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# AJY MIRROR

A Quarterly Newsletter of  
AMA JANGALA YOJANA

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## PROJECT DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

Ama Jangala Yojana is now in the 5th year of its journey in achieving the targeted objectives. This scheme has the mandate of ensuring restoration of the degraded forest in one hand and augmenting the livelihoods of the forest fringe dwellers. Till date 4,605 numbers of VSSs in 23 Forest Divisions have been covered for restoring 2,29,568 ha of assigned forest area and 1005 ha of Block Plantation have been raised with active participation of the local communities. In addition to this, Rs. 127.41 Crores have been mobilized during the period through convergence with the line Departments benefitting 4,14,715 households and 8,51,698 numbers of beneficiaries.

The present quarter of the year (April-June, 2021) was meant for implementation of the scheduled forestry and community development interventions. During the period, the livelihoods of the forest fringe communities have been affected adversely. Despite of the trying conditions, the officials and support staff have proactively responded to the situation and have addressed the issue to some extent by implementing labour intensive programmes. All the Divisions and the functionaries of AJY have performed their best during the pandemic of Covid-19 and ensured achievement of objectives of the Yojana.

In this issue of AJY Mirror, a brief description of the activities and events accomplished during the last year has been compiled. Apart from this, a snapshot of the events and activities performed successfully during this period have also been placed in this edition. Exemplary VSS efforts have been narrated as success stories of livelihood and convergence initiatives in this issue.

I hope that all the AJY Divisions will continue their innovative works for the forest fringe dwelling communities and share their achievements so as to achieve the overall goal of AJY.

**Dr. Meeta Biswal, IFS**  
PCCF & Project Director, OFSDP

## 1. Highlights of the Major Achievements of Ama Jangala Yojana by the end of 5th year of Intervention

Ama Jangala Yojana (AJY) is being implemented in 22 Territorial and Wildlife Divisions of the State. By the end of the year 2020-21, the project has covered 4.2 lakh households under 4,605 VSSs in 16 Revenue Districts; out of which 885 VSSs have been taken up under AJY during the year 2020-21. In addition to this, about 14,263 women SHGs have been linked to various income generating activities under AJY. In spite of Covid-19 pandemic situation, INR 12,741.20 Lakhs could be mobilized through convergence with other Departments under different Schemes, benefitting about 8,51,698 persons during this year. A total of 15 numbers of Partner NGOs have been engaged to support in community mobilization and institution building under the scheme in different Forest Divisions.

Community mobilization is an essential component of Ama Jangala Yojana for effective implementation of various project activities. In addition to this, monthly VSS meetings have been conducted on regular basis facilitated by the P-NGO and Department staff. During the last year (FY-2020-21), a total number of 885 VSSs have completed micro-planning and all the micro-plans have been approved by the respective Palli Sabhas. Survey, demarcation and pillar posting works have been completed in 22 Divisions

covering 42,887 hectares of forest area in 885 new VSSs taken up during 2020-21. Soil and moisture conservation measures have been taken in 27,000 hectares of assigned forest area of 540 VSSs under 22 Divisions generating employment of 5,40,000 person days. ANR operations such as thinning, high stump cuttings, climber cutting and cleaning were undertaken within scheduled time. During the year, ANR without gap plantation was carried out in 22,887 ha of forest area as 0th year operation in 522 VSSs of 22 Divisions. About 44,00,000 number of seedlings of indigenous species have been raised in different nurseries under 18 Forest Divisions for ANR with gap plantation. In addition to this, maintenance of block plantation raised over 1005 ha during 2016-17 under 12 Forest Divisions in 87 sites have also been carried out during the year. Construction of 56 numbers of VSS buildings have been started in different VSSs. Capacity Building Training programmes, both under project components and convergence have been conducted at PMU as well as field level involving 14,847 participants of 4605 numbers of VSSs. Emphasis has been given on livelihood improvement of the tribal community through convergence. During the last year, the project was able to mobilize Rs. 127.41 crores to benefit 8,51,698 beneficiaries under inter- sectoral convergence.

## 2. Update on the activities and events under Ama Jangala Yojana during the present quarter

### 2 (A)- Updates on Activities:

During the present quarter of the year, the project personnel were faced with many challenges due to outbreak of the second wave of Covid-19 pandemic and occurrence of frequent forest fires across the state. Despite all these adversities, the committed workforce has worked tirelessly in implementing the scheme. The operations like community mobilization, fire protection, nursery raising, ANR plantations, livelihood promotion initiatives were given due priority during this quarter. One of the major objective was to provide employment opportunities to the

forest fringe dwellers, who were facing financial crisis due to unemployment during the pandemic period. Priority was given, during the regular VSS interactions, to promote livelihood initiatives among the community members in all VSSs under AJY. This also helped in easy dissemination of the message on personal hygiene and community safety measures to restrict the spread of Covid 19 in the community. The Project activities delivered during the quarter are showcased below:

**(i) Community mobilization and institution building activities**

Formation and strengthening of VSS, preparation of village micro plan using participatory rural appraisal tools and capacity building are the stepping stones for

community mobilization. Micro plans have been prepared in a participatory manner in all VSSs included under AJY. The micro-plans at VSS level cover the development plan for sustainable forest management and other livelihood needs for the communities. During this year, there was a proposal to cover 460 numbers of VSSs under AJY.



Community Mobilization Training at Reamal FMU, Deogarh Division



VSS EC Meeting at Rebena VSS, Keonjhar (WL) Division



EC Meeting of Tileimal VSS, Redhakhol Division



GB Meeting of Mandalapadara VSS, Balliguda Division



Distribution of Covid Kits, Keonjhar (WL) Division



Awareness on Covid-19, Tentulisahi VSS, Angul Division

### (ii) Survey, Demarcation & Pillar posting

Survey and demarcation are the preparatory activities under AJY Scheme following site selection, especially where new VSSs are included. Each VSS is assigned with treatment area, where Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) activities are taken up. During the year 2021-22, 460 numbers of VSSs have been identified to be taken up under AJY.

### (iii) Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) & Block Plantation

The 0th year operations for ANR with gap plantation in 20,000 ha of forest area belonging to 446 VSSs under 18 Forest Divisions have been completed. For this purpose, 44,00,000 numbers of seedlings of indigenous species have been raised including 10% casualty replacement in different nurseries. In addition to this, 1st year operation both in ANR with & without gap, 2nd and 3rd year maintenance work of ANR without gap plantations are under progress. Block plantations raised over 1005 ha are also being maintained.



Seedlings for ANR plantation at Jatiguda VSS Nursery, Jeypore Division



Seedlings for ANR plantation at Khuntabandha VSS nursery, Deogarh Division

### (iv) Control of forest from fire incidences:

Fire protection is one of the prime objectives of Sustainable Forest Management. The summer season is the crucial time to take proactive measures against forest fire. Fire protection measures were taken up during this quarter in all VSSs under close supervision and monitoring of Department staff including organization of awareness campaigns against forest fire. Due to dedicated efforts of the VSS members as well as forest and project personnel, occurrence of forest fire in the assigned forest areas could be effectively controlled



Forest fire prevention meeting at Jharbereni VSS, Angul Division



Forest Fire prevention meeting at Chhendipada Range, Angul Division



Awareness meeting on Forest Fire Protection, Patna Range, Keonjhar Division



Awareness rally on Forest Fire Protection , Ghatgaon Range, Keonjhar Division



Street play on Forest Fire prevention, Purunadiha VSS, Paralakhemundi Division



Awareness Campaign on Forest Fire prevention & control, Balaniposi VSS, Keonjhar Division



Fire control Demonstration at Katasahi VSS, Deogarh Division



Awareness meeting on Forest Fire protection measures, Kundra Range, Jeypore Division



Awareness meeting on Forest Fire prevention measures, Bijadihi VSS, Deogarh Division



Felicitation to VSS members for effective control of Forest Fire, Jeypore Division

### (v) VSS Buildings

There was provision for construction of 56 numbers of multipurpose VSS buildings in the villages under AJY during last year. Construction of all 56 numbers of VSS buildings is under progress and will be completed during this year. Altogether 456 VSS buildings have been completed till now and handed over to the communities in AJY project area.



VSS Building, Mayurnachen VSS, Bamra WL Division



Capacity Building Training at Jalananda VSS, Keonjhar WL Division



VSS Building, Palokhaman VSS, Bamra WL Division



Capacity Building Training at Amrutapada VSS, Keonjhar Division

**(vi) Capacity building initiatives**

Capacity Building Training programs have been organized for implementation of AJY activities, such as Community Mobilization, PRA tools and Micro Plan preparation and Soil Moisture Conservation Measures. Capacity Building Training programmes, both under project components and convergence have been conducted at field level involving 14,847 participants during the last year.



Capacity Building Training at Muniguda FMU, Rayagada Division



Capacity Building Training at Anlapal VSS, Balasore WL Division



Capacity Building Training at Gupteswar FMU, Jeypure

**(vii) Livelihood promotion initiatives through convergence with Line Departments**

Inter-sectoral convergence to ensure livelihood promotion for the forest dependent communities so as to reduce their dependence on forests is one of the core objectives of Ama Jangala Yojana. 14,263 numbers of women SHGs in

AJY operational area have been linked to various income generating activities through convergence. The AJY teams were able to mobilize INR 3239.85 Lakhs through convergence with other line Departments under different Schemes, benefitting about 1,69,989 persons during this quarter (April-June, 2021).



*Mushroom Cultivation Training in convergence with Horticulture Department at Tileimal VSS, Redhakhol Division*



*Mushroom Cultivation Training in convergence with Horticulture Department at Biswanathpur Range, Kalahandi South Division*



*Pond Renovation work in convergence with PR Department through MGNREGS, Sandiapasi VSS, Keonjhar Division*



*Mo Pokhari through convergence with PR Department, Siriguda VSS, Nabarangpur Division*



*Selection process for Skill Training through SBI-RSETI, M. Gomundali VSS, Nabarangpur Division*



*Mushroom Cultivation Training in convergence with Horticulture Department at Sanahundala VSS, Keonjhar Division*



Tailoring training at Gayalamunda VSS, Keonjhar WL Division



Collective cultivation of water melon by SHG members at Makadchua VSS, Deogarh Division



Pointed gourd cultivation by SHG members at Tentelkhunti VSS, Bolangir Division



Ridge gourd cultivation by Ghantasuni SHG members at Tentelkhunti VSS, Bolangir Division

**2 (B). Update on the events**

**(i) Observation of World Environment Day:**

World Environment Day was celebrated on the 5th of June 2021 in all forest divisions under AJY as an annual event to

highlight the importance of healthy and green environment required for existence of living organisms. Awareness was raised among the community to protect, improve and conserve the depleting forest resources to address the environmental challenges.



Celebration of World Environment Day, 2021 at Borigumma, Jeypore Division



*Celebration of World Environment Day, 2021 at Angul Division*



*ANR With gap plantation during World Environment day- Banbir VSS, Keonjhar Division*

### **(ii) State level Review Meeting of AJY Activities through Video Conferencing:**

A video conference was held on 7th May, 2021 in virtual mode under the Chairpersonship of PCCF (Projects) and Project Director, OFSDP to review the physical and financial progress of works in AJY Divisions. The Additional Project Director (A&F), Dy. Project Director (A&F), SMS (IME), RCCFs of Angul, Sambalpur, Rourkela, Berhampur, Koraput, Baripada and Bhawanipatna Circles and the Divisional Forest Officers of 22 AJY Divisions of the State have participated in the online conference.

Emphasis was given on submission of micro-plans, progress of ANR with & without gap plantation, maintenance of Block Plantation, construction of VSS Buildings, convergence activities, submission of monthly statement of accounts and conduct of regular VSS meetings.

### **3. Special Initiatives taken by AJY for Covid-19 response**

Forest fringe dwellers are mostly unaware of the consequences of the infectious diseases. Hence maintaining hygiene, social distancing and continuation of income generating activity were the challenges during the peak infection period of Covid-19 pandemic. However, the committed and dedicated workforce were able to manage implementation of all the scheduled activities with utmost care and protection. Not only the forestry activities were achieved but also the villagers were mobilized to keep themselves safe during the Covid-19 pandemic situation.



*Covid 19 awareness meeting at Deogarh Range of Deogarh Division*



*Awareness raising and distribution of Covid kits at Mukulapani VSS under Kuliposh Range, Bonai Division*

## SUCCESS STORIES FROM VSSs

Inspite of much upheavals during the quarter, there are numbers of success stories on various forestry activities and community development initiatives under AJY. There are also a number of extra ordinary efforts and achievements by the VSSs during this period. Some of them are highly appreciable and exemplary and can be regarded as milestones of in selfless service towards the holistic development of the community. A few have been placed here for inspiring others.

### Mushroom farming by the SHG members; A Success Story of Bharuamunda VSS under Khariar Forest Division

*Mushroom farming has proved to be a viable option to prevent malnutrition, supplement family income and create employment opportunity for women in rural Odisha. Training programmes have been conducted in village Bharuamunda under Khariar Division in convergence with Agriculture Technology Management Agency (ATMA) with a goal to enable women SHGs within the VSS area to become successful entrepreneurs based on the acquired knowledge and skills. Out of many SHGs trained, thirty women members from three SHGs have turned into successful women entrepreneurs by earning more than Rs.1000/- per day.*

Bharuamunda is a tribal village under Sinapali Range of Khariar Forest Division with 211 households. The population of the village is about 950 numbers. Most of them belong to Scheduled Tribe category. Agriculture is the major means of income for almost all the households, followed by daily wage earning. The village was covered under Ama Jangala Yojana during the year 2016-17 and a Vana Suraksha Samiti was constituted. There are 12 functional SHGs in the village.

The level of participation of the VSS members and SHGs in AJY activities is remarkable. The VSS has been assigned 50 Ha. of forest area under Chereipani PRF, which they protect with much care and enthusiasm. But year after year, the villagers were struggling to meet both the ends with low income from subsistence agriculture and MFP collection. With the initiative of AJY team and the VSS, they could be mobilized for training on mushroom cultivation in the village through ATMA, Nuapada. About 30 numbers of women from three women self-help groups of the village were trained on mushroom cultivation by the Officials of ATMA. After the training, some of the SHG members started mushroom farming on a trial basis, which gave encouraging results. With timely handholding of the PNGO staff, confidence of the SHG members was build up and all of them started mushroom farming as a subsidiary vocation. The VSS also extended all sorts of support to the SHGs for setting up of the establishment.



Training and demonstration on Mushroom Cultivation at Bharuamunda village



Preparation of Mushroom beds by SHG members

Now, mushroom cultivation is a successful group enterprise for the SHG members of all three SHGs. During the peak period of Covid-19 pandemic, each SHG was able to earn about Rs 1,200 to Rs 1,500 a day by selling 7-8 Kgs of mushrooms in the local weekly market, apart from self consumption. In this way, the SHG members were able to become capable in meeting their household level nutritional and financial need.

## Small Interventions for sustainable change- A Success story of Kodipasa VSS under Keonjhar Division

Kodipasa is a village under Keonjhar Range of Keonjhar Forest Division, located at a distance of about 15 kms from Keonjhar town with 70 households and 270 populations. The village is located near the proposed Reserve Forest area of Baras. All the families in the village belong to BPL category. The VSS was reconstituted in the village during the year 2019-20 and an area of 50 ha has been assigned to them for protection and development.

Prior to the formation of Vana Surakshya Samiti, the villagers did not pay much attention to forest protection. After formation of the VSS, special focus was given for protection of forest and livelihood promotion in line with their socio-cultural way of living. After bringing the village under the fold of AJY, Forest Department has launched various innovative programs on forest protection and management. There was acute scarcity of water for agricultural activities in the village. Water scarcity was due to heavy runoff through the assigned forest area followed by soil erosion. During the transect walk (a component under PRA), the facilitator could identify that there is a seasonal water channel which can be used as a suitable resource of the village to address the aridity crisis. Accordingly, a plan was placed in the micro-plan and approved in the Palli Sabha. Forest Department gave special emphasis to the initiative as the project could solve multiple purposes such as irrigation for agricultural field during Kharif and water stress of the forest vegetation. The VSS and the Department worked together to protect the forest floor and conserve water within the forest area assigned to the VSS. With the help of the support from the Department, a large amount of water flowing through the stream could be harvested and diverted for agricultural purpose. Later, a Cement Concrete Check Dam was constructed at the same site by Keonjhar Forest Division. As a result, soil erosion could be checked and villagers benefited by doing their agricultural operations in time. Cultivable waste lands of the villages are now under agriculture. More specifically the water harvesting structure is immensely helpful for forest vegetation & raising plantations. The success of this small intervention could be clearly visible from the agricultural land and the surrounding forest areas, which was not possible a year before.



*Orientation Training to VSS members on micro-plan preparation at Kodipasa village*



*Plantation activity by VSS members under AJY*



*Construction of RCC Check Dam across the stream in the village Kodipasa*

**Diversified income options could be more remunerative than conventional singular vocation-  
A Success Story of Maa Parbati SHG under Mankadachua VSS, DMU-Deogarh**

*Deogarh District has a unique identity in Odisha markets for high quality water melon production. Maa Parbati SHG could tap this opportunity and earn a sizeable amount of income from water melon and allied businesses. This is a successful convergence initiative under Ama jangala Yojana*

Maa Parbati SHG, formed under TRIPTI Project (Odisha Livelihood Mission) is now working under the guidance of Ama Jangala Yojana team. The SHG belongs to Mankadachua Vana Surakshya Samiti (VSS) under Deogarh Forest Division. It was formed in the year 2013 by 10 women members of the village. Each member contributes Rs.50/- per month towards personal savings and opened a saving account at S.B.I, Pallahara. Till March 2020, the members had taken attempts for paddy cultivation, rice processing and many other activities, but failed to make profit. When the VSS was included under AJY, the project team is facilitating the income generation activities for the SHG members. The project team could find a solution to the distress of the SHG members caused due to loss in each and every attempt.

During April 2020, the PNGO arranged a training for the SHG members with support from VSS and Odisha Livelihood Mission (OLM). Odisha Livelihood Mission has organized a short training for the SHG members on income generation through agriculture and allied activities. After completion of the training, the Project team also coordinated with other agencies for input support and handholding. In this connection, the SHG was able to mobilize Rs.1,50,000/- as loan from S.B.I, Pallahara. Following this, SBI organized a 10-days comprehensive training for the SHG members on Vegetable Cultivation as a component under the loan assistance. By utilizing this credit, the members started vegetable cultivation, especially watermelon cultivation in large scale. The SHG members were able to earn a net profit

of Rs. 3000/- to Rs. 4000/- per member per month for about a quarter period. This amount supplemented their income and helped them to maintain their family, after sustaining a series of loss. The traders came to the field point to collect the product and paid instantly. The most benefitting part was that, a credible link was established between various stakeholders through this intervention. This intervention made the SHG members confident to adopt multiple business opportunities such as NTFP processing, Mushroom cultivation and goatary through which they were able to get sizable profit. Maa Parbati SHG is now an eye opener for the SHGs in the nearby villages.



*Meeting of SHG members on Income Generating Activities (IGAs)*



*Harvesting of watermelon by the members of Maa Parbati SHG*

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

**Editor** Mr. Bijaya Ram Senapati,  
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**Please send  
your comments  
and inputs to:**

**Ama Jangal Yojana Cell**  
Odisha Forestry Sector Development Society  
SFTRI Campus, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India  
Phone: 0674-2386084, 2386016  
email: [webmail@ofsdp.org](mailto:webmail@ofsdp.org)