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AJY MIRROR

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AMA JANGALA YOJANA

April-June 2023

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PROJECT DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

Ama Jangala Yojana has entered into the 2nd year of its extension period covering about 4.2 lakh households under 22 Forest Divisions of Odisha. Forest centric holistic development of the forest fringe dwelling communities through peoples' participation has been the core focus of Ama Jangala Yojana. The Scheme emphasizes on forest protection, capacity building of the community members on various aspects of natural resource management and livelihood promotion initiatives. About 20 lakh persons and 14,263 women SHGs of the State covering 4601 villages have been directly benefitted through the Scheme. After 7 years of implementation, the results are with amazing outreach and great impact on the community. AJY is one among the few projects that reaches to the remotest and inaccessible pockets of the State.

The present quarter (April-June, 2023) was a crucial period of the year for protecting the Assigned Forest area from fire incidences during the long prevailing dry spells. Community mobilization for forest fire prevention and control has been a special drive during the present quarter in addition to the routine project activities. As a result, in spite of the alarming heat wave and rapid forest fire incidences, there is hardly any case of forest fire in the assigned forest areas under AJY.

The livelihood promotion initiatives have impacted to a great extent the household income of the forest fringe communities. Though the project has a limited financial support for livelihood promotion, and even NIL in many instances, these activities have been carried out by leveraging funds from other line Departments through convergence. Though it was very tough and challenging, AJY could mobilize during the implementation phase, an amount of Rs. 750.07 crore for the community development and livelihood promotion of the forest fringe dwelling communities from 37 Line Departments, CSR and NGOs. This was made possible due to strong involvement and commitment of the team members. This has been highly appreciated by the State authorities in many forums.

A brief description of the activities and events accomplished till June, 2023 has been compiled and placed in this issue of AJY Mirror for reference of all stakeholders. In addition to this, exemplary VSS efforts have been narrated as success stories of our initiatives in this issue. I hope, all the AJY Divisions will continue their innovative works in future in the same earnest momentum.

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 activities under Ama Jangala Yojana during the Project Period

During the year 2023-24, Ama Jangala Yojana (AJY) is operational in 1424 VSSs under 22 Forest Divisions in which maintenance activities in 19,975 Ha of ANR with gap plantation and 49,862 Ha of ANR without gap plantation is being carried out. In addition to this, community mobilization and livelihood promotion activities are also being carried out in the entire 4601 numbers of project VSSs.

Till 2023, total 4,601 nos. of VSSs have been covered under the Project. In addition to this, 14,263 Women Self Help Groups have also been linked with various Income Generation Activities (IGAs) through inter-sectoral convergence with Line Departments. As on June, 2023, Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR)-without gap plantation has been carried out in 2,09,543 ha of forest area and ANR-with gap plantation has been carried out in 19,975 ha of forest area under the project. Apart from these, Block Plantations have also been raised over 1005 ha of forest land in 12 Forest Divisions. In addition to this, Forest Protection and Soil & Moisture Conservation activities have been carried

out in the assigned areas under the project VSSs. Most importantly, the fire incidents in the assigned areas under AJY could be handled by the proactive response of the VSS members and the project team. 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 project period, total 2,39,922 number of participants have been covered under 7997 numbers of capacity building programs under AJY scheme. In addition to the above, 612 numbers of VSS buildings-cum-IGA Facilitation Centers have been constructed and handed over to the communities in AJY project area.

During the last six years, the AJY teams were able to mobilize Rs. 750.07 Crore through convergence with other Line Departments under different Schemes, benefitting about 26,79,654 persons of the project area. Additionally, AJY team has accomplished many activities pertaining to community infrastructure development and livelihood improvement for the benefit of the local communities.

SUCCESS STORIES FROM VSSs

STORY-1

Shantinagar Pada VSS of Kalahandi (South) Forest Divisions - A flag ship of exemplary effort for Forest Protection and livelihood promotion through AJY initiatives

Shantinagar pada is a small village under Dharamgarh FMU of Kalahandi(S) Division consisting of about 38 households with 185 population. Most of the households belong to BPL category and ST community. The dominant livelihood of most families of the village is agriculture followed by daily wage earning. Animal husbandry & NTFP collection are other subsidiary vocations of the people living in the village. Shantinagar Pada Vana Surakshya Samiti was reconstituted under Ama Jangal Yojana during the year 2019-20. Since then, they have been protecting 50 ha. of assigned forest area within Sahajkhoh Reserve Forest.

The Villagers have been protecting the forest for more than 36 years. The Historical Transect of the village depicts that the villagers are carrying out the forest protection practice since 1986 with their community effort. The assigned forest area is gradually increasing its potential by having a healthy combination of plant species that meets their household, economic and environmental needs.

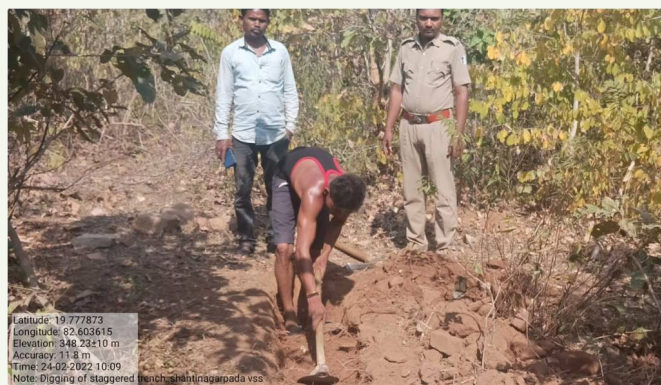
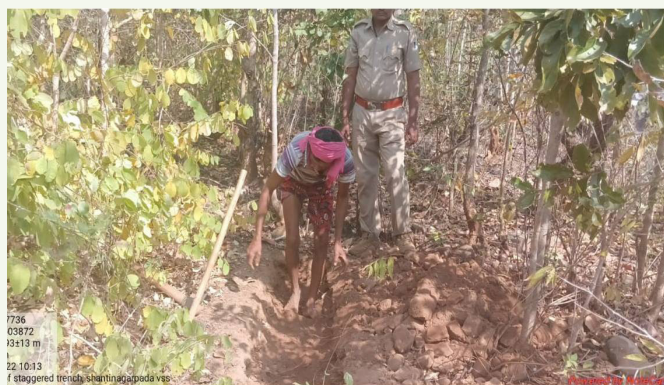
The VSS is highly active on each aspect of Forest Protection and management and they are giving their best on protection of Forests. Every time they assist the Forest Officials in detecting and preventing forest offences. Since reconstitution of the VSS, the members

SUCCESS STORIES FROM VSSs

are celebrating the environmental festivals and planting seedlings in the vacant spaces of their assigned forest area. Prior to reconstitution of the VSS and intervention of AJY, the collection of NTFPs and other products were done randomly in a disorganized manner. For last few years, they collect and distribute the usufructs in equitable manner among the members. In addition to this, the villagers and the VSS members resolve any type of intra village conflicts raised and such matters never come to the notice of the Forest officials.

After being included under Ama Jangala Yojana, the community mobilization and livelihood promotion activities has reached a new height in the village. There is

no fire incidence in the assigned area since introduction of AJY due to proactive response of the VSS members and cooperation with AJY team. Every member of the VSS and SHG is a front line fire fighter. Apart from forest protection, the VSS members have made convergence with about 24 Line Departments for community development and livelihood promotion. Both men and women are involved in cleaning of forest, carrying out soil and moisture conservation activities and fire line tracing/preparation. Apart from these, the VSS members are also involved in many awareness and social welfare activities. During the last few years, the VSS have done many commendable works for which their efforts have been appreciated in many forums.



Forest Protection and Regeneration activities by Shantinagar Pada VSS



Convergence Initiatives by Shantinagar Pada VSS

SUCCESS STORIES FROM VSSs

STORY-2

The VSS that changed the strategy for Forest Protection - A story of Saruali VSS under Angul Forest Division

The natural resources in Angul District are the brink of complete depletion due to rapid industrialization. On the other hand, the Assigned Forest Areas under Saruali VSS is close to the urban populations of Angul District. Hence, illicit felling and unauthorized trespassing was a common phenomenon in the forest. The traditional methods of forest protection could not give positive results. So the VSS members adopted changed and contextual strategies to protect their assigned forest. Here is the story explaining how they were able to tackle such a difficult situation.

Saruali VSS comes under Angul Forest Range of Angul Forest Division and is very close to Angul town, the District Headquarters. The Village is situated adjacent to Chandanpur PRF. The villagers mostly depend upon Chandanpur Forest Block for their day to day forest based needs like small timber, fuel wood, NTFP etc. The Village is consisting of 15 households. The VSS has been included in 5th Phase of Ama Jangala Yojana. 252 Ha of degraded forest has been assigned to the VSS from Chandanpur PRF.

As the assigned forest is very close to the urban area, illicit felling of trees by timber Mafias was rampant. Hence, the villagers were unable to get enough usufructs from their protected forest. There were also free grazing & high fire occurrence every year, prior to AJY interventions. Due to the above reasons the entire forest was on the verge of complete degradation. The villagers were not able to get small timber, fodder & fuel wood for their daily livelihoods from their assigned forest area. NTFP production was also very small owing to the above factors.

In the above scenario, the villagers felt the acute shortage of fuel wood for cooking, bamboo for thatching their houses, small timbers for agricultural implements, NTFPs for their livelihood, etc. A meeting was held by the villagers in presence of the AJY team during October, 2020 in which the VSS members unanimously agreed to protect the Chandanpur PRF in a strategic way. Accordingly, a dedicated committee was formed & it took decision to protect the assigned forest area in rotation basis by forming several groups of VSS members who would be monitored by a core committee. It was decided that the forest protection groups would keep vigilant eyes



SUCCESS STORIES FROM VSSs

on the forest on daily basis. In addition to this, the system of "Thenga Pali" was introduced for watching the Forest Block which is still going on in the village. If anybody fails to attend the rotation, he will pay the labour cost or replace a person in other days as per his convenience.

When summer approaches, the VSS forms a fire protection committee and becomes vigilant 24x7 to protect the assigned forest from fire incidences. The existing SHGs in the VSS prepared the fire lines in and around the assigned forest area. The AJY team helped in night patrolling and has also supplied them with search light to the VSS to checkup any fire hazard during night hours. The VSS has created awareness through conducting meeting in their own village and the neighboring villages as well. As a result of which, no fire incidence has been reported since last four years. The VSS members also took up proper silvicultural operations and soil and moisture conservation measures in their assigned forest area with the involvement of AJY team. At present, the forest is covered with aesthetically attractive and productive green plants.

The VSS has also extended support for the livelihood improvement of the members through existing Women Self Help Groups. Most of the individuals and SHG members have taken seed money from the core fund of the VSS and initiated multiple income generating activities. As a result of which all the households in the village are into multiple vocations and earning substantial income to run their families. Both male and women members of the households are having fairly secured income source which was made possible through the convergence initiatives of Ama Jangala Yojana.

The VSS members express their pleasure that the Advisor, Ama Jangala Yojana has highly appreciated the effort of the VSS on forest protection methods, level of transparency maintained at VSS level and the livelihood promotion initiatives during his visit on 25.01.2023. He also verified all the field works & documents of the VSS and was highly pleased. The villagers also requested for repairing VSS Building-cum-IGA facilitation Centre and up on his advice, the villagers have repaired the VSS building from the own fund of the VSS which was incurred from the interest of the Revolving Fund supported to them.



SUCCESS STORIES FROM VSSs

STORY-3

Banana cultivation has become the backbone of the household economy - A success story from Ghardhara VSS under Khariar Forest Division

Ama Jangala Yojana (AJY) is being implemented in Joint Forest Management (JFM) mode in 87 forest fringe villages of Khariar Forest Range under Khariar Forest Division since 2016-17. In each village, a VSS is formed with active participation of the villagers. Protection of Forests, Community mobilization, Capacity building and livelihood promotion for the VSS and SHG members are the activities which are ideally implemented in the VSSs under Khariar Division. The villagers express their interest in forest protection and livelihood promotion activities through AJY. By participating in these activities the villagers are spirited to do community development and income generation activities for their livelihood. Here are two stories of successful interventions under the Division, which is now a major contributing factor to the household income of the VSS members. This leads to a successful AJY convergence initiative...

Livelihood promotion is a continuous process under AJY. However, there is no direct financial assistance from the project to promote livelihood activities in the project villages. In order to carry out the income generation activities, Inter-Departmental convergence has been given importance by the project team. Periodical handholding support has been extended by the project staff and PNGO team in consultation with the concerned Line Departmental staff. The initiative carried out in Ghardhara VSS is an ideal example of continuous effort by the AJY team. Since inception of Ama Jangala Yojana, the VSS members are sincerely working for the conservation of the forest area assigned to them. Bringing a change in the present livelihood pattern to earn additional income was a challenge before the AJY team working for the upliftment of this VSS. However, the team continued their effort for improving the Socio-economic status of the VSS members.

The VSS with the help of AJY team expressed interest to nominate some VSS members to carryout Banana cultivation in collaboration with the Department of Horticulture. The AJY team also helped the farmers to enroll in the farmers' portal and avail necessary inputs for Banana cultivation from the Horticulture Department through State Plan Scheme. In addition to this, the beneficiaries have also undergone trainings for the same through the Department. Out of many in the proposed list, two farmers (Lalman Rana and Sarjan Rana of Ghardhara VSS) were selected for cultivation of Banana on commercial basis. The farmers started to prepare their

field for Banana cultivation after field inspection by the Departmental staff. The Department also provided them with 1200 numbers of good quality seedling of G-9 variety and other inputs as per the provision in the scheme. Periodical monitoring, supervision and coordination were made by the AJY team.

Banana cultivation was done in 2 acres of land without any input cost by both the farmers. The major difficulty was to provide irrigation during the hot summer months as banana is a water demanding plant. However, this issue was resolved through life saving irrigation support from the Department. After about 18 months of the planting, the beneficiaries were able to earn Rs. 60,000/- each from sale of the first harvest. Thereafter, they were able to get a good amount of money from the sale of subsidiary harvest and intercrops.

Both the farmers, Lalman Rana and Sarjan Rana of Ghardhara VSS have set an example for the neighbouring villages for which other farmers are coming forward for similar kind of farming practice to earn additional income from the small piece of upland they own. The convergence initiative undertaken by Ama Jangala Yojana has helped them to convert the unproductive upland to a revenue generating model. During this year, more than 15 farmers of this VSS and surrounding areas have applied for similar kind of livelihood support from the Department of Horticulture. The role of entire AJY team in this successful journey is highly commendable, as opined by the farmers by expressing their heartfelt thanks to the AJY team.

SUCCESS STORIES FROM VSSs



Meeting with VSS and SHG members for Livelihood promotion activities in Ghardhara village



The Banana Field of Lalman Rana of Ghardhara village



Banana crop harvesting by Lalman Rana and Sarjan Rana of Ghardhara village



Sale of Banana crop by Lalman Rana and Sarjan Rana of Ghardhara village

SUCCESS STORIES FROM VSSs

STORY-4

An innovative approach brought a big income for the rural women - A successful story of Strawberry Cultivation in Baroboli VSS under Kalahandi South Forest Division

Baroboli is a small Tribal village located inside Musanal Section under Biswanathpur Forest Range of Kalahandi South Forest Division. The population of village is 79 with 17 households. Farming is the mainstay of the household income and economy. Monocropping of paddy with small area under vegetable cultivation was the major agriculture scenario of the village. The tribal farmers were incurring loss from their traditional farming practices. There seemed no way out. After intervention of Ama Jangala Yojana in the year 2020-21, a series of meetings were conducted in the village by the AJY Team where various livelihood aspects were discussed. Looking at the geophysical situation and agroclimatic condition of the village, the AJY team insisted them to do something different from the traditional farming. There was a scheme for crop diversification in the area which was already implemented by Kutia Kandha Development Agency (KKDA). The VSS members decided to take up Strawberry Cultivation activity on a pilot basis. After that the AJY Team appraised everything with the FMU Chief and Kutia Kandha Development Agency (KKDA), the Agency agreed to extend financial assistance, seed and capacity building support to VSS members to execute the proposal. As the crop and its management practices were completely new to the farmers, a series of capacity building trainings were conducted for the farmers, who were mostly SHG members of the village Baroboli.

When the farmers were confident enough to carry out the activity, they were supported with all inputs for

Strawberry cultivation through KKDA. Finally, their hard work and dedication have paid off as they are reaping a good harvest and earning huge amount of money from this vocation. This helped them to come out of the prolonged poverty situation. From 2 acres of Strawberry cultivation, they have earned about Rs. 88,000 in the first harvest. The crop is still in the field providing a sustainable income throughout the year. The villagers started cultivation in October 2022 and the plants were laden with red juicy fruits. The good thing about Strawberry crop was that, it also created a demand in the local and distant market as well. They are now being transported to Bhawanipatna, Rayagada, Nuapada and Bhunaneswar with hygienic packaging to attract the consumers. The District Collector and outside visitors are now continuously visiting their field and the village for gaining knowledge on strawberry cultivation.

Till a year ago, not a blade of grass was seen in the field of this hilly area. Rain fed agriculture was the main livelihood option of the villagers and the cultivation practices were traditional. They didn't have sufficient knowledge on alternative crops. Now they are confident enough to command over the new approach on pilot basis through their hard work. And finally, they succeeded and a bumper crop was harvested bringing an amount of Rs. 1,88,000/- of net income by the end of June, 2023. They have also expanded the area to another one acre by accessing irrigation support from OPELIP, Bhawanipatna.



Meeting with SHG members for exploring IGA activities



Convergence meeting with KKDA

SUCCESS STORIES FROM VSSs



Strawberry planting in the main field



SHG members in their Strawberry field with salable products

STORY-5

Effective grooming and a strong will power converted a barren land to a Productive Enterprise - A story of successful cabbage farming by the VSS members of Ramnayakput village under Koraput Forest Division

With a proper crop planning, 200 gram seed can provide a good return to eradicate the poverty of a tribal family. Here is the example how effective grooming and a strong will power could convert a barren land to a productive enterprise. A story of Ramnayakput VSS under Koraput Forest Division.

Ramayakput is a village under Semiliguda Forest Range of Koraput Forest Division. The village was included in Ama Jangala Yojana (AJY) in the year 2019-20 and a Vana Suraksha Samiti was reconstituted. There are 81 households in this village who depend solely on farming for their livelihoods. Paddy and finger millet were the dominant crops grown by them. There is a vast patch of forest area very close to the village which has been assigned to the VSS for protection and regeneration. All the VSS members cooperate with the AJY team and protect their forest in a sustainable way. It means, they only collect the NTFP from their assigned forest to meet their domestic necessity only.



SUCCESS STORIES FROM VSSs

The AJY team was able to find out that the agro climatic condition of the village is suitable for growing off-season crops which could fetch good income for the farmers. Looking at the experience and expertise of the villagers on farming, the AJY team informed the VSS members regarding the available Schemes under Horticulture and Agriculture Departments. After a series of interactions and confidence building, eight farmers agreed to carry out cabbage cultivation during post monsoon season of 2022-23. Since they were familiar with cereal crops, a short duration crop was introduced during the Kharif season so that they were able to take up cabbage cultivation in the following season.

The enlisted farmers were provided with seed and other input support from the Vegetable Promotion Scheme under the Department of Horticulture. The result was extremely encouraging. All the eight farmers were able to get an income of Rs. 50,000-60,000 within a short span of 3 months. As opined by Shri Trinath Guntha, a farmer supported under the scheme, the Horticulture Officer of Semiliguda provided him with 200gm cabbage



seeds and Rs.6000/- as cultivation cost. He used organic inputs to grow the crop during the month of September-November and was able to earn a net income of Rs.50,000 from cabbage cultivation. He also expressed his immense happiness and gratitude to AJY team for motivating other farmers to think out of the box to boost their household income.

STORY-6

Upland used for upliftment of the group economy - A Success story on marigold cultivation at Tilakpadi V.S.S under Phulbani Forest Division

The high altitude landscape of Kandhamal district is very much suitable for commercial floriculture. The cool climate and carbon rich soil of the District has a big potential for ornamental gardening and generating income through this vocation. The floral products are having a ready market in Berhampur town which has a big share in the Flower markets of South India. In the above backdrop, our AJY team has piloted a successful trial through women Self Help Groups and got an encouraging result.

Tilakpadi is a small village under Phiringia Block of Kandhamal District which comes under Phulbani Forest Division. There are 48 households in the village with a total population of 275 members. Most of the villagers depend upon paddy cultivation and collection of NTFPs for their livelihood.

There are 3 women Self Help Groups in the village. Maa Jagat Janani SHG is the most active one among them which has 10 members, all belonging to poorest of the poor families. Being fed up with the

traditional thrift and credit activity, the members of this SHG were interested to do something new to increase their group fund. In view of this, the SHG members had a discussion with the AJY team during December, 2022. The AJY team coordinated with the Block level Horticulture Department Officials and the representative of Mission Shakti Department for available assistance. The Assistant Horticulture Officer (AHO) of Phiringia Block and Block Programme Co-ordinator (BPC) of Mission Shakti assured them to support for commercial floriculture which was the best alternative for the SHG members in this area. As

SUCCESS STORIES FROM VSSs



Capacity Building Training to members of Maa Jagat Janani SHG on Marigold cultivation at Tilakpadi village

per the advice of AHO and BPC, cultivation of marigold was taken up during January, 2023 and is continuing till date.

The PNGO team and Forest Department Officials helped them to identify a suitable patch of land for marigold cultivation. After the site selection, a training was organized for the group members at Similisahi VSS with the help of Mission Shakti Department & Horticulture Dept. The seedlings were provided to the SHG through Mission Shakti @ 50 paise per plant. They purchased 1600 plants and planted in one acre of land.

Periodical supervision and handholding supports were extended by the AJY team in consultation with both the Departments. The result was extremely encouraging.

The first harvest was made during March, 2023. The SHG members sold about 3.5 quintals of marigold @ Rs.60-70/ Kg in the first harvest and earned Rs.23,700/- net income by selling flowers to the traders. Periodical harvesting was going on at weekly intervals which gave Rs. 8,000-10,000/- per harvest. By the end of June, 2023, the SHG was able to earn more than one lakh rupees from marigold cultivation.

The marigold cultivation has benefitted the SHG by enhancing their group income to an unexpected extent. The group members are now encouraged enough to carry out the same activity in future on a larger scale by taking a large patch of land on lease. This achievement has motivated other SHGs/VSSs to take up marigold cultivation in the unused uplands of the District.



Marigold field of Maa Jagat Janani SHG

STORY-7

A Capacity Building Training that brought an architectural revolution in Terracotta sub-sector and ultimately enhanced household income of the rural artisans - A success story of Tondaguda VSS under Nabarangpur Forest Division

Tondaguda is a village under Nabarangpur Range of Nabarangpur Forest Division. There are two women Self Groups, namely, Bishwa SHG and Ratneswari

SHG located in the village having prior experience in traditional terracotta carvings. However, they had faced marketing challenges due to their traditional method and design of the products. Improvement over their traditional skills and generating a sustainable income from their craft items was a challenging task as there were many architectural designs already existing in the market.

Recognizing the potential of these SHGs, AJY team organized a training programme on terracotta making for the members of Bishwa and Ratneswari SHGs in convergence with Comprehensive Handicrafts Cluster Development Scheme (CHCDS) of the State Development Council. The training was conducted by the experts in the above field who provided an in-depth knowledge and hands-on support for art of terracotta preparation and marketing.

With the new skills, the SHG members were able to improve the quality of their products and created innovative designs to attract the customers. They also learned the art of marketing of their products which helped them to reach a wider range of customers and generate higher income. As a result of their hard work and dedication, the members of Bishwa and Ratneswari SHGs have realized a significant increase in their income. They are now able to supplement their family income more comfortably and are able to reinvest some of their profits to expanding their business.

In addition to the economic benefits, the training program has also had a positive impact on the overall well-being of the SHG members. They have gained a sense of confidence in craft production sector and have developed a strong cohesion among the group members to work together towards a common goal. The success story of Bishwa and Ratneswari SHG is a testament of skill-building in empowering communities and promoting sustainable economic growth among the rural artisans.



STORY-8

Mobile Medicare Units for Senior Citizens - An innovative approach to provide health care support to the inhabitants in the remotest villages under Nabarangpur Forest Division.

The Mobile Medicare Unit is a crucial initiative that aims to provide healthcare services to people who have limited access to public healthcare, especially the elderly persons living in remote rural areas. This is also a part of our convergence initiative that builds confidence among the local people for which the community mobilization becomes easier.

Under Ama Jangala Yojana, members of AJY team and Gramya Vikas Sangathan (P-NGO) under convergence with DSSO (Department of Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities), Nabarangpur organised to set up Mobile Medicare Unit to provide healthcare services to the remote areas under Nabarangpur Forest Division.

The Mobile Medicare Units offer different medical services not only to elderly persons, but also to child and adolescent girls. The services rendered include dental care, eye care, mental illness, treatment for common illnesses and referral for major illness. By providing access to healthcare services, the Mobile Medicare Unit helps to



Mobile Medicare units at Deula VSSs under Nabarangpur Forest Division



Mobile Medicare units at Dokraguda VSSs under Nabarangpur Forest Division

improve the health and well-being of the local population on one hand and help in community mobilization on the other.

It is commendable that the Mobile Medicare Unit team treated a significant number of patients in different VSSs such as Deula VSS, Khandaguda VSS, Kujajaniguda VSS, Kanheimunda VSS, Dakraguda VSS, Krushnaguda VSS, Gondaguda VSS, and Jagannathpur VSS. The team has already treated a total of 454 patients across the

locations, which is a significant number. Furthermore, providing medicine free of cost to VSS members is a noble initiative as it helps to ensure peoples' access to health care services regardless of their financial situation. This also helped in bridging the gap between the villagers and Departmental staff for which the community mobilization became easier than before. All the villagers regardless of their age group are now shouldering accountability for protecting their assigned forest and wildlife resources with great enthusiasm.

Advisor, Ama Jangala Yojana visited the VSSs under Balliguda and Phulbani Forest Divisions

The Government of Odisha appointed Shri Narayan Pattanaik as Advisor, Ama Jangala Yojana Programme in the rank of Secretary since January, 2023. He has visited different Project VSSs covered under AJY Divisions to review the interventions under Ama Jangala Yojana.

Shri Narayan Pattanaik, Advisor, Ama Jangala Yojana, Government of Odisha has visited different Vana Surakshya Samities under Baripada, Karanjia, Phulbani and Balliguda Forest Divisions during April-June, 2023. During this tour, he visited different Vana Surakshya Samities (VSSs) and reviewed the activities being carried out through OFSDP-II and Ama Jangala Yojana. In addition to this, he also visited the plantation sites and VSS buildings-cum- IGA Facilitation Centres and reviewed the impact of livelihood interventions carried out under the Schemes. He also interacted with the VSS members & Women Self Help Group (SHG) members, Department Officials and local PRI representatives and gave suggestions for resolving the specific local issues by linking them with concerned Line Departments.

During the tour of the Advisor, AJY, the Representative of the Project Management Unit of OFSDS, Divisional Forest Officers of the respective Forest Divisions and other Departmental Officials accompanied him in this visit.

The major observations he has highlighted are:

- The forest protection, community development and livelihood promotion activities carried out in the communities which he has visited, are commendable, especially when these villages are remotely located.
- The Forest Protection and Restoration initiatives taken up under the projects in the degraded forest land are really inspiring for others. It was an encouraging fact that, though there is no project support, yet the AJY team could mobilize an amount of Rs. 726.48 crores

for developmental works and livelihood promotion through convergence with 37 Line Departments, by which 26,18,150 numbers of VSS and SHG members have been benefitted. The strong community mobilization and proactive response by AJY team resulted in nearly zero Forest Fire incidences in the Assigned Forest area under AJY Vana Surakshya Samities, despite the rampant fire incidences in other places during the current year.

- Some of the Vana Surakshya Samities are truly inaccessible and detached from the mainstream/ Administration due to poor or no road communication. The basic facilities for living are far from their reach. However, the AJY team have performed extraordinarily to mobilize the communities for forest protection and livelihood promotion under utter difficult situation. The basic amenities such as all weather roads, drinking water facility, primary school, mobile network and access to Ambulance services are absent in the above villages due to poor or no road communication and also distance from the mainstream agencies. However, the people are getting benefits from Government Schemes like PDS, MAMATA Yojana and old age pension due to coordination of the AJY Team.
- The VSS Building-cum-Income Generation Activities Facilitation Centers have been constructed and used for various purposes by the villagers living beyond the last mile. The advisor was highly impressed up on the use of the VSS buildings for various productive purposes.



New VSS Building at Sambruli village under Balliguda Forest Division



Meeting with VSS Members at Rugudi Sahi VSS, Phulbani Forest Division



Inauguration of VSS building at Sambruli VSS, Balliguda Division



Meeting with the Project Team at Rairangpur Forest Division



Interaction with EDC members at Gagamaha EDC, Baliguda Forest



Interaction with the VSS members at Rairangpur Forest Division

SUCCESS STORIES FROM VSSs



Interaction with the VSS members at Sambruli VSS, Balliguda Forest Division



Visit to Multi-product Cluster Centre at Bisoi Range, Rairangpur Forest Division



Visit to Rugudisahi ANR Site, Phulbani Division



With the VSS members at Lambagurudi VSS, Phulbani Forest Division



Visit to Telimunda Nursery under Phiringia Range, Phulbani Forest Division



Visit to Plantation Site at Jambani VSS, Rairangpur Forest Division

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