



Govt. of Odisha



Jibika Sambad

Quarterly Newsletter of OFSDS-OMBADC Livelihood Promotion Project

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April 2025 - September 2025



PROJECT DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

Over the past six months, the OFSDS-OMBADC Livelihood Promotion Project has continued its journey of strengthening rural communities through inclusive and sustainable livelihood initiatives. Guided by the vision of resilience and self reliance, the project has touched lives across tribal and marginalized households, creating pathways for dignity, income security, and empowerment.

Implemented in the Joint Forest Management (JFM) mode in five mineral bearing Forest Divisions of Odisha, e.g. Rourkela, Bonai, Deogarh, Keonjhar, and Keonjhar (Wildlife), the project's overarching goal is to promote the sustainable use of forests and forested landscapes while enhancing the livelihoods of underprivileged, forest dependent communities. Supported financially by the Odisha Mineral Bearing Area Development Corporation (OMBADC), the project has been underway since 2021–22 and will continue for five years.

Over the past six months, significant progress has been achieved. By September 2025, a total of 11,509.91 lakhs has been sanctioned and disbursed by Village Forest Protection & Management Committees (VSSs) to borrowing entities-2,452 Self Help Groups (SHGs), 70 Common Interest Groups (CIGs), and 2,670 Persons of Particular Vulnerability (PoPs)-through the Revolving Fund to support sustainable enterprises. In addition, 4,888 community development and income generation activities worth 111,521.31 lakhs have been executed through inter sectoral convergence, directly benefiting 3,68,193 individuals.

This newsletter compiles a brief account of the activities undertaken during April–September 2025, along with exemplary success stories of VSS members whose dedication and achievements serve as inspiration for all stakeholders. These stories reflect the spirit of resilience, innovation, and collective action that lies at the heart of the project.

I extend my sincere gratitude to all VSS members, departmental staff, support staff, and partner NGO teams for their tireless efforts in driving substantial progress. With continued commitment and collaboration, I am confident that together we will achieve the overall goal of the project- empowering communities while safeguarding our forests for generations to come.

Dr. K. Murugesan, IFS
PCCF (Projects) & Project Director, OFSDS

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- Brief Account of the major achievements of OFSDS-OMBADC Livelihood Promotion Project up to September.2025 (Cover Story)
- Achievements carried out during April, 2025 to September,2025
- Success Stories



COVER STORY

BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS OF OFSDS-OMBADC LIVELIHOOD PROMOTION PROJECT

The OFSDS-OMBADC Livelihood Promotion Project is being implemented in five mineral bearing Forest and Wildlife Divisions of the State, e.g. Keonjhar, Keonjhar (Wildlife), Rourkela, Bonai, and Deogarh with financial assistance from OMBADC since 2021-22 for a period of five years. The prime objective of the project is to promote sustainable livelihoods for forest dependant communities, thereby reducing their dependency on forests. A total of 900 forest fringe VSSs, comprising socially and economically disadvantaged households, have been covered under the initiative.

Preparatory activities such as identification and constitution/re constitution of VSSs, product mapping, and mobilization of target communities have already been completed. To catalyze internal lending and enable needy VSS members to meet immediate credit requirements, a Revolving Fund (RF); a one time grant of

Rs. 2.0 lakh per VSS has been provisioned and released to all project divisions. By the end of September 2025, Rs. 1,509.91 lakhs had been sanctioned and disbursed by project VSSs to borrowing entities; 2,452 SHGs, 70 CIGs, and 2,670 PoPs for undertaking diverse income generation activities. Of this, Rs. 555.48 lakhs has already been repaid by the beneficiaries, with the amount being replenished by the VSSs.

Further, Rs. 11,521.31 lakhs has been mobilized for 4,888 community development and income generation activities through inter sectoral convergence with Government and Non government welfare Schemes, benefiting 3,68,193 VSS members. In addition, 4,442 Capacity Building Training programmes have been organized for 56,061 participants and 5,810 SHGs, while 1,029 SHGs have been successfully linked with financial institutions.

ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT DURING APRIL-SEPTEMBER ,2025

1. INSTITUTION BUILDING AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

a. Community Mobilization and Institution Building

Community mobilization is a continuous process of organizing and involving stakeholders at every stage of project implementation to take effective collective action for sustainable development. It is the key activity that builds momentum in any people oriented programme. At the village level, Vana Suraksha Samitis (VSSs), Eco Development Committees (EDCs),

and Self Help Groups (SHGs) serve as the backbone of community institutions. Recognizing their importance, the project has prioritized mobilizing and strengthening these grassroots stakeholders. During this period, 5,169 VSS meetings and training programmes were conducted across project villages to mobilize and empower communities.



Meeting at Talabahali VSS, Deogarh Division



EC meeting at Sajanapal EDC, Keonjhar WL Division

b. Capacity Building Initiatives

Capacity Building is a systematic process of developing and strengthening the skills, abilities, processes, and resources that communities and institutions need to adapt and thrive in a changing environment. It enables local people to take timely action on community issues with minimal dependence on external support.

As primary stakeholders, VSS/EDC members have been provided with targeted training to enhance their



CBT by Janasikhyan Sansthan at Natigotha VSS of Keonjhar Division

2. LIVELIHOOD PROMOTION

Livelihood promotion and diversification remain the top priorities of the OFSDS-OMBADC Livelihood Promotion Project, aimed at reducing dependence on forest resources. Income generation activities are facilitated through project funds (Revolving Fund) as well as convergence with schemes of line departments.

Livelihood Plans of VSSs and Business Plans of borrowing entities form the basis of these initiatives.



Goat Farming by Maa Tulashi SHGs at Talabahali VSS, Barkote Range, Deogarh Division

capabilities in problem solving and self management. The project team has taken the lead in conducting these programmes and offering hand holding support for holistic community development. Special emphasis has been placed on skill development for sustainable businesses, preparation of business plans, effective management of the Revolving Fund, market linkages, and financial institution connections. During this period, 600 capacity building programmes were organized, benefitting 17,200 participants.



Tailoring Training by Janasikhyan Sansthan at Sinduria VSS, Keonjhar Division

Business Plans are prepared by SHGs, CIGs, and PoPs with intensive support from project staff, appraised by the Loan Appraisal Committee (LAC), and sanctioned by the Executive Committees of VSSs. Communities have also been linked with welfare and income generation schemes of line departments, while SHGs are being connected to financial institutions to meet credit needs for micro enterprises.



Vegetable cultivation, Bandal VSS of Barasuan Range, Bonai Division

3. IGA PROMOTION THROUGH REVOLVING FUND (RF)

A Revolving Fund of ₹2.0 lakh per project VSS has been provisioned to provide loans to SHGs, CIGs, and PoPs for promoting income generation activities. Loans are sanctioned following RF guidelines, with Loan Appraisal Committees at the VSS level examining applications based on credibility, repayment history, and financial worthiness.



Grocery shop by Maa Sarala SHG at Talabahali VSS, Deogarh Division

Business Plans are prepared by borrowing entities with project team support, covering on farm, off farm, non farm, and NTFP based activities. During the reporting period, 473 SHGs, 17 CIGs, and 712 PoPs availed loans amounting to ₹313.76 lakhs, of which ₹275.45 lakhs has already been repaid by beneficiaries. A division wise detailed report has been compiled separately for reference.



Tailoring unit by Maa Brundabati SHG at Harekrushnapur VSS, Deogarh Division

STATUS OF REVOLVING FUND (APRIL, 2025 TO SEPTEMBER, 2025)

Sl.No	Name of the Division	Number of Borrowing Entities			Status of disbursement (Rs. in lakh)				Status of Repayment (Rs. in lakh)		Total Beneficiaries		
		SHG	CIG	PoP	SHG	CIG	PoP	Total	Amount Repaid	Male	Female	Total	
1	Bonai	6	-	231	4.80	-	34.30	39.10	27.55	99	217	316	
2	Deogarh	213	17	116	10.17	5.00	6.35	21.52	11.06	97	2487	2584	
3	Rourkela	98	-	323	46.15	-	28.90	75.05	24.93	115	1198	1313	
4	Keonjhar	77	-	11	42.60	-	1.00	43.60	84.49	0	662	662	
5	Keonjhar (WL)	79	0	31	39.88	0.20	2.80	42.88	27.83	25	796	821	
Grand Total		473	17	712	143.60	5.20	73.35	222.15	175.86	336	5360	5696	

4. IGA PROMOTION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES THROUGH INTER-SECTORAL CONVERGENCE

The process of structural economic transformation in rural communities emphasizes the promotion of diverse income generating activities. These include on farm, off farm, non farm, and NTFP based enterprises. Holistic community development requires alternate livelihood opportunities, skill enhancement of

rural entrepreneurs, provision of financial and technical support to SHGs, CIGs, and PoPs, as well as infrastructure development for community assets. Since project funds alone cannot meet all these requirements, inter sectoral convergence has been adopted to leverage resources and expertise from various government and non

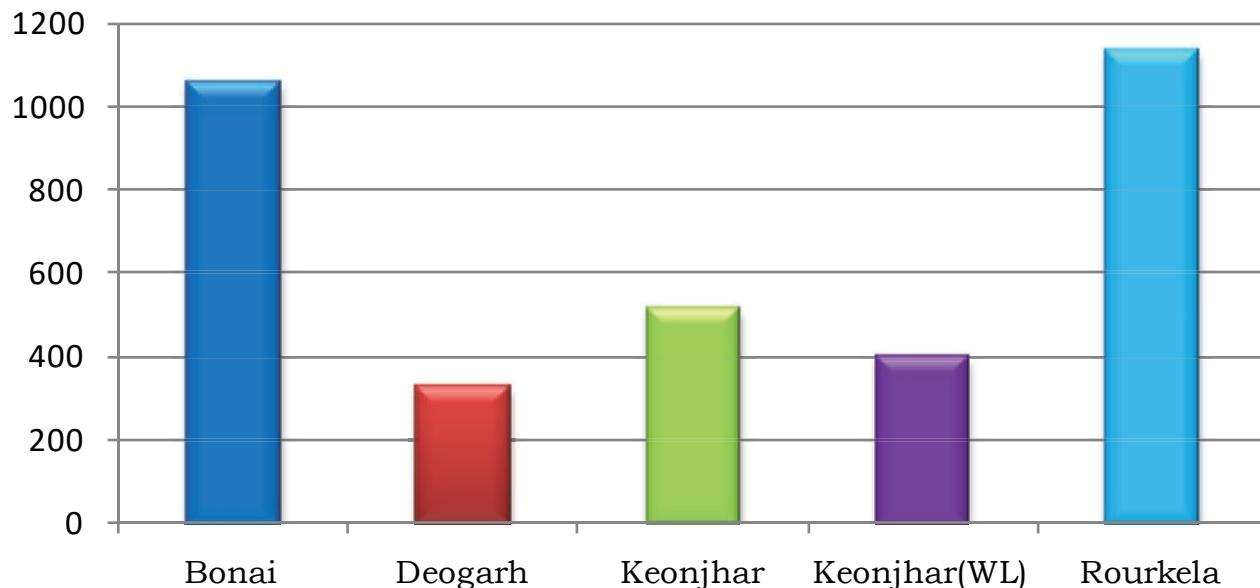
government organizations, thereby addressing multiple dimensions of livelihood improvement more effectively.

During the reporting period, Rs. 3,454.00 lakhs were mobilized, directly benefiting 1,52,251 community members. The efforts made at the VSS/EDC level to establish linkages with 17 government departments and NGOs are noteworthy. Activities undertaken included upskilling rural entrepreneurs and providing technical and financial support to individuals and groups for entrepreneurial ventures such as guava, mushroom, tasar, palm, and chilli cultivation, along with other agricultural and non agricultural enterprises.

DIVISION WISE CONVERGENCE UNDER OFSDS-OMBADC DURING APRIL-2025 TO SEPTEMBER-2025:

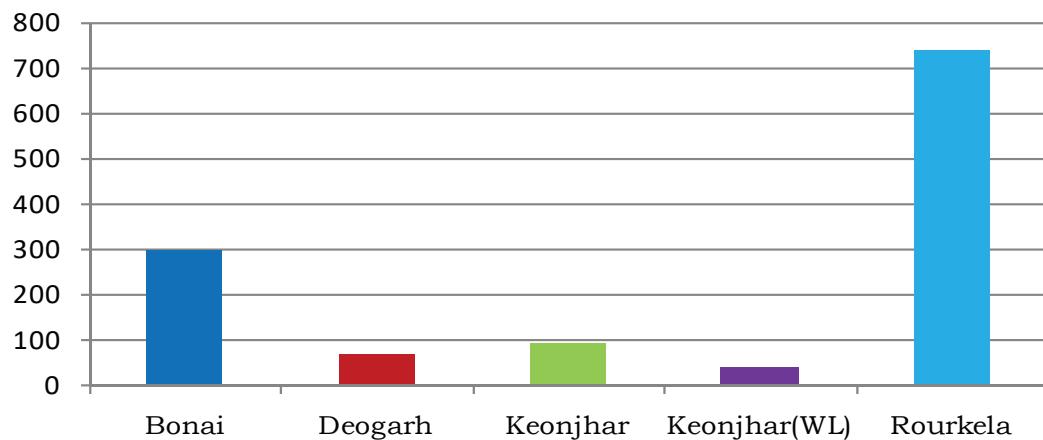
Sl.No	Name of the Division	Number of Convergence activities	Fund Mobilised (in lakhs)	Beneficiaries		Total Beneficiaries
				Male	Female	
1	Bonai	297	1063.04	13548	10303	23851
2	Deogarh	67	331.58	6461	6905	13366
3	Keonjhar	91	516.80	17751	16979	34730
4	Keonjhar(WL)	40	403.66	6205	5936	12141
5	Rourkela	737	1138.91	35817	32346	68163
Grand Total		1232	3454.00	79782	72469	152251

Division-wise Fund Mobilised under Convergence Initiative (in Lakh Rs.)

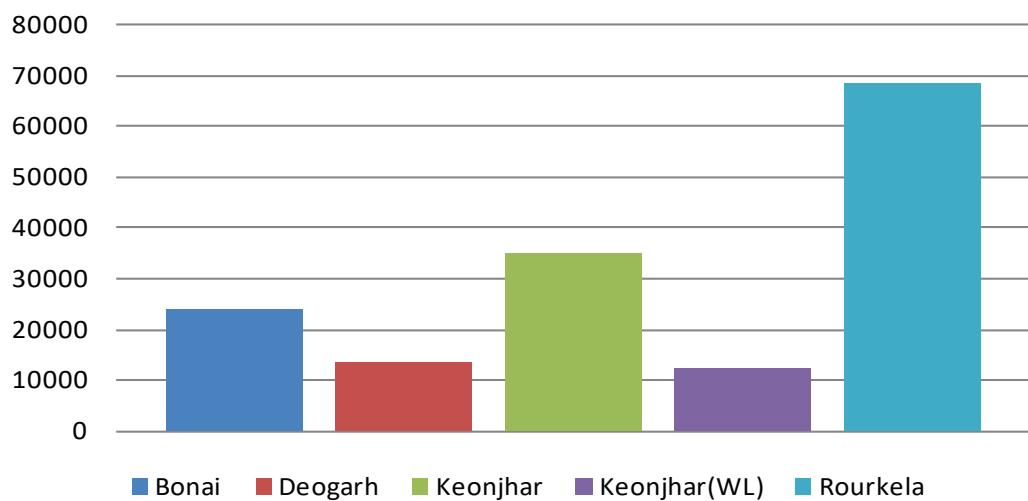


In addition, several community development initiatives were carried out through convergence. These include renovation of canals, construction of C.C. roads, building of community centres, excavation of farm ponds, stone bunding, installation of solar water supply systems, and the creation and maintenance of community assets. Together, these interventions have strengthened both livelihoods and community infrastructure, contributing to long term resilience and growth.

Division-wise number of Convergence Activities undertaken



Division-wise number of Beneficiaries Covered



DEPARTMENT-WISE CONVERGENCE UNDER OFSDS-OMBADC DURING APRIL, 2025-SEPTEMBER, 2025

Sl No.	Departments	No. of VSS	Male Beneficiaries	Female Beneficiaries	Total Beneficiaries	Fund Mobilised (Rs. In Lakhs)
1	Agriculture Department	77	716	619	1335	61.56
2	Bank	19	800	760	1560	79.70
3	Corporate	10	758	600	1358	39.85
4	Finance Department	2	118	110	228	7.00
5	Fisheries & ARD	144	2175	1946	4121	156.97
6	Forest, Environment & Climate Change	42	2391	1420	3811	71.57
7	Health & Family welfare	7	1428	907	2335	7.03
8	Horticulture Department	369	1680	1600	3280	120.67
9	Lift Irrigation	3	9	6	15	0.60

10	MLA/MP LAD	1	273	147	420	5.00
11	NGO	1	121	117	238	3.00
12	Panchayati Raj Department	487	64326	59846	124172	2657.10
13	Road & Building Department	1	125	95	220	30.00
14	Rural Development	2	261	239	500	3.50
15	Science & Technology	1	2	0	2	4.00
16	Soil Conservation & watershed	10	808	647	1455	36.35
17	ST & SC Dev Department	56	3791	3410	7201	170.11
Grand Total		1232	79782	72469	152251	3454.00



Seed distribution to SHGs of Tiadiposi VSS, Keonjhar Division



Labour card registration in convergence with Labour Department, at Patilo G.P, Keonjhar Division



Broiler Farm at Putujhari VSS, Anandapur FMU in Keonjhar WL Division



Convergence with ITDA for Farm equipment Distribution at Mishrapali VSS, Rourkela Division



Convergence with Horticulture Deptt. for vegetable seeds distribution at Manko VSS, Rourkela Division



Pond renovation at Lamsi VSS, Bonai Division PR & DW Deptt. through MGNREGS

SUCCESS STORIES

Our collective efforts have focused on diversifying livelihoods, building capacities, and forging market linkages that ensure fair opportunities for producers. Women's Self Help Groups have emerged as pillars of change, youth entrepreneurs are shaping new possibilities, and traditional artisans are finding renewed recognition in modern markets. These stories of courage and innovation remind us that development is most meaningful when it is community driven and participatory.

Story-1

From Forest to Fortune: A success story of Maa Kalijai SHG under Keonjhar Forest Division

Raigoda is a small forest-fringe village located about 30 Km. from the Bhuyan Juanga Pirha (BJP) Range headquarters in Keonjhar Forest Division. Like many such villages, the people of Raigoda have long depended on the forest for their daily needs, such as fuel wood, fodder, and minor forest produce. In 2015–16, the village came under the fold of the Ama Jangala Yojana (AJY), a community-based forest management initiative. Later, it was also included in the OFSDS-OMBADC Livelihood Promotion Project, which aims to strengthen forest conservation while improving the lives of forest-dependent communities.

In 2016, a joint team from the P-NGO and the Forest Department visited Raigoda to explore livelihood opportunities through convergence with various government departments. They connected the community with schemes from the Agriculture Department, ITDA, Veterinary Department, Horticulture Department and OTELP. Agriculture emerged as a promising option for sustainable income generation.

With support from the Agriculture Department, the P-NGO team facilitated training on Palua (Arrowroot) cultivation, a traditional crop with high market value. A capacity-building program was organized in the village, where all women members of the Maa Kalijai Self-Help Group (SHG) participated enthusiastically. They learned the techniques of Palua cultivation, from land preparation to harvesting and marketing.

Inspired and equipped with new skills, the Maa Kalijai SHG decided to take the leap. They cultivated Palua on two acres of land, investing Rs.80,000/-.

Within just three months, they harvested 350 kilograms of finished arrowroot (Palua). Selling it at Rs. 600/- per kilogram in markets and exhibitions at Keonjhar, they could earn Rs. 2,10,000/- making a net profit of Rs. 1,30,000/-, deducting the actual cost of cultivation. This was a turning point for the group to march forward with a greater vision.

The success of arrowroot cultivation brought a visible improvement in the income and confidence of the SHG members. With better access to credit, training, and market linkages, they began exploring other livelihood options such as goat rearing, vegetable farming, and small businesses. Their dependence on daily wage labor and moneylenders reduced significantly.

Beyond income, the initiative brought deeper changes. Women gained new skills, regular employment, and a stronger voice in household and community decisions. The success of Maa Kalijai SHG has inspired neighboring villages to adopt similar models of collective farming and convergence-based development.

Today, the Palua cultivation project in Raigoda stands as a shining example of how grassroots efforts, when supported by convergence and capacity building, can lead to sustainable livelihoods and women's empowerment. It reflects the broader goals of the OFSDS-OMBADC Livelihood Promotion Project; an initiative for community ownership, forest conservation and inclusive development.



Community meeting and Livelihood planning at Raigoda VSS



Collective cultivation of Arrow root crop



Harvesting and sale of Arrow root (Palua)

Story-2

From Migration to Motivation: The Rise of Kahachuan VSS for poverty mitigation

Kahachuan Vana Suraksha Samiti (VSS), located in the Jarda Forest Management Unit of Bonai Forest Division, has emerged as a beacon of hope for tribal families through the OFSDS-OMBADC Livelihood Project. Formed in 2017-18 and included in the program in 2022-23, the VSS now supports 40 Scheduled Tribe families; 195 individuals, including 105 men and 90 women.

A baseline survey revealed the harsh realities of life in Kahachuan. Most families depended on paddy cultivation and forest produce, with limited income and few opportunities. The lack of resources forced many young people to migrate to distant states like Gujarat and Goa in search of work.

One such story is that of Phulchand Bhukta, son of Baura Bhukta. With a large family to support his parents, younger brother, and wife-Phulchand struggled to survive on a small patch of land and forest resources. In 2021, he migrated to Surat, Gujarat, to work as a labourer, hoping to earn enough to sustain his family.

In 2024, during a visit home, Phulchand learned about the Revolving Fund (RF) available through the Forest Protection Committee. With guidance from the Forest Department and the P-NGO team, he secured a loan of Rs. 20,000/- and began a new chapter.

He added Rs. 5,000/- of his own savings and started a fast-food stall. His wife opened a grocery and stationery shop using the loan amount. Together,

they also launched a chicken cutting shop. These small businesses now earn them a daily profit of Rs.450/- to 500/-.

Phulchand repaid the loan with interest and reinvested his earnings to buy a second-hand bike for Rs.25,000/- to support business logistics, and a fridge worth Rs.15,000/- to sell cold drinks. After three years of hardship in Gujarat, he now earns Rs.15,000/- per month from home, while staying with his family and contributing to his village's economy.

He credits his turnaround to the support of his community, the Forest Department, and the P-NGO team. His story has become a source of inspiration for other youth in Kahachuan, showing that migration is not the only path to survival. With local support and determination, prosperity is possible right at home.



Income generation activity by the members of Kahachuan VSS



Income generation activities by the members of Kahachuan VSS

Story-3

Soil to Sustenance: Maa Samaleiswari SHG's Vermicompost Journey under Rourkela Forest Division

The OFSDS-OMBADC Project is designed to reduce dependency on forest resources, restore degraded lands, and improve the socio-economic conditions of rural communities by promoting alternative livelihoods. One of its key initiatives is the Vermicomposting Income Generation Activity (IGA), introduced in VSS areas to help communities build sustainable income sources through skill development and eco-friendly practices.

In May 2023, several Self-Help Groups (SHGs) from the Banki Range in Rourkela Forest Division, including the Maa Samaleiswari SHG from Mishrapali (Saradhapura Hamlet), decided to take up Vermicomposting as a livelihood option. The partner NGO team introduced the concept and benefits of Vermicompost, followed by hands-on training led by an expert from Bhubaneswar. With guidance and support, the SHG members developed a detailed business plan to launch their vermiculture operations.

By July 2023, the group had set up 10 vermiculture tanks, investing Rs.50,000 from their own savings. Each member received a prefabricated, portable tank (6 x 4 x 2 feet) and 5 kilograms of earthworms. To protect the tanks from heat, each was covered with a 9 x 6 feet shed. The initial investment covered tanks, worms, raw materials, and other essentials.

The composting process began with beds made from cow dung and farm wastes. Earthworms were inoculated into semi-decomposed compost materials and members take care and protection measures. At the final stage, the organic materials decompose and turn into brown granules. The worms are then separated, the compost dried in the sun and the cycle restarted.

After three to four months, the first batch of Vermicompost was ready. The Forest Department supported the SHG by providing packaging materials, such as 25 kg ARANYA Vermicompost bags and a

hand-held sewing machine free of cost. The packaged compost was purchased by the Forest Department for use in plantation drives. Encouraged by the success, the SHG produced even more compost in the next cycle, which was again purchased by the department.

Over eight months, the group produced 15 tons of high-quality Vermicompost. Sold at Rs.15 per kilogram, they earned Rs.2,25,000/- in revenue. After covering all expenses, the SHG made a net profit of Rs.1,75,000/-.

With this profit, they expanded their operations and purchased additional tanks to scale up production.

This initiative has created new employment opportunities and reduced the group's reliance on forest resources. By adopting sustainable farming practices, the Maa Samaleiswari SHG has become a role model for other communities. Their success has shown that Vermicomposting is not just an eco-friendly solution; it's a powerful tool for rural empowerment and economic resilience.



Vermi-compost production progress monitoring



Vermi-compost production units



Vermicompost pit preparation and Training on Vermicompost production by Master Trainer



Vermi-bed support to the beneficiaries



Collector and District Magistrate, Sundargarh visited the vermi-compost production site at Mishrapalli village



Story-4

Livelihoods Rooted in Resilience: The story of Naigaon VSS under Keonjhar Forest Division

Naigaon Village, nestled in the Keonjhar Range of Odisha's Keonjhar Forest Division, is home to forest-dependent Scheduled Tribe families who once relied solely on minor forest produce and daily wage labor for survival. Economic insecurity and limited opportunities led many to migrate in search of work, leaving behind their families and forests.

In 2016–17, the community came together to form the Naigaon Vana Suraksha Samiti (VSS) under the Joint Forest Management framework. Recognizing the challenges, the Odisha Forestry Sector Development

Society (OFSDS), with support from the P-NGO and funding from OMBADC, launched a livelihood promotion project to create sustainable, forest-friendly income sources.

Through structured interventions, the project focused on capacity building, skill development, enterprise creation, and market linkages. Community members actively participated, supported by the Forest Department and the P-NGO team.

The transformation began with training in mushroom cultivation, paper plate making, vermicomposting, and goat rearing. SHGs were formed and strengthened, with members receiving guidance in group management, bookkeeping, and financial literacy. Start-up inputs like mushroom spawn, paper plate molds, vermicompost pits, goat shed materials, and working capital were provided. Exposure visits to successful livelihood clusters and connections to local markets ensured product sales and sustainability.

Over 40 households engaged in these activities, turning seasonal efforts into reliable year-round livelihoods. Household income rose significantly, food security improved, and migration declined. Women emerged as entrepreneurs and decision-makers, leading SHGs and contributing to community development. A Revolving Fund was established to support reinvestment and future growth.

INCOME GROWTH HIGHLIGHTS

Livelihood Activities	Before Project (Monthly)	After Project (Monthly)	Income Increase
Mushroom Cultivation	Rs.2,500 – Rs.3,000	Rs.8,000 – Rs.10,000	250% – 300%
Goat Rearing (per cycle)	Rs.4,000 – Rs.5,000	Rs.10,000 – Rs.12,000	150% – 180%
Paper Plate Making	Rs.3,000 – Rs.3,500	Rs.7,000 – Rs.8,000	130% – 160%
Vermicompost	Nil	Rs.8,000 – Rs.10,000	150% – 180%
Overall Household Income	Rs.3,000 – Rs.4,000	Rs.8,000 – Rs.10,000	Over 150% increase

The project's impact extended beyond income. Migration reduced significantly. Families began saving and investing in their children's education. Women's leadership within SHGs and VSS activities grew stronger. Cooperation between forest officials and villagers improved, fostering sustainable forest management.

VOICES FROM NAIGAON

"Before the project, we used to migrate for daily wage work. Now, through mushroom cultivation, vermicompost, goat rearing, and paper plate making, we earn from our own village and spend more time with our families." - Smt. Hemangini Mahanta, SHG Member

"Our VSS is now stronger and united. We protect our forest and also earn our living from sustainable

livelihoods." — Sri Nabakishore Mahanta, President, Naigaon VSS

The journey of Naigaon VSS under the OFSDS-OMBADC Livelihood Project is a powerful example of how forest conservation and livelihood enhancement can go hand in hand. It reflects the true spirit of "Livelihood Improvement through Community Empowerment."



Various income generation activities by the members of Naigaon VSS



Production and sale of Vermi-compost in customized packets by the SHG members

VISIT OF DIGNITARIES TO THE PROJECT DIVISIONS



PCCF & HoFF visited Keonjhar Division, interacted with field staff and SHG members



PMU team from OFSDS visited Balijodi VSS, Keonjhar Division and interacted with the VSS members



PMU team from OFSDS visited Kathakata EDC, Keonjhar (WL) Division

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