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AJY MIRROR

A Quarterly Newsletter of
AMA JANGALA YOJANA

July-Sept, 2024

Volume – 8 ■ Issue - II

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PROJECT DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

Ama Jangala Yojana has completed 8th year of its implementation in 4601 Vana Surakshya Samities under 23 Forest and Wildlife Divisions of Odisha. Sustainable Forest Management and Livelihood promotion has been the core focus of the Scheme.

Our committed Project team could bring visible changes in the lives and livelihoods of the forest fringe dwelling communities through many income-promoting interventions. The success stories along with the successful VSS management reports are collated in this edition to highlight the major progress of the project at all levels. Apart from this, a brief description of the major achievements of the project has also been placed for reference of all our stakeholders. It is expected that, other communities will be inspired by such extraordinary achievements by some of our project stakeholders.

There are continuous efforts for convergences with the Schemes of other line Departments to mobilize funds for community development and livelihood promotion. The impact of our livelihood promotion initiatives are evident from the fact that, funds worth of Rs. 1085.18 Crores have been mobilized from other Line Departments and CSR agencies through which about 4.2 lakh households belonging to 4601 Vana Surakshya Samities and 14,263 SHGs have been benefitted.

The effort put by our Forest Divisions, P-NGOs and other stakeholders towards sustainable forest management, livelihood promotion and income generation activities are commendable. I am sure that all AJY Divisions will continue their innovative works for the benefit of the community and share their achievements so as to secure the overall goal of AJY.

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"



COVER STORY

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

Ama Jangala Yojana (AJY) is in the 9th year of its implementation through 4601 numbers of VSSs covering about 4.2 lakh households and 14,263 Women Self Help Groups. The Forest Restoration activities have been carried out as Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) - Without Gap Plantation in 2,09,543 ha of forest area and ANR-With Gap Plantation in 19,975 ha under the Scheme. Apart from these, Block Plantations have also been raised over 1005 ha of forest land. Out of the above, maintenance activities are being carried out in 42,737 ha of Assigned Forest Area during the present year i.e 2024-25.

Livelihood promotion is an important component of Ama Jangala Yojana. AJY aims to diversify the livelihood opportunities of the forest fringe dwelling communities so that the pressure on forests for their day to day requirements is minimized. By September 2024, Rs. 1085.18 Crores have been mobilized from other Line Departments benefitting about 32,67,808 persons belonging to 4601 VSS and 14,263 SHGs under

Livelihood promotion and Community Development initiatives. In addition to this, 612 numbers of VSS buildings-cum-Income Generation Activities Facilitation Centres have been constructed and handed over to the communities in AJY Project area for multipurpose use. The SHGs in the project area are also linked to various Income Generating Programmes (IGPs) in convergence with 42 numbers of Line Departments and CSR agencies. Additionally, many activities pertaining to community infrastructure development have been undertaken under the convergence initiatives of AJY.

During the present year, 3rd and 4th year maintenance activities have been carried out in 22,812 ha of ANR Without Gap Plantation and 19,925 ha of ANR With Gap Plantation in 884 numbers of Vana Surakshya Samities under 22 Forest Divisions. However, livelihood promotion and community development activities are being carried out in 1424 VSSs with support of 10 PNGOs.



Maintenance work of ANR With Gap plantation at Khajurijharan VSS, Redhakhol Division



SMC maintenance work at Suliamal VSS under Sainitala Range, Bolangir Forest Division



Vegetable cultivation support to Putulia VSS of Patna Range, Keonjhar Division



Vegetable cultivation support to Kenduput VSS members, Koraput Division

SUCCESS STORIES

A number of successful cases have been created under the livelihood promotion and community development initiatives of Ama Jangala Yojana. There are also a number of extra ordinary achievements in protection and conservation of forest resources by the VSSs. Some of them are highly appreciable and regarded as milestones for holistic development of the community and forest resources. Some of such efforts have been placed here for wider dissemination.

STORY-1

CONSISTENT EFFORT IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE HAS POPULARIZED BAGHIANASA AS A VERMI-VILLAGE

The story of a successful initiative of Baghianasa VSS under Champua Range of Keonjhar Forest Division

Community Development is a consistent and constant effort that brings all round prosperity for a community in a sustainable way. On the other hand, the rapid degradation of Odisha's balanced forest conditions and its far-reaching effects are being realized by all. The increasing pressure on the natural resources has affected the standard of living of the forest fringe dwelling communities. The Government has formulated Joint Forest Management policy to minimize the effects of rapid degradation of forest resources through equal partnership between the Forest Department and the communities living in and around the forest areas. Based on the Joint Forest Management principles, the Department of Forest, Environment and Climate Change of the Government of Odisha is implementing "Ama Jangala Yojana" in 4601 villages under 23 Forest Divisions.

Here is a story that depicts how a successful collaboration and continuous effort brought sustainable change in the life and livelihoods of a forest fringe community that led to Sustainable Forest Management.

Baghianasa is a tribal village under Nahabeda Gram panchayat of Champua Forest Range under Keonjhar Forest Division. The Vana Suraksha Samiti is operational in the village under Ama Jangala Yojana since 2019-

20. This village is located 15 km away from the district headquarters and having a population of about 300 with 44 families. Almost all the families in the village belong to BPL category.



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naitude: 85.517605

Livelihood Planning and micro-plan preparation at Baghianasa VSS



Pisciculture and mushroom cultivation by the SHG members at Baghianasa



VSS and SHG members selling the vermi-composts at the collective sales centre (VSS Building-cum-IGA Facilitation Centre)



Inauguration of VSS Building by Hon'ble Minister, Forest, Environment and Climate Change Department, Labour and ESI, Odisha Shri Ganesh Ram Singh Khuntia and handing over the cheques to the SHG members of Baghianasa Vana Surakshya Samiti.

After the formation of the VSS committee under AJY, special attention was paid to augment livelihoods, socio cultural and economic well-being of the community through in collaborative approach. Various innovative programmes on forest protection and management were initiated through Joint Forest Management (JFM) mode. Prior to inclusion under AJY, there were utter problems of some basic facilities in the village, such as scarcity of

drinking water, road connectivity and electricity. These problems could not be resolved even after repeated appeal before the local self government. With the help of Ama Jangala Yojana, the members of Baghianasa village prepared a comprehensive village development micro-plan with the help of the Partner-NGO. All these major problems of the village were highlighted in this micro plan and approved in the Gram Sabha of the Gram

Panchayat before implementation. Thereafter, most of the major problem of the village has been resolved through coordination among various Departments of the Government, Gram Panchayat and the VSS as well.

In the year 2022-23, a proposal was placed before the AJY team by the women Self-help Groups of the Baghianasa VSS to prepare vermi-compost owing the resource base of the village. But the key issue was, where to sell the produce ! However, the P-NGO team and the Project staff encouraged them to carry out the production activity assuring them to support for the initial market linkage. Rigorous training, critical input support and technical guidance were provided to the SHG members by the project team. The Divisional Forest Officer also assured them to purchase the entire stock for use in the plantation sites under Keonjhar Forest Division. This inspired the SHG members to carry out the activity in a large scale. They produced a huge quantity of good quality vermin-compost. In the first year, 12 women members prepared vermin-compost and sold the entire produce of 96 quintals, earning a good profit of Rs. 1,92,000/-. Being inspired by the huge income, 32 women members from three Self-help Groups entered into the

venture, prepared 170 Quintals of vermi-compost during 2023-24 and earned a profit of about Rs. 3,39,000/-. During the present year (2024-25), as on September 2024, they could be able to earn Rs. 13,24,800/- by producing 660 Quintals of Vermi-compost.

A VSS building was also constructed in the village to carryout harvesting, packaging and selling of the produce. The VSS Building was inaugurated by Shri Ganesh Ram Singh Khuntia, Hon'ble Minister, Forest, Environment and Climate Change & Labour, Employees' State Insurance, Odisha on 10th August, 2024 and handed over the building to Baghianasa Vana Surakshya Samiti. He was very happy to see the indomitable work of the Women Self Help Group members and presented a cheque worth of Rs. 13, 24, 800/- to the members as their profit share.

"We have to take utmost care to improve the forest resources, well, at the same time we also have to take innovative actions to improve the livelihoods and economic wellbeing of the forest fringe dwelling communities so that their sole dependency on forest resources gets diverted and, thereby, forest resources are protected."- The Divisional Forest Officer Shri Dhanraj H. D. Expressed with great pleasure.

STORY-2

TRANSFORMING LIVELIHOODS THROUGH POULTRY FARMING; A STORY OF TULASI SHG, KUMBHARAMUNDA VSS UNDER DARINGIBADI RANGE OF BALLIGUDA FOREST DIVISION

Poultry rearing has been considered as a successful rural venture, through which the women SHG members are earning a handsome income. The change of food habits in the rural community, the choice of majority of the consumers and the proximity to the consumer market have driven Tulasi SHG members to go for poultry rearing venture. In the rural areas, people usually prefer small and medium poultry units rather than larger ones so that those can be easily managed by the women members of their family. As a result, these units are becoming popular nowadays. It provides supplementary income and nutrition of high value to the families without incurring any extra expenditure.

Kumbharamunda, a small tribal forest-fringe village located at a distance of 5 kms from Kirikuti Gram Panchayat Headquarters of Daringibadi Block, exemplifies how grassroots initiatives can transform lives. The village, part of the Daringibadi Range under Balliguda Forest Division, is home to Scheduled Tribe and Scheduled Caste communities, most of them belong to BPL category. Their livelihoods rely primarily on subsistence farming, goat rearing, minor forest produce collection and daily wage labour.

In 2018-19, the village was associated with Ama Jangala Yojana (AJY). As a part of this program, a Vana Surakshya Samiti was constituted to protect and manage forest resources in the assigned forest area. Among the notable achievements under AJY is the establishment of Tulasi SHG, a women self-help group that has successfully leveraged poultry farming as a sustainable livelihood option.



Livelihood planning in the village



Inside view of the poultry unit



Collection of eggs for sale



SHG members in their poultry unit

Tulasi SHG was formed in 2018-19, comprising twelve determined tribal women under the guidance of AJY and in convergence with the Mission Jiveeka Scheme of ITDA, Balliguda and OLM Daringbadi. Recognizing the growing market demand for eggs and meat, the group decided to venture into backyard poultry farming.

Under the convergence initiative, the SHG was provided with a poultry farm setup and 500 chicks during the year 2023-24. The initiative aimed to empower these

women with a steady income source while contributing to the local economy.

The poultry farm, operated by Tulasi SHG, currently produces 500 eggs daily, generating an income of Rs.3,000/- rupees per day. They earn an average monthly revenue of Rs.90,000/-, out of which Rs.34,000/- is retained as profit after deducting the expenses for chick feed, maintenance, and other operational costs.

This steady income has not only enhanced the financial stability of the SHG members but also demonstrated the potential of community-driven livelihood programs under AJY.

AJY played a pivotal role in the success of this initiative. Through continuous support, including training sessions, meetings, and regular follow-ups, the AJY staff motivated the SHG members to adopt a structured and sustainable approach to poultry farming and marketing. The guidance helped the women members to overcome challenges and optimize their business model.

Tulasi SHG now serves as a model for economic self-reliance in the region, showing how women-led enterprises can thrive with the right support. Apart from this, members of the SHG have acquired valuable skills in poultry farming, marketing, and resource management. The success of Tulasi SHG in Kumbharamunda highlights the transformative impact of a collaborative initiative between Ama Jangal Yojana and Mission Jiveeka. By combining grassroots participation with need based support, this initiative highlights the empowerment of marginalized communities to achieve economic self-reliance. Tulasi SHG's factsheet is a testament to the potential of women-led enterprises to drive sustainable development in forest fringe scenario.

STORY-3

DIVERSIFICATION OF LIVELIHOOD OPTIONS LED TO FOREST PROTECTION- A STORY OF TALAGUDA VSS UNDER KORAPUT FOREST DIVISION

A secure source of income is the need of every household in almost all villages. Forest fringe dwelling communities are dependent on forest resources for their livelihoods. Sometimes there is a competition among the dependent communities for collection of minor forest produces which leads to depletion of the same. Over exploitation of forest resources leads to degradation of quality and extent of forest resources. On the other hand, a secured and diversified livelihood options when provided to the communities have played a major role in protection and regeneration of the degraded forest. Here is the example of the initiatives taken up by the AJY team to mobilize Talaguda VSS members towards forest protection.

Talaguda, a small village in the remote forest under Koraput Division, is home to 22 households and 118 people, including 67 women and 51 men. Like many forest-fringe villages, Talaguda VSS faced challenges in providing sustainable livelihoods for its residents. Women, in particular, struggled to earn a living while staying close to the resourceful forest areas.

Recognizing the need for economic empowerment and environmental stewardship, the women of Talaguda decided to form a Self-Help Group (SHG) to address their challenges. With the help of Ama Jangala Yjana team, they chose turmeric cultivation as a sustainable livelihood option, setting the stage for a transformative journey. Ama Jangala Yojana played a crucial role in supporting the households with necessary technical and input supports though it was a completely new crop for the inhabitants.

The women SHG members were supported with necessary training, handholding and input materials through convergence with Horticulture Department. The women were taught sustainable turmeric cultivation techniques, including preparation of organic inputs, soil preparation and post planting management of turmeric. The AJY team facilitated connections to markets beyond the local region, ensuring fair prices for their produce. And, above all, the villagers were involved in protecting the surrounding forests through activities such as preventing forest fires and planting trees in the gap areas.

The women embraced the challenge of turmeric farming despite being new to the practice. They cultivated turmeric under partial shade condition under tree canopy, aligning agricultural activities with environmental conservation. In their first year, the women achieved remarkable success after the crop harvest. A total of 38 quintals of raw turmeric was produced which they sold



at a fair price and earned about Rs. 1,14,000/- which significantly boosted their income, enabling them to invest on their basic household needs. Support from AJY helped the women to access markets beyond their village, ensuring better returns. Turmeric cultivation under tree canopy also improved the soil health, promoted crop diversification and supported local economy.

The initiative had far-reaching impacts, enumerated as:

1. **Economic Empowerment:** Women gained financial independence and confidence, breaking traditional barriers.
2. **Environmental Conservation:** Agroforestry practices contributed to soil health and resilience.
3. **Community Development:** The project fostered a sense of pride and unity in Talaguda, inspiring neighboring villages to adopt similar initiatives.
4. **Ripple Effect:** The success of Talaguda's SHG encouraged others to explore sustainable farming, creating a model for rural development.

The women of Talaguda have transformed their lives through continuous endeavor and determination. Supported by Ama Jangala Yojana, they have shown that sustainable farming can be both economically rewarding



and environmentally beneficial. Talaguda's journey is an evidence of a successful community-driven initiative, where empowerment and conservation go hand in hand. The story inspires hope and serves as a way of entrepreneurship development for other forest-fringe communities striving for sustainable development.

"Turmeric farming not only brought income to our families but also gave us the confidence to do something bigger and better. Together, we've shown that with hard work, even a small village like ours can make a big impact" – View of the members of Talaguda SHG.

STORY-4

EMPOWERING LIVELIHOODS THROUGH BIOFLOC PISCICULTURE; A SUCCESSFUL CASE OF LALMUNDA VSS UNDER JEYPORE FOREST DIVISION

Biofloc pisciculture is a cutting-edge aquaculture system designed for high-density fish farming. This case study underscores the potential of biofloc pisciculture as a replicable model for other rural communities seeking to diversify income sources and embrace modern, eco-friendly livelihoods.

Biofloc Pisciculture has emerged as a transformative livelihood option in rural areas, combining modern technology with sustainable practices. In Lalmunda Vana Surakshya Samiti under Jeypore Forest Division with 75 households and a population of 374, this innovative aquaculture approach was adopted to diversify income sources. This initiative, supported by Ama Jangala Yojana (AJY) team in collaboration with the Odisha Livelihood Mission and Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA), has showcased how advanced aquaculture can boost rural livelihoods and community resilience.

Lalmunda VSS members primarily depend on agriculture and forest products for subsistence. However, seasonal income fluctuations and limited opportunities necessitated exploring alternative livelihood options. Recognizing this need, the AJY team and P.NGO staff initiated discussions with VSS members, identifying Biofloc pisciculture as a feasible and sustainable income generation vocation.

A Systematic approach was followed in implementation of Biofloc pisciculture unit, which was planned well before the implementation of the program.



Latitude: 19.127494
Longitude: 82.443077
Elevation: 585.46±8 m



These are as follows:

1. Capacity Building and Motivation:

- o Awareness meetings were conducted by the AJY team and P.NGO staff.
- o Members were educated on Biofloc technology, its benefits, and the required setup.

2. Selection of Beneficiaries:

- o Six beneficiaries from Lalmunda VSS were identified based on their interest and availability of land.

- o Land documents and other requisites were prepared for submission to the District Fishery Office.

3. Technical Setup and Convergence:

- o Beneficiaries established Biofloc tanks through convergence initiatives involving multiple stakeholders.
- o Training on managing the Biofloc unit, feeding, and maintaining the bacterial ecosystem for waste management was provided.

4. Financial and Technical Support:

- o The District Fishery Office extended support for technical guidance and project monitoring.
- o Convergence with OLM also ensured cost-effective implementation of the program.

The outcomes of the biofloc pisciculture were very encouraging. The initiative enabled beneficiaries to generate significant income by culturing fish in limited space. In the 1st instance, they were able to get a net profit of Rs. 80,000/- in a single harvest. The beneficiaries also acquired scientific and technical knowledge on aquaculture, enhancing their long-term employability and entrepreneurial skills. Apart from these, the Biofloc unit optimized resource utilization, reduced environmental impact, and ensured sustainable livelihoods.

The Biofloc pisciculture initiative in Lalmunda VSS exemplifies how technology-driven interventions can transform rural livelihoods. The key success factors of this initiative is an example of successful collaboration among Odisha Livelihood Mission, Fishery & ARD Department and AJY which ensured community participation and adoption of eco-friendly technology aligned with community's long-term needs.



Mechanical weeder support to Siilikuti VSS members, Daringibadi Range, Balliguda Division



Latitude: 20.197612
Longitude: 82.736895
Elevation: 317.57±4 m
Accuracy: 1.2 m

Irrigation pump support to farmers of Dabri VSS, Khariar Division

NEWS IN BRIEF

OBSERVATION OF VANAMAHOTSAV WEEK, 2024

75th Vanamahotsava Week was celebrated across the AJY Divisions during the month of July, 2024 in which awareness campaigns, rallies, meetings, felicitations to various stakeholders for their extraordinary efforts and massive plantation programmes were conducted.



Latitude: 20.705998
Longitude: 83.106485
Elevation: 254.2145 m

Vanamahotsav celebration at Patnagarh Range in presence of Honorable Dy. Chief Minister Shri K.V. Singhdeo



Vanamahotsav celebration at Loisingha FMU, Bolangir Division in presence of Dr. Mukesh Mahaling, Hon'ble Minister, Health & Family Welfare, Odisha.



Latitude: 20.562234
Longitude: 83.409439
Elevation: 193.682100 m
Accuracy: 3.9 m
Time: 14-07-2024 12:56

Vanamahotsav celebrated at Deogaon FMU in presence of RCCF, Bhawanipatna, DFO, Balangir and Project Staff.



Vanamahotsav celebration at Mundatola VSS, Rourkela Division in presence of Shri Jual Oram, Hon'ble Minister of Tribal Welfare, Government of India



Latitude: 19.760981
Longitude: 82.152835
Accuracy: 2800.0 m
Time: 03-07-2024 12:08
Note: Celebration of 75th Vanamahotsava at GOVERNMENT U.G.H.S. Beheda section, Tehora.

Vanamahotsav at Govt. U.G.High School at Beheda VSS, Nabarangpur Forest Division



Latitude: 21°21'56"N
Longitude: 86°30'E
Elevation: 65.6743 m
Accuracy: 83.0 m
Time: 04-07-2024 11:48

Vanamahotsav at Tavakuda VSS, Keonjhar WL Division



Vanamahotsav at Kotpad ITI, Jeypore Division



Vanamahotsav celebration at Aamjharan VSS, Rourkela Division



Vanamahotsav celebration at Chaka Nuasahi VSS, Keonjhar Division



Celebration of Vanamahotsav at Telkoi Range, Keonjhar Division



Vanamahotsav at Basantpur Beguniali VSS, Deogarh Division



Vanamahotsav at Mardanga VSS, Deogarh Division



75th Vanamahotsav at Dhodra Section, Nabarangpur Division



75th Vanamahotsav at Dharmagada Range, Kalahandi South Division

VISIT OF DIGNITARIES TO AJY PROJECT AREA



Shri Ganesh Ram Singh Khuntia, Hon'ble Minister of Forests, Environment and Climate Change & Labour, Employees' State Insurance, Odisha visits Baghianasa VSS under Keonjhar Forest Division



Hon'ble Union Minister of Tribal Affairs, Shri Jual Oram, presenting Biju Pattnaik Award for Forest Protection to Mundatola VSS of Rourkela Forest Division



Honorable Dy. Chief Minister Shri K.V. Singhdeo, Odisha visits Patnagarh FMU, Bolangir Division on 09.07.2024



Dr. Mukesh Mahaling, Hon'ble Minister, Health and Family Welfare, Odisha visits H.K. Mahatab High School under Bolangir Division on the occasion of 75th Vanamahotsav

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