



AJY MIRROR

A Quarterly Newsletter of
AMA JANGALA YOJANA

January-March, 2025

Volume – 8 ■ Issue - IV

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PROJECT DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

Ama Jangala Yojana, an innovative Scheme of Government of Odisha for community managed forest restoration and livelihood promotion initiative is now in the terminal phase. During the entire period of Ama Jangala Yojana, many initiatives on sustainable forest management and livelihood promotion of the forest fringe dwelling communities have been taken up.

The core objective of the Scheme is to ensure restoration of the degraded forests on one hand and augmentation of the livelihoods of the forest fringe dwellers on the other. Till March, 2025 a total of 4,601 numbers of VSSs in 23 Forest Divisions have been covered for restoring 2,29,518 Ha of Assigned Forest Areas under ANR and creating 1005 Ha of Block Plantations with active participation of the local communities. In addition to this, Rs. 1230.27 Crores have been mobilized during the Project period through convergence of Schemes of the Line Departments benefitting 4.2 lakh households and about 36.04 lakh beneficiaries.

The present quarter (January-March, 2025) was a very eventful period of the year for implementation of the scheduled forestry and community development interventions on one hand and to protect the assigned forest areas from the widespread fire incidences on the other. Extra effort has been taken for protecting the Assigned Forest Areas from fire incidences during the long prevailing dry spells and excessive heat wave situation in the State. Especially the community involvement for prevention and control of forest fire was the most challenging task during the present quarter. But it has been successfully tackled with active participation of the communities.

AJY has been doing exemplary works on forest centric community development and livelihood promotion of the forest fringe dwelling communities. The activities and events accomplished during the project period has been compiled in brief and placed in this issue of AJY Mirror for reference of all stakeholders. In addition to this, exemplary efforts of VSSs 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

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS OF AMA JANGALA YOJANA DURING THE PROJECT PERIOD

Ama Jangala Yojana has been implemented in the State with an objective to promote sustainable forest management and alternate livelihoods for the forest fringe dwelling communities in 23 Forest & Wildlife Divisions. All the activities are being carried out with active participation of local community based institutions called Vana Suraksha Samitis (VSSs) in Joint Forest Management (JFM) mode.

After completion of the initial tenure of the Project (2016-17 to 2021-22), the Scheme was extended up to the year 2024-25. By the end of the current financial year, total 4,601 numbers of VSSs have been covered under the

Scheme and 2,30,523 Ha of Assigned Forest Areas including ANR-Without Gap plantation, ANR-With Gap Plantation and Block Plantations have been restored. In addition to this, Rs. 1230.27 Crores have been mobilized during the Project period through convergence with Line Departments benefitting 4.2 lakh households and 36.04 lakh beneficiaries.

During the year 2024-25, the maintenance activities in 42,737 Ha of Assigned Area covering 1424 VSSs have been carried out, in which ANR with gap was over 19,925 Ha & ANR without gap plantations over 22,812 Ha.

ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT DURING THE PRESENT QUARTER

I) COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION:

Vana Suraksha Samitis (VSSs) and women Self Help Groups (SHGs) are the major grassroot institutions under AJY through which various project interventions are being implemented. Therefore, strengthening of these institutions has been focused under AJY program, especially during the extension phase. Conducting regular VSS meetings, capacity building trainings for the community members, livelihood promotion through inter-sectoral convergence with Schemes of Line Departments and engaging the VSS and

SHGs in prevention and control of forest fire incidences are the prime activities carried out during the present quarter.

About 14,263 women Self Help Groups have also been linked with various Income Generation Activities under inter-sectoral convergence with various Line Departments. AJY team is instrumental in conducting regular VSS meetings and facilitating all the community development activities and Income Generation Activities in the VSS areas.



VSS EC meeting at Badabahal VSS, Bamra (WL) Division



Monthly VSS meeting at Kalhapada VSS, Bamra (WL) Division



Monthly VSS meeting at Mardanga VSS, Deogarh Division



VSS meeting for prevention of forest fire at Adas VSS, Deogarh Division



VSS level meeting on forest fire prevention at Gadigaon VSS, Jeypore Division



Forest fire prevention rally at Dangachinchi VSS, Jeypore Division



VSS GB meeting at Jakam VSS, Kalahandi South Division



Special Gram Sabha at Semelpadara VSS, Kalahandi South Division



Forest fire prevention oath taking at Mayadharpur VSS, Keonjhar Division



Forest fire prevention meeting at Kandarkala VSS, Keonjhar Division



VSS GB meeting at Jabaguda VSS, Nabarangpur Division



VSS EC reformation at Hatibena VSS, Nabarangpur Division



VSS EC meeting at Hariharpur VSS, Rourkela Division



VSS EC meeting at Betura VSS, Rourkela Division

II) MAINTENANCE OF ASSISTED NATURAL REGENERATION

Assisted Natural Regeneration (with & without gap plantation) are considered as the most effective regeneration 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 19,925 Ha of ANR with gap plantation covering 443 VSSs under 18 Forest Divisions and 22,812 Ha of ANR without gap plantation covering 1424 VSSs under 22 Forest Divisions.



4th year Maintenance work at Kandiguda VSS, Keonjhar Division



ANR with Gap Plantation at Handibhanga VSS of Keonjhar Division



ANR without Gap Plantation site- Munipal VSS of Deogarh Division



ANR without Gap Plantation- Bankhol VSS of Deogarh Division



ANR without Gap Plantation site- Bhalukhol VSS of Bamra WL Division



ANR without Gap Plantation- Buchiaguda VSS of Nabarangpur Division

III) PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF FOREST FIRE

Community participation in forest protection and management is one of the prime objectives of AJY. Hence, protection of forests from fire incidences is as important as forest regeneration activities. Forest fire incidences not only affect the forest resources and ecology, also a number of houses belonging to forest fringe communities reportedly get damaged due to fire menace as they live in close proximity of the forests. Forest fire incidences are more common in the tropical dry deciduous forests of Odisha during the leaf shading months, i.e. from January-May each year where AJY is under implementation. In addition to this, the long dry spell and excessive heat wave during the present quarter has resulted in a conducive atmosphere for fire incidences.

The role of AJY stakeholders in forest fire management is very crucial. The forest fire management under AJY involves timely creation & maintenance of fire lines, awareness generation among local people, involvement of local public and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) in early detection, message dissemination and control of forest fires in the assigned areas, and engagement of fire watchers in the forest areas assigned to each VSS. These activities are performed with the active involvement of VSS members and

Forest Department staff. The awareness generation through meetings at community, School and college level, organizing awareness rallies and street plays, inter-Departmental coordination meetings for forest fire prevention, involvement of women SHGs and swift action by the fire response team by the project has a great impact on forest fire prevention and control in the Assigned Forest Areas under AJY. During this year, the fire incidences could be handled by commendable contributions of the proactive VSS members and responsive project team for which no major fire menace has been noticed in the project areas under AJY. Hence, a lot of resources have been saved by timely management of forest fire.

Timely creation of fire lines, engaging fire protection watchers and conduct of fire awareness measures are the activities that have been taken up during the project period under vigilant observation by the Forest Department and Project personnel under AJY. As a result, the VSSs have been efficiently activated and the forest fire incidences have been controlled to a large extent in spite of soaring summer temperatures and long prevailing dry spells during the present quarter.



Forest Protection and Fire prevention meeting at Tentulipada VSS, Kalahandi South Division



Forest Protection and Fire prevention meeting at Buchiaguda VSS, Nabarangpur Division



Latitude: 21°40'55" N
Longitude: 85°40'6" E
Elevation: 475.81±3 m
Accuracy: 3.8 m
GPSTime: 27-01-2025 5:10 pm

Forest fire prevention awareness vehicle engaged in all Ranges under Keonjhar Division



altitude: 21.533439
ongitude: 85.777363
levation: 361.8±49 m
accuracy: 10.8 m

Forest fire prevention oath taking by the VSS members under Manoharpur VSS of Keonjhar Division



Latitude: 21°52'47" N
Longitude: 84°56'14" E
Elevation: 159.43±12 m
Accuracy: 7.5 m
Time: 19-03-2025 12:49
Note: Range level fire awareness program at Lamunipada, Kalyan mandal

Block level coordinated Forest Fire prevention meeting at Kuarmunda Block, Rourkela Division



Forest fire awareness rally by the VSS members under Rourkela Forest Division



Latitude: 18.831438
Longitude: 82.615814
Elevation: 823.28±28 m
Accuracy: 32.1 m

Fireline creation at Ghatgumar VSS, Jeypure Division



Latitude: 21.465008
Longitude: 85.948068
Elevation: 332.04±74 m
Accuracy: 4.8 m

Fire Line creation work at Atei ANR Site, Keonjhar Forest Division



Fire Line creation work at Kasada VSS, Bamra WL Division



VSS members fire control mock drill at Gupteswar Range, Jeypore Forest Division

IV) LIVELIHOOD PROMOTION THROUGH CONVERGENCE WITH SCHEMES OF LINE DEPARTMENTS

Forest centric community development and livelihood promotion of the forest fringe dwelling communities through various income generation activities is an important component of Ama Jangala Yojana. During the extended period of AJY, emphasis was given to expedite the livelihood promotion initiatives through Inter-sectoral Convergence with the Schemes of line Departments. As there is no direct project support to carry out livelihood promotion and income generation activities, it has been envisaged to carry out these activities through convergence with the ongoing Schemes of Line Departments. The communities covered under AJY have been linked with various socio-economic, welfare and income generation Schemes for this purpose. AJY has been instrumental in livelihood promotion and income augmentation of the project beneficiaries and there is a remarkable change in the livelihood scenario of the tribal communities over the last few years. 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. During the year 2024-25, the project could implement various activities amounting to Rs. 267.80 crores to benefit 5,31,306 beneficiaries. During the present year, the Scheme has successfully brought convergence from 33 Line Departments including MGNREGS, Mission Shakti, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY), Subhadra Yojana, Swachha Bharat Mission, Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana, National and State Horticulture Mission, State Millet Mission, CSR and other funds.



Goatary support to VSS members at Birsapada VSS, Rourkela Division



Agarbati Making by SHG members at Misrapalli VSS, Rourkela Division



Goat shed support through Convergence with Veterinary & ARD Dept. to Maa Indira SHG, Nabarangpur Division



Latitude: 19.766119
Longitude: 82.155792
Elevation: 622.58±8 m
Accuracy: 6.5 m
Time: 11-11-2024 17:12

Layer Bird rearing by Siraguda VSS members, under Nabarangpur Division



289134
1.434102
5.35±8 m
1 m
2024 14:42

Pisciculture by Jay Bajarangwali SHG, Ganjabahal VSS under Redhakhhol Division



Mushroom Farming at Mishrapali VSS, Rourkela Forest Division



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



Mushroom cultivation support to the members of Murtumma VSS, Nabarangpur Division



Latitude: 21.677928
Longitude: 85.425208
Elevation: 566.31±28 m
Accuracy: 289.0 m
Time: 03-10-2024 09:20

Arrowroot cultivation at Raigada VSS, Keonjhar Division



Millet Harvesting and processing by the VSS members of Musakata VSS, Redhakhhol Division



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



Watermelon cultivation at Tando VSS, Keonjhar Division

NEWS IN BRIEF

I) OBSERVATION OF WORLD FORESTRY DAY, 2025

The International Day of Forests, known as World Forestry Day has been celebrated on 21st March, 2025 in all Divisions under Ama Jangala Yojana across the State. On this occasion, Protection, Conservation and Regeneration of Forest Resources and development of resilience against climate change effects on nature were the major subjects of dissemination among the stakeholders of the forestry sector. Protection of forests from fire incidences in an innovative way was the major focus during this year owing to the wide-spread forest fire incidences across the State.



World Forestry Day celebration at Bamra WL Division



World Forestry Day celebration at Nabarangpur Forest Division



II) PARTICIPATION OF OFSDS IN ADIVASI MELA, 2025

The State Level Annual Tribal Fair, popularly known as “Adivasi Mela” is being organized by the ST & SC Development, Minority and Backward Classes Welfare Department, Government of Odisha and is a unique event for socio-cultural integration among tribal and urban people in Odisha. This is one of the oldest and colorful festivals of Odisha which showcases the art, culture, tradition, crafts and economic exchange among rural, especially tribal and urban people.

OFSDS participated in the Adivasi Mela-2025 organized from 5th -16th January 2025. 27 VSSs, EDCs and

Self Help Groups (SHGs) from OFSDS project area showcased their achievements and used this platform to promote their products. The unique product based display of the materials attracted many researchers and marketing agencies which may be helpful for our stakeholders for marketing in future.

Eleven numbers of VSSs/SHGs had participated in the event from AJY project Divisions with a total sales amounting to Rs. 34,01,379/- which is an all time record in sales so far. Total 27 VSSs/EDCs/SHGs participated in the event on behalf of OFSDS and sold their products worth of Rs. 81,92,512/-.



Overview of products display in OFSDS Stall and sale in progress

SUCCESS STORY

A number of successful stories have been created under convergence initiatives through Ama Jangala Yojana. Most of them are related to livelihood improvement and community development which showcase our achievements through convergence. There are also a number of extra ordinary achievements by the VSSs 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.

MINI CROP BROUGHT ABOUT A LARGE IMPACT ON THE ECONOMIC WELLBEING OF THE TRIBAL FARMERS; A STORY FROM THE VILLAGE BEYOND LAST MILES

Farmers in Kandhamal District have adopted the System of Millet Intensification (SMI) which has brought a revolution in millet production, especially in Ragi crop. Traditionally, Ragi was grown in barren and less fertile land, resulting in a low yield. However, with the newly introduced SMI, farmers are now able to get higher yield of about 5-6 quintals per acre. This method focuses on indigenous species and optimum spacing between plants, leading to increased microorganism population, aeration and tiller production. Local community resource persons, community-based organizations, progressive farmers, Krishak Sathis, and subject matter specialists of Krishi Vigyan Kendra have played a crucial role in promoting improved agronomic practices among these marginal tribal farmers. Their collective efforts have contributed to enhanced productivity and crop yield among farmers associated with millet farming. Here is a story of a successful intervention that brought a drastic transformation in the life and livelihoods of the residents. The livelihood initiatives of AJY have become an eye opener for the people living in the surrounding areas towards prosperity and self sufficiency.

Srambuli, a village under Tumudibandh Range of Baliguda Forest Division is truly beyond the last miles and detached from the mainstream societies. There are 22 households, living under utter poverty and scarcity of all the basic needs. Being surrounded by high hills, the geographic inaccessibility of the village mostly affects the socio-economic development of the residents. There was no electricity, no mobile network, no Pucca house and no all weather roads to the village prior to the intervention of Ama Jangala Yojana. With the help of the local administration, a Vana Suraksha Samiti was constituted during the year 2020-21 and afterwards the situation of the village came to limelight.

After being taken up under AJY, many activities pertaining to forest protection and livelihood promotion of the local communities have been carried out in the village. Alternative livelihood opportunities have been provided to the villagers through various measures in convergence with other line Departments and NGOs. The most successful convergence was made with the State Millet Mission through Special Programme for Promotion of Millets in Tribal Areas. The millet promotion activities were carried out through the members of Maa Patakhanda SHG consisting of 10 of women members who were provided supports for cultivation of 10 acres of finger millet (Ragi) during Kharif season of 2023-24. Adoption of improved farming practices such as System of Millet Intensification (SMI) and application of organic



inputs in their fields has resulted in bumper crop harvest and higher yield. All the on-field supports were provided by the local Agriculture Officer and the P-NGO team members. By successful intervention of AJY team, the Government has procured all the produces from the SHG members in minimum support price of Rs. 3500/- per quintal which is much higher than the locally prevailing price. All the SHG members got benefitted both collectively and individually due to this intervention. Apart from domestic consumption, the SHG members have earned Rs. 70,000/- through sale of 20 quintals of raw Ragi to the Government. This huge benefit within a 3-month crop cycle has made a transformation in the life and livelihoods of the inhabitants of the village, encouraging others to adopt such geo-suitable livelihood options.

Apart from the financial benefits, the collective farming by the SHG members also incorporated unity and integrity among the SHG members. The diversified livelihood opportunity also helped them reducing their sole dependency on forest produces which helps for conservation of forest as well as wildlife within the forest cover.



Cultivation of Ragi through SMI method



SHG meeting in the village



Collection of Ragi for processing



Harvesting of Ragi Crop



Sharing of profit among the group members in the VSS building-cum-IGA Facilitation Centre.

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