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AJY MIRROR

A Quarterly Newsletter of
AMA JANGALA YOJANA

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EDITORIAL



Over the decades, we have experienced loss of forest cover with the rapid increase of industrialization and population. This has led to degradation of forests. Reversal of deforestation and degradation requires a change in policies and practices. A “landscape” based approach incorporating activities such as restoring degraded forest land, boosting agricultural productivity, creating alternative livelihood opportunities and involving local communities more directly in the design of forest management have become the need of the hour. Combining these factors, Aam Jangala Yojana has been in the forefront to ensure successful implementation of community based forest management in Odisha, so as to restore the degraded forests.

The project has entered its fourth year of implementation and we have much learning from the field in shape of success stories. About 540 new VSSs have been targeted to be formed during this year to mobilize communities for protection of natural resources in JFM mode. There are also initiatives for convergences with other departments to mobilise communities in management of joint resources and sustainable livelihoods. Many regular project activities were also accomplished successfully during this quarter. In this issue of quarterly newsletter ‘AJY Mirror’ an attempt has been made to bring some success stories of grass root interventions of livelihood programme in different Forest Divisions. There are number of success stories and replicable models reported by various DMUs during this period. Successful VSS management reports and case studies are collated in this edition to highlight the major progress of AJY across the forest divisions.

I wish all the concerned Divisions will continue their innovative works for the community and share their achievements so as to secure the overall goal of AJY.

I convey my deepest condolence for the sad demise of Sj Lalit Kumar Tewari, IFS, the Ex- Project Director of OFSDS during the mid of this quarter.

Dr. Sudarsan Panda, IFS

Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
and Project Director, OFSDS

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UPDATE OF AJY IN ITS 4TH YEAR OF INTERVENTION:

Ama Jangala Yojana (AJY) has been implemented through Odisha Forestry Sector Development Society (OFSDS) since the year 2016-17. The program is intended to promote sustainable forest management in the state in participatory mode through Vana Suraksha Samiti (VSSs) with emphasis on livelihood support for the communities living in the forest fringe villages. Under the scheme, it is envisaged to strengthen the community based initiatives of protection of the forest and create alternate livelihood opportunities for the local community to reduce pressure on forest. The program is presently implemented in 23 Forest and Wildlife Divisions of Odisha. As of 31st December, 2019 a total number of 3720 VSSs in 129 FMUs have been brought under the fold of AJY. In addition to this, 8619 women self help groups are also linked with various income generation programmes under convergence with various departments of the State Government. All the activities are being carried out with active participation of local communities.

Apart from these, Inter-sectoral Convergence strategy to ensure optimal results with support from related Government programs has been adopted in this program. Substantial public investments are being made for strengthening of rural economy and livelihood base of the poor, especially the marginalized groups like SC/STs and women. Many activities have been undertaken in convergence with various schemes and programs of line departments covering a cumulative number of 5,27,000 beneficiaries worth Rs. 157 Crores as on 31st December, 2019.

The prominent departments with which the convergence are made during this quarter are Agriculture and Farmers Empowerment, Animal Husbandry, Panchayatiraj, Rural Development, Health and Family welfare, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Women and Child Development, NABARD and Department of MSME.

1. HIGHLIGHT OF THE MAJOR ACTIVITIES ACCOMPLISHED DURING THE QUARTER

1.1 Micro Plan Preparation

Micro Plan is a community based empowering process for preparation of road map for development and management of forest and to address the livelihood opportunities of the forest dependent communities. Micro Plan has been perceived to be a guiding document for the communities and the facilitators in implementing the planned intervention for forest management & livelihood enhancement. AJY has mandated to cover all 7,000 VSSs with independent microplan within 6 years of project intervention. As on 31st December, 2019 preparation of micro plans in 2830 VSSs have been completed. Micro planning processes in 540 VSSs, which have been covered during the current financial year, are under progress.



Social mapping for preparation of Microplan in Pabala VSS under Angul DMU and Daudabhata VSS under Malkangiri DMU



Microplan preparation under progress in Saratpara VSS under Nawrangpur DMU and Angul DMU

1.2 Forestry Activities

Regular forestry activities such as survey, demarcation, pillar postings, ANR without gap and SMC Works have been carried out in all AJY DMUs. Survey and demarcation are the preparatory activities under AJY Scheme following site selection, especially where new VSSs have been taken up. Each VSS is assigned a treatment area of about 50 hectares of forest land, where Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) without gap is taken up. Additionally, tracing of fire line, preparation of staggered trenches and LBCD (Loose Boulder Check Dam) works have been done in the assigned areas.

Within this quarter, SMC activities have been done in the assigned areas of 20 DMUs for 540 new VSSs. Survey and

demarcation of the assigned area have been complete in 3114 VSSs with total demarcated area of 169748.76 ha. Similarly, ANR without gap in 1,60,731 ha area and pillar posting in 3114 VSSs has been completed by December, 2019. Some of them are presented here in a snapshot.



Staggered Trench under SMC works in Mathili FMU under Malkangiri DMU *Survey demarcation of Katada Dangadharsahi VSS under Angul DMU*



Survey, Demarcation and Pillar posting in Talcher FMU under Angul Forest Division



LBCD in Bondiki VSS under Malkangiri DMU *Fire line tracing in Mudulipada VSS under Malkangiri DMU*

1.3 Livelihood Activities

To provide and improve the livelihood opportunities of the forest dependent communities so as to reduce their dependence on forests-is one of the core objectives of Ama Jangala Yojana.

The AJY team has accomplished many activities pertaining to forest protection and livelihood improvement of the local communities. Some major initiatives taken during the last quarter are presented in brief through photographs.



Livelihood support to the Bamboo Craftsmen of Brahmapur, Nandapur and Pokatunga VSSs under Angul DMU (1)



Livelihood Improvement Training and Demonstration on Mushroom Cultivation at Badpur VSS under Nawrangpur DMU



Livelihoods improvement through clay craft at Tondaguda VSS, Nawrangpur DMU



Sewing Machine support to the members of Kalam VSS under Kalahandi (N) DMU



Inauguration of Hydraulic Leaf plate pressing machine by Dr. Sudarsan Panda, IFS, PCCF-cum-Project Director (OFSDS) at Lundruguda Cluster under Baliguda DMU

1.4 Entry Point Activities

Due to the sincere effort of the AJY teams, several entry point activities have been accomplished from MGNREGS and



Construction of Drying Yard in Charamula and Rabnaguda VSS under Nawrangpur DMU

other departmental support. Construction of drying yard and renovation of water bodies under MGNREGS as Entry Point Activities (EPAs) were completed during the quarter.



1.5 VSS Office- cum-Meeting Place:

There is a provision for construction of VSS Office-cum-Meeting Place in the villages under the AJY Scheme. The VSSs construct a low cost multipurpose building with meeting facility over a built-up area of around 400 sq. ft., consisting

of an office room of around 150 sq. ft. with RCC (Reinforced Cement Concrete) roof, and a meeting space without walls of about 250 sq. ft. with RCC roof.

During the period under report, 19 VSS buildings have been completed in 8 DMUs.



1.6 Awareness Campaign

i. Vigilance Awareness Week

Vigilance awareness week has been observed across AJY DMUs and PMU of OFSDS during the month of October-November, 2019 as per the mandate of Central Vigilance Commission (CVC), GoI. This is usually observed every year during the week in which the birthday of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel (31st October) falls. This awareness week campaign

affirms our commitment to promotion of integrity and probity in public life through citizen participation.

“Integrity- A way of life” has been chosen as the theme for the Vigilance Awareness Week this year by the Commission. This was observed through an awareness meeting followed by a pledge of integrity by the staff serving under OFSDS on 28.10.2019.



Pledge of Integrity and probity during Vigilance Awareness Meeting at PMU on 28.10.2019

ii) Sensitization workshop on Ban of single use plastic:

Following the ban of single use plastic by the Government of Odisha, one-day sensitization cum consultation workshop was organized at the conference hall of PMU on 02.12.2019. Mr. B. K. Nayak from Odisha Pollution Control Board and Dr.

Sabhapati Khadanga, Consultant from OUAT explained the plastic ban circular. They also highlighted the hazardous effects of plastic and polythene with respect to human and animal health as well as the natural ecosystem. Both the resource persons laid emphasis on reduced use, recycling, decomposing and reusing of new generation materials.



iii) Awareness Campaign on prevention of forest fire and use of smokeless Chullah:



Awareness Campaign on Forest Fire Prevention by Angul DMU and Smokeless Chullah awareness campaign at Sanaolma VSS of Nawarangpur DMU

1.7 Other Activities (SHG Rating and Assessment of Refilling Potential and Impact of Supply of LPG Connection under OFSDS)

There are about 8619 SHGs within the operational villages of 23 DMUs under Ama Jangala Yojana. Most of them are involved in NTFP and product based livelihood and income generation activities. After formation of the Livelihood Resource Centre at PMU level, there is scope for boosting the production, value addition and marketing of such products by formation and strengthening of production clusters.

In this context, a performance based rating exercise for the self help groups present within the AJY operational villages has been conducted by the field team of AJY. Score in the form of grade points are given to the SHGs on various aspects such as membership, regularity in savings and meeting, loan disbursal, utilization and recovery, external support use, livelihood and social activities etc. Accordingly a livelihood improvement and financial inclusion plan would be evolved for different categories of the SHGs under the LRC of OFSDS.

In a nutshell, out of the total number of 8619 SHGs brought under rating and gradation, it was found that 2731 numbers are high performing SHGs with Grade-A, 3459 are medium with Grade-B and 2181 numbers (grade-C and D) need improvement over their existing practices. Similarly, the report for the study on Assessment of Refilling Potential and Impact of Supply of LPG Connection under OFSDS, conducted PMC came out during this quarter.



SHG rating Exercise at Akul Pradhansahi under Telkoi FMU of Keonjhar and Ambapal village under Angul DMU

1.8 Trainings and Meetings:

Capacity Building Training programs have been carried out under AJY for implementation of AJY, Survey and Demarcation, Community Mobilization, PRA tools and Micro Plan preparation, GIS Mobile Application and Soil Moisture Conservation Measures. Capacity Building Training programme have been conducted at PMU and DMU levels involving 98520 participants, covering 3720 VSS and members of 4336 SHGs.

Apart from this, a two-day residential training to the DEOs (Accts.) on Basic Accounting Procedure and Maintenance of Primary Books of Accounts under the project Ama Jangala Yojana was organized at OFSDS Conference Hall, Bhubaneswar during 16-17th October, 2019. Twenty four participants, especially DEO (Accts.) and AJY coordinators across 23 AJY DMUs participated in the training.



SHG Meeting of Bankapatuli VSS of Ghatgaon FMU under Keonjhar DMU



Capacity building training at Jereng Dehurisahi VSS under Angul DMU



DMU Level Review Meeting held at DMU Conference Hall of Keonjhar DMU



G.B Meeting for VSS Formation at Kodiposa, Keonjhar FMU



Participation of VSSs in Palli Sabha- Angul and Chhatabeda VSS of Nawrangpur DMU



Training to the DEOs (Accts.) on Basic Accounting Procedure organized on 16-17th October, 2019



1.9 Publications:

A guideline on formation and strengthening of Self Help Groups (SHGs) & Grounding of Income Generation Activities under Ama Jangala Yojana was prepared, published and circulated to DMUs during this quarter. The overall objective

of the guideline is to promote/strengthen SHGs to engage in the sphere of socio-economic development to enhance the economic and social wellbeing of members, status of women and contribute to the overall village development.

2 CONVERGENCE ACTIVITIES UNDER AMA JANGALA YOJANA

Inter-sector convergence is one of the important mandates of Ama Jungle Yojana. During the reporting period, many

activities have been undertaken in convergence with various departmental schemes and programs, some of them are highlighted below:

2.1 Convergence for LPG connection:

One of the very relevant convergence activities which have been persuaded in many VSSs under AJY is provisioning of LPG to the project community. This convergence initiative is being implemented through the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY), popularly known as "Ujjawala", of Ministry of

Petroleum and Natural Gas, Government of India. OFSDS is playing a pivotal role, as a facilitator, in implementation of this scheme. One of the mandates of the project is to assist in energy conservation so as to reduce the dependency of local communities on forest for their energy needs.



Ujjwala Gas Distribution to Kerokuda VSS Kalahandi (N) DMU and Bargarh DMU



Ujjwala LPG Distribution at Dahimalia VSS, Keonjhar WL DMU and Kholbilung VSS, Bamra (WL) DMU

2.2 Convergence for IGAs and Livelihood Improvement Activities:

Many livelihood improvement and income enhancement activities have been undertaken during the reporting quarter. Most of them are agriculture based. Some major initiatives taken in this quarter are presented in brief.

2.3 Community Development Activities through Convergence



Convergence for Solar Light Equipments under Bargarh DMU



Course Completion Certificate and Support material distribution to Poultry Farmers under Dumadei VSS, Nawrangpur DMU

Support Material distribution to SHG members after completion of Sewing Training under Kalam VSS, Kalahandi-N DMU

2.4 Capacity Building Initiatives under Convergence:

As a major component of AJY, capacity building programs in various thematic areas have been organized for the FMU staff and VSS members in the project area. This includes capacity building of VSS members on livelihood promotion, VSS management and enhancement of employable skills. The following picture depicts some of the major initiatives.

SHGs into successful trading; the Case of Kurtumgarh Anchalika Mahila Siali Mandal, Lundruguda under Baliguda DMU

The Lundruguda Village is situated 2 K.M. from Kurtumgarh chhak and 25 K.M. from Balliguda Town. The Lundruguda Siali Cluster, consisting of 14 numbers of VSSs and 27 Women SHGs, was established during 2013-14 under Tumudibandha FMU of Balliguda DMU. Value addition and trading of Siali leaf plates is the core business of this cluster. Total 295 SHG members are involved and benefitted from this venture. The members attend cluster activities regularly on rotational basis. The cluster was named as Kurtumgarh Anchalika Mahila Siali Mandal, Lundruguda cluster.

The cluster activities covered the VSS namely Lundruguda, Padikia, Budulipadar, Jakikia, Banimila, Bandemila, Dungerikia, Pushangia, Siliki, Malangi, Litedikia, Mundapada, Gadaringniga, Mediapanga. The main activity of the cluster is to promote uniform and better quality Sal and Siali leaf collection, stitching of leaf plates and cups and sell them in bulk to the traders. The SHG members collect Sal leaf from nearby forests, stitch by pinning in their own houses and prepare fine stitch plates. Four numbers of electrically operated Sal and Siali leaf pressing machines, 5 numbers of leaf stitching machine and one electronic weighing machine has been provisioned in the cluster. In addition to this, several training programmes have been conducted to improve the skill of SHG members in quality control, stitching of leaf plates and use of pressing machine. Recently new version Hydraulic Pressing Machine has been provided under Eco-System Initiative of OFSDS at Lundruguda Cluster.

Dr. Sudarsan Panda, IFS, PCCF cum PD, OFSDS inaugurated the commencement of new Pressing Machine in Lundruguda Cluster on Dated 28.12.2019. He lauded the effort of 14 VSS and 27 SHG is transforming the cluster as a role model for others and expected that in future this will augment their financial and social growth. "Preparing export quality leaf plates and selling those in overseas market in the brand name of Forest Green is the ultimate aim of this cluster"- opined Mr. Subhrojit, the member of the mentor organization-Indus Tree Foundation.



Koilipari VSS Of Malkangiri has done exemplary work on Forest Conservation and Livelihood Improvement



Background

Koilipari is a tribal village under Malkangiri DMU with 75 families and 503 populations. Majority of the villagers are Paraja and Koya Tribes. The common occupation of the villagers are agriculture, cattle rearing, NTFP and fire wood collection. In the other hand, almost all people in the village are wage earners from various works implemented in and around the village area.

Koilipari VSS was formed in the year of 1998 as per JFM resolution and was included in Ama Jangala Yojana in the year 2016 with the state VSS code AJY-Y15-P03-MKG04-2068. The VSS was re-constituted as per the JFM resolution-2011 and 2015 and registered in Malkangiri with the VSS Code No AJY-Y15-P03-MKG04-2068. Koilipari VSS was selected as the best VSS under Malkangiri Forest Division in the year 2018.

Participatory forest management in JFM mode is an evolving concept encompassing ecological socio-cultural and economic dimensions. People have played an important role in protection and regeneration of forests all over the state of Odisha. Since inception, the VSS is working sincerely for the conservation and regeneration of the forest resources assigned to them. The inclusion of the VSS in AJY brought more benefits to the members' families in terms of income generation and in improving their socio economic status. Many milestones have been achieved by the sincere effort of the VSS.

As a result of the VSS intervention, about 32 families are getting benefit from goat rearing with a tune to Rs 32,000/- to 40,000/- per annum. No fire incidence has been detected

in the VSS area for last 3 years of program execution. Kendu leaves collection has increased to an extent of 12500 Kerries per year and hence the village is being provided with a permanent Phadi house. Stitching of Siali leave plates and leaf bowls are also being carried out under the guidance of VSS. The diversified livelihood opportunities helped reducing the dependency of the villagers solely on forest which helps for conservation of forest as well as wildlife within the forest cover.



Goat Rearing and various other Income Generation activities promoted through Koilipari VSS

Major Achievements of the VSS



Fire Control:

Since the formation of the VSS, the villagers are sincerely working for the conservation of the forest resources assigned to them for protection and conservation. Inclusion of the VSS in AJY brought more benefits to them in terms of income generation and in improving their socio-economic status.

Effective fire protection measures are being carried out during peak season for which no fire incidence has been reported in the VSS assigned area for last 3 years. Timely creation of fire lines, engaging fire protection watchers, fire awareness measures are the regular activities conducted during fire season.

This VSS has been appreciated by the Forest Department for effective cooperation of different forest activities and supportive and protective role in controlling forest fire hazard and illicit felling.

Sustainable collection of NTFPs

The villagers are collecting Kendu leaf, Siali leaf, Mahua, Char, Tamarind etc. without causing any damage to the

forests. Because of effective protection in the last years, the Kendu leaf collection within the village has increased to an extent of 12500 Kerries per year. Hence the village has been provided with a permanent Phadi house by the Kendu Leaf Division. Stitching of Siali leaf plates and leaf bowls are also being carried out as income generation activity. Because of the improved forest quality, production and collection of Siali leaf from the forest area has increased, giving every household an assured additional income of Rs. 5000/- to 8000/- per year.

Providing Alternative Livelihood options

In order to reduce the dependency on the forest resources, alternate employment opportunities have been provided by the VSS to the villagers through various measures.

Goat rearing with the support of MODE : With the financial assistance from ITDA, Malkangiri and AJY, one SHG (MAA KALI SHG) of the village has been strengthened by providing the opportunity of getting livelihood through poultry farming, Vegetable cultivation. 36 families are being benefitted from this project. It is expected to have a benefit of Rs. 8000/- to 10000/- quarterly per family.



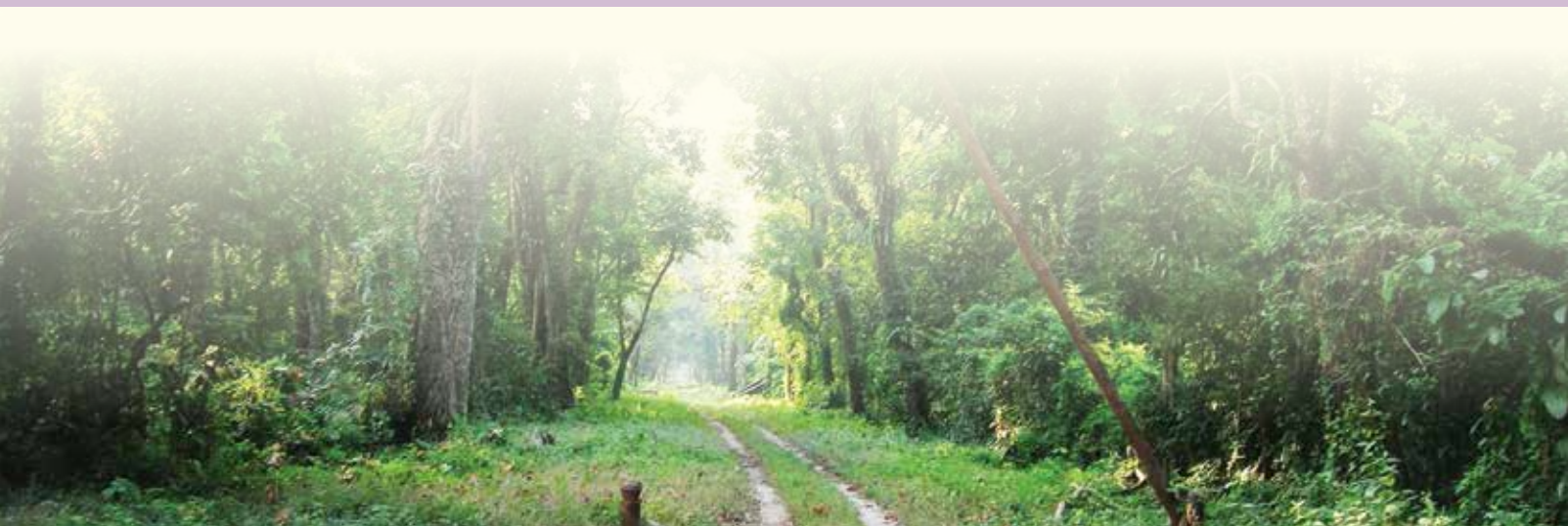
Livelihood Activities by Koilipari VSS of Malkangiri DMU

4. HIGHLIGHT OF OTHER EVENTS DURING THE QUARTER

4.1 Remembrance Meeting:



A meeting on the occasion of sad demise of Shri Lalit Kumar Tewari, Ex- Project Director, OFSDS was convened on 15th November, 2019 at OFSDP conference hall. All PMU staff along with the family members of late Shri L. K. Tewari were present in the meeting. The officers and staff memorized the valuable moments they have spent with Shri Tewari and paid tearful tribute to him.



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