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AJY MIRROR

A Quarterly Newsletter of
AMA JANGALA YOJANA

October-December, 2024

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PROJECT DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

Ama Jangala Yojana is in the terminal phase of its extension period. Many initiatives on sustainable forest management & livelihood promotion of the forest fringe dwelling communities have been taken up during this period. Community development and livelihood promotion has been given top priority under this project. In addition to this, field level monitoring and supervision has also been strengthened during the extension period.

The core objective of the scheme is to ensure restoration of the degraded forest on one hand and augment the livelihood of the forest fringe dwellers on the other. Till December 2024, a total 4,601 number of VSSs in 23 Forest Divisions have been covered for restoring 2,29,543 ha of Assigned Forest Area under ANR and creating 1005 ha of Block Plantations with active participation of the local communities.

The present quarter (October-December) was a very crucial period of the year for implementation of the scheduled forestry, livelihood promotion and community development interventions. Extra effort has been taken for mobilizing communities by creating public awareness through various means for protecting the Assigned Forest Area from forest fire incidences.

The livelihood promotion initiatives have a greater impact on the household income of the forest fringe communities. The project has no direct financial support for livelihood promotion; these activities have been carried out by leveraging funds from other line Departments and agencies through convergence process. This was made possible due to strong involvement and commitment of AJY team members.

A brief description of the activities and events accomplished till December, 2024 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”



COVER STORY

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

Ama Jangala Yojana (AJY) is a Flagship Program of Government of Odisha, being implemented through Odisha Forestry Sector Development Society with the objective to promote participatory sustainable forest management and alternate livelihoods for the forest fringe dwelling communities in the State. The initial duration of the Scheme was for six years, i.e. from 2016-17 to 2021-22 which has been extended till 2024-25. Presently, the Scheme is being implemented in 22 Territorial and Wildlife Divisions of the State, covering about 4.2 lakh households. All the activities are being carried out with active participation of local community based institutions called Vana Suraksha Samities (VSSs) in Joint Forest Management (JFM) mode. State CAMPA and State Plan (Programme Expenditure) are the major source of funding for Ama Jangala Yojana.

By December 2024, total 4601 nos. of VSS have been covered under the scheme. As a major policy under the project, participatory village micro-plans have been prepared, approved in Gram Sabha and implemented in all villages under the Scheme. In addition to this, 14,263 Women Self Help Groups are linked to various Income Generation Activities (IGAs) through inter-sectoral convergence with the Schemes of Line Departments. During the Project period (as on December, 2024), Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR)-without Gap Plantation has been carried out 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. In addition to this, forest protection activities like survey, demarcation, pillar postings and fire protection activities have been carried out in the assigned areas of all 4601 VSSs. Soil & Moisture Conservation activities such as Check Dams, Loose Boulder Check Dams (LB CD) and staggered trenches have been created in the assigned areas under the project VSSs. The fire incidents in the assigned areas under AJY were negligible due to the continuous efforts of the VSS members and the Project teams.

Capacity Building Training programs have been carried out under various project components and livelihood

promotion through the project as well as inter-sectoral convergence involving 2,75,117 members from 4601 VSS and 14,263 women SHGs of the project area.

Livelihood promotion is an important component of Ama Jangala Yojana. AJY aims to promote alternative livelihood opportunities among the forest fringe dwelling communities so that the pressure on forests for their day to day requirements is minimized, while simultaneously, the forest based resources are protected. However, there is no direct assistance from the project to promote livelihood activities in the project villages. It has been carried out through convergence with Schemes of other Line Departments. Inter-sectoral convergence has been given priority by the project team for livelihood promotion, income generation and community infrastructure development. Fifteen Partner NGOs have been engaged in the field level as support organizations for community mobilization and livelihood promotion activities under the scheme. 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.

By December 2024, Rs. 1148.78 Crores have been mobilized through the Schemes of other line Departments benefitting about 34.30 lakh persons belonging to 4601 VSS and 14,263 SHGs under Livelihood promotion and Community Development initiatives. 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 convergence initiatives. Livelihood promotion activities such as skill development of rural youths, 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 various MGNREGS based activities have been implemented through inter sectoral-convergence by which the quality of life of the forest fringe dwelling communities has improved remarkably.

ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT DURING THE PRESENT QUARTER

I) COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION:

The Vana Suraksha Samitis (VSSs) are the major grass root level institutions through which the AJY activities are being carried out. 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 under the scheme. During the present quarter, 5,656 numbers of VSS meetings have been conducted for 1424 numbers of VSS. However, the cumulative total number of VSS meetings conducted till December, 2024 are 99,779.

On the other hand, women Self Help Groups (SHGs) are also playing an active role in community development and livelihood promotion under the project. Under AJY programme, 14,263 women Self Help Groups have been linked with various Income Generation Activities through inter-sectoral convergence with various Line Departments. AJY team is instrumental in facilitating all the community development activities and Income Generation Activities in the VSS areas.



EC Meeting at Kambinaju VSS, Phulbani Division



EC Meeting at Tainsara VSS, Rourkela Division



EC Meeting at Birida VSS, Keonjhar Division



Forest fire prevention meeting at Budhikapudi VSS, Keonjhar Division



VSS EC Meeting at Kambhargadia VSS, Deogarh Division



EC Meeting at Rebena VSS, Keonjhar (WL) Division

II) FOREST RESTORATION INITIATIVES (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 4th year maintenance of 19,925 ha of ANR with gap plantation and 22,812 ha of ANR without gap plantation covering over 1424 VSSs.



Raksha Bandhan at ANR With Gap Plantation site Jatiguda VSS, Jeypore Division



ANR With Gap Plantation site, Kondelguda VSS, Malkangiri Division



ANR With Gap Plantation site, Handibhanga VSS, Keonjhar Division



ANR without gap plantation site, Nuhamalia VSS, Keonjhar(WL) Division

III) OTHER FOREST PROTECTION INITIATIVES BY THE DIVISIONS & VSS MEMBERS

Various innovative approaches and initiatives have been taken up for creating awareness among the general public, school and college students for forest protection and regeneration of forests and ecology. Some of them are highlighted below in pictorial form.



Public Awareness Rally at Keonjhar Division



Awareness camp by School Children at Nuagaon VSS, Rourkela Division



Dengue awareness campaign by the VSS members at Siriguda VSS, Nabarangpur Division



Awareness building through Raksha Bandhan at Gupteswar VSS, Jypore Division



Awareness building through Raksha Bandhan at Mardanga VSS, Deogarh Division



Awareness programme at Schools, Kendriya Vidyalaya, Dharmagarh under Kalahandi South Forest Division

IV) LIVELIHOOD PROMOTION THROUGH CONVERGENCE WITH SCHEMES OF LINE DEPARTMENTS

Livelihood promotion of the forest fringe dwelling 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 are remarkable changes in the livelihood scenario of the tribal communities over the last few years in the Project VSSs. 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 2024-25 (April-December, 2024), the project could implement various activities amounting to Rs. 186.30 crores to benefit 3,57,270 beneficiaries. The scheme has successfully brought convergence from 42 Departments by including MGNREGS, Subhadra Yojana, Mission Shakti, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY), CM Kisan, Swachha Bharat Mission, Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana, National and State Horticulture Mission, State Millet Mission, MKUY and other funds.



Vegetable cultivation support at Kasirapatna VSS under Keonjhar Division



Vegetable cultivation support at Kandaposi VSS under Keonjhar Division



Turmeric farming support to VSS members at Talaguda VSS, Koraput Division



Cabbage cultivation support to Bishnu Patarani SHG, Chemana VSS, Keonjhar Division



Latitude: 21.105745
Longitude: 84.900424
Elevation: 122.92±7 m
Accuracy: 9.5 m
Time: 11-27-2024 13:13
Note: Langkul Jangle vss

Vegetable cultivation support at Langalkhol VSS, Angul Division



Millet Cultivation at Akhupal VSS, Keonjhar(WL) Division



Latitude: 21.78093
Longitude: 85.589591
Altitude: 391.06±5 m
Accuracy: 4.0 m
Time: 05-06-2024 09:04
Note: Vegetable Cultivation by Maa Durga WSHG at Tiadiposi VSS

Vegetable cultivation by Maa Durga SHG of Tiadiposi VSS, Keonjhar Division



Time: 11-12-2024 11:42
Note: Jamunali VSS agriculture farming

Banana cultivation at Jamunali VSS, Angul Division



Time at Makarmunda VSS...Barkote FMU

Goatary support to VSS members at Makarmunda VSS, Deogarh Division



Latitude: 21.406751
Longitude: 85.731049
Elevation: 485.92±3 m
Accuracy: 4.0 m
Time: 07-05-2024 08:50
Note: Kuajharan VSS

Goatary support to SHG members at Khajurijharan VSS, Keonjhar



Vegetable seed support to farmers at Jarapada Range, Angul Division



Back yard poultry farming support to the members of Tulasi SHG at Kumurapalli VSS, Deogarh Division



Mushroom cultivation support to the members of Naigaon VSS, Keonjhar Division



Vermi-compost production and packaging at Rion and Pratappur VSS under Rourkela Division





Papaya and marigold cultivation support to the SHG members of Tangarapalli VSS under Rourkela Division

NEWS IN BRIEF

PARTICIPATION OF OFSDS IN 17TH KALINGA HERBAL FAIR

OFSDS participated in the '17th State Level Kalinga Herbal Fair' during 6-12th November, 2024 organized by the State Medicinal Plants Board, Government of Odisha. This was a unique event for showcasing and selling of traditional herbal and other 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 and herbal healing products by our VSSs and SHGs. The VSSs, EDCs and Self Help Groups (SHGs) from AJY 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 17th Kalinga Herbal Fair



Inside view of the OFSDS Stall at 17th Kalinga Herbal Fair



Honorable dignitaries visiting OFSDS Stall during 17th Kalinga Herbal Fair

SUCCESS STORIES

A number of successful stories have been created under convergence initiatives through Ama Jangala Yojana. Most of them are related to livelihood promotion 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.

STORY-1

SUCCESS STORY ON POULTRY FARMING BY WOMEN SHG IN TALRACHUGUDA VSS UNDER KALAHANDI SOUTH FOREST DIVISION

Poultry rearing has been considered as a successful rural venture through which the women 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 market have driven the Maa Shinghabahini Women 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 it can be easily managed by the women members of the family. As a result, these units are becoming popular now-a-days. It provides supplementary income and nutrition of high value to the families without much effort.

Talrachuguda, a remote village under Karlapat Sanctuary Range of Kalahandi South Forest Division consists of 45 households; most of them belong to BPL categories. There are 4 numbers of women Self Help Groups (SHGs) in the village who are implementing various livelihood promotion activities through Ama Jangala Yojana. After being included under AJY, the SHGs were directly involved in various community development and livelihood promotion activities through the Project. As a result, the members were able to earn a good amount of additional income through diversified sources of livelihoods. Among all the livelihood options, collective poultry rearing vocation adopted by Maa Shinghabahini Women SHG is the most profitable one. Appropriate choice of vocation has fetched an amazing result for the SHG members.

During the initial period of project implementation, the P-NGO, Gramya Vikas Sangathan had conducted a livelihood mapping in the village in order to improve the household income of the tribal communities. The project implementation team could identify that small poultry units could be a suitable option for the women members to boost their household income level. It is easier to manage and sell the produces at the doorstep.

The team motivated the SHG members to initiate a small poultry unit in their locality owing to the demand in the local market. After rounds of discussion with SHG members, the proposal was placed before the Block



Veterinary Officer, Bhawanipatna. After completing the application formalities and required trainings, each members of Maa Shingha Bahini SHG were supported with 45 nos.of Vanaraj chicks. The technical guidance was provided by the Department of Veterinary & ARD.

The associated supports, such as poultry shed, starter feed and handholding assistance was also given by the Department of Veterinary & ARD. This helped the members to manage their poultry units more effectively. About 450 numbers of Vanaraj chicks were reared in 2 numbers of sheds of 30ft x 12 ft. The SHG members also followed the exact management schedule of poultry rearing. The result was very inspiring. The chicks attained a body weight of around 1 to 1.5 Kg within a period of 45 days which the members sold them locally @200/- per bird. As a result, each member was able to earn a net income of Rs.10000/- individually without major hardship within a period of about 2 months. This initiative inspired other SHGs in the village and locality to go for small poultry units to boost their family income. Being inspired by this initiative, there are now about 5 numbers of new poultry units running



on the same principle by the women SHGs. It brings an additional income for their families and nutrition security for which the SHG members offered their highest obligation towards the initiatives of Ama Jangala Yojana.

STORY-2

VSS BECAME THE AMBASSADOR FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF THE VILLAGE; A SUCCESS STORY OF DABRI VSS UNDER KHARIAR DIVISION

This case study explores the successful convergence between farmers and various line Departments, which enabled the VSS members for improving their income level. Recognizing the need of diversified livelihood options, the VSS members collaborated with line Departments, extension service providers, and financial institutions to implement various livelihood models. Through training programs, input support and effective marketing strategies, the initiative empowered them to make transition from traditional livelihood practices to more lucrative vocations. This partnership not only enhanced the economic viability of the vocations in the region but also demonstrated the potential of collaborative approaches in livelihood promotion and income augmentation of the communities in the region.

Dabri, a forest fringe village located towards the south of Khariar Range under Khariar Forest Division is native to 327 households with a population of about 1250 suffering from utter poverty. Most of them belong to ST category. The livelihoods of household members are mostly from subsistence agriculture, collection of minor forest produces and wage earnings.

Dabri Vana Surakshya Samiti was taken up under AJY since 2016. The VSS was allotted 57 Ha of degraded forest land under Choulmachi PRF for protection and regeneration under AJY. As the village is located at the close proximity of the forest, collection of minor forest produce and agriculture were the main sources of livelihood of the villagers. Since inception of AJY in the village, the villagers expressed their interest in protection of forest resources and ecology through active involvement of the VSS members. Their affinity towards forest resources has transformed the degraded forest to a dense forest, full of trees and economic MFPS.

After the implementation of AJY, various income generation activities have been carried out in the

village for the SHG and VSS members. A comprehensive planning was prepared in the village with the support of the P-NGO team members. Emphasis was given on convergence with other Departments to include the households under various Schemes. The project team facilitated the livelihood promotion initiatives and extended door step services for the problem solving. As a result, the VSS members were able to implement and get substantial income from goat rearing, poultry farming, vegetable cultivation and other non-farm vocations. The Department of Panchayati Raj & DW, Veterinary & ARD, Horticulture Department and philanthropic organizations such as Azim Premji Foundation has supported the village through the continuous effort of the project team and P-NGO, Lokadrusti. Thirty landless families were supported for goat rearing and back yard poultry farming with 2 numbers of goats and 10 numbers of chicks each, 7 families were provided financial support worth of Rs 14000/- each for small shops, almost all households were supported for vegetable cultivation and mango plantation through support from Horticulture Department. In addition to the above, support for mango

orchard development was also provided to seven numbers of farmers of the VSS by the Horticulture Department, two VSS members have been provided with a support of Rs.1.8 lakhs each for small scale poultry farming through Veterinary & ARD Department, 3nos. of farmers have been provided with water pump set support for crop cultivation through Agriculture Department. These are some of the best initiatives taken up through convergence.

The impact of the initiative is clearly visible from the socio-economic empowerment of the VSS members. Almost all the households are now been able to earn an average additional income of about 12-15 thousand rupees which adds value to their dignified living. Each family is now able to meet their household needs and lead their life with dignity.



Latitude: 20.21757
Longitude: 82.71377
Elevation: 281.13±10 m
Accuracy: 14.4 m
Time: 07-12-2024 11:15
Note: Shg meeting at Dabri vss

Livelihood planning meeting in the village Dabri



Latitude: 20.217076
Longitude: 82.716163
Elevation: 262.76±13 m
Accuracy: 9.8 m
Time: 07-09-2024 11:30
Note: Dabri vss Meeting

Convergence meeting in the village in presence of Line Department representatives



Latitude: 20.216987
Longitude: 82.716051
Elevation: 331.25±49 m
Accuracy: 4.8 m
Time: 07-09-2024 11:18
Note: Special Gram Sabha

Special Gram Sabha for livelihood plan approval



Time: 05-17-2024 10:54
Note: goat of Surya Tandri w/o Ganesh Tandri at Kainpada on behalf Lokadrashti APF Khajur

Goat rearing support to landless households



Latitude: 20.217604
Longitude: 82.713238
Elevation: 286.5±16 m
Accuracy: 17.5 m
Time: 10-04-2024 16:47
Note: Poultry farm at Dabri

Small commercial Poultry unit support to VSS members



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

Water pump set support to farmers of Dabri VSS

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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