

# ANNUAL REPORT For 2016 - 2017

## ARASMIN

( ASSOCIATION FOR RURAL AREA SOCIAL MODIFICATION, IMPROVEMENT AND NESTLING )

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1. Project Information:	
Name of the Organization:	ARASMIN
Project Title:	Conservation of Nature through Tribal Socio- Cultural and Spiritual Empowerment.
Project Number:	Project No- IND-16/17-3620
Report Period:	April' 2016 to March' 2017

## 2. Target Group:

(Name of the target group community/ region etc)

More than 85% Tribal (Adivasi) People belonging to "Kandha" Community in the Districts of Kandhamal, Kalahandi and Bolangir in Odisha State are taken as our Target Group and stakeholders.

#### 3. CONSERVATION PROGRAMME:

(Activities and measures taken):

## **FOREST AND ENVIRONMENT:**

Environmental degradation during these present days has become a Global Issue. Degradation of Forest, Extinction of Wild Animals, diminishing Biological diversity, Climate Change and Raise of Temperature are the acute problems and the vital cause of Environmental degradation. It is a broad concept which includes pollution of various biological and physical components of the planet as a result of which the entire world is going to be destroyed.

In this juncture, we have thought it wise and gainful to work on the endangered species and trying for acceleration and restoration of Forest, Conservation of Nature, Biodiversity, Control of Pollution, Restoration of Environment and Climate Change. On the other hand, the lives of all Wild Animals like Tigers, Elephants, Bears, Deer, Monkeys and Wild Bores can be saved. All the village Forests are being developed which will generate fresh Air, clean Water and create a congenial atmosphere for the lives of all. Hence, vigorous awareness campaigns with appropriate actions are being taken in a regular manner for Restoration of Forest, protection of Environment and conservation of Biodiversity.

#### **WILDLIFE CONSERVATION:**

**ARASMIN** is an active member of the "Wildlife Institute of India" and as such we are trying our level best to protect the Wild Animals, Wild Birds, migrated Birds and the Mammals so as to avoid different type of Natural Calamities, en-hazards and different diseases like Cancer, Asthma and Tuberculosis etc in order to accelerate the human life-cycle. A regular awareness program is being conducted to stop Tiger poaching, Deer poaching and hunting of different Animals and Birds. We are also getting much more support from the Officers and Staff of the Forest Department of the Government of Orissa. In view of the above phenomenon, some of the activities undertaken by us are mentioned hereunder.

 We have formed Forest and Wildlife protection Committees in 360 villages in our Area of operation and having regular interactions with the stakeholders periodically for conservation and protection of Nature.

- ii. Awareness campaigns are being done for restoration of Forests and not to fire the forests during summer season in order to save the carnivorous animals, insects, herbal plants and sprouts so as to promote the lively-hoods of all creatures.
- iii. Awareness campaigns are being conducted on the value of Forests, Environment and Wild animals and how to protect them from the endangered situations with cultural link.
- iv. Special attention and awareness programmes are being done at the Elephant Corridor in Kalahandi District and Kandhamal District to save the lives of the Elephants.
- v. Our community members are watching regularly to save a rare species of big animal called "Gaur" (seems like wild buffalo) seen in Kalahandi District of Orissa State.
- vi. Awareness campaigns are being done at Kalinga Ghat in conjunction with the local people and the Forest personnel to save the lives of the Monkeys and Apes coming to the Road for food given by the Travelers.

#### **ENVIRONMENT AND GREEN ECONOMY:**

We have observed that lack of Lively-hood alternatives is another major reason of degradation of natural resources. Ecology works to promote sustainable agriculture, non-timber forest products and community enterprise. We are initiating to avail these alternative opportunities that improve the individuals and poor Community well-being. Hence, we are encouraging our Community members to have the subsistence Agricultural production that saves the lives of the Tribal people as well as the Earth. The details of the advantages of the subsistence Agricultural farming and production are mentioned hereunder:

- Practices of Land use: The Land use practice is generally horizontal and sometimes it is Vertical for the purpose of Subsistence Agricultural cultivation.
- Crop Coverage: Suan Rice, Boro-Rice, Raggi, Maize, Black gram, Beans, Pea, Cowpea, Turmeric, Zinger etc. which are totally grown in Forest Area without more care and more labour.
- Duration of the Crops: The duration of the crops are very less i.e. before 60 days except the Turmeric and Zinger.

#### **ADVANTAGES AND OPPORTUNITIES:**

- No need of more water and No need of fertilizer.
- More Nutritional contents and more Medicinal value.
- Economic for cultivation and Easy to harvest.
- No Possibility of infection and Palatable for consumption.
- Freedom pattern of cropping and Market demand is very high.
- Fertility of soil will not be destroyed.
- The best practice for Climate Change.
- Over all, the cultivation is Eco-friendly, Climate-friendly, Climate -resilient, Climate smart, Carbon smart, Water smart and Energy smart.

#### MARINE ECOSYSTEM AND BLUE ECONOMY:

Awareness campaigns are being done at Rushikulya River mouth and Astarang Sea-shore area of <u>Bay of Bengal</u> to save and protect the Marine Mammals like Shark, Whales, Dolphins, Migratory Birds and other endangered fish species and Marine Ecosystem. The idea of blue economy is related to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, is a local context of Odisha as world's largest bay, and needs of locally led effort for blue growth are being discussed that the idea Blue Economy is the new approach of sustainability in which the world acknowledged the role of our Oceans as the carbon sink stabilizer of global climate, water cycle regulator, and the catalyst of economic progress and human well-being. Discussions are being done on UN Sustainable Development Goals 14 and 15 which are very important that, only a healthy Marine Ecosystem can offer ecosystem goods and services to increasing rate of population.

#### **CONSERVATION OF OLIVERIDLEY TURTLES:**

Since last two years, we have extended our activity to a new venture at the Bay of Bengal and involved in Conservation and protection of Olive Ridley Turtles at the Rushikulya River Mouth with awareness programs at the villages Purunabandha, Gokharkud, Podampeta, Kantiagad, Pallibandha and Binchanapalii and working pleasantly in conjunction with our Community members.

Awareness campaigns are also done in the villages Suhan, Gundalaba, Daluakani, Anakana, Chhenu, Tandaghar, Udayakani, Musapada, Nadiamatha and Chhuriana near Ramchandi River mouth and Keluni River mouth to save the Olive Ridley Turtles.

## 4. LIVELIHOOD PROGRAMME

(Describe the system of exploitation/ marginalization)

#### **Situation analysis:**

- Exploitation is an acute problem in our Area of operation. It is caused by the Land Lords, Businessmen and the Money Lenders through lending system, Micro-Finance Companies and other Financing Institutes are also exploiting in the name of Socio-economic Development. Contractors are exploiting the labourers at the time of paying their wages. Political Leaders are exploiting the people in the name of welfare projects. Government Officers are exploiting the people severely on providing their legitimate claims like caste certificates, income certificates and on availing welfare projects. The NGOs are also exploiting the people in different manners.
- In recent past, the Businessmen and the Land lords have hi-jacked thousands of acres
  of Tribal lands creating synthetic relation with them and providing country liquor.
- The Government by legislation have banned the entry of the Tribal people to forest area and trying to make them out from the Forest Area.
- Since time immemorial the Tribal people are in possession of Forest lands but they do not have the Record of Rights of their lands due to the in-coherent attitude of the Govt. Officers.

- All the Tribal people are being diverted from their own culture in different manner like:
  - (i) Migrant exterminatory groups are trying to divert the Tribal people from their own Culture in order to exploit them.
  - (ii) The Govt. Officers of Forest department are making them out from forest area for which they are staying far away from their Goddess which makes them out from their culture.
  - (iii) The multi-national companies in order to sale their products are advertising in a large scale and trying to merge the Tribal people with the fashion world of the time which makes them out from their own culture.
  - (iv) When poverty becomes a bar on the livelihood management of the people and they are going on migration, being debarred from their culture.
- Food crisis is a vital problem in our area of operation as the Agricultural produces and Forest produces are being hi-jacked by the Land Lords, Businessmen and Money Lenders. The people are selling their products in a very nominal price for which they face the food crisis from the second part of the cropping season.
- The Government being motivated by the multi-national companies is forcing the Tribal people to use the Hi-breed seeds which are a curse for their own traditional crop.
- The Government in power with the hidden aim to hold the political power continuously supplying one rupee rice which attracts the soft corner of the people towards the Govt. Machinery and results to increasing rate of dependency of the People.
- Due to lack of employment opportunity the people are going out side regularly to earn something for their family management for which migration in our area is very common.
- As a result of severe exploitation and sheer deceits the Tribal people are becoming poor day by day and leaving their native place for ever. Hence, displacements are very common in our area.
- The Government officers in charge of Health Care Services are not so punctual in their duty and not caring for the poor people. Hence, the Health Care Services in our area of operation is very poor.
- Communal Riot and tensions are also seen frequently due to the political interference with the internal aim to hold the political powers.

#### **Latest Changes in Situation:**

(Describe political/ administrative/ legal changes in recent time)

**ARASMIN** from the inception has been working on Conservation and Protection of Forest and Environment, Wild Animals, Biodiversity, Food Security, Transformational Leadership, Human Rights, Anti-corruption, Women Empowerment (Gender Equalization) and Child Education" etc. We also feel it like a **Global Challenge** and continuing to work since last 24 years.

Now, we feel a great change in the livelihood situation that during the last Panchayat Raj Election 183 male members and 153 women have been elected for ward members, 08 male members and 06 women have been elected for Samiti savya and as regards to Sarapanch, 06 male members and 06 women have been elected. It is a historical change in political situation as a result of our continuous inter-action with the people. More over, now the

People have become more conscious about their political Rights and Social Rights as a result of which, the Political exploitation has reduced to some extent.

In administrative sector by virtue of our continuous Lobby and Advocacy, we are getting cooperation from the Govt. Officers and able to draw their soft corners towards the people that leads to a great change in the policy of the Government. As a result of which the People are getting their welfare projects like Indira Awas houses, Old age pensions, Destitute pensions, Drinking water facilities and communication facilities etc.

Moreover, now the innocent people are able to raise their voice against the exploitations, injustice and claim for their social Rights before the Administration and to counter the anti-social elements.

Advocacy and Lobby followed by frequent contacts have brought some visible changes in the life situation of the poor people and 456 families have been able to get their Record of Rights on their forest lands. Moreover, after getting the Record of Rights there is a great change in the cropping pattern of the people as they have accepted the subsistence Agriculture as their traditional crop.

#### **Difficulties & Challenges:**

(Describe difficulties & challenges from the changing situation, affecting the project work)

#### Difficulties:

- Our project concept is so unique that if it is properly fed to a dumb he will become one
  political leader. Hence, our dedicated Coordinators and Animators being developed
  with this concept are leaving our NGO and seeking for Govt. jobs. Some of them are
  entering to political sector.
- Due to lack of education, people are often confused of the project concept for which it is taking more time to merge them with the project concept.
- The Government machinery by Legislation has banned the entry of Tribal people to Forest Area which is a barrier for the livelihood management of the Tribal People.
- As regards to some legal matters the Government Officers do not cooperate the people which are obstacles for the people to develop.
- The commercial attitude of other NGOs is a barrier to our progress. They are motivating the people, showing the attraction of more money and trying to involve them in micro-finance that makes the people proletarian.
- The entrance of multi-National Companies caused by Globalization and the outside Businessmen are a curse for the Tribal People. They are taking the advantages of the innocent character of the people.
- Many times, at the time of advocacy and lobby, the Government officers are giving assurance but subsequently they are not cooperating.

#### Challenges:

- At the time of selecting any village for adoption, we have to locate the real target group and work with them or otherwise being motivated by other community they will be far away from the process and our efforts will go in vein.
- We have to initiate the people in a regular manner to strengthen their Community
  Organizations, Koth Funds, Grain Banks and culture so long they are not thorough on
  the concept of the project. Reconnecting to spiritualism is also highly necessary to
  bring a change in the life situation of the people and to bring their mental strength.
- Strengthening the Regional Networks for generating more power of the People to

- preserve their Social Rights is a great challenge.
- A large number of TB Patients are neglected by the TB Department for which we have to take the appropriate action to get their services.
- The exploiting attitude of the Land Lords, Businessmen, Money Lenders, Contractors, Government Officers and Political persons are still in continuation for which we should be very careful, because they can spoil our people at any moment.
- The Officers of the Agriculture Department are forcing the people to use Hi-breed seeds, chemical fertilizers and pesticides by which the traditional cultivation will be abolished.
- To make the people stay far away from loans in order to be saved from Exploitations and get the genuine sale proceeds of their local produces.
- All the people should be strictly advised not to leave their Landed Property on mortgage or Lease.
- To involve the people with forest protection activities and take care of the Forest which
  provides foods and shelter that save the Life of the Tribal People and keep the Forest
  and Forest Lands under their Rights and to protest in case of any injustice.
- Demand for the legal Right on their encroached land before the Revenue Authority and get the **Records of Right**.

## **5.** Objective of the project:

(Outline the objective of the project)

- To strengthen the socio-economic condition of the poor Adivasi people and creation of opportunities for providing FOOD SECURITY to save the lives.
- To keep them far away from Loans and Exploitations which are the most detrimental elements of Tribal livelihood.
- To preserve their Social Rights, especially the Rights on their LAND, FOREST and Culture which are the baseline elements of the Tribal life.
- To reduce their Cultural dependency and to improve their Spiritual connection in order to create their self-confidence for facing the hazardous situations of life.
- Creation of some Social Leaders and improving their leadership quality in order to raise their voice against Social injustice and challenge the anti-social elements.
- To check the migration, that is the most dangerous trend of Tribal life.
- Over all, to strengthen the lively-hood of the poor Tribal people in order to merge them in the mainstream of the present society and lead a peaceful life.

#### 6. Intervention Methodology:

(Describe the method of empowerment process)

- Formation of community organizations like Men organization and Women organization at all the adopted villages and forming Regional Networks.
- Establishment of Koth funds (Rice Gola and Cash), Grain Banks and Death funds at all villages so as to provide food security, health security and help them at disasters.
- Involving the people with their cultural tradition and re-connecting them to spirituality.
- Making Lobby and Advocacy for obtaining the RoR of the Revenue lands, encroached forest lands and for other welfare activities of the Government before the appropriate authorities.
- Encouraging the people to have subsistence Agricultural farming, like Suan Rice, Kuda Rice, Maize, Janna, Ragi and Tila etc.

## **7.** Project Activities:

(Describe the list of activities being conducted for empowerment process/ mention highlight of activities(how many/ what types of activities) <u>including</u> those conducted for addressing the 'specific focus/objective' set in the last years' report)

- Providing capacity building training to the staff members and Intensive Leadership training to the village Activists on Land Rights, Debt bondage, Human Rights, Culture, Spiritualism and subsistence Agriculture.
- Strengthening the Educative Community Organizations like Village Development Sanghas (VDS) and Women Sanghas (MS) and Regional Networks.
- Strengthening the Regional Networks through proper education to the people and meeting interventions and promoting the same.
- Strengthening their Village Koth Funds, Death Funds, Grain Banks and Seed Banks in order to stay far away from loans and Exploitations.
- Educating the People through deeper analysis of their situation in their periodical village meetings.
- Identifying the persons having leadership quality and promoting them Creation of opportunity to improve their Leadership quality and art of their speaking.
- Initiating the People for preservation of their Rights on Land and Forest.
- Initiating the Tribal Community to promote their Culture and cultural traditions and reconnecting the People with Spiritualism.
- Promoting the Culture and organizing the cultural functions and celebrations and reorganising the traditional sacrifice.
- Creation of ability to participate in all decision making situations.
- Promoting the Community involvement for reduction of dependency.
- Motivation to check the Migration and Displacement that devastate the Adivasi life.
- To inject their own perceptions for acquiring their welfare projects.
- Making Community involvement Lobby and Advocacy for acquiring RoR, availing different welfare projects like BPL Cards, Ration Cards, Indira Awas Houses, Old-age pensions and Destitute pensions etc.
- To develop the practice of subsistence Agricultural Encouraging the people to have the
  practice of Subsistence Agricultural farming, like Suan Rice, Kuda, Maize, Jana, Ragi
  and Tila etc; so as to reduce their dependency.
- Awareness campaigns are being done in a regular manner against different contagious diseases like Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS to all members to take their treatment and maintain regular contact with the Chief District Medical Officers.
- The District Medical Officers and District TB Officers are being informed on TB affected people and HIV/AIDS suspected cases regularly.

## 8. Impact of the project:

#### **Extent of project coverage:**

(Describe number of villages/families reached/ difficulties experienced/ deviation in plan –if any)

 We are working in this field since last 5 (five) years. By virtue of our long term experience, we have been able to activate the people and their Organizations as mentioned hereunder:

i. No. of Villages: 360.

ii. No. of Men Organizations: 360iii. No. of women Organizations: 360

iv. No. of families: 7274

v. No. of Grain Banks created: **360** 

vi. No. of Rice saving Groups created: 360vii. No. of Cash saving Groups created: 360

#### **Progress achieved:**

(Describe the highlights of achievements <u>including</u> progress on specific focus/objective set in last year's report and problems faced)

- The community organizations are functioning smoothly and the community members are being developed. Moreover, the people have become conscious about the advantage of their Community organisations and trying to strengthen the same
- The Regional Networks have generated more Man power and a number of unique local Leaders have been created who are taking leadership at all occasions.
- Almost, all the people are well aware of the benefits of their savings activity and taking
  utmost care to strengthen their Koth Funds and availing the facilities of credit in a very
  constructive way.
- The people have realized that the culture is a vital part of their livelihood and as such the people of all villages are celebrating their cultural functions without fear.
- Community involvement advocacy and lobby has been started by virtue of our regular interactions with the people.
- The people being conscious are fighting for their Rights and taking the justice from the Administration.
- As regards to their political Rights, during the last Panchayat Raj Election they have been able to acquire their political Rights in large scale.
- The people have understood the importance of subsistence farming and ecoenvironment conservation.
- Gender equalization and gender empowerment is very prominent in this area as such the ladies of the Tribal community are taking the vital roles in all occasions.
- As regards to amenities and accesses the people have become more conscious and availing their BPL/Ration cards, Old Age/Destitute pensions and the Drinking Water facilities on demand.

#### Numerical data of Results achieved:

(Transfer indicated key-data from the Data Collection and Monitoring Grid (DCMG))

Key Indicators:	Results:
Number of villages covered:	360
Number of families covered:	7274
Total Number of family members covered:	35786

Number of Men involved:	3592
Number of Women involved:	3682
Number of Men saving group/ Grain Bank:	360
Number of Women saving group/ Rice Bank:	360
Number of internal credits taken:	1118
Number of Bonded Laborers freed:	242
Number of Families receiving higher wages:	3276
Number of Families securing land/right:	2284
Number of Acres of land secured:	866.000
Number of Families practicing subsistence agriculture:	2388
Number of Families stopped migration with baseline.	2242/930
Number of Ration/ BPL cards:	456/456
Number of drinking water facility:	356
Number of girls going to school:	674
Number of boys going to school:	683
Number of members elected in Panchayatraj elections:	362
Number of members participated in Advocacy & Lobbying events:	740
Number of villages reconnected to lost culture and spirituality: (DCMG 12.b)	246

## 9. Future Action Plan:

## Plan for area coverage:

(Describe number of villages planned/ justification for consolidation/ expansion or phase out -if planned)

Now, the programme is continuing in 360 villages in three Districts of Odisha. A number of 140 villages have been phased out at the end of the Financial year 2011-2012. The land rights education has not been provided to the people of those 140 villages and the Follow-up programme was closed at the end of March 2016. But, still we are in touch with those 140 villages.

Hence, the planning for future to extend our Area of operation or to phase out any area shall be done with consultation of the National Coordinator. But, for the coming project year we plan to promote the running activities by means of Supervision and Monitoring.

#### **Specific Focus:**

(Describe the specific objectives/ tasks to be focussed, in view of the problems being faced)

- To strengthen the saving activities/Grain Bank process and Networks.
- To link the Land Right in phased out Villages to the programme activities.
- To emphasise on Land Rights and obtain the Record of Rights.
- To emphasise on the Cultural aspects of the people and spiritualism.
- To provide intensive Training to the Animators for capacity building.
- To organise Mega Festivals and Health Camps at different villages.
- To organise Mega Advocacy and Lobby programs on Land Issues.

#### **Specific Activities:**

(Describe specific activities to be conducted to address the specific objectives/ tasks)

- Strengthening and promoting the Community Organizations, Koth Funds and Regional Networks.
- Providing Land Right Education to the People of all Villages.
- To prioritise on Cultural aspect and giving importance on Spiritualism.
- Providing intensive training to the new Animators on Land Rights, Debt Bondage, Human Rights and Culture.
- Providing Leadership and Capacity Building training to the village Activists and Capacity Building Training to the staff members.
- To make Lobby and Advocacy for different welfare projects.
- To organise Health camps at Panchayat Headquarters.

#### 10.Case Study:

(Describe one success story from the project with one or two photos)

## **SAVING THE LIVES THROUGH CULTURE:**

"Taganaju" is a big Village under Jiridikia Gram Panchayat of K. Nuagaon Block in the Kandhamal District. The village consists of 53 families out of which 49 families belong to Tribal Community and 4 families belong to other backward class. We started our program in that village during the year' 2012. Initially, there was no response from the people despite our repeated visits and repeated approaches. On a detail study of their situation, it was revealed that, there was no integration, no fraternity and no unit among the people. They were being exploited by the local Businessmen, Money lenders, Government Officers, Political Leaders and Contractors in different manners. They were disgusted with the social trend and inhuman attitude of the anti-social elements that sounds very much like personal demonstration of aggression against the Tribal. Though it was a good opportunity for us to work in such type of village, we could not get the support and cooperation of the people. Once, we invited them to attend a mega cultural function arranged in another village and a number of people attended the program. There was a focus of the program on their livelihoods. Subsequently, we had a meeting in their village and all the villagers attended our meeting with pleasure. It was an opportunity for us to organize one small cultural program in their village inviting the local Government Officers.

Gradually, we were able for formation of their community organizations, Koth Funds, celebrating their cultural functions, taking important roles in their Network meetings and getting their Record of Rights and acquire their social Rights. Hence, there is a sudden change in the life situation of the poor people and by virtue of the strength of their community organization; they became very powerful with an amazing Leadership quality. So, in present position, they have become free from food crisis, loan burden, exploitation, social injustice and the migration has reduced.

Once, during our monthly interaction meet, we advised them to start the Subsistence Agriculture in their village during the cropping season which is very useful to solve the Food Crisis and to save the lives of Tribal people and very effective for environment. Then, all the villagers took a thunder oath to clean the forest area and have their subsistence agricultural cultivation. Accordingly, without fearing for the Forest Officers and Revenue Officers they put the statue of their "Dharani Penu (Goddess)" in the forest area and started worshipping with

high-sounding traditional musical instruments and started cutting the unnecessary trees and cleaned about 50 Acres of forest land where they are cultivating the Subsistence Agriculture. Though the matter came to the notice of all Officers, they did not have any reaction out of fear and did not initiate any legal action.

In the mean time, the Indian Consultant of our Donor Agency had a visit to this village and observed the situation. He asked the people "What will you do if the Government takes severe action against you?" In reply, the people answered "acquire the forest land is our Right, we all are ready to face any type of legal action that the Government wants to take, even we are ready go to the jail". Now, the program is continuing very smoothly under our responsive guidance and direct supervision. The community is subsequently pursuing the grant of a legal right over the encroached ancestral land.



PHOTOS SPEAK ABOUT THE EVALUATION PROGRAMME 2016-2017.



## **CULTURAL FUNCTION OF THE TRIBAL COMMUNITY:**





## **PLANNING FOR FUTURE:**

- To strengthen the Educative Community Organisations, Koth Funds and the Cultural Traditions of the people so as to achieve some more constructive and more tangible works to save their livelihoods.
- Conducting frequent training programmes to improve the working skill and capacity of the staff members in the fields.

- Providing more radical knowledge on the benefits of Forest, Environment, Conservation of Wildlife and Ecosystems so as to save the Earth.
- To use the empowerment parameter during the process of implementation.
- To make the people well aware of their Land Rights and acquire the ROR.
- To strengthen the cultural traditions of the people for a better lively-hood.
- Taking absolute care to make the programme sustainable.
- To providing employment opportunity and improve subsistence agricultural farming so as to bring food security.
- Increasing the level of lobby and advocacy for the benefits of the people.
- To create some prominent Leaders in the area of operation.
- To organise more Health Care Camps, so as to provide Health care facility to the people.

SECRETARY ARASMIN