetings at community, School and college level, organizing awareness rallies and street plays, inter-Departmental coordination meetings for forest fire prevention, involvement of women SHGs and swift action by the fire response team by the project has a great impact

on forest fire prevention and control in the Assigned Forest Areas under AJY. During this year, the fire incidences could be handled by commendable contributions of the proactive VSS members and responsive project team for which no major fire menace has been noticed in the project areas under AJY. Hence, a lot of resources have been saved by timely management of forest fire.

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 been efficiently activated and the forest fire incidences have been controlled to a large extent in spite of soaring summer temperatures and long prevailing dry spells during the present quarter.



Raksha Bandhan for Forest Protection Awareness at Tamanguda VSS, Bamra Wildlife Division



Forest fire prevention awareness rally by the VSS members under Patna FMU of Keonjhar Division



Awareness building among Students at Th. Rampur North Range of Kalahandi South Division



Forest fire prevention awareness rally by the VSS members under Ghatagaon FMU of Keonjhar Division



Fireline work at Bolangir Forest Division



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



Fire Line creation work at Mardanga VSS, Deogarh Forest Division



Women SHG members volunteering fire extinguishing at Kambinaju VSS, Phulbani Forest Division

iv) Renovation of Soil & Moisture Conservation Structures:

Soil & Moisture Conservation (SMC) measures are the major sub-components under ANR operations. These 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 2023-24, renovation of staggered trenches within the forest area, Loose Boulder Check Dams (LBCD) are some of the major SMC activities carried out in 69,837 ha. of Assigned Areas of the Project.



Renovation of staggered trench at Madkamiguda VSS, Malkangir Division



Renovation of staggered trench at Muribahal, Bolangir Division

v) VSS Buildings-cum- IGA Facilitation Centres:

VSS Buildings-cum- IGA Facilitation Centre is a multi-purpose platform for community interaction and a place for operating livelihood activities, which also serves as a 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 about 400 sq. ft. in selected VSSs. During the Project period (up to 2023-24), 612 Nos. of VSS Building-cum-IGA Facilitation Centers have been constructed and handed over to the concerned VSSs for multipurpose use.



VSS Building-cum-IGA Facilitation Centre inauguration at Kandili VSS, Rayagada Division



VSS Building-cum-IGA Facilitation Centre at Chedenga, Malkangiri Division



Inauguration of VSS Building at Dhabadi VSS, Keonjhar WL Division



VSS Building-cum-IGA Facilitation Centre at Dhepaguda VSS, Jeypore Division



VSS Building-cum-IGA Facilitation Centre at Bhaludunguri, Bargarh Division



Inauguration of VSS Building at Sikaripalli, Bargarh Division

vi) Livelihood Promotion through Convergence with Schemes of Line Departments

Forest centric community development and livelihood promotion of the forest fringe dwelling communities through various income generation activities is an important component of Ama Jangala Yojana. As there is no direct project support to carry out livelihood promotion and income generation activities, it has been envisaged to carry out these activities through convergence with the ongoing Schemes of Line Departments. The communities covered under AJY have been linked with various socio-economic, welfare and income generation Schemes for this purpose. AJY has been instrumental in livelihood promotion and income augmentation of the project beneficiaries and 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 2023-24, the project could implement various activities amounting to Rs. 247.75 crores to benefit 4,89,166 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.



Livelihood Promotion Activities (vegetable cultivation, fruit orchard development and pisciculture) through convergence with Schemes of Line Departments by the members of Putupada VSS, Khariar Forest Division



Latitude: 19.778575
Longitude: 82.147697
Elevation: 685.07±68 m
Accuracy: 260.9 m

Pisciculture by SHG members under Ratanguda VSS , Nabarangpur Division



Mushroom cultivation at Naigaon VSS of Keonjhar Division



Vegetable Cultivation through Convergence at Hayerpur VSS, Keonjhar Wildlife Division



Sale of fish by the members of Laidaguna VSS, Bamra WL Division



Goatary Support to the members of Tavakud VSS, Keonjhar Wildlife Division



Pomegranate plantation in Bodlapada VSS, Khariar Division



Latitude: 21.718997
Longitude: 84.496719
Elevation: 269.52±100 m
Accuracy: 7.5 m
Time: 03-18-2024 13:20

Chilli cultivation by SHG members at Bamra WL Division



Latitude: 22.172233
Longitude: 84.90542
Elevation: 179.81±47 m
Accuracy: 14.0 m
Time: 01-12-2024 13:22

Mustard Cultivation by SHG members at Kharuatoli VSS of Rourkela Forest Division



Latitude: 21°16'26 N
Longitude: 85°21'29 E
Elevation: 188.47±12 m
Accuracy: 9.7 m
Time: 05-09-2023 16:31

Brinjal cultivation at Godhihudi VSS, Keonjhar Division



Latitude: 21.746711
Longitude: 84.447601
Elevation: 323.87±13 m
Accuracy: 2.4 m
Time: 09-02-2023 06:01

Mushroom production by the members of Laidaguna VSS, Bamra WL Division



DMU level training to VSS members on use of machinaries at Bolangir Division



Latitude: 20.215065
Longitude: 84.29358
Elevation: 656.28±12 m
Accuracy: 11.2 m
Time: 04-18-2023 13:18

Mushroom Production Training at Gangamata SHG, Phulbani Division



Distribution of poultry chicks to SHGs at Jugsaipatna VSS, Kalahandi (S) Division



Chilli cultivation in convergence with ITDA, Mendhiakani VSS, Deogarh Division



Latitude: 21°47'25"

Members of Sandyarani SHG, Bonai Division preparing their products for selling



Brinjal Cultivation by Bibhisn Padhan at Pratappur VSS under Deogaon FMU, Bolangir Division

NEWS IN BRIEF

OBSERVATION OF WORLD FORESTRY DAY, 2024

The International Day of Forests, known as World Forestry Day has been celebrated on 21st March, 2024 in all Divisions under Ama Jangala Yojana across the State. The theme of the World Forestry Day 2024 was “Forest & Innovation: New Solution for Better World”. On this occasion, Protection, Conservation and Regeneration of

Forest Resources and development of resilience against climate change effects on nature were the major subjects of dissemination among the stakeholders of the forestry sector. Protection of forests from fire incidences in an innovative way was the major focus during this year owing to the widespread forest fire incidences across the State.



World Forestry Day celebration at Malkangiri Forest Division



World Forestry Day celebration at Keonjhar Forest Division



ii) Participation of OFSDS in Adivasi Mela, 2024

The State Level Annual Tribal Fair, popularly known as “Adivasi Mela” is being organized by the ST & SC Development, Minority and Backward Classes Welfare Department, Government of Odisha and 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-2024 organized from 26th February to 4th March, 2024. 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.

In addition to this, 7 numbers of AJY VSSs have participated in the Adivasi Mela, 2024 and they sold their forest and non-forest products worth of Rs.5.2 lakhs.



Participation of OFSDS in Adivasi Mela, 2024. The OFSDS stall being Inaugurated by Shri Yosobanta Beriha, OFS (STS), Dy. Project Director, OFSDS



Overview of products display in OFSDS Stall and sale in progress

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 achievements by the VSSs 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.

STORY-1

RAISING INCOME LEVEL THROUGH INNOVATIVE MECHANIZATION OF POST HARVEST MANAGEMENT OF FARM PRODUCTS : A STORY FROM KORAPUT FOREST DIVISION

The Southern part of Koraput District is rich in agricultural production, especially spice crops such as ginger, turmeric, black pepper and many others. Devoid of adequate value addition and marketing opportunity, it is difficult to provide fair price to the producers which are also the members of VSSs under Ama Jangala Yojana. As a result, the members were 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, Koraput motivated the Self Help Group and VSS members for a market driven approach of product improvisation to fetch better price of ginger crop. In this process, the AJY Team has identified 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 through technology based value addition to the traditional products. As a result, the community members were able to earn substantial income through various vocations of their choice. Here is an inspiring story of successful women enterprise that have set example in income generation after a long fight against poverty.

Baraput village is situated at a distance of 27 km from Semiliguda Forest Range under Koraput Forest Division. The village was taken up under Ama Jangala Yojana during 2020-21 and the VSS was reconstituted. There are 47 households in this VSS who belong to OBC category. Almost all the villagers are farmers cultivating various crops throughout the year. They manage their families through cultivation of agricultural crops and selling them in the nearby local market. There are three nos of Women SHGs in the village.

It was observed by AJY team that almost all the farmers are cultivating ginger as a major cash crop. However, they are getting a very low price by selling raw ginger in the local market during the harvesting season. Whereas the demand of ginger and ginger products is huge in the outside market, they were compelled to sell their product at marginal price owing to its abundance and lack of post harvest preservation facilities. The AJY team had extended

their support for converting this opportunity to a scope for income augmentation through focused intervention on improvement of ginger.

In the year 2023-24, 30 numbers of ginger dryer machines were supported to the SHGs with adequate skills and knowledge on sliced dry ginger making through trainings. This was made through convergence with Horticulture Department and local Krishi Vigyan Kendra at Semiliguda. The members are now collecting raw ginger during peak harvesting season, making slices, drying and preserving them till there is a price rise in the market.

It was observed that, within one year, each member of the SHGs was able to earn five times of their traditional income from ginger cultivation and sale in the local market. Expressing their satisfactions up on the AJY team, the SHG members are planning to procure more numbers of dry ginger machines out of their own fund to increase their outreach and income.



AJY team with the SHG members in village Baraput



Dry ginger making machines for distribution



Ginger processing is in progress



STORY-2

HILL BROOM CULTIVATION HAS BECOME THE BACKBONE OF THE HOUSEHOLD ECONOMY : A SUCCESS STORY FROM SIRKI VSS UNDER G. UDAYAGIRI FOREST RANGE, PHULBANI FOREST DIVISION

Time has arrived to think about the commercial production of forest based specific products to increase the income level of forest fringe dwelling communities. This will also lead to wise utilization of degraded uplands owned by the people living in and around the forest areas. Livelihood Promotion of the forest fringe dwelling communities is one of the major mandates of AJY. However, there is no direct financial assistance from the project to promote livelihood activities in the project villages. In order to carry out the income generation activities, Inter-Departmental convergence has been given importance by the project team. Since inception of Ama Jangala Yojana, the VSS members are sincerely working for the conservation of the forest area assigned to them. Need based handholding support have been extended by the project staff and PNGO team in consultation with the concerned Line Departments for livelihood promotion and IGAs.

The initiative carried out in Sirki VSS is an ideal example of continuous effort by the AJY team. Bringing a change in the present livelihood pattern to earn additional income was a challenge before the AJY team working for the upliftment of this VSS. However, the team continued their effort for improving the Socio-economic status of the VSS members. This story also inspires other Division to adopt similar strategy to fight against poverty.

Sirki is a small village under G. Udayagiri Range of Phulbani Forest Division. The VSS with the help of AJY team nominated some VSS members to carryout hill broom cultivation in collaboration with the Department of Soil Conservation, Odisha. The AJY team helped the farmers to apply for the same through farmer's portal and avail necessary input for hill broom cultivation through State Plan Scheme. In addition to this, the beneficiaries were also nominated for undergoing trainings for this purpose through the Soil Conservation Department. Out of many farmers in the proposed list, five farmers, namely Chaitanya Pradhan, Aspati Pradhan, Jadama Pradhan, Sipura Pradhan and Vighnaraja Pradhan of Sirki VSS were selected for cultivation of Hill Broom in their own land on a commercial basis. The farmers started to prepare their field for Hill Brom cultivation, after a round of field verification by the Departmental staff. The Department also provided them with 3000 numbers of good quality seedlings and other inputs as per the provision in the Scheme. Periodically monitoring, supervision and coordination were made by the AJY team.



Harvesting broom sticks and making of brooms

Hill Broom was cultivated in four acres of land without any input cost by the farmers. After about 12 months of planting, the beneficiaries were able to harvest the Hill Broom and earn Rs. 40,000/-each from sale of the first harvest. Thereafter, they were able to get a good amount of money from the sale of subsidiary harvest and intercrops. All of them are now preparing their nurseries for production of hill broom seedlings for supporting other interested farmers.

All the farmers of Sirki VSS have set an example for the neighboring villages for which other farmers are now coming forward for similar kind of farming practice to earn additional income out of their piece of unproductive upland. The convergence initiative undertaken by Ama Jangala Yojana has helped them to convert the unproductive upland to a revenue generating model. During the financial year 2024-25, more than 10 farmers of this VSS and surrounding areas have applied for similar kind of livelihood support from the Department. The role of AJY team in this successful journey is highly commendable, as opined by the farmers by expressing their heartfelt thanks to the AJY team.

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