



ଆମ ଜଙ୍ଗଲ ଯୋଜନା

# AJY MIRROR

A Quarterly Newsletter of  
AMA JANGALA YOJANA

Oct-December 2022

Volume – 6 ■ Issue - III

## CONTENTS

- Brief account of the major achievements of Ama Jangala Yojana during the quarter (Cover Story)
- Success stories

## PROJECT DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

Ama Jangala Yojana has been appreciated as a successful endeavor of the State, reaching out to about 4.2 lakh households in the forest fringe areas. The Forest Restoration and Livelihood Promotion initiatives taken up under the Scheme are very inspiring. The core objectives of Ama Jangala Yojana are to ensure restoration of degraded forests on one hand and augment the livelihoods of the forest fringe dwellers on the other, which have been successfully implemented.

The impact of Ama Jangala Yojana is very encouraging as far as forest protection and livelihood promotion is concerned. About 2,30,573 Ha of assigned area under 4601 VSS have been optimally treated and 14,263 Women SHGs have been engaged in various income generation activities through the Scheme. In addition to this, scheme worth Rs. 663.04 Crores have been mobilized during the Project period through convergence with Line Departments benefitting about 24,51,907 persons from the target communities.

Currently, Ama Jangala Yojana has entered into the extended period during which, the maintenance activities of existing resources are being carried out. Additionally, the livelihood promotion activities have been given more emphasis during the extended period. The present quarter of the year (October-December) was an eventful period of the year for carrying out many scheduled forestry and community development interventions. Extra effort has been made for livelihood improvement of the forest fringe dwelling communities through inter-sectoral convergence. It gives me immense pleasure that all the Divisions and the Project functionaries have performed their best and ensured achievement of the envisaged objectives of Ama Jangala Yojana.

In this issue of AJY Mirror, a brief account of the activities undertaken during the quarter has been collated. In addition to this, encouraging achievements on livelihood promotion and community mobilization have been narrated as success stories in this issue. I hope that all the AJY Divisions will continue their innovative works on livelihood interventions 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 Quarter

Ama Jangala Yojana (AJY) is being implemented through Odisha Forestry Sector Development Society (OFSDS) since the year 2016-17. By December, 2022, the Scheme has reached out to 4601 VSSs of 23 Divisions covering about 4.2 lakh households. In addition to this, about 14,263 women SHGs have been linked to various income generating activities under AJY.

After completion of the initial tenure of six years (2016-17 to 2021-22), the Government of Odisha has extended the Scheme for additional 3 years (2022-23 to 2024-25). It has been provisioned to carry out the maintenance activities in 95,837 Ha of assigned area under 1964 VSSs belonging to 22 Forest Divisions in which ANR with & without gap plantations have been taken up along with expediting the livelihood promotion activities for the forest fringe dwelling communities during the extended period.

There is no target for taking up new VSSs under the fold of AJY during the present year. Hence preliminary activities such as micro-planning, survey, demarcation and pillar postings have not been undertaken during this quarter. However, maintenance of ANR with & without gap plantations was carried out as the major forestry activities under AJY.

In the present quarter, the 2nd year maintenance of ANR with gap plantation has been carried out in 20,000 Ha of assigned area belonging to 446 VSSs under 18 Forest Divisions. Similarly, maintenance activities of ANR without gap plantation were carried out in 22,887 ha of forest area as 2nd year operation, 25,950 ha of area as 3rd year and 27,000 ha as 4th year operation in 22 Forest Divisions. ANR operations such as thinning, high stump cutting, climber cutting and cleaning were undertaken within scheduled time during this quarter. In addition to these, soil & moisture conservation measures such as staggered trenches & loose boulder check dams have been carried out in the ANR sites.

During the present quarter (October-December, 2022), the AJY team could mobilize Rs. 47.72 Crores through convergence under different Schemes in which 1,36,209 persons of the Project area have been benefitted. Under livelihood promotion initiatives a cumulative total of Rs. 663.04 Crores have been mobilized from other Line Departments benefitting about 24,51,907 persons under the Scheme up to December, 2022. Additionally, AJY team has accomplished many activities pertaining to community infrastructure development in the forest fringe communities through inter-sectoral convergence.

## SUCCESS STORIES FROM VSSs

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

### Making markets available at the doorstep - A successful initiative by Adarsa Women Self Help Group under Bijamal VSS, Bolangir Forest Division

*A successful rural livelihood model cannot be achieved without women involvement as they are the main driving force for the household economy to prosper. Women have a greater role in strengthening family income. Hence, empowerment of women is the most important component in any development programme. Ama Jangala Yojana has given priority on gender equity in its livelihood promotion programme. Women centric livelihood promotion under AJY convergence initiatives has made commendable impact in almost all VSSs under the Project. Here is a story of Adarsha Women's Self Help Group in Bijamal village under Bolangir Forest Division. This is an ideal example of taking the women entrepreneurship to a new height. Adarsha Women's Self Help Group of Bijamal VSS under Muribahal FMU, Bolangir Forest Division has been considered as an eye opener in livelihood promotion through collective effort. The small poultry units initiated by the SHG members have fetched a remarkable profit that strengthened their fund base to many folds within a couple of years.*

## SUCCESS STORIES FROM VSSs

Bijamal, a Tribal village under Muribahal FMU of Bolangir Forest Division consists of 80 households. Most of the households belong to BPL categories. There are 5 women SHGs in the village who are active in implementing various livelihood promotion activities through AJY convergence initiatives. Among them, the poultry rearing unit initiated by Adarsa Women SHG is the most remunerative and successful one. The timely and appropriate choice of vocation has fetched them extraordinary result.



The change in food habits of the rural community, the choice of majority of the consumers and the proximity to the goods & services have driven the members of Adarsa Self Help Group members to go for poultry rearing venture. In the local area, people usually prefer small and medium poultry units rather than larger ones. These units are becoming popular as it provides supplementary income to the families and nutrition of high order without incurring any extra expenditure. Looking at the local scenario and dedication of the SHG members, the VSS has recommended their name for initiating poultry units with support from Mission Shakti and Department of Fisheries & ARD. The members have also undergone through a series of trainings organized by the Department. Initially seven members were organized to set up a small poultry unit of 500 layer birds. The process started for rearing of poultry birds in convergence with Mission Shakti Department and Department of Fisheries & ARD with active support of AJY team.

The Department of Fisheries & ARD in cooperation with AJY team supported the members with chicks, starter feed and training that helped the members in increasing the production. This, in turn, led them to increase the production and become self-reliant. The Department was capable to meet the farmer's demand for supplying of dual purpose color bird chicks and ducklings. The SHG members reared the ducklings and

chicks up to a period of 45 days in the rearing units and followed the management schedule. After the growth period, when the birds attained a body weight of around 1 to 2 Kgs, the members sold them locally @ Rs. 300/- per bird and earned Rs. 1,40,000/- within a period of about 50 days. Each member was able to earn a gross income of Rs. 20,000/- within a very short period through this collective initiative. Since then, Adarsa SHG has been recognized for production of best quality birds in the locality and created a market space in the local area. They have also created their own brand name without any extra effort. The group is now extending training and handholding support to other SHGs in the locality for such micro initiatives. They have also honored with the best Women SHG award by the Mission Sakti Department.



## SUCCESS STORIES FROM VSSs

### Social safeguard measures for forest protection - A Success Story of Badahar VSS under Angul Forest Division

*Forest Protection without community involvement is a tough task now-a-days. The Departmental effort for forest protection is not sufficient enough to meet the need of the hour in order to protect their assigned forest, the members of Badahar VSS have adopted an innovative social safeguard measure which gave commendable result.*

Badahar, a village under Sanatribida G.P in Kaniha Block comes under Angul Forest Division. The village is adjacent to Badakathia Reserve Forest on which the people largely depend for their domestic needs such as small timber, fuel wood and NTFPs. The Village is consisting of 80 households which are mostly forest dependent. A Vana Surakshya Samiti was constituted in the village through Ama Jangala Yojana and an area of 30 Ha. of forest land was assigned to them for protection and conservation. The village is close to the Badakathia RF and hence, the dependency of the villagers on nearby Forest Block was very high. In addition to this, free grazing and repeated occurrence of forest fire incidences were



common in the Forest Block, resulting in degradation of the forest resources. In this scenario, the villagers were able to realize that the depleting forest resources was unable to supply their livelihood and domestic needs. If the trend continued, there would hardly be any forest left to fulfill their needs such as fuel wood for cooking, small timber for agricultural implements and NTFP for their livelihood in coming days. A sensitization meeting was organized by the VSS through AJY field team in which all the villagers unanimously agreed to protect the Badakathia RF with all possible ways. Accordingly, a Forest Protection Committee was formed to protect the forest resources. Since then, the system of "Thenga Pali" for watching the assigned area, fire surveillance and



controlled grazing has been adopted by the villagers. The committee becomes more vigilant during summer to protect the forest from fire incidences as a result of which no fire incident has been reported during last few years. It was noticed that, in spite of all such efforts, there is still the incidence of indiscriminate felling of some timber species by some miscreants who are local to the village. In order to overcome this situation, the VSS imposed the provision of heavy cash penalty to the accused and person associated with such activity. In addition to this, the community has imposed social isolation for the families within and outside the village who are involved in harmful practices such as uninformed trespassing, felling, poaching and setting fire in any land within and near to the assigned forest area. The cases of unauthorized felling, removal of timber or other forest produce, poaching in the protected forest area are taken very seriously and the accused are immediately handed over to the Department for further

## SUCCESS STORIES FROM VSSs

action. The VSS has also formed an active 'Working Force' for supervising Forest Protection and Regeneration activities including implementation of SMC works.

At present, the instances of unauthorized cutting of trees have significantly reduced. The assigned forest area is covered with greenery throughout the year. The materials obtained from the regeneration cleaning of the Forest are gathered & are equally distributed among the VSS members. Sustainable collection of NTFP from the Forest is free to the VSS members and they are sensitized to do so sustainably. The villagers have practiced to clean the area under Mahua tree for collection of Mahua flower instead of setting fire. Other NTFPs like Amla, Harida, Bahada, Dhatuki flower, Kendu, Bhuin Neem and honey are amply collected from the forest without



causing any harm to the mother plants. As estimated, the VSS members have got direct benefit amounting to Rs. 8,00,000 approximately from collection of NTFP and fuel wood from the assigned forest area.

### Collective Fish farming - A successful Income Generation Initiative for Maa Manikeswari Women SHG in forest fringe areas of Kalahandi North Forest Division.

*During the last few years, collective fish farming in village common ponds/Panchayat water bodies through Women Self Help Groups (SHGs) have proved to be a successful rural venture. The operational management is so easy that the women SHGs are able to handle the business successfully to earn substantial amount of income for their families by marginal effort. The activity provides additional income to the member households on one hand and meet the nutritional need of the family on the other. Here is a story of successful fish farming by Maa Manikeswari SHG through AJY initiative under Kalahandi North Forest Division.*

Maa Manikeswari SHG, a woman Self Help Group under Maskaguda VSS of Narla Forest Range, Kalahandi North Forest Division comprises of 10 members. All the members belong to poorest of the poor families of the village. They had a limited alternatives for income generation owing to their small fund base and limited linkage with other agencies such as banks and micro-finance institutions. Hence, they were unable to fulfill their dreams. Their financial crisis continued for a substantial period, till the intervention of Ama Jangala Yojana.

The VSS was reconstituted in the village in the year 2020-21 and included under AJY. As mandated under AJY, the village micro planning was conducted in the village in which a comprehensive livelihood planning for the existing institutions was carried out. Looking at the dedication and enthusiasm of the women members of the said SHG, the project team was highly impressed. The



PNGO, Gramya Vikash Sangathana took the responsibility to find a suitable and viable option for the income generation of Maa Manikeswari SHG. It was observed that there was a community pond of about 1 Acre area (owned

## SUCCESS STORIES FROM VSSs



by the Gram Panchayat, Kamardha) in the village which is left unused and could be utilized for income generation purpose with a little effort. The SHG members agreed upon the proposal and the process started. The AJY team organized them to apply at the Gram Panchayat office to take the pond on lease basis. The Panchayat approved their lease ownership for a period of three years with a lump sum rent amount of Rs. 35,000/- in 3 installments. The AJY team arranged the fingerlings, starter feed and other materials from Fishery Department at Lanjigarh. The SHG member met at regular interval to discuss about their new and shared responsibility. The PNGO team, AJY Officials and the Fishery Department Officials monitored their activities closely. All their dedication and hard work gave an amazing result. For last three years, the SHG has been earning an average annual income of Rs. 60,000/- from sale of fish, after a substantial quantity of home consumption. The members express their happiness over getting an amount Rs. 6,000/- per member per year after meeting their domestic and festive needs. They have also paid the lease amount to the Gram Panchayat and the material cost to the fishery Department after the first harvest. "We cannot believe that a waste pond can be so much beneficial for our families. We express our gratitude to the AJY team for being our eye opener" – a version by Smt. Superi Beruk, the SHG leader. She expressed her gratitude to the AJY team, Gram Panchayat and Officials of Fisheries Department for their active support.



## SUCCESS STORIES FROM VSSs

### Carving a Secured Livelihood Model through traditional Bamboo Craft - A success story of Baba Khanual SHG under Kalahandi South Forest Division

*Many traditional craft products are still in use by the people, both in rural and urban areas for their cultural and daily use purpose. Traditional bamboo crafts such as baskets, winnower, brooms, bouquets and decorative items are some of them. Traditional bamboo craft products with modern finish have a huge demand in the market among the elite consumers. This was the driving force for the women members of Baba Khandual SHG. They are now self reliant and financially sound, and have set an example for others. Here is the story.*

Janipada is a hamlet under Sana Pujhariguda Revenue Village, located under Sargiguda G.P. of Jaipatna Block, Kalahandi District. The hamlet is situated at a distance of 15 Km from Jaipatna Block Headquarter. There are 44 households in the hamlet, out of which 16 belong to Schedule Tribe. Baba Khandual Self Help Group is the only women self-help group in the hamlet comprising of 16 members. Traditionally, the group members were earning their livelihoods by preparing and selling bamboo based products especially baskets and hand winnowers. Now, with modernized lifestyle of the people and rapid mechanization, the traditional bamboo craft vocation has got a great set back. However, there is still demand of traditional bamboo craft products during festive seasons. The traditional crafts with modern touch also draws the attention of the urban consumers who offer a better price as well. In practice, the women members usually sell their products directly in the local market, Jaipatna. The market smart women members of the SHG realized that, with proper training and support, they would be able to prepare better quality and finished bamboo products than previously done. The SHG took self driven initiatives for betterment of their products and requested Ama Jangala Yojana team for necessary support. Though the VSS was newly reconstituted (during 2020-21) in the village, yet the AJY team took their initiative as a major livelihood option and extended possible support. The team, in collaboration with ORMAS under Odisha Livelihood Mission organized practice based training sessions for the members. OLM had also provisioned financial support from the local SHG Federation GPLF-Mahasangha for this purpose with minimum interest.

After a couple of months, the members produced a variety of multi-purpose handicraft items. They have put utmost efforts to prepare the market friendly products with quality finish.

The SHG is now capable of crafting multiple items such as decorative items, Arm Chair and other modern

items in addition to the traditional ones. Traditional Kula (Winnowing fan), Dala (Flower Basket), Binchana (Hand Fan) and Broom are more attractive than that of other artisans. They have created their own identity in the market. These products also fetch a good market price. At present, all the 16 households are producing bamboo craft items and selling them in the local market. They are now able to earn an average group income of Rs. 20,000/- to 22,000/- per week, which is nearly 4 times of their previous earnings.

OLM, with facilitation of AJY team has agreed to train them by highly professional bamboo artists for further improvising their skills and market linkage. A proposal has also been submitted to Mission Shakti Department for skill development training and financial support to expand their activity and business.



## SUCCESS STORIES FROM VSSs

### SUCCESS STORIES ON GOAT FARMING

*Availing regular wage based employment opportunities through forest based interventions was a big challenge for the poor and needy forest fringe dwelling community members. In this context, the Livelihood Promotion initiative adopted by the VSS members in of Kumbharmunda village under Balliguda Forest Division and Khuntaposi Colony under Deogarh Forest Division for securing the income and livelihoods of the community members is exemplary. Our committed team members have put up extraordinary effort to make it possible through convergence initiatives and to ensure schematic benefit to the VSS and SHG members.*

#### Small Ruminants fetch big income for the rural women - A Success Story on goat rearing by Maa Singha Bahini SHG under Khanatapasi Colony VSS, Deogarh Forest Division

Maa Singha Bahini Women SHG was established under Project TRIPTI in the village Khanatapasi Colony during 2018 with a membership of 10 tribal women. The members contribute an amount of Rs.100/- per month which is deposited in a saving account at UCO Bank, Khamar. Initially they were involved in thrift and credit activity only to increase their group funds. They had never thought of any alternative income generating vocation though they had accrued a substantial amount of funds in their account.

After being included in Ama Jangala Yojana, the SHG was directly involved in the community development process through the project. Through this involvement, the members were able to explore various sources of income rather than just thrift and credit. In a meeting related to income generation programs under the project, the members opined for establishing a community goat rearing unit which will be managed by the SHG members collectively. The process started and they invested from their own fund base for establishing a goatary unit in the village. The unit was small, having a capacity of 10 goats.

However, the unit could not sustain due to marginal profit. The members got demoralized by the incident and their fund base got heavily affected.

Since the intervention of AJY in the village, the SHG is working under direct supervision of the project personnel. Under the livelihood promotion initiatives of AJY, the SHG have been facilitated for various income generation activities. A thorough SWOT analysis was made for the failed endeavor and it was observed that the same unit could also make substantial profit by marginal modification of the management practices. Then, with due consent of the SHG members, the VSS and AJY team coordinated with Odisha Livelihood Mission for extending necessary support to the group. The OLM officials then organized several trainings for the members and linked them to the local commercial bank, UCo Bank, Khamar for availing a loan of Rs. 1,00,000/- by which they revived the goatary unit. They have also invested their own fund for purchasing the buckling. This time they have put their wholehearted effort to sustain the unit by all means.





## SUCCESS STORIES FROM VSSs

The result was very encouraging. For last two years, the members are getting 36,000/- to 48,000/- per year. They are extremely happy for this achievement and express their gratitude to the AJY team. The community mobilization for forest protection and livelihood promotion has now become easier due to the active involvement of the SHG members in all AJY activities. The group also is in regular contact with various organizations such as PNGO, OLM, Banks, VSS and Forest Department. Now, they are getting prepared to explore other business opportunities like NTFP trading and vegetable farming.

“A small decision has changed our economy. Dedication and commitment towards any job can fetch you the best result.”- Expressed by Smt. Gouri Kandal, the President of Maa Singha Bahini SHG.



### The contribution of goats in rural economy in forest fringe areas - A story from Kumbharmunda VSS under Baliguda Forest Division

Kumbharmunda is a tribal forest fringe village located at a distance of 5km from Kirikuti Gram Panchayat Headquarters of Daringbadi Block. The village comes under Daringbadi Range of Baliguda Forest Division, where a VSS is constituted under Ama Jangala Yojana since the year 2018-19. The population of the village belongs to Scheduled Tribe and Scheduled Caste community coming mostly under BPL category. Subsistence farming, Collection of Minor Forest Products and daily wage earnings are the major means of their incomes. They are protecting the assigned forest area in a planned manner against felling, fire damage and other biotic interferences. After being included under AJY, twelve Tribal women organized themselves to form an SHG through the project initiative. Looking at the geographical scenario of the village and present demand in the market, some of the SHG members opined to opt for goat farming as one of the major livelihood options. Due to a vast open area for grazing of small ruminants, they decided to establish a goat farm for increasing their economic status. With the help of Maha Sangha (GPLF) they mobilized a short term loan of Rs. 50,000/- and started goat farming with a small number of 12 goats. In the local market, the selling price of an adult goat is not less than Rs. 10,000/- per number. They made substantial profit out of this initiative and earned an amount of Rs. 12,000/- per member within one year. In addition to this they also have goat strength of 22, whose market value would be about 2 Lakh Rupees.

The group leader, Ms Samuka Pradhan has also undergone a cattle management training organized by OLM and acquired knowledge on nutrition and vaccination aspects. Moreover, some members also acquired the skills to manage small ruminants and poultry birds. The members are taking rotational responsibilities to manage the herd. Browsing, stall feeding, shed cleaning and watch and ward are the major activities associated with goat farm which they perform with great interest. They take care of the health of the goats by regular follow up. Ms Bimala Pradhan, President of the SHG opined that “Some five years back, we were underestimating the vocation. Now, this vocation is fetching better price than conventional crop farming, that too, without a piece of land being owned by us.”

Their success inspired the landless women in the nearby areas of their locality. Most of the households of Kumbharmunda village are now rearing goats in backyard and express that, nothing is so remunerative than goat farming in valleys. Through this enterprise, the SHG is now able to fulfill their household requirements, children education, and festival expenses. A piece of private land has also been taken on lease basis in which they have planned to go for commercial vegetable cultivation.

# SUCCESS STORIES FROM VSSs

## Extraordinary VSS Effort for Inter-sectoral Convergence - A Success Story of Pipalchandi VSS under Khariar Division

*When skill is supplemented with timely Schematic support, wonders happen. Here is a story of extra ordinary effort by Pipalchandi VSS through which the households under the VSS have changed their economic scenario by increasing their household income to many folds and thereby, reducing the seasonal migration in the village.*

Pipalchandi is a small forest fringe village under Khariar Division, located towards the south east of Nuapada Forest Range Office. There are 93 households in the village with 275 population, mostly belonging to Scheduled Caste category. Prior to implementation of Ama Jangala Yojana, the major occupation of most of the households was daily wage earning. The village was recognized for skilled and unskilled human power with multiple trade skills. Hence, most of them used to migrate to nearby towns and cities for earning their livelihoods.

A VSS was reconstituted in the village under Ama Jangala Yojana during 2018-19. Since then, the villagers are actively participating in all the project activities for protection and regeneration of forest resources. The VSS

has been allotted with 50 Ha of Assigned Forest Area in the periphery of the village. Since inception, the villagers expressed their keen interest in protection of forest resources and NTFP base with active involvement of women members.

Livestock rearing was a major vocation of the households in Pipalchandi village. Hence, a comprehensive livelihood planning was carried out in the village at the early stage of project implementation, i.e. during the micro planning process. All possible means were explored to encash the skills and competencies of the existing human resources and link them with various Govt. schemes so that they could earn their livelihoods from within their village. In the above backdrop, the VSS



## SUCCESS STORIES FROM VSSs

with support from the AJY team initiated dialogues with Animal Resource Development Department & Odisha Livelihood Mission for linking the VSS members with available Schemes under Government of Odisha. Both the Departments have extended their support in the form of trainings, animal health camps, materials and infrastructure development support. The comprehensive animal vaccination drive along with awareness campaign also helped the households to overcome the animal diseases and mortality. The extent and productivity of the domestic animals have increased by many folds now. At present, about 80% of the households in the village rear domestic animals for income generation purpose. Each member is getting an average supplementary income of Rs. 24,000/- to 48,000/- per year, which is an encouraging amount for the households. As a result, the extent of seasonal migration has substantially reduced. The members are now preferring to utilize their skills in the piece of land to raise their income rather than going outside. They are now well mobilized and united their skills to mitigate poverty that was prevailing for years.

In addition to this, a farmer's meeting was held in the VSS to provide them other supports available with Line Departments. As a result, each VSS member was supported with kitchen gardening kits and horticulture plants to develop their own back yard garden. Shri Siba Prasad Rana, one of the VSS members has been provided



with a special support for 'Dragon Fruit Cultivation Trial' from the Department of Horticulture. Support for other remunerative crops, such as onion and potato have been accessed from concerned Departments which have given impressive results.

The effort of the AJY team has been reflected in increasing the household income of the VSS members and changing their age old practice in the VSS. The villagers are now focusing on their available resources and opportunities rather than migrating to other places for earning their livelihoods. A sincere effort of AJY team has brought sustainable changes to the long prevailing poverty situation of the village.

### **Mushroom Farming is a viable source of lean-period income for forest fringe families- A Success Story of Kantasaru VSS under Paralakhemundi Forest Division**

Kantasaru is a tribal forest fringe village under Mohana Block of Gajapati District, situated at a distance of 29 km from Mohana Forest Range Office. The village comprises of 32 households with a population of 135, all belonging to Scheduled Tribe category. About half of the populations are landless who earn their livelihoods from daily wage earning in other's agricultural land. The agricultural practice followed in the area is primarily rain fed mono cropping and hence, the months from November – February are considered as the lean period for agricultural labourers. The major crops grown here are short duration paddy and millets, which are sown during

early monsoon so that those could be harvested before the month of October (before cessation of monsoon). This is the period during which the villagers usually face utter difficulty in getting wage based employment and hence, they lead a miserable life.

During a VSS meeting, the villagers expressed about the pitiable situation before the AJY team. The AJY team explored suitable options to get a solution to this long standing problem and proposed that, Mushroom Cultivation could be a viable income generation option for these resource poor families. Oyster Mushroom

## SUCCESS STORIES FROM VSSs

Cultivation need less inputs, easy to practice, women friendly and very much suitable to cultivate during winter season. The products are also easily sold in the nearby areas. Hence, 10 women members from Maa Mangala Women SHG were selected on trail basis for piloting the intervention. The members were trained on Oyster mushroom production methods and management by the Department of Horticulture through the "Lean Period IGA Scheme" by the convergence initiative of AJY. The local field staff of Horticulture Department also supported the members for availing the input materials such as mushroom spawn, polythene sheets and disinfectants. The members arranged other local materials like paddy straw and bamboo poles from their own source. Thereafter, the group members started mushroom cultivation in 8 beds with timely handholding support by the Department Staff and AJY team.

The result was very alluring in the first attempt. The members got about 12 Kg of fresh mushroom from 8 beds within a period of one month. They sold the product @ Rs. 160/- per Kg and earned about Rs. 1920/-, after utilizing a part of it for home consumption. The group members got inspired and repeated the same in the next season. The result was very amazing as they were able to get Rs. 5000/- from 20 number of beds. Then they have piloted the production of paddy straw mushroom and got even



more profit than the previous trials. Since then, the SHG members have been practicing mushroom production during the lean agricultural season and earning a good amount of supplementary income for their families. Now, they feel confident enough to carry out mushroom farming independently without any external support.

The success story explains how a simple alternative livelihood option could fetch good amount of income to the rural women with a little effort from the facilitating organization. Inspired by their success, five SHGs from the nearby villages also adopted the same strategy to fulfill their nutritional and monetary requirements during the lean income period.

### EDITORIAL BOARD

**Editor-in-Chief** Dr. Meeta Biswal, IFS  
PCCF (Projects) & Project Director, OFSDS

**Editor** Mr. Bijaya Ram Senapati,  
Subject Matter Specialist (Publicity & Training), AJY

**Please send  
your comments  
and inputs to:**

**Ama Jangala Yojana Cell**  
Odisha Forestry Sector Development Society  
SFTRI Campus, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India  
Phone: 0674-2386084, 2386016  
email: webmail@ofsdp.org