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OUR VOICE

Bi-Monthly Newsletter



Monaj Manding, a leading maize farmer from Dandapeta village of Balipatta Panchayat in Narayanpatna block, Koraput district enjoys the maize harvesting.

Inside

- Agri-Enterprise Helps Kasturi Fly High
- Trellis Brings Transformation in the Lives of Akhapalan PG Members
- Leaf Plates for Livelihood and Life : A community-based enterprise in Kashipur
- Janaki Sets Example of Women Empowerment
- Irrigation brings Success for Sumitra Gouda in Vegetable Farming
- Dry Food Ration Sustained Sulochana Devi till she got back to Job
- CDS Healthcare Services Sidelined in AWCs of Titlagarh
- Photo Gallery | Publications Archive | Media Coverage

Agri-Enterprise Helps Kasturi Fly High

At a time when the agricultural sector is replete with distress scenarios, Kasturi Mohanta, a woman farmer and member of Maa Bhairavi Producer Group, has emerged as a role model, playing the much-needed role of 'Agri-Entrepreneur' for others in the tribal inhabited Bharanibela village of Thakurmunda block, Mayurbhanj district.

Kasturi, who was earlier shouldering the livelihoods responsibilities of a six-member family, used to do farming on her 1.5 acres of land with her husband Jawaharlal. Despite her hard work and continuous efforts, she was not able to get enough profit. Rather her family's living condition worsened day-by-day.

Where there is a will there is a way. Kasturi's luck favoured when she received a poultry-rearing shed from CYSD under the Agriculture Product Cluster (APC) programme and attended the Agri-entrepreneurship skill building training. That was when she started experimenting with poultry rearing. Her keen interest and active participation in skills training made her a master in improved farming practices including vegetable cultivation, mushroom farming and poultry birds rearing. Now, Kasturi earns Rs. 15000 per month and has a bank savings of Rs 38,000.

Encouraged by the success of Kasturi, the tribal women of her village, who were earlier depending mostly on forest products to earn their livelihoods in a small way, have now started following in the footsteps of Kasturi. "The untiring efforts and willpower of Kasturi and her decision-making role in her family, has shown us the way as to how to improve our living conditions by adding extra income to our family", says Kasturi's husband Jawaharlal Mohanta.



Trellis Brings Transformation in the Lives of Akhapalan PG Members

Adopting the new Trellis method of cultivation by the tribal farmers initially seemed an impossible task in Thakurmuna block of Mayurbhanj district. But, the locally active Akhapalan Producer Group, a collective of 75 women members in the Block, when supported by CYSD in the Agriculture Product Cluster (APC) programme, gladly took the lead and popularized the Trellis method of cultivation, thereby helping the tribal farm households bring significant changes in their fortunes.

Agriculture is the key source of income for the rural-tribal farmers; but traditional farming hardly met their basic family needs. The APC programme facilitated by CYSD in Thakurmunda Block seeks to enable the farm households, especially the women farmers, to double their annual income through various innovative methods of farming, cultivation and marketing. Trellis is one such method of cultivation introduced during the COVID-19 Pandemic, when a lot of migrants returned to their native villages opting for agriculture.

It was the Horticulture Department, which launched the single line Trellis in APC areas providing the farmers with some financial support with an aim to help them maximize the utilization of their land. With the efforts of CYSD team, trainings on the new method, model, way of cultivation and land preparation were imparted to the farmers. With full handholding and technical support, the people adopted this new technology in their farm fields.

During the last Kharif season, 75 members of the Akhapalan Producer Group installed an equal number of permanent Trellis models in twenty-five decimals of land; and cultivated the creeper variety of vegetables like cowpea, beans and bitter gourd and earned a good profit. With the initiative getting highlighted in the locality, the Akhapalan Producer Group (PG) now stands recognized as the 'Trellis PG' everywhere. Following the Trellis method of agriculture, most of the producer groups in the block are growing creeper-vegetables availing a subsidy amount of Rs. 12550/- per Trellis from the Horticulture Department. Taking advantage of the Trellis method of cultivation, the farmers are now getting good yield and earning good profit.

The Akhapalan PG now has plans to cultivate crops integrating the multilayer method in their Trellis during the upcoming Kharif season. The Trellis method has resulted in a remarkable change in the lives of the members of Akhapalan PG member households.



Leaf Plates for Livelihood and Life :

A community-based enterprise in Kashipur

“Our leaf plates don’t break or leak easily. In a way, they are stronger and more convenient to use than disposal plates made up of plastic or thermocol,” claims Sumanti Nayak, a member of Ma Sankeshwari SHG of Chandragiri, an Adivasi-dominant village in the Kashipur block of Odisha. 12 members of Ma Sankeshwari SHG have come together to form a producer group “Akashganga Producers Group” that runs a community-based enterprise of leaf plates and bowls. According to the PG member, their products contribute not only to their income but also to the health of the people and the ecology of the region.

“In training that we got from CYSD; we came to know that eating on plastic plates is not good for health. It can cause cancer and many other diseases. It also pollutes our land. We understood that setting up a leaf- plate-making unit in our village will not only improve our income but also protect our health and keep our land clean and fertile,” says Sumanti Nayak. She further explains that most of the members of producer groups engaged in leaf plate making already knew how to make leaf plates but the introduction of the pressing machine and the innovative technique of leaf plate making has completely revolutionized the quality of plates and the production capacity.

The electricity-operated pressing machine and processing unit have been installed in Chandragiri under the UANAT project of CYSD. The entire processing and marketing are being taken care of by the PG including production as well as the marketing of their products.



Feast, festivities, and leaf plates

Leaf plates and bowls are not something new to the Adivasi communities of India. They are like a part of the identity of Adivasi communities, known for their never-ending feasts and festivities. Until recently, in almost every Adivasi household, some members were skilled in making leaf plates. Leaves of siyadi or sal, used for making leaf plates were freely available in the village forest. So, people rarely felt the dearth of leaf plates, whether for household use or social feasts.

For community feasts, be it a marriage or any other event, the preparation for arranging a sufficient amount of leaf plates and bowls usually gets started days before the event, and contributions are made from each household.

Challenges for traditional style leaf-plate making

However, the situation has changed now. Due to the easy and cheap availability of factory-made disposal plates, people are buying non-decomposable, disposal plates from the market. The number of people skilled in leaf plate making has significantly decreased. Especially, the younger generation doesn't take much interest in such time-consuming activities. Another reason people are not continuing with leaf plates is the unavailability of raw materials. Due to continued deforestation, it has become difficult for people to get Sal and Siyadi leaves, and even the quality of available leaves is not at par, rendering them unsuitable for leaf plate making.

Innovation and technology to overcome the challenge

"Nowadays people find leaf plates clumsy as in leaf plates, chances of leakage are more. This makes it unsuitable for eating while standing, which has become an emerging culture," Sumanti Nayak explains.



Vaishali Manjhi, a member of the PG involved in leaf-plate making says, "Our SHG members wanted to start an enterprise but we were not sure where to begin with. We didn't have enough capital to start a big enterprise. When we were told that we can get financial and technical help from CYSD's project to start an NTFP-based enterprise, we readily agreed to that." She further adds, "Our PG procures raw materials from a wide base. There are 30-35 SHG women who either provide us with a stitched plate of sal or siyadi leaves or leaves in raw form."

Explaining the process of manufacturing, Sumanti Nayak says, "the leaves are first stitched in the traditional manner using the twigs of hill broom grass. It is then pasted on hard cardboard using a paste of besan (Gram flour). Further, it is put under the electric machine which presses, cuts, and gives a handy shape to the plate. Also, because of the cardboard base, the plate remains sturdy and it can be easily used while eating in a standing position."

As of now, the unit hasn't started making a profit but PG members are hopeful that soon they will start earning a decent income from this initiative. According to Vaishali, their PG has already started getting bulk orders from local vendors as well as from end-user retail customers. "Presently our focus is to keep the unit running. There are some challenges in getting a regular supply of raw materials including cardboard and stitched leaf plates. Once we overcome these challenges, we can increase our production capacity manyfold and start earning profits," says Vaishali.

Not just a livelihood option

The members of Akashganga PG understand that this initiative is beyond an income generation program. One of its members, Lakshmipriya Manjhi shares, "We started with a leaf plate-making enterprise because we were aware of the health hazards of eating food in thermocol plates. Through our leaf plates, we wanted to provide safer options to people for consuming food without compromising their health."

The PG members are also aware of the impact of non-decomposable plates on soil and water. They say that such plates are not only harming human health but also the health of their overall environment including soil, and water. These are rendering agriculture fields unfertile, polluting water, and causing the death of fish, compromising their subsistence.

Lakshmipriya further says that in future the PG will start enterprises based on other non-timber forest produce (NTFP) too. The group has prepared a seasonality calendar for NTFPs found in this region. This includes the Mehua flower, tamarind, etc. It is worth noting that NTFPs significantly contribute to the annual income of an Adivasi household in rural areas of Odisha. Promoting enterprise based on NTFPs can significantly improve the livelihood of the rural poor while remaining light on the local environment.

Janaki Sets Example of Women Empowerment

Many people in our society believe that women are not stronger than men in any aspect of life. But, women are no less than men, is a shared view of Janaki Mohanta of Mahuldiha village in Jamunalia Panchayat of Thakurmunda block of Mayurbhanj district.

Janaki, a 28 years old woman, got married to Fakir Mohan Mohanta in 2013. She is blessed with a daughter (7 years) studying in Std. II and a son (4 years) yet to join schooling.

At the age of 18, when she got married, her husband Fakir was going for labour intensive work for wage earning. They had only 3 acres of landed property to manage his family throughout the year. Economic crisis was growing with an increase in the number of family members.

After every dark night comes a glorious morning of a new day. Likewise, the Agriculture Production Cluster project approach of CYSD in Thakurmunda block brought an excellent opportunity which brought a sea change in the living standard of Janaki's family. Being a smallholder farmer, she became a member of Salandi Producer Group in September 2019 and underwent several trainings on organic farming and non-pesticidal management (NPM) in agriculture production.

Capacitated Janaki, with the support her of husband, initiated cultivating summer, kharif and rabi crops including vegetables like cabbage, cauliflower, radish, etc. in their 3 acres of land. For sale of the products, she goes to the nearby weekly market at Thakurmunda, Mahuldiha, Khuntaposi and Satkosia.

Adding to her agriculture production practices, Janaki has started preparing NPM Products for use in farmland. Apart, she is also imparting NPM product preparation training to other women farmers of her locality.

Initially, people were reluctant to adopt the use of organic products in agriculture, but seeing the economic development of Janaki;





gradually they accepted the APC approach and appreciated the efforts of Janaki. Now, Janaki is not only an established farmer, but also a known face as NPM Lady in her community.

She is socio-economically better off now, and becomes an example for other women PG members in her village. Her son, daughters and other family members are maintaining a decent standard of living. Recently, she has brought a moped-bike for easy carriage of farm products to the market places. Moreover, she has procured a power tiller to ease her farm cultivation work. Round the year, her husband is completely engaged in cultivation work using NPM Products. In the recent past, she could add another feather to her cap by receiving a 14-

day Agriculture Entrepreneurship Training organized by the APICOL in Bhubaneswar. "Now a day, we are earning around 2.5 lakhs per year through organic farming. I am delighted that our hard labour did not go in vain. I am thankful to the CYSD-APC Project team for helping me improve my way of thinking", shares Janaki cheerfully.

Initially, people were reluctant to adopt the use of organic products in agriculture field, but seeing the economic development of Janaki; gradually they accepted the APC approach and appreciated the efforts of Janaki. Now, Janaki is not only an established farmer, but also a known face as NPM Lady in her community.



Irrigation brings Success for Sumitra Gouda in Vegetable Farming

Sumitra Gouda is a 39 year old tribal woman farmer living in A. Goudaguda village. Ever since she became a beneficiary of the Mission Jeevika programme, there has been a sea change in her life. Sumitra shoulders the responsibility of feeding a seven-member family. "Earlier, I never earned enough from my one acre farm to be able to meet the basic needs of my family. There was no irrigation in my land that is mostly rainfed, and I had to struggle hard to lead an independent and dignified life. But, theJalanidhi-II Project being implemented by the Orissa Agro Industries Corporation Limited (OAIC) as part of the Mission Jeevika programme has helped solve the issue of water supply to my land". "I now grow vegetables and have also planted various fruit-bearing trees on my farm land; this has helped me double my income from INR 20,000 to 40,000," says Sumitra with a smiling face.

Goudaguda village of Dashmantpur Block, Koraput experiences a tropical wet and dry climate. Thus most of the farmers solely depend on rainfed agriculture. Paddy is thus the main crop grown by the farmers during the Kharif season. None of the farmers considered doing summer and winter crops like vegetable cultivation owing to such lack of irrigation. As a result, the farmers never had an alternative source of income. However, now this has become possible with the implementation of Mission Jeevika programme under the Jalanidhi-II Project.

About 35 farmers of A.Goudagudanow cultivate a wide range of vegetables like Brinjal, Tomato, Okra, Beans, Chilli, Watermelon along with their traditional paddy and millet crops on more than 50 acres of land. The intervention has also provided them with a sustainable solution. Moreover, all farmers of the village have become members of Janijakar Producer Group. The group currently has a membership of 120.





Encouraged by the success of Goudaguda farmers, the neighbouring villagers have successfully influenced the government to provide irrigation facilities to their farmlands. This successful initiative of A.Goundaguda has increased the confidence level of the tribal communities in the entire Dashmantpur block.

In Dasamantpur block, the Mission Jeevika Program has helped provide water facilities in the form of 5 HP capacity water pumps (known as MRLP) that ensure water supply to unirrigated and dry lands. Ever since CYSD has started promoting the Agriculture Production Cluster (APC) approach in the Block, the tribal farmers have increased vegetable farm activities to enhance their income. The irrigation potential area has increased from 446 acres in 2019-20 to 839.5 acres in 2021-22. The number of households having irrigation facilities in Dashmantpur block have increased from around 400 in 2019-20 to to 906 in 2021-22.

Most importantly, the Mission Jeevika and CYSD have jointly established market linkages not only for vegetable sales, but also for paddy and millets. Going a step forward, CYSD has established market linkages for the farmers with far-off places like Raipur, Bihar and nearby semi-urban areas such as Semiliguda and Kunduli for easy and hassle-free sale of the vegetables grown by the farmers of A.Goudaguda and adjacent villages.

Mission Jeevika's success in South Odisha region in enhancing household income can be replicated anywhere in the semi-arid and drought prone areas of Odisha to overcome the challenge of water scarcity.

Dry Food Ration Sustained Sulochana Devi till she got back to Job

Sulochana Devi, a 55-year-old widow, has been living alone in the Sahoopada village of Kanasa Block, Puri district in Odisha for the last 7 years after getting her only son married. She described the week she lived in floodwater, as more menacing than the coronavirus. Because of the disconnected living, she could not continue to help in vegetable selling which earned her Rs 40 a day. With the rise of water in the Daya river of the



Mahanadi basin the entire village remained marooned for more than two weeks, coupled with the trajectory of poverty, food remained the concern of marginalized people like Sulochana. Their immediate need was to overcome hunger as well as to fight for the restoration of livelihoods.

Just when Sulochana Devi was losing hope of getting food, CYSD and APF the non-profit organizations came to her locality and distributed dry ration kits that would last a month. A month's worth of dry ration was enough to sustain her till she got back to her job after the easing of the flood. Like Sulochana Devi, the support has brought relief from the food shortage of 2000 families across the district.



ICDS Healthcare Services Sidelined in AWCs of Titlagarh

While the country is celebrating Amrit Mahotsav, most of the populous particularly in rural areas are simply victim of anaemia of which more than half are women. Owing to anaemia, the work capacity and reproductive capacity of women are severely affected.

The village Naren under Titlagarh block is located at a distance of 6 km from Block headquarters and 76 km from the district headquarters of Bolangir. Around 2500 inhabitants live in the village and majority of the people belong to the Gond tribe. Agriculture is the main source of income, but during lean season, people used to migrate in search of daily wages outside. From a primary survey, it was revealed that 871umber girls in village Naren are under adolescents group, consisting of students, daily laborers or engaged in household chores. The village Anganwadi Centre (AWC) functions as the primary agency to cater to the needs of women in terms of health and nutrition improvement. In order to assist the AWWs and Asha worker, 8 numbers of Saathiyas are engaged who are aware of their own responsibilities but don't have the ability to solve any health related issues of women and adolescent girls. Saathiyas are peer educators, who ensure that adolescent girls benefit from regular and sustained peer education covering all six themes of Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK).

Though the Iron and Folic Acid (IFA) supplementation programme has been initiated in the village to control anemia among adolescent girls in a specific area earmarked by ICDS, it was observed that girls do not have access to that services. They are hardly aware about the benefits available for them. They are neither vocal about the scheme nor concerned about their own health. It seemed the healthcare system was side-lined in Titlagrah.



CYSD representatives, Murali Charan Dash, during his visit to 3 AWCs (sub-centres) of village Naren could unveil the issues of adolescent girls. Subsequently, he discussed the issue with the Saathiyas (Peer Educators) and as a quick remedial measure, he instantly arranged a meeting with three AWWs, who are the root cause of developing anaemia among adolescent girls by supplying inadequate or no IFA tablets to the adolescents. Then he contacted the concerned ICDS Supervisor and clearly apprised the emerging issue. Without further delay, the ICDS Supervisor supplied the required IFA tables to the concerned AWCs. Subsequently, Murali Charan Dash met the CDPO, Titlagarh for a permanent solution and requested him to put the matter before the Medical Superintendent of Kholan CHC for supplying adequate IFA tablets to the AWWs. As a result, the CHC since then supplied around 49200 IFA tablets to the AWWs for distribution among the adolescent girls.

Reducing the percentage of anaemia among rural women and adolescent girls is critical for a healthy nation. However, while implementing the programme meant for dropping anaemia, a couple of obstacles emerge on the way due to lack of interest and awareness among the duty bearers as well as the beneficiaries. Therefore, the government must rise to the occasion and bring reform in systems thoroughly with intellectual inputs to provide the required benefits at the ground level.



Photo Gallery



Tomato growers from Nunpani of Ekori GP in Kosagumuda block of Nabarangpur assembled to know the benefit of Tomato Cultivation in Cluster Approach



Senior level officials from IIMR - Dr Srinivas, Director & Dr. K N Ganapathy, Plant Breeder along with Fodder Scientist, ICAR and Mr. Dinesh Balam Asso Director, WASSAN visiting the Millets Trial Field initiated at Boipariguda of Koraput district.

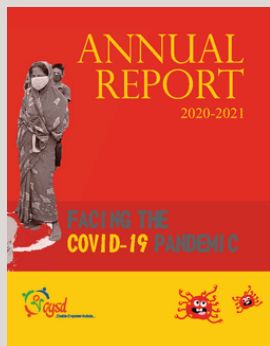


Sarjam Sakam Producer Group from Thakurmunda block initiated first phase marketing of sweet potato to ORMAS, Baripada through Murgasuni Farmers Producer Co. Ltd. (MFPCCL)



CYSD launched its Project SURAKSHYA in Kalahandi district aiming to contribute to the socio-economic well-being of communities and build resilient among the people to cope with eventualities like COVID-19.

Annual Report



Annual Report -20-21



Annual Report -2019-20



Annual Report -2018-19



Annual Report -2017-18



Annual Report -2016-17

Our Voice - Newsletter



Our Voice - Issue-29



Our Voice - Issue-28



Our Voice - Issue-27



Our Voice - Issue-26



Our Voice - Issue-24



News Bulletin Issue - 8



News Bulletin Issue - 7



News Bulletin Issue-6



News Bulletin Issue -5



News Bulletin Issue -4

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