

OUR VOICE

BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



ODISHA @2036: LEVERAGING PATHWAYS TO A GREEN ECONOMY TRANSITION

FOONDAATION DAY LECTURE @CYSD

The 42nd Foundation Day Lecture was delivered by Shri Satya S Tripathi, the Secretary General of Global Alliance for a Sustainable Planet (GASP). Reflecting on his own journey, Shri Tripathi emphasised the importance of being driven by values rather than wealth or privilege. He expressed gratitude for the opportunities to represent his culture and community on the global stage, challenging the notion of labels while recognizing the significance of his achievements as an Odia.

His remarks resonated with humility and a profound sense of responsibility as he prepared to address the audience. With a focus on preparing Odisha for the challenges of 2036, he emphasised the need for collective action and innovative solutions to address the looming climate crisis.

In his address, he emphasised the historical significance of Odia culture, dating back to the Kalinga War in 262 BCE, where Kalinga remained unconquered. He highlighted the transformative power of the land, citing Emperor Ashoka's change of heart following the war. The speaker urged the audience to recognise their roles as change-makers, guiding people towards positive transformations.

Shifting focus from problems to solutions, he addressed the global challenge of climate change, emphasising the interconnectedness of science, policy, and politics. He lamented the moral landscape of carbon emissions, where industrialised nations disproportionately contribute to global warming. He used the analogy of meal consumption to illustrate the disparity in carbon footprints between developed and developing countries, highlighting the unfair burden placed on nations like India.

He continued by highlighting the moral complexities surrounding climate action, particularly in the context of international negotiations and carbon emissions. He criticised the imbalance in responsibility between developed and developing nations, emphasising the unfair burden placed on countries like India. He illustrated this disparity using the analogy of a village with rich and poor households, where despite moral objections, practical necessity often requires cooperation with those in power.

Moving to the specifics of Odisha, he discussed the evolving carbon market and its potential impact on the state. He explained the concept of scope three emissions and how they will be factored into carbon pricing in the future. He cited examples of successful carbon reduction strategies, such as the Delhi Metro's regenerative braking system, and highlighted the economic implications of carbon pricing for industries like natural farming in Odisha.



The lecture delved into the intricate details of carbon avoidance, mitigation, and sequestration, particularly in natural farming practices. He emphasised the importance of covering land throughout the year to retain moisture, thus reducing the need for irrigation and subsequent carbon emissions associated with electricity generation. He highlighted the potential benefits of transitioning to natural farming in Odisha, where vast cropland could sequester significant amounts of carbon annually, leading to improved prosperity for farmers.

Expanding his focus to the broader challenges faced by Odisha, he addressed the state's carbon emissions and the implications of climate change on its coastal regions and agricultural productivity. He underscored the need for holistic solutions and emphasised the importance of community engagement in conservation efforts, citing successful projects in Indonesia as examples of collaborative, private-sector-led initiatives.

He concluded with a call to action, urging individuals to take responsibility for driving change and highlighting the potential for innovative solutions to address complex environmental issues. He emphasised the role of community-driven initiatives, such as the Master Farmer program, in promoting sustainable practices and empowering local farmers.

He emphasised the transformative impact of natural farming practices, particularly in improving public health and reducing the prevalence of diseases linked to chemical-based agriculture. He highlighted the success of bio-villages in Odisha and advocated for the recognition and financial compensation of women farmers for their contributions to carbon sequestration and societal well-being.

Addressing the need for behavioural and psychological changes, he stressed the urgency of acknowledging and addressing the accelerating degradation of the Earth's ecosystem. He cited alarming trends such as the rapid melting of Arctic ice and the Himalayan cryosphere, emphasising the dire consequences for sea levels, water availability, and human civilization. He urged individuals to question consumption patterns and embrace sustainability, underscoring the importance of humility and collective action in safeguarding the planet for future generations.

He underscored the urgency of halting destructive practices and embracing sustainable living to preserve Earth's ecosystems. He recounted a meeting in the early 1980s where concerns about ecological degradation were raised, warning of dire consequences if natural resources were not managed responsibly.

Addressing a query about pricing carbon in agricultural and coastal areas, he shared insights from a recent visit to Uttar Kanada district in Karnataka. There, efforts are underway to protect biodiverse wetlands by planting mangrove trees. Mangrove carbon, valued for its role in adaptation and carbon sequestration, offers multiple benefits in mitigating sea-level rise and minimising damage from natural disasters like tsunamis. He highlighted the potential for similar initiatives in Odisha, leveraging partnerships with global corporations to fund mangrove restoration projects.

Satya Tripathi's Foundation Day lecture emphasised collective action and innovative solutions to combat climate change in Odisha. He highlighted the transformative impact of natural farming and urged recognition and compensation for women farmers. Tripathi underscored the urgency of addressing ecological degradation and advocated for sustainable living. His insights on pricing carbon and mangrove restoration projects offered practical pathways for environmental conservation.

NURTURING FUTURE CHANGE MAKERS: YOUNG COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP CAMP



CYSD is dedicated to fostering equitable and inclusive decision-making at the grassroots level by grooming young community leaders as change-makers. These leaders are trained to harness the strength of Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) to address critical challenges faced by backward communities. Through constant mentoring and support, they become catalysts for positive change within their communities.

During the CYSD Annual Summit-2024, a "Young Community Leadership Camp" was organized for 35 select young leaders from seven tribal operational districts of Odisha. The camp aimed to analyse successful strategies, identify developmental needs, and refine the community leadership program based on feedback from these leaders.



The camp consisted of two components: Learning Sessions and Deliberation Sessions. Learning sessions covered topics such as the basics of the Indian Constitution and the Common Service Centre (CSC) operations. Deliberation sessions deepened the understanding of successful strategies, issues, challenges, and evolving needs.

The young leaders discussed various challenges they face, both in their work and personal capacity. These challenges included the lack of precise information on government programs, difficulty in translating vision into actionable plans, and struggles with family acceptance and work-life balance.

The young leaders identified evolving needs in knowledge, skills, and cognitive competency. These included knowledge about the community and government programs, leadership skills, conflict resolution, emotional maturity, and gender sensitization.

Key action plans for young community leaders included the identification of personal support groups, setting milestones for objectives, and leveraging Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) for community-led monitoring of government services.

Participants expressed gratitude for the summit, highlighting the opportunity to share experiences, learn from peers, and gain insights into constitutional rights. They felt proud to contribute to community development and safeguard constitutional values through their work.

The Young Community Leadership Camp organized by CYSD marks a significant step towards nurturing a new generation of empowered leaders. With a focus on addressing challenges, refining skills, and fostering collaboration, these young leaders are poised to drive positive change and uphold the principles of equity and inclusion in their communities.

LUKU DARUA: CHAMPIONING FOREST CONSERVATION AMIDST CONFLICT



In the remote village of Tallur, nestled within Odisha's Koraput district, Luku Darua has emerged as a beacon of hope amid daunting challenges. Surrounded by Maoist-infested territories and threatened by the forest mafia, Luku and his fellow villagers embarked on a mission to protect their ancestral forests. Armed only with water bottles and sticks, they formed the Forest Protection Group, determined to safeguard their precious natural resources.

Despite facing adversity, Luku, a 21-year-old student pursuing his education in the Maoist-dominated Malkangiri district, took on the mantle of leadership. Recognising the symbiotic relationship between the forest and their community's livelihood, he rallied the villagers to join him in the fight against deforestation.

Their journey was not without challenges. Convincing apprehensive villagers to confront the timber mafia required patience and perseverance. Yet, Luku's unwavering commitment and vision for a sustainable future resonated with his community. Together, they imposed stringent penalties for unauthorised tree felling and collaborated with local authorities to push back against encroachment.

Luku's story exemplifies the power of grassroots activism and community mobilisation in the face of adversity. As he prepares to graduate, he creates a legacy of environmental activism and empowerment, inspiring future generations to cherish and protect their natural heritage.

MONALISA SAHOO: A LOCAL HEALTH CHAMPION EMPOWERING HER COMMUNITY

Monalisa Sahoo, a 19-year-old resident of Dhirkuti slum in Bhubaneswar, had aspirations of pursuing higher education after passing her matriculation exams in 2021. However, her plans were put on hold due to her father's declining health, as he was the family's sole provider. Despite this setback, an opportunity arose for Monalisa to contribute to her community. She eagerly enrolled in a three-month training program for General Duty Assistance (GDA), overcoming initial struggles with English instructions through determination and even acquiring basic computer skills during the training.

Initially reserved, Monalisa found her confidence when she was introduced as a Paramedic at a community gathering, organised by the Urban Health Project team of CYSD. This moment of self-discovery allowed her to tap into her inner strength and value.

She began actively engaging with her community, visiting homes to encourage health monitoring and guide individuals to seek medical assistance when necessary. Her efforts not only boosted her own confidence but also fostered a culture of health consciousness within the community.

Motivating community members to monitor their health, utilise the nearby community health centre (CHC) for medical support, and adhere to medication routines presented challenges. However, Monalisa now takes pride in witnessing families willingly participate in immunisation drives and regular health check-ups. They have become advocates themselves, spreading awareness to their neighbours and contributing to the overall well-being of the community.

During her interactions with adolescent girls, Monalisa addressed topics like anaemia, early marriage, and menstrual hygiene. Many girls were initially shy and uninformed about menstruation, prompting Monalisa to provide education and support. Through her efforts, girls gained confidence and adopted healthier practices, such as proper nutrition and iron supplementation.



A pivotal moment for Monalisa occurred during a routine check-up with a pregnant woman and her elderly mother-in-law. Sensing the older woman's discomfort, Monalisa convinced her to check her blood pressure, revealing a concerning reading. Urging her to seek medical attention, the woman later returned healthy, grateful for Monalisa's intervention. This experience underscored the importance of timely healthcare and empowered Monalisa to continue her community service despite personal loss.

Monalisa's resilience and dedication amidst adversity are inspiring. Despite facing the loss of her father, she remains committed to her community, even considering pursuing further education. Her journey exemplifies the transformative impact of community service on personal growth and healing.

Health Paramedics like Monalisa introduced through a Community-Led Participatory Learning Approach (CLPLA) have revolutionised community health practices. Their stories, along with those of other dedicated individuals, highlight the triumph of the human spirit over adversity. From shattered dreams to renewed aspirations, these narratives reflect resilience, compassion, and a commitment to collective well-being.

As these local Health Champions continue to nurture both community health and their personal aspirations, their impact extends far beyond Dhirkuti and Sikharachandi slums. Their journey stands as a testament to the power of community-driven initiatives in fostering lasting positive change and collective empowerment.

LACHAMA'S TRAIL: EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES THROUGH GRASSROOTS ACTIVISM



Tucked away in the picturesque village of Tendulipadar, amidst the rolling hills of Odisha's Koraput district, Lachama Karlia emerges as a guiding light for her community. Despite the village's serene exterior, it grapples with bureaucratic hurdles and a lack of basic amenities. But within this backdrop, Lachama, at just 26 years old, embodies resilience and determination, serving as a catalyst for change.

Driven by a desire to uplift her fellow villagers, Lachama embarked on a mission to navigate the complexities of government schemes, particularly for the most vulnerable members of society. As the first graduate from Tendulipadar, she felt a deep responsibility to ensure that her people were not deprived of the assistance they were entitled to.

With meticulous attention to detail and an unwavering commitment to community welfare, Lachama collaborated with the Panchayat Executive Officer to help eligible villagers access old age and widow pensions. Her proactive approach involved assisting villagers in collecting necessary documents, such as Aadhaar cards, ration cards, and bank passbooks, and submitting them to the Panchayat Office.

Lachama's impact extends beyond paperwork; it's about restoring dignity and ensuring no one is left behind. She recounts the plight of widows like Sashi Panasputia, Moti Panasputia, and Rama Mathapadia, who were denied pensions for years due to their lack of awareness about government schemes. Through Lachama's intervention, these deserving individuals finally received the benefits they were entitled to, bringing tangible relief and empowerment to the community.

Her journey epitomises the transformative power of grassroots activism and the resilience of individuals committed to effecting change. In a village where progress seemed elusive, Lachama's determination and compassion have ignited a spark of hope, illuminating the path towards a brighter future for Tendulipadar and its inhabitants.

EMPOWERING WOMEN: FROM NTFP COLLECTORS TO MILLET ENTREPRENEURS

In the vibrant heart of Thakurmunda, nestled within the lush landscapes of the Mayurbhanj district, a community of resilient Santal tribal women is rewriting the narrative of their livelihoods. Traditionally known for their craftsmanship in crafting disposable plates from shal leaves and gathering firewood from dense forests, these women have embarked on a new journey of entrepreneurship.

Empowered by the Odisha Millet Mission (OMM) and supported by CYSD, these women have embraced the indigenous wisdom of millet farming and production. With determination and limited resources, they formed the Sambandha Maa Duarasuni women's group and ventured into millet flour production, defying economic odds.



Initially faced with market challenges, these women found solace in the guidance of MFPC and the Odisha Millet Mission. Through tailored training sessions on product development and marketing strategies, they honed their entrepreneurial skills and enhanced product quality.

With newfound confidence, these women set up temporary stalls, showcasing their meticulously crafted millet products to the local community. Establishing personal connections and highlighting the uniqueness of their offerings, they quickly garnered a loyal customer base.

As demand soared, these enterprising women reinvested profits to expand their product range and improve their capabilities. With dreams of a permanent millet shop on the horizon, they are poised to make millets a household staple, one satisfied customer at a time. In the heart-warming journey of these Santal tribal women turned millet entrepreneurs lies a testament to the power of determination, resilience, and community support. As they continue to thrive and expand their business, their success not only uplifts their livelihoods but also contributes to the preservation of traditional knowledge and the promotion of healthier food choices. With each sale, they are not just selling products but also spreading the seeds of empowerment and sustainable living. As they look towards the future, their vision of a permanent millet shop symbolizes not just a place of commerce but also a beacon of hope and inspiration for generations to come.

FOSTERING GROWTH: UANAT PROJECT'S PARTNERSHIP WITH HORTICULTURE DEPARTMENTS



In the idyllic landscapes of Rayagada and Kalahandi districts in Odisha, a ray of hope shines bright for farmers seeking to elevate their agricultural practices and livelihoods. The Utkal Action for Agricultural Transformations (UANAT) Project, in collaboration with CYSD, emerges as this beacon of hope, supported by a significant infusion of 131.27 lakhs from the Horticulture Departments. Together, they embark on a transformative journey aimed at promoting cluster development and empowering farmers through a range of horticultural initiatives.

Agriculture isn't just a way of life in the Kashipur block of Rayagada district and Th. Rampur block of Kalahandi district; it's the lifeline for numerous families. Yet, challenges such as limited resources, outdated techniques, and poor market connections have held back their growth potential. Enter the UANAT Project, with its comprehensive approach and backing from the Horticulture Departments, poised to tackle these hurdles and pave the path for agricultural rejuvenation.

With support from the Horticulture Departments, the UANAT Project wastes no time in rolling out a series of tailored initiatives to address the unique needs of farmers in the region. Farmers receive guidance and assistance for cluster-based Khariff potato cultivation, embracing modern techniques for improved yields and quality. Additionally, 250 farmers benefit from support in rabi potato cultivation, gaining access to quality seeds, training, and essential inputs to boost productivity and income. Furthermore, 365 farmers receive high-quality vegetable seeds and subsidies, encouraging diversification and sustainable cultivation practices.



Moreover, 30 farmers undergo training and subsidy support for oyster mushroom cultivation, providing an alternative income source and nutritional boost. Additionally, 56 households venture into mango plantations, while 12 households receive support for banana cultivation, capitalising on the region's favourable climate and enhancing household incomes. Lastly, 9 solar dryers are distributed to farmers, enabling the preservation of agricultural produce and reducing post-harvest losses.

The collaboration between the UANAT Project and the Horticulture Departments triggers a remarkable shift in the agricultural landscape of Rayagada and Kalahandi districts. Farmers witness a notable uptick in productivity, income levels, and overall well-being. Cluster-based approaches foster collaboration and shared learning, nurturing a sense of community empowerment and resilience.

The initiatives spearheaded by the UANAT Project, with the backing of the Horticulture Departments, lay the groundwork for sustainable agricultural practices and economic prosperity in the region. By promoting diversification, strengthening market connections, and embracing innovation, farmers are equipped to thrive amidst evolving environmental and socio-economic dynamics.



The partnership between the UANAT Project and the Horticulture Departments stands as a testament to the transformative potential of collaborative efforts in driving agricultural progress and rural development. Through strategic investments, capacity-building endeavors, and tailored support, farmers in Rayagada and Kalahandi districts embark on a journey toward prosperity and resilience. As they continue to cultivate their lands and communities, the legacy of this collaboration will endure, inspiring future generations to cultivate the seeds of progress and prosperity.

SADAN MUDULI: FIGHTING AGAINST CHILD MARRIAGE AND ALCOHOLISM IN ODISHA'S TRIBAL HEARTLAND



Child marriage remains a significant challenge in regions like Odisha, particularly among tribal communities. Despite legal restrictions and awareness efforts, underage marriages persist, leading to various social and economic consequences. In the midst of this, individuals like Sadan Muduli are emerging as champions of change, dedicating themselves to combatting harmful practices and uplifting their communities.

In Muduliguda village of Koraput district, Sadan Muduli has become a local hero, actively fighting against child marriage through education, activism, and community engagement. Recognising the urgent need for intervention, Sadan swiftly responded to cases like that of Tulabati Khilo, a 15-year-old girl facing pressure for early marriage. Through collaboration with local stakeholders and dissemination of legal information, Sadan successfully prevented Tulabati's marriage, setting a positive example for the community.

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