



AJY MIRROR

A Quarterly Newsletter of
AMA JANGALA YOJANA

April-June, 2022

Volume – 6 ■ Issue - I

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PROJECT DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

Ama Jangala Yojana has successfully completed its 6th year of intervention, which simultaneously reaching out to about 4.2 lakh households under 23 Forest and Wildlife Divisions of the State. During this period, the Scheme targeted to restore & conserve about 2.30 lakh hectares of degraded forest land through Forest Restoration Initiatives like Assisted Natural Regeneration and Block Plantations. Moreover, holistic development of the forest fringe communities was made possible through participatory micro-planning & implementation in 4601 Vana Suraksha Samities. In addition to this, Ama Jangala Yojana has promoted convergence with the programmes on community development interventions of various Line Departments to bring a visible change in the life & livelihoods of the forest fringe communities through 14,263 numbers of Women Self Help Groups.

After successful completion of the implementation phase, the scheme has entered into the maintenance phase of the existing infrastructure. The Government of Odisha has agreed upon the proposal for providing financial support during the maintenance phase of 3 years. During this phase, emphasis will be given for maintenance of the resource base created during the previous phase and livelihood improvement of the forest fringe communities. Protection, conservation, public awareness and livelihood augmentations of forest dwellers are some of the priority areas which will be expedited during this period.

In this issue of our quarterly newsletter 'AJY Mirror', some snapshots of the successful interventions during the present quarter have been placed. Exemplary efforts by VSSs & SHGs coming up as success stories of livelihood and convergence initiatives are also collated in this edition to highlight the progress. Moreover, a brief account of the activities and events accomplished under Ama Jangala Yojana in the last year has been placed in the beginning of the issue for acknowledgement of the efforts of all stakeholders in the program.

I sincerely hope that all the AJY Divisions will continue their innovative interventions on the community development and share their achievements so as to achieve the overall goal of the Scheme.

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"



Highlights of Major Achievements of Ama Jangala Yojana during the 6th year of Intervention

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 sustainable forest management and alternate livelihoods for the forest fringe communities in the state in participatory mode. The duration of the Scheme is six years i.e. from 2016-17 to 2021-22 with an extension period from 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 and presently being implemented in 22 Territorial and Wildlife Divisions of the State. All the activities are being carried out with active participation of local community-based institutions called Vana Surakshya Samities (VSSs) in Joint Forest Management (JFM) mode. In addition to this, 14,263 Women Self Help Groups are also linked with various income generation programs in convergence with Line Departments and other agencies.

Major Activities during the implementation phase of AJY:

All the activities carried out through Ama Jangala Yojana are broadly classified into 4 categories namely- community mobilization & institution building, restoration of degraded Forests, livelihood promotion activities and capacity building.

A total of 4,601 nos. of VSSs have been covered under the scheme during this period. As a major project intervention, participatory village micro-plans have been prepared in all 4601 villages under the project for preparing a road map for holistic community development and resource management. In addition to this, 14,263 women Self Help Groups are also linked with various Income Generation Activities (IGAs) under inter-sectoral convergence with Line Departments. Fifteen number of Partner NGOs comprising of 88 teams and 6 Development Officers (Dos) have been engaged at the field level as support mechanism for community mobilization and livelihood promotion activities under the scheme. Additionally, 1964 numbers of animators have been engaged at VSS level for support to the community from within.

By the end of FY: 2021-22, Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR)- without gap plantation has been carried out in 2,09,568 ha of forest area and ANR-with gap plantation has been carried out in 20,000 ha of forest area under the

project. In addition to these, Block Plantations have also been raised over 1005 ha of forest land in 87 sites belonging to 12 Forest Divisions. Forest protection measures such as survey, demarcation, pillar postings and fire protection activities have been carried out in the assigned areas of all 4601 VSSs. Soil & Moisture Conservation measures such as Check Dams, Loose Boulder Check Dams (LBCD) and staggered trenches have been created in the assigned areas under the project VSSs along with other forest restoration works. Most importantly, the fire incidences in the Assigned Areas of VSS under AJY could be controlled by the proactive response of the VSS members and support from the project team.

Livelihood promotion of the forest fringe dwelling communities has been given the utmost priority under the Scheme. Convergences have been made with suitable agencies for livelihood promotion and income augmentation of the community members in the Project area. During the last six years, the AJY team was able to mobilize Rs. 542.44 Crore through convergence with other Line Departments for livelihoods and rural infrastructure development, benefitting about 21,26,744 persons of the project area (till March, 2022). Additionally, AJY team has accomplished many activities pertaining to community development for the benefit of the local communities. Besides, 512 numbers of multipurpose VSS buildings- cum- IGA facilitation centre have been constructed and handed over to the communities in AJY project area for diversified use purpose.

During 2021-22, Capacity Building Training programs have been carried out under various project components, such as Survey and Demarcation, Community Mobilization, PRA tools and Micro Plan preparation, GIS based monitoring and Soil Moisture Conservation Measures involving all 4601 VSSs. In addition to this, skill-based Capacity Building Training programmes and support for income generation & livelihood enhancement have been conducted through convergence involving 14,263 women SHGs of the project area. During the last six years, a total of 2,39,922 members have been covered under 7997 numbers of capacity building programs under AJY scheme.

Update on the activities & events under Ama Jangala Yojana in the present quarter

This quarter (April-June) is the most eventful period of the year for strategic planning for the upcoming year, protection of forest from forest fire incidences, carrying out of many routine activities for maintenance of ANR plantations and to take new initiatives under inter sectoral convergence. However, the committed team effort has made the program a successful one to reach to about 4601 Vana Surakshya Samities in 22 Forest Divisions across the State. Protection & conservation of the forest resources, capacity building and livelihood enhancement of forest dwellers are some of the core areas addressed during this period.

The brief description of the activities accomplished during this quarter is given below:

A. Community Mobilization and Institution Building Activities:

Community mobilization activities during this quarter included VSS monthly meetings, awareness campaigns, convergence meetings and VSS level EC & GB meetings. There was no target for formation/ re-constitution of new VSS during the upcoming year, hence only the activities pertaining to strengthening of VSS were carried out. During

the reporting period, 6195 numbers of VSS meetings have been conducted in AJY project area. In addition to this, 14,263 numbers of women SHGs in the project area have been facilitated to carry out income generation activities during this period.



Grama Sabha at Tangiriapal GP under Keonjhar Wildlife Division



EC Meeting at Jharbelda VSS, Keonjhar Division



GB meeting at Gamhardihi VSS, Redhakhol Division



GB meeting at Rukhatola VSS, Redhakhol Division



VSS monthly meeting at Jhariapada VSS, Balliguda Division



Forest Fire Awareness meeting at Sankhajurali VSS, Rourkela Division



G.B. meeting at Sinduria VSS, Keonjhar Division



GB Meeting at Samanali VSS, Keonjhar Division

B. Maintenance of ANR Sites:

During the present quarter, periodical maintenance of ANR (with & without gap plantation) was carried out in 22 Forest Divisions. This included 2nd year maintenance work of 20,000 ha of ANR with gap plantation covering 446 VSSs sites under 18 Forest Divisions was carried out. In addition to this, 2nd year maintenance work was also carried out in 22,887 ha of ANR without gap plantation in 522 VSSs under

22 Forest Divisions. Similarly, 3rd year maintenance in 27,000 Ha and 4th year maintenance in 25,950 Ha of ANR-without gap plantation was carried out in 22 Forest Divisions. As a low-cost restoration method, ANR interventions have proved to be effective methods to restore degraded vegetation. This involves thinning, high stump cuttings, climber cutting and cleaning initiatives for which summer months are best suited.



ANR with gap plantation at Gopinathpur VSS of Telkoi Range, Keonjhar Division



Maintenance work of ANR with Gap Plantation at Sundra VSS of BJP Range, Keonjhar Division



ANR with gap plantation at Banbir VSS of Patna Range, Keonjhar Division



Maintenance work of ANR with gap plantation at Kaunrikala Patrasahi VSS of Champua Range, Keonjhar Division



AR_Plantation site at Khajuribani VSS, Keonjhar Wildlife Division



ANR with Gap Plantation at Pikaradi VSS of Phiringia Range under Phulbani Division



Maintenance of ANR With Gap Plantation at Ramsahi VSS, Balliguda Division



SSO work at Bagpada VSS, Khariar Division



Silvicultural Operation at Kharuatoli VSS under Rourkela Division



Silvicultural Operation at Gutitangara VSS under Rourkela Division

C. Prevention and Control of forest fire:

The summer season is the crucial time to take protective measures against forest fire incidences. Awareness creation, fire line tracing, cleaning and trenching are being carried out during this quarter in all VSSs. Timely creation of fire lines,

engaging fire protection watchers, fire awareness measures are various activities that have been taken up during the reporting period under vigilant observation by the Forest Divisions under AJY. As a result, the VSSs have shown exemplary results in forest fire prevention and control in spite of soaring summer temperature.



Fire Line creation work at Panasuan ANR plantation site in BJP FMU of Keonjhar Division



Meeting on Forest Fire Prevention at Gopinathapur VSS, Keonjhar Division



Forest fire prevention awareness and oath talking at Ulibasa VSS, Keonjhar Wildlife Division



Forest Fire Prevention Awareness Rally at Bankapatuli VSS, Keonjhar Division

D. Capacity Building Initiatives

As a major component of AJY, Capacity Building Training (CBT) programs on various thematic areas have been organized at the field level for livelihood promotion in

collaboration with Line Departments. The CBTs conducted during the period are - capacity building of VSS members on livelihood promotion, VSS management and enhancement of employable skills. The following picture depicts some of the major initiatives.



Capacity Building Training Program at Kumbhitangiri VSS, Keonjhar Wildlife Division



Capacity Building Training Program at Gayalamunda VSS, Keonjhar Wildlife Division



Mushroom Cultivation Training at Sinapali Range under Khariar Forest Division



Capacity Building Training at Champanagar VSS, Keonjhar Wildlife Division



Training and installation of vermi-compost tank at Sologoda VSS, Keonjhar Division



Exposure visit by Keonjhar DMU to S.K. Bio-flock unit at Kakabarei Village, of Balasore district

E. Livelihood promotion through convergence with Line Departments

Convergence with Line Departments and other agencies for diversifying the livelihood options of the forest fringe communities is one of the important mandates of Ama Jungle Yojana. During the reporting period, many activities

have been undertaken in convergence with the schemes and programs of various Departments. Some of the activities carried out through schematic convergences in various Divisions are given in a snapshot.



Kitchen Garden developed by vegetable minikit support at Mishrapali VSS area of Rourkela Division, an AJY convergence initiative



Maize cultivation at Medinipur VSS, Keonjhar Division through AJY convergence initiative



Vegetable cultivation by poly mulching at Baba Bholeswar SHG under Purujoda VSS of Keonjhar Division



Vegetable cultivation by poly mulching by Omm Shree SHG at Ghuntuposi VSS of Keonjhar Division



Potato Cultivation at Bahminhoda VSS of Bisra FMU, Rourkela Division



Banana cultivation at Thopaberna VSS, Rajgangpur FMU, Rourkela Division



Grafted mango seedling distribution at Sorda VSS, Bisra FMU, RKL



Vegetable Seed distribution at Kasipada VSS, Rajgangpur FMU, Rourkela Division



Cattle Vaccination drive by Khariar Division



Cattle Vaccination camp at Chinimahul VSS, Rourkela Division



Vegetable seed minikit distribution at Raourkela Division through convergence with Horticulture Dept.



Culvert Construction at Tentuli VSS of Angul Division through convergence with RD Dept.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Observation of World Environment Day:

World Environment Day was celebrated on the 5th of June 2022 in all The Divisions under AJY as an annual event to highlight the importance of healthy and green environment in human life. On this occasion, awareness building

activities, competitions and meetings were conducted in the DMUs. All the activities were carried out maintaining COVID-19 appropriate protocol by the member participants. Glimpses of the program have been given in the following photographic presentation.



World Environment Day celebration at Khariar Division



Street play on Environmental Awareness during Celebration of World Environment Day at Malidih VSS, Rourkela Division



Awareness Rally during Celebration of World Environment Day at Tikira VSS, Keonjhar Wildlife Division

SUCCESS STORIES FROM VSSs

There are many success stories pertaining to forest protection, resource management & community development initiatives under AJY. There are also a number of extra-ordinary VSS efforts and achievements for community mobilization and livelihood promotion during this period. Some of them are highly appreciable and regarded as milestones the project initiatives towards the holistic development of the community. A few inspirational success stories have been placed here.

Story-1

MINGLING MILLET MISSION WITH AJY INITIATIVES; MINIATURE CROP PROVIDED MEGA PLATFORM FOR ECONOMIC WELLBEING OF THE VILLAGERS IN KANDHAMAL DISTRICT- A SUCCESS STORY FROM PHULBANI FOREST DIVISION.

The primary objective of this convergence initiative was to reduce the dependency on forest resources through arrangement of alternative livelihoods for the forest dependent communities. This was made possible through improving the socio economic conditions of the VSS members in collaboration with State Millet Mission. The VSS members were motivated to be involved and benefitted from various economic development programs implemented by the Government.

Gandharabhuin & Kailamba are adjoining villages under Karada Range of Phulbani Forest Division. Ama Jangala Yojana (AJY) has been implemented in both the villages since 2019-20 after reconstituting the VSSs. The P-NGO PAHAD has been engaged for community mobilization work in the project Division.

There are 37 household in Gandharbhuin VSS with a total membership of 183. Similarly, 22 household and 110 populations constitute Kaliamba VSS. The major occupation of the inhabitants of both the villages is agriculture. The villagers mainly depend upon rainfed farming, confining to paddy, millets and vegetable cultivation during Kharif season only. They also depend upon forest products for their livelihood during the lean seasons. However, they earn a major part of their income from Ragi (millet) cultivation.

During community mobilization process, it was observed by the P-NGO team members and Department staff that the price of Ragi during the harvest season is too low, which gradually increases with time. This was mainly due to the nexus of local traders and commission agents. In order to get a solution for this issue, the P-NGO team and Forest Staffs continued to contact the officials of Odisha Millet Mission who were keen enough to support the traditional millet producers. The millet mission assured to take up both the villages under Millet Mission program. Meetings were convened in both the villages in presence of AJY Officials, P-NGO team, Field staff of Agriculture Department & Millet Mission. The Millet Mission assured the villagers for providing crop improvement & marketing support for Ragi crop. The process initiated with a series of meetings, consultations and trainings pertaining to production and management



Ragi Yield Inspection by Millet Mission & AJY staff



Ragi Yield Inspection by Millet Mission & AJY staff



The Millet Mandi established at Gandharabhuin Village

of millets in both the villages. Some of the selected farmers were also sponsored for District level training programs organized by the Millet Mission.

The Forest Department Staff and the P-NGO team worked hard to motivate the community to involve them in the convergence programs. Some youths of the villages were interested to take part in the training programs organized District Agriculture Office where they were trained about soil testing, soil health management, determining the nutrient content of the soil and other characteristics such as the soil acidity and pH level etc. A separate training was organized for the millet growers on soil fertility management and its relation to sustainable millet production at the District headquarter, Phulbani.

The impact of the trainings and mobilization was clearly visible from the crop production. Improved cultivation practices and better soil management practices

were adopted by the farmers. As a result, Ragi production in both the villages was increased. About 150 quintals of Ragi was harvested in a single season out of which 60 quintals were sold, earning an amount of Rs. 1,80,000/- to meet the immediate need of the members. Looking at the commitment of the farmers, monitoring by the AJY team and the bumper production, the Millet Mission supported the VSS for opening a Millet Mandi in the village to overcome distress sale of the produce. The Mandi is now fully functional and is being managed by the VSS members. This initiative mobilized great benefits for the farmers in both the villages by selling Ragi and other agricultural products in a collective manner, and there by fetching fair price.

The villagers in both the villages convey their gratitude to the AJY team and P-NGO staff for this achievement. It inspires other farmers of nearby villages to be organized, cultivate and sell their products collectively and get fair price.

DIVERSIFIED INCOME OPPORTUNITIES HAVE STRENGTHENED THE VILLAGE ECONOMY AMID CLIMATE CHANGE DISASTERS- A SUCCESS STORY OF JAMUDALAK VSS UNDER KEONJHAR FOREST DIVISION.

Story-2

The climate change and global warming has a huge impact on crop production system, especially in drought prone Keonjhar District. The negative impact of Climate Change are already being felt, in the form of increasing temperatures, weather variations, shifting agro ecosystem boundaries, invasive crops and pests, and frequent extreme weather events in Odisha. Unless the income sources are diversified, a single source is likely to be affected by this global phenomenon. Here is a story about how the continuous effort can lead to sustainable income by the VSS members.

The story belongs to Jaumudalak, a large village under Champua Range of Keonjhar Forest Division. The village is located at a distance of 15 km from the Forest Range Office, Champua. The population of village is 1291 with 255 households; most of them belong to ST & SC category. The VSS committee has been reconstituted in the village during the year 2018-19 after being included under AJY Scheme. Almost all the households in the village belong

to BPL category. The villagers mostly depend upon rain-fed agriculture and daily wages for their livelihoods. Only about 20% households were into other subsistence vocations. The village is situated in a drought prone terrain where there is no scope for irrigation facility for cultivation in cropping seasons, other than the Kharif crops. Hence, the villagers depend on rain and mostly practice monocropping during Kharif season. There are 4 numbers of women SHGs in the village. Their activity was confined to thrift & credit only.



The contribution of VSS members towards protection and regeneration of forest resources is very recommendable. During the livelihood planning session under micro-planning process, it was observed that there is a repeated incidence of crop loss due to uncertain weather conditions. Every alternative year brings disaster for agriculture. Hence, sole dependency on agriculture cannot be a viable livelihood option. So, in order to improve their livelihoods, the project team interacted with the VSS members during a series of consultations. During these interactions, VSS members always put emphasis on creation of irrigation facility to support their cultivation so that they can do double cropping. Though road communication facility was demanded for better connectivity, but irrigation was the top priority. But it was not easy to fulfill their needs within a short period which involve huge investment. During a VSS meeting, the project team (AJY coordinator & P-NGO team) suggested some measures for immediate economic benefit through diversified income opportunities to mitigate the effect. This includes climate resilient practices such as cultivation of low water requiring vegetables, poultry farming, mushroom cultivation, small business and NTFP trading. A SWOT analysis of the diversified vocations was discussed several times in the VSS meetings and a common consensus evolved. Following this, discussions regarding all aspects such as fund requirement, marketing, capacity building, follow up were carried out. After a series of confidence building follow ups, the VSS & SHG members decided to take up vegetable cultivation, mushroom,

duckery and back yard poultry farming on a pilot basis in close coordination with the project team.

The P-NGO team organized skill based training programs for the interested farmers in which members of all 4 women SHGs were involved. After the training, all 4 SHGs were interested to start livelihood activity as per their expertise.

All the group members contributed their share as per the modalities finalized in the meeting, prior to project support. The mushroom cultivation group invested Rs. 80/- per bed and were able to earn about Rs. 2000/- to 2500/- per day by selling 10 Kg mushroom per day from 50 numbers of beds within a short period of 30 days. The trend continued for a cycle of 15 days and repeated again. The poultry groups, by investing Rs.50/- per chick for 500 birds were able to earn 2 Lakh Rupees by selling 3.5 quintals of country birds within 90 days period. The beneficiaries were overwhelmed by such outcome during the pilot phase.

At present, the SHGs in the nearby villages and other VSSs are keen to adopt similar strategy to enhance their income. The P-NGO team also organized exposure visits for other SHGs in the locality to share the success story on a wider platform. Now, the process has been initiated to involve Mangalapur and Mirigisinga VSSs under AJY in such initiatives. The success story has started its chain reaction, and hopefully the same will be translated to other VSS in future through AJY intervention.

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