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AJY MIRROR

A Quarterly Newsletter of
AMA JANGALA YOJANA

July-September 2023

Volume – 7 ■ Issue – II

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PROJECT DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

Ama Jangala Yojana has stepped into 8th year of its implementation. During this period, the project has been able to mobilize 4601 VSSs for sustainable forest management in a participatory mode. There are also continuous efforts for convergences with the Schemes of other line Departments to mobilize communities for their holistic development and livelihood promotion. Despite many challenges during the present quarter, our committed team effort has brought about visible changes in the lives and livelihoods of the forest fringe dwelling communities and augment their income through forestry and livelihood promotion interventions. In this issue of AJY mirror, a brief description of the major achievements of the present quarter has been placed for reference of all our stakeholders.

The effort put by our Forest Divisions, P-NGOs and other stakeholders towards sustainable forest management, livelihood promotion and income generation activities are commendable. The phasing out period of the project is approaching and we have gathered substantial learning from the field in the form of success stories on the above aspects. In this special issue of quarterly newsletter 'AJY Mirror', an attempt has made to collate some success stories of our grass root interventions. The success stories along with the successful VSS management reports are collated in this edition to highlight the major progress of the project at all levels. Apart from these, this newsletter also contains the snapshot of the major events organized during this quarter across the project Divisions. It is hoped that other communities will be inspired by the achievements shared by some of our project stakeholders which have been placed in this newsletter.

I am sure that all AJY Divisions will continue their innovative works for the benefit of the community and share their achievements so as to secure the overall goal of AJY.

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"



BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS OF AMA JANGALA YOJANA DURING THE PROJECT PERIOD

Ama Jangala Yojana (AJY) is in the 8th year of its implementation through 4601 nos. of VSSs covering about 4.2 lakh households and 14,263 Women Self Help Groups belonging to 22 Forest and Wildlife Division. As far as Forest Restoration activities are concerned, Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR)- Without Gap Plantation has been carried out in 2,09,568 ha of forest area and ANR-With Gap Plantation in 19,975 ha under the Scheme. Apart from these, Block Plantations have also been raised over 1005 ha of forest land. Out of the above, maintenance activities are being carried out in 69,837 ha of Assigned Forest Area during the present year i.e 2023-24.

Livelihood promotion is an important component of Ama Jangala Yojana. AJY aims to diversify the livelihood opportunities of the forest fringe dwelling communities

so that the pressure on forests for their day to day requirements is minimized. By September 2023, Rs. 781.34 Crores have been mobilized from other Line Departments benefitting about 27,48,542 persons belonging to 4601 VSS and 14,263 SHGs under Livelihood promotion and Community Development initiatives. In addition to this, 612 numbers of VSS buildings-cum-Income Generation Activities Facilitation Centres have been constructed and handed over to the communities in AJY Project area for multipurpose use. The SHGs in the project area are also linked to various Income Generating Programmes (IGPs) in convergence with 39 numbers of Line Departments and CSR agencies. Additionally, many activities pertaining to community infrastructure development have been undertaken under the convergence initiatives of AJY.

SUCCESS STORIES FROM VSSs

A number of successful stories have been created under convergence initiatives through Ama Jangala Yojana. Most of them are related to livelihood augmenting and community development. There are also a number of extra ordinary achievements in protection and conservation of forest resources by the VSSs. Some of them are highly appreciable and regarded as milestones for holistic development of the community and forest resources. Some of such efforts have been placed here for wider dissemination.

STORY-1

MUSHROOM CULTIVATION IS A VIABLE LEAN-PERIOD VOCATION FOR THE WOMEN SHGS IN THE FOREST FRINGE AREAS- AN INITIATIVE OF 'GANGAMATA SHG' UNDER PHULBANI FOREST DIVISION

The Village Gotamaha is a small village under G. Udayagiri Range of Phulbani Forest Division comprising of 28 households. Almost all households are into farming vocation and are below the poverty line. They meet their livelihood from millet, paddy and vegetable cultivation, and collection of minor forest produce. The village

was taken up under AJY during the year 2021-22 by reconstituting the VSS.

There are 3 numbers of women SHGs in the village out of which only Gangamata SHG, consisting of 11 members was an active one. However, their activities

SUCCESS STORIES FROM VSSs

were confined to only a few activities pertaining to thrift and credit.

The AJY team motivated them to invest their group fund in a suitable income generating activity so that their idle fund could grow. They showed keen interest for mushroom cultivation which was comparatively easier than other options. The AJY team contacted the Horticulture Department and provisioned necessary trainings and inputs for them through convergence. The Horticulture Department staffs came forward and guided them for mushroom cultivation following a comprehensive training. The major input, i.e. paddy straw was collected from the paddy fields which were left in the fields.

The result was amazing. In the first instance, the SHG was able to harvest 150 Kg paddy straw mushroom providing a net income of Rs. 27,300/- to their group. They are also cultivating oyster mushroom during the winter season. They were able to double their group fund by May, 2023.

Though a small intervention, yet SHG members benefitted to a great extent. The paddy stubbles, which were left out in the fields for burning, was utilized for productive purpose and thereby the nearby forest areas were also protected from probable fire incidences.



STORY-2

SUCCESS STORY ON POULTRY FARMING BY SHGs IN BALAGAON VSS UNDER KALAHANDI SOUTH FOREST DIVISION

Poultry rearing has been considered as a successful rural venture through which the women members are earning a handsome income. The change of food habits in the rural community, the choice of majority of the consumers and the proximity to the consumer market have driven the Maa Bhandara Gharani SHGs members to go for poultry rearing venture. In the rural areas, people usually prefer small and medium poultry units rather than larger ones so that it can be easily managed by the women members of their family. As a result, these units are becoming popular now a days. It provides supplementary income and nutrition of high value to the families without incurring any extra expenditure.

Balagaon, a Village under Junagarh FMU of Kalahandi South Forest Division consists of 140 households. Most of the households belong to BPL categories. There are 3 women SHGs in the village who are implementing various livelihood promotion activities through AJY convergence

initiatives. After being included under Ama Jangla Yojana, the SHGs were directly involved in the community development process through the project. As a result, the members were able to diversify their sources of income. Among all the livelihood options, collective poultry

SUCCESS STORIES FROM VSSs

rearing vocation adopted by Maa Bhandara Gharani women SHG is the most profitable one. The appropriate choice of vocation has fetched them amazing results.

The AJY Partner NGOs Gramya Vikash Sangathan had motivated the SHG to initiate a small poultry unit in their locality owing to the demand in the local market. After rounds of discussion with the SHG members, the proposal was placed before Mission Shakti Department, Govt of Odisha through the Department of Veterinary & ARD. After completing the application formalities and required trainings, the Mission Shakti Department supported the members of Maa Bhandara Gharani SHG with a short term loan amounting to Rs. 3,60,000/- with back ended subsidy amount of Rs.1,44,000/-. The technical guidance was provided by the Department of Veterinary & ARD. The poultry shed, chicks, starter feed and timely technical assistance has helped the members

to increasing the production and thus, in turn, led them to increase the production and become self-reliant. About 250 numbers of broiler chicks were reared in a shed of 30x12 feet dimension. The SHG members also followed the exact management schedule of poultry rearing. The chicks attained a body weight of around 1 to 1.5 Kg within a period of 45 days which the members sold them locally @Rs.200/- per bird and earned Rs. 50,000/-. Thus, within a period of about 2 months, each member was able to earn a gross income of Rs. 5000/- individually without major hardship. This initiative inspired other SHGs in the village and locality to go for small poultry units to boost their group income. Being inspired by the initiative, there are now more than 5 numbers of small poultry units run by the women SHGs. Now, it brings an additional income for their families and nutrition security in Junagarh area for which the SHG members offered their highest obligation towards the initiatives of Ama Jangala Yojana.



SUCCESS STORIES FROM VSSs

STORY-3

DIVERSIFICATION OF LIVELIHOOD OPTIONS LED TO FOREST PROTECTION- AN EXAMPLE OF PUTUPADA VSS UNDER KHARIAR DIVISION

A secure source of income is the need of every household in almost all villages. Forest fringe dwelling communities are dependent on forest resources for their livelihoods. Sometimes there is a competition among the dependent communities for collection of minor forest produces which leads to depletion of the same. Over exploitation of forest resources leads to degradation of quality and extent of forest resources. On the other hand, a secured and diversified livelihood options when provided to the communities have played a major role in protection and regeneration of the degraded forest. Here is the example of the initiatives taken up by the AJY team to mobilize Putupada VSS members towards forest protection.

Putupada, a tribal dominated village under Farsara Gram Panchayat under Khariar Division of Nuapada District is located at a distance of 35 km from the Forest Range Office, Khariar. There are 116 households in the village belonging to ST, SC and OBC categories. Most of the families of the village come under BPL category. Agriculture, wage labour and NTFP collection are the main occupation.



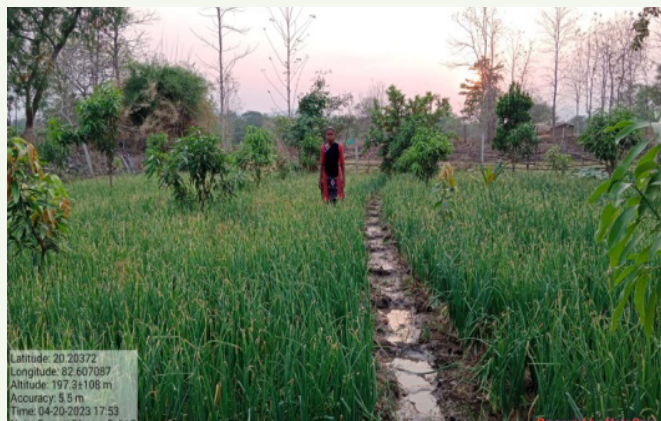
For years, the villagers were struggling for a secure livelihood. Their sole dependancy on NTFPs during the agricultural lean period has put a heavy load on the forest resources, leading to over exploitation of the resources. They often meet their demands from the nearby forests for adding income to their families. Forest and forest produce are mainly collected from Kumudi PRF which was on the verge of depletion. At this juncture, the village was included under Ama Jangala Yojana during the year 2019-20. After being included under AJY, the

villagers were able to understand that unless they diversify their sources of income, the forest resource alone cannot meet their future needs. Following this, a comprehensive livelihood plan was prepared for the villagers by the initiatives of the P-NGO, IAEET and AJY team. Focus was given on each family considering their resources and potential labour forces. After preparation of the livelihood plan, the families were linked to various Schemes as per their choice to avail required support. The major focus was agriculture, vegetable cultivation, poultry, fish farming, cash crops and fruit plantations. In addition to this, various IGA based skill trainings were also provided to the Self Help Groups for improving their entrepreneurial skills.

Within a period of 3 years, the initiative started to give successful results. The cooperation extended by the line Departments such as Agriculture, Horticulture, Veterinary & ARD, Fishery and Mission Shakti in supproting the community in terms of financial as well as technical support was also very impressive. This was the entry point of the forest protection initiative in the village. The AJY team won the confidence of the villagers by which the community mobilization towards forest protection became easier. All the villagers voluntarily participated in forest protection activities.

Thereafter, the villagers have taken keen interest for the protection of forest as their primary duty. Due to their sincere efforts, the further depletion of forest has been checked to a great extent. At present, Kumudi PRF is a place worth visiting.

SUCCESS STORIES FROM VSSs



VARIOUS LIVELIHOOD PROMOTION ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT BY THE VSS MEMBERS
THAT LED TO PROTECTION OF KUMUDI PRF

SUCCESS STORIES FROM VSSs

STORY-4

GROWING TRADITIONAL VEGETABLES IN A SCIENTIFIC WAY HAS MADE HIM ECONOMICALLY SECURE- THE STORY OF UGRASEN SAHU OF BHULUKABAHAL VSS UNDER DEOGARH FOREST DIVISION

Though Deogarh District is very rich in natural resources, yet most of the population belongs to BPL category. The rural infrastructure and communication situation in the AJY project areas are not so good. Agriculture is the single major occupation of majority of the tribal people here. The District is characterized by the habitation of tribal dwellers with no livelihood options other than agriculture. The agriculture and allied sub-sectors are in need of lot of improvement in order to promote sustainable livelihoods among the local communities as majority of them belong to poor and marginal farmers. Within agriculture, vegetable farming is an important sub-sector and has ample scope for providing livelihood opportunities for poor and marginal farmers in this area.

In the above backdrop, AJY team has promoted a unique farming model in Bhulukabahal VSS under Badchhapal GP Deogarh Division. Ugrasen Sahu, aged about 36 years and single earning member of his family, piloted a very profitable vegetable farming model through AJY convergence initiative. From an area of about 0.5 acres, he was able to earn an income that could suffice his family's financial needs. The Integrated Tribal Development Agency, Deogarh has played a major role in this initiative by providing timely financial and input support.

Ugrasen Sahu, prior to this intervention was not very familiar with vegetable cultivation. His family members were doing traditional agriculture by using whatever inputs available with them. He was also using large quantity of fertilizers and pesticides in his crop field without knowing its after effects. As a result, the quality and productivity of the crop field had deteriorated to a great extent.

The AJY team while discussing about the livelihood promotion of the community members was able to identify some farmers who had been continuously

making loss in their vocation. The AJY team noted the matter and consulted the appropriate line Agencies for possible cooperation. The Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) Deogarh was approached for cooperation and it was a breakthrough for the agricultural revolution in the village.

The ITDA Deogarh organized skill based capacity building trainings for the VSS members on organic vegetable cultivation and extended handholding support to the community. They trained the farmers on preparation of organic compost, liquid manure, pesticides and their use in crop fields. Afterwards, necessary inputs and financial supports were provided to the members for practicing organic vegetable cultivation in an improved way.



SUCCESS STORIES FROM VSSs

The mission went on. A water harvesting structure along with irrigation pipe lines and a diesel pump set was provided to the beneficiaries through convergence with Line Departments for lifting of water for irrigation.

Among the farmers, Shri Ugrasen Sahu with 50 decimal of crop land was able to grow various vegetable crops like bitter gourd and other cucurbits in low cost trellis method. Though he did not invest much from his own source, yet the result was very impressive. For last 4-5 months, he has been selling his produces in the local

market and earning about Rs. 5000/- to 6000/- per week. Up to September, 2023 his family was able to earn about Rs. 80,000/- from the vegetable farming, after fulfilling his domestic need. He is now able to fulfill the basic needs of his family. In addition to this, he also started the construction of a new house. He also conveyed his heartfelt gratitude to the AJY team for showing him the right direction during his distress period. This created an enthusiasm among other VSS members of the village and nearby areas to do something innovative to overcome their poverty situation.

STORY-5

LOW COST ONION STORAGE STRUCTURE- A SUCCESSFUL INITIATIVE OF AJY TEAM AT DUMDUMI VSS UNDER BOLANGIR FOREST DIVISION

Promotion of livelihoods through inter-sectoral convergence is one of the major objectives of Ama Jangala Yojana. Assessment of need of the community members, preparing them for suitable livelihood vocations, linking them with ongoing Govt. Schemes and mentoring them are the major tasks of AJY team engaged in the field. Here is a story of a successful venture under AJY initiatives where the beneficiary was able to store his produce till a better price accrued.

Onion is a major cash crop in some areas of western parts of Odisha. The farmers get a bumper harvest of onion during Rabi season. But, due to lack of storage facility, the farmers are used to sell freshly harvested onion crop at a very low price. Whereas onion can be stored in a moderately cool and well ventilated low-cost structure, many farmers choose to sell the produces instantly in a very marginal price owing to lack of storage structure. On the other hand, the Department of Horticulture, under their extension programme has facilities to support farmers for low cost onion storage structures with 50% subsidy through DBT.

There is extensive cultivation of onion in Dumdumi village under Loisingha Forest Range. But the farmers get a very low price from the crop due to the above fact. During regular interaction with the Horticulture Departmental staffs, the AJY team came to know that onion can successfully be stored for about 6 months under moderate temperature and with a low cost structure.

Thus, the sales of onion in the lean season can fetch a better price in the market and enhance the income of the farmers.

As a practice in the VSS meeting, this option was put before the VSS members in Dumdumi village. Some interested farmers were selected and nominated to Horticulture Department to carry out onion storage structure under the Scheme. Looking at the volume of production in the nearby locality, the Horticulture Department sanctioned one storage structure in Dumdumi village.

The AJY team members organized a meeting at Dumdumi VSS in presence of the Horticulture Extension Worker and discussed regarding the process of application and the modalities of the Scheme. A common consensus evolved to nominate Shri Saheba Kalta, a lead onion farmer of the village to carry out the programme. Saheba agreed to set up the storage structure in his

SUCCESS STORIES FROM VSSs

own land and prepared all documents for getting the support. He was approved one unit of the structure of 25x20 square feet with a scope for further expansion. The total cost was about Rs. 88,000/- with 50% of back ended subsidy amount. Shri Kalta has invested a little more from his own source to construct a bigger and 3 tier structure to accommodate more volume of onion. The AJY team also nominated his name for undergoing a rigorous training on post harvest management of onion and other perishable agricultural products organized at District level.

With the above initiative, Mr. Kalta was able to store about 60 quintals of onion. During the lean season, he sold the product with Rs.5/- increment over the purchase price and got an additional benefit of about Rs. 30,000/-. The major advantage of onion storage structure is that, there is no requirement of electricity to store the products in such structures. Hence, the benefit earned was the net amount which contributed towards his family's income without much effort.



Discussion with Horticulture Department staff and completion of application procedure



Selection of site for construction of onion storage structure



Construction work of storage structure is under progress



A complete 3-tier structure with supervision of the Departmental Staff

STORY-6

BOOSTING HOUSEHOLD INCOME THROUGH FARM BASED LIVELIHOOD INTERVENTIONS-A SUCCESS STORY OF KUNTARADABA VSS UNDER BONAI FOREST DIVISION

The primitive tribal community of Kuntardaba village, located in a remote pocket in Jarda Forest Range under Bonai Forest Division, is known for the inhabitants with low economic profile as compared to other areas of the District. A total of 63 households comprising of 326 members have been staying together since long. Their social traditions and customs are unique. Their lifestyle, which was mostly reliant on the natural resources available in deep forest areas, revealed that their standard of living was low. Despite possessing conventional expertise and abilities, they were unable to adapt themselves to the mainstream. The team made up of representatives from Ama Jangala Yojana and P-NGO encountered this particular primitive society while profiling the household economy in the year 2021-2022. They made a small effort to ensure them to fulfill their basic needs through increased social involvement and schematic convergence that led them towards a self-sustained community.

Adidharam SHG, a group of 10 women members under Kuntardaba VSS was reconstituted after intervention of AJY with an objective to carry out their traditional vocations with a market driven approach. The genuine needs of these communities, mostly Kisan and Oram were apprised to the relevant authorities through interactions between the community and the representatives of the Integrated Tribal Development Authority (ITDA). The local financial institutions were consulted in order to extend adequate support for livelihood improvement of the members as well as community development. Through

frequent capacity building and interactive sessions, their traditional knowledge and abilities gradually transformed into a greater strength. The members of Adidharm SHG, the only SHG in the village that was leading the entire community, were mobilized to adopt agriculture as a profitable business venture. They began practicing agriculture with a loan of just Rs. 30,000/- and collectively grew crops in a compact patch. The vegetables like tomatoes, cauliflower, chilly, cabbage, bottle guard, and ladies' fingers were grown that fetched them with outstanding yield and income.

Despite the fact that they lack a brand position for the marketing of their products, their unwavering determination has made them to develop a market all on their own. The purely organic vegetables produced by them were sold in adjacent marketplaces like Jarda, Gurundia, Kuchinda and Bonai. Through continuous interaction with various agencies, the AJY team helped them to sell their products in a fair price. They have already repaid their loan and have contributed an amount of Rs 65,000/- to their group fund. Thus, the primitive tribal community is now economically sound to support their families with a minimal investment. Each member of Adidharm SHG is now generating a respectable income for their livelihood in the first phase of this initiative.

In addition, the community is highly motivated to support the Department in a variety of forestry activities to conserve forests and other natural resources.

SUCCESS STORIES FROM VSSs



Members of Adidharam Woman Self Help Group



Meeting with VSS members in presence of line Department Officials



Cultivation of Chilli by the members of Adidharm SHG



Cultivation of Okra by the members of Adidharm SHG



Selling of dry Chilli to traders by the SHG members



Sorting and grading of Bottle guard before sending to Market

OBSERVATION OF VANA MAHOTSAV WEEK, 2023

74th Vana Mahotsava Week was celebrated across the AJY Divisions during the month of July, 2023 in which awareness campaigns, rallies, meetings, felicitations to

various stakeholders for their extraordinary efforts and massive plantation programmes were conducted.



Vana Mahotsava celebration at Goeljhumpa VSS, Bamra WL Division



Vana Mahotsava at Khalasuni FMU, Bamra WL Division



Azadi Ki Amrut Mahotsav at Sagada Section of Kalahandi (S) Division



Vana Mahotsava at Sagada Section of Kalahandi (S) Division



Vana Mahotsava at Jharbandhli VSS, Bolangir Division



Vana Mahotsava week celebration at Bhulikucha VSS of Bonai Division

REVIEW OF AJY PROGRAMME BY SHRI NARAYAN PATTANAİK, ADVISOR, AMA JANGALA YOJANA AT VARIOUS PROJECT LOCATIONS

Shri Narayan Pattanaik, Advisor, Ama Jangala Yojana had visited different Project locations under the following AJY Divisions and reviewed various interventions being carried out under the Scheme. He was accompanied by the PMU representatives from OFSDS, the AJY team of respective

Divisions and the PNGO representatives. He expressed his satisfaction over the implementation of Forest Protection, Regeneration and Livelihood Promotion initiatives under the Scheme. His field visits have deeply inspired the AJY team and the VSS members. The details of the visit are given below.

Month	Name of the VSS visited	Name of the Range	Division Name
July, 2023	Kendukhunta Matia Sahi VSS,	Nilgiri Range	Balasore WL
	Duibandhu Jangala Suraksha Committee (covering Tukipada and Anlapal VSSs)		
	Bhalukasuni VSS		
	Kantala VSS	Pallahara Range,	Deogarh
	Petpura VSS	Barkote Range	
	Basantpur VSS	Reamal Range	
	Deoposh VSSs	Kuliposh Range	Bonai
	Bhalugadia VSS		
	Bhulikucha VSS	Tamra Range	Rourkela
	Riun VSS	Kuarmunda Range	
	Mahipani Oramtola VSSs	Bisra Range	
August	Visit to Bantikri VSS	Karlapat Sanctuary Range	Kalahandi S
	Upar Rachuguda VSS		
	Ranbel VSS		
	Kutenpadar VSS	Bhawanipatna Range	Kalahandi N
	Sinangbhata VSS		
	Putupada VSS	Khariar Range	Khariar
September	Bhaludungri VSS	Padampur Range	Bargarh
	Sikaripalli VSSs		
	Chikalbahal VSS	Bolangir Range	Bolangir
	Dahimal VSS	Saintala Range	

PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE ADVISOR'S VISIT



Advisor, AJY Visits Kendukhunta Matia Sahi VSS under Balasore WL Division and interacts with the VSS members



Advisor, AJY Visits to Duibandhu Jangala Suraksha Committee under Balasore WL Division and interacts with the VSS members



Review of AJY activities at Pallahara Central Nursery under Deogarh Division



Advisor, AJY Visits Kantala VSS under Deogarh Division and interacts with the VSS members



Advisor, AJY Visits Petpura VSS under Deogarh Division and interacts with the VSS members at the VSS building



Advisor, AJY Visits Basantpur VSS under Deogarh Division and interacts with the VSS members



Interaction with VSS members at Bhulikucha VSS, Bonai Forest Division



Interaction with VSS members at Bhulikucha VSS, Bonai Forest Division



Advisor, AJY Visits IGA under Riun VSS under Rourkela Division



Advisor, AJY Inaugurating the VSS Building-cum-IGA Facilitation centre at Sikaripalli VSS, Bargarh Division



Interaction with VSS members at Dahimal VSS, Bolangir Forest Division



Advisor, AJY interacts with VSS members at Chikalbahal VSS, Bolangir Division





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Advisor, AJY interacts with VSS members at Dahimal VSS, Bolangir Division



Review of AJY activities at Kalahandi North Division



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Advisor, AJY interacts with VSS members at Haripur VSS, Bolangir Division



Advisor, AJY visits the IGA initiatives at Bargarh Division



Advisor, AJY Visits IGA under Mahipani Oramtola VSS under Rourkela Division and interacts with the SHG members



EDITORIAL BOARD

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

Editor Mr. Bijaya Ram Senapati,
Subject Matter Specialist (Publicity & Training), AJY

**Please send
your comments
and inputs to:**

Ama Jangala Yojana Cell
Odisha Forestry Sector Development Society
SFTRI Campus, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India
Phone: 0674-2386084, 2386016
email: webmail@ofsdps.org