

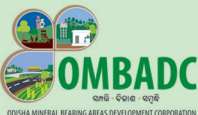


Govt. of Odisha



# Jibika Sambad

Newsletter of OFSDS-OMBADC Livelihood Promotion Project



Volume – 2 Issue - II

July-December, 2023

## PROJECT DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

With the prime objective of holistic development of the forest dependent communities and creation of local ecosystems of self-reliance, OFSDS-OMBADC Livelihood Promotion Project was launched in 5 mineral bearing Forest & Wildlife Divisions in the state with the financial assistance from OMBADC for a period of 5 years since 2021-22.

The forest fringe dwelling communities depend on forest resources both for their livelihood and sustenance. Unless the dependence of forest dependent communities on forest resources is reduced by creating alternate sources for their livelihood, sustainable forest management will remain as a distant goal. Hence, to improve the standard of living of these communities, interventions for community development like in-situ employment, empowerment of rural women and youth, nourishment of the sustainable livelihoods are the need of the hour, which have been focused in the Livelihood Promotion Project.

During this period, sincere efforts have been made by the key stakeholders for timely completion of the project mandates, skilling, up skilling, re skilling and training of local talents to enable localized entrepreneurship and region-specific innovations. Revolving Fund, a onetime grant by the project to the VSSs is being utilized by the SHGs, CIGs and PoPs for taking up IGAs. Resources for Livelihood Promotion and community development are also being leveraged through Convergence of schemes of line Departments. Community Development activities worth Rs. 3017.47 lakhs benefitting more than 56000 beneficiaries have been executed through Inter-sectoral convergence up to December, 2023.

Throughout this period, a series of initiatives focused on community development, capacity building, participatory rural appraisal (PRA) exercises, and the preparation of livelihood and business plans were undertaken. A summary of the key activities accomplished during this time has been compiled and presented in this issue for the benefit of all involved parties. Additionally, the remarkable efforts and achievements of the target groups have been highlighted as success stories of livelihood and convergence initiatives in this publication. The commitment and dedication of stakeholders at all levels are commendable, and they will continue their efforts in advancing the well-being of the target communities in the future.

**Dr. Meeta Biswal, IFS**

PCCF (Projects) & Project Director, OFSDS

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## COVER STORY

### Brief Account Of The Major Achievements Of OFSDS-OMBADC Livelihood Promotion Project:

The OFSDS-OMBADC Livelihood Promotion Project is actively underway across five mineral-rich Forest/Wildlife Divisions in the state, namely Keonjhar, Keonjhar (WL), Rourkela, Bonai, and Deogarh Divisions. Its primary objective is to foster sustainable livelihoods for forest-dependent communities in accordance with the Joint Forest Management Resolution of the Government of Odisha. This project, with a funding allocation of 43.43 crores, spans a five-year period from 2021-22 to 2025-26, aiming to support 900 Village Forest Committees (VSS) comprising Self-Help Groups (SHGs), Community Interest Groups (CIGs), People of Priority (PoPs), and vulnerable individuals.

The groundwork, including the identification and constitution/reconstitution of VSSs, product mapping, and mobilization of target communities has already been

completed. Each VSS has received a revolving fund, a one-time grant of Rs. 2.0 lakh, to provide loans to borrowing entities (SHG/CIG/PoP) facilitated by VSSs/EDCs. This fund is being utilized at the VSS level in accordance with the Operational Guidelines for Revolving Fund established by the State Project Management Unit (SPMU) under the OFSDS-OMBADC Livelihood Promotion Project.

Participatory livelihood planning has been conducted in 899 Project VSSs, and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) exercises have been completed in all 900 target VSSs. Furthermore, a sum of 3017.47 lakhs has been mobilized for community development and income generation activities, benefiting 56,118 beneficiaries. The significant activities and achievements of the Livelihood Promotion Project from its inception to December, 2023 are detailed in the following sections.

#### Progress since Inception till December, 2023

Activities	Achievement
The list of Forest / Wildlife Divisions (5) and Ranges (25) covered.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rourkela Division : Banki, Biramitrapur, Bisra, Kuaramunda, Panposh &amp; Rajgangpur Forest Ranges (6 numbers)</li> <li>Bonai Division: Barsuan, Jarda, Kuliposh, Sole, Tamra &amp; Bonai Forest Ranges (6 numbers)</li> <li>Deogarh Division: Deogarh, Reamal &amp; Barkote Forest Ranges (3 numbers)</li> <li>Keonjhar Division: BJP, Champua, Ghatgaon, Keonjhar, Patna &amp; Telkoi Forest Ranges (6 numbers)</li> <li>Keonjhar (WL) Division: Anandapur, Brahmanipal, Deogaon &amp; Hadgarh Forest Ranges (4 numbers)</li> </ol>
Division wise No. of VSS covered (900 numbers)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rourkela Division: 200</li> <li>Bonai Division: 150</li> <li>Deogarh Division: 210</li> <li>Keonjhar Division: 200</li> <li>Keonjhar (WL) Division: 140</li> </ol>
No. of SHG covered under CBT	2930
No. of VSS, where PRA exercise completed.	900
No. of livelihood Plans prepared	899
No. of VSS in which Livelihood Plans approved at Division level	600
No. of Capacity Building Training Programme conducted	1667 (Participants-32962)
Livelihood Promotion & Community Development through Convergence Initiatives	3017.47lakhs 56118 numbers of beneficiaries

## ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT DURING JULY-DECEMBER, 2023

### I. Instituion Building and Capacity Building

#### (a) Community Mobilization and Institution Building

The Vana Surakha Samiti (VSS)/Eco Development Committee (EDC) and Self-Help Group (SHG) serve as the grassroots institutions facilitating livelihood promotion activities within the OFSDS - OMBADC Project. Consequently, the project has emphasized the mobilization and strengthening of these institutions. Throughout

this period, a total of 4,910 VSS meetings/trainings were conducted in project villages to engage and mobilize the communities. Additionally, Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) exercises were carried out in 92 villages to involve rural communities in understanding their accessible resources, developing their own participatory livelihood plans, empowering them, and fostering social cohesion to improve their social, cultural, and economic well-being.



#### b) Capacity Building Initiatives

Regular VSS meetings, capacity building trainings for the community members are the prime activities conducted during the present period. Project team is instrumental in conducting regular VSS meetings, facilitating the community development activities and Income Generation activities in the project VSSs. Skilling,

up skilling, re skilling and training of local talent to enable localized entrepreneurship and region-specific innovations are the prospective of building capacity of the unprivileged forest dependent communities. 97 numbers of capacity building training programs benefitting 3102 numbers of VSS members have been conducted during this period.



## 2. Livelihood Promotion

Livelihood Promotion of the forest fringe dwelling communities through various income generation activities is the vital component of OFSDS-OMBADC Livelihood Promotion Project. It has been envisaged to facilitate livelihood and income generation activities for the forest dependent communities through convergence with the schemes of Line Departments as well as Project support.

To prepare the roadmap for such initiatives, Livelihood Plan is the most essential tool. Livelihood Planning (Participatory micro level planning) is a process, which helps in identifying available resources and basic needs of the disadvantaged community to formulate viable interventions so that with limited resources, maximum benefit can be achieved. During this period participatory livelihood planning has been completed in 190 project VSSs.



## 3. IGA promotion through Revolving Fund.

As it's name implies Revolving Fund is one that keeps turning over and is continuously replenished as withdrawals are made. Considering the limited credit

accessibility of the forest fringe dwellers, the Project has focused on provision of Revolving Fund for the community members to provide financial support at their crisis. It is a one time grant to the VSS/EDC @ Rs. 2.0 lakh (Two lakh)

per VSS/EDC aimed at providing support to the needy Borrowing Entities (namely-SHGS, CIGs and Poorest of the poor entrepreneurs) for Income Generation Activities in the target villages, which has been released to the Project Divisions. Loan Appraisal Committees (LAC) have been constituted in all the target VSSs/EDCs consisting of 5 members, namely-the Chair person or Vice Chairperson, Member Secretary, Treasurer, the animator and any other EC member nominated by the EC of the VSS/EDC. Loan applications of the Borrowing Entities are scrutinized and processed by the LAC for approval by the EC of the concerned VSS/EDC. The maximum loan admissible to a Borrowing Entity involving a group of members, namely-SHG, CIG is Rs. 50000/ (Rs. Fifty Thousand) only in one loan cycle. In case of Poorest of the Poor (Individuals), the loan size is Rs. 5000/ to Rs. 20000/ (Rs. Five Thousand to Rs. Twenty Thousand) only in one loan cycle. Business plans are prepared by the Borrowing Entities with the hand holding support of the P-NGO team and livelihood co-ordinators

of the Project. Based on the credibility of the Borrowers and their financial worthiness in term of past record of utilization of loan, repayment etc, loan in favour of the Borrower is recommended by the LAC and sanctioned by the EC.

Borrowing Entities are availing loans from the Revolving Fund provided to the VSSs/EDCs by the Project after approval of the Business Plans. During this period. 436 numbers of SHGs, 07 numbers of CIGs and 153 numbers of PoPs have availed loan from the Revolving Fund for Income Generation Activities like Goatary, Poultry, Vermi compost Units, Vegetable Cultivation, Cultivation, Mushroom Cultivation, Fish Farming, Duckery, Sal leaf Business and other activities to generate income for their livelihood. Loan amount of Rs. 2,27,98000/ (Rupees two crore twenty seven lakh ninety eight thousand) has been availed by the Borrowing Entities from the VSS Revolving Fund during this period.



#### 4. IGA Promotion and Community Development Activities through Inter-sectoral Convergence

Inter-sectoral convergence is a collaborative approach, which can span across various Government Departments/Agencies and Non Government Organizations to meet the basic requirements of the people. As it is not possible to meet all the aspirations, requirements of the target community with Project Funds to address the basic needs of the target communities, Inter-sectoral Convergence has been scheduled in the Livelihood Plan. It has been envisaged to facilitate livelihood and income generation activities for the people living in forest fringe villages. The target communities under this Livelihood Promotion Project have been linked with various socio-economic, welfare and income generation Schemes under

Line Departments. Remarkable changes in the livelihood scenario of the target communities have been achieved in the VSSs linked with Inter-sectoral Convergence. Livelihood activities, skill development of rural youth, support to individuals/groups for entrepreneurial activities, construction/repair/renovation of village roads, solar water supply, excavation/renovation of canals for irrigation, land development and creation of other community assets, distribution of mustard, vegetable, onion and potato seeds, raising of Guava, mango orchards, mushroom cultivation and goat rearing like activities have been implemented in the project villages during this period through Inter-sectoral Convergence with Panchayati Raj, RWSS, Horticulture, Agriculture, Veterinary, Soil Conservation and other line Departments. Rs. 1892.52 lakhs have been mobilised during this period benefiting 28611 beneficiaries.



## SUCCESS STORIES

*A number of successful cases have emerged under OFSDS-OMBADC Livelihood Promotion Project. Most of them are related to Livelihood Augmentation and Community Development, which bring about the achievements under the support of Revolving Fund & Inter-Sectoral convergence. Some of them have been placed here.*

### **Mushroom Cultivation: A way towards self reliance. Balang VSS, Bonai Forest Range, Bonai Forest Division.**

Balang is a small village under S. Balang Gram Panchyat of Bonai Forest Range under Bonai Forest Division. There are 322 households in the village mainly of Kishan, Ganda & Munda castes (ST-280, SC-37 & others-5). This VSS was formed in the year of 2006-07 under OFSDP and was re-constituted under OFSDS-OMBADC livelihood Promotion Project. Most of the villagers in this village depend upon paddy cultivation and collection of NTFPs. With such meager income, they fail to meet the basic necessities of their families.

In view of promoting the livelihood of the villagers, a meeting was conducted in the village with VSS members by the p-NGO team and Forest Department officials in the month of September, 2023. During this meeting, one SHG member (Rajani Rani Kishan) belonging to poorest of the poor family shown her interest towards Mushroom

cultivation as an alternate source of livelihood. The VSS members requested the project personnel to provide hand holding support to Rajani Rani for mushroom cultivation. The p-NGO team coordinated the Block Level Horticulture Department officials to provide necessary assistance available under Govt. Scheme.

As per the instruction of Assistant Horticulture Officer, Bonai a training program on mushroom cultivation was conducted for Balang VSS members by the Horticulture Department expert with the support of P-NGO staff and Forest Department officials. With the funds provided by Horticulture Department, Mushroom spawns & straw were purchased by Rajani Rani. 150 numbers of mushroom beds were prepared by her. 20 Kg of mushroom was harvested after 30 days of seeds sowing.



**Mushroom Cultivation by SHG: A success story paved with challenges: Gobira VSS, Kuarmunda Forest Range, Rourkela Forest Division.**

Gobira village under Kuarmunda Range of Rourkela forest Division is situated nearly 07 kms away from Range Head Quarters. The people of the village are mainly dependent on forest to meet their day-to-day needs. As it is a forest fringe village and the people are absolutely dependent on forest resources, the village was covered under "Ama Jangala Jojana" in the year 2015-16. The VSS has been included in the OFSDS-OMBADC Livelihood Promotion Project aiming at sustainable forest management in one hand and improvement in socio-economic status of the forest dependent community on the other hand.

In the first cycle, she has sold those mushrooms in the local market and nearby villages @ Rs. 200/- per Kg. She has also received a subsidy amount of Rs. 7000/- from Horticulture Department. The performance and success of Rajani Rani has enthused other interested villagers to embark on such entrepreneurship ventures. The villagers are now proactively participating in VSS meetings, training programs and assisting Forest Department as and when required.

At the outset, for skill development, a training programme was organized at Gobira VSS in collaboration with Horticulture Dept., where all the Women SHG



members of Gobira VSS actively participated and learnt the process of Mushroom cultivation. After the training programme, the SHG members started the mushroom cultivation with 500 nos. of beds. Mushroom spawns and polythene were purchased by the SHG members from Rourkela market. They started up with an investment of Rs. 40000/- for purchasing material and contributed labour for mushroom cultivation.

For the livelihood promotion of the forest dependent community, P-NGO staff of Kuarmunda Range mobilized and facilitated the VSS members for taking up income generation activities round the year to supplement their livelihood. Being motivated, the Women SHG members of Gobira VSS (Mahua SHG) proposed for Mushroom cultivation. Considering pros and cons for sustainability of the venture, it was decided to go ahead with mushroom cultivation by the SHG members. Horticulture Department was co-ordinated by the P-NGO staff to provide necessary support for mushroom cultivation by the WSHG members of Gobira VSS. Officials of Horticulture Department assured to render all sorts of support for mushroom cultivation by the SHG members.

The SHG member started harvesting 10 kg of mushrooms per day. They sold the mushroom in their



local market and Rourkela market @ 300/-per kg and got total amount of Rs. 90000/- per month from mushroom farming. They have earned a net profit of Rs. 50000/- with a relatively smaller investment utilizing the available local resources. Moreover, a subsidy amount of Rs. 7000/- has been received by the SHG from Horticulture Department.

Now the SHG members are quite happy as the mushroom cultivation helped them earn better dividends and plan to continue the activity round the year with a larger sphere. The success of mushroom cultivation by the WSHG members under the pivotal role of p-NGO and Punia Minz (WSHG member) brings new hope among the unemployed youths of the locality to take up such ventures to be self-reliant.

### Duck Farming– A potential source of rural livelihood.

RANGAPAT SHG was formed on 22.04.2000 comprising 12 women members belonging to the scheduled tribe category in village Medinipur, Gram Panchayat-Jamujodi of Harichandanpur Block under Keonjhar District. Smt. Sabita Mahanta is the President and Smt. Mitarani Mahanta is the Secretary of the WSHG.

OFSDS-OMBADC Livelihood Promotion Project lays special focus on gender main streaming, women empowerment and employment through revival and strengthening of women Self-Help Groups. With the objectives of creating alternate sources of income for forest dependent communities to reduce growing biotic pressure on forest resources, this Livelihood Promotion Project has been launched by Odisha Forestry Development Society with the financial assistance of OMBADC.

The members of Rangapat SHG are quite active and affirmative in taking up income generation activities such as Goat and Duck farming, Vegetable cultivation etc. But due to lack of guidance and financial support they could not proceed to transform their dream in to reality.

During mobilization of the members of Medinipur VSS, aspiration of the SHG members were projected before



the Project staff of Ghatagaon Forest Range of Keonjhar Division. Taking in to consideration the interest of the SHG members, market demand and available resources, it was finalized to go ahead with the duck farming activities. Business Plan for the purpose was prepared and Rs. 500000/- was provided to the SHG to start their dream project. The group members were imparted training on duck farming by Jan Shikshan Sansthan, Keonjhar with the support of the Project. Since they were imparted proper knowledge on proper feeding, housing and health care, the duck matured quickly that paved a way for generating income for them.

Initially, they had purchased 300 ducklings from a private agency and invested a total amount of Rs. 83,500.00 including the loan amount availed from the Revolving Fund of the VSS. The members took proper care like feeding and health care for quick growth of the ducklings. They sold all the ducks in the local market at the average rate of Rs.470.00 / piece which amounts Rs. 1,41,000.00 and earned a net profit of Rs. 57,500.00.

Duck farming significantly contributes to rural livelihood in terms of nutrition and income. Following the roaring success of their business, the SHG members now planned to increase their business in duck farming as they have gained unexpected profit within a span of only 3 months. Performance of the SHG has inspired others in the locality to adopt such type of entrepreneurship ventures to fulfill their dreams.

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