Sustainable Development

Through Partnerships

AFPRO
Action For Food Production
56 years of Excellence

Newsletter

Issue 4
March 2024

Editorial

Greetings!

A new year brings with it the promise of new horizons with new opportunities, new collaboration and continued growth.

We warmly share our Fourth newsletter. This reflects upon the works carried out by AFPRO to enable poor communities to move towards sustainable development for achieving enhanced socio-economic status in the society. There has been major focus on strengthening resources and building capacity of community, especially small farmers through connecting traditional knowledge and cultural identity for achieving sustainable farming practices. We have introduced the concept of regenerative farming in various project areas. This approach allows natural systems to renew themselves with focus on soil moisture retention, combating soil deterioration, better crop productivity and climate resilience as well as low carbon farming practices.

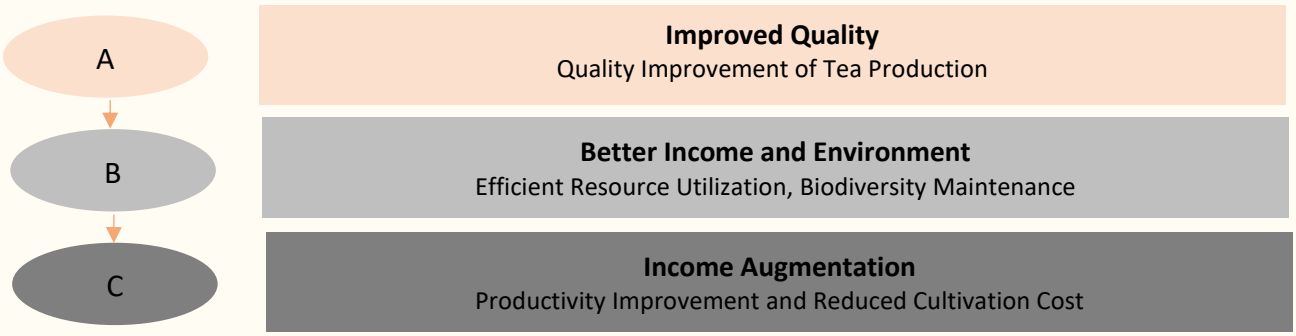
We will continue our efforts to deepen AFPROs impact on disadvantaged population through varied programs and interventions while contributing towards Sustainable Development Goals.

Dr. Jacob John,
Executive Director, AFPRO

Living Income Program for Small Tea Growers

The Project **"Living Income Program For Small Tea Growers"** aspires to improve the income of small tea growers in Tinsukia and Dibrugarh districts of Assam, India. It intends to develop a working model for small tea growers to improve farm profitability, by the adoption of sustainable/regenerative agricultural practices, focusing on efficient soil and water management practices along with improvement in the quality & quantity of their produce. This is supported by our project partner 'Stitching IDH Sustainable Trade Initiative'.

Project Objectives



Key Features

- Improve and upgrade the quality of tea leaves produced by 1500+ Small Tea Growers (STGs) network of 4 Bought Leaf Factories (BLFs) by focusing on training on the use of mechanical plucking machines and following good plucking standards.
- Encouraging the adoption of sustainable/regenerative agricultural practices by the selected Small Tea Growers to bring positive impacts on soil health and water and maintaining biodiversity.
- Training of Smallholders on various aspects of land, soil, water, and nutrient management improved agronomics with reference to sustainable/regenerative agriculture.

Activities

Field visit and training program comprised of the following tasks:

Plucking: Training was given for identifying and plucking good-quality green tea leaves to improve the quality of production.

Pruning: Training programmes were conducted along with demonstrations on the importance of pruning for better crop productivity and distribution of crops.

Integrated Pest Management: imparted training that will improve the knowledge of targeted STGs on how to correctly follow tea cultivation practices, the use of proper agrochemicals, and the use of PPC-approved chemicals for pest management.

Soil Health: Training was given on how to evaluate the health of the soil, make vermicompost, and consider corrective action to make the soil healthier.

The adaptation of sustainable and regenerative agriculture practices and efficient soil water management practices will improve farm profitability, contribute to farm income, and reduce the living income gap.

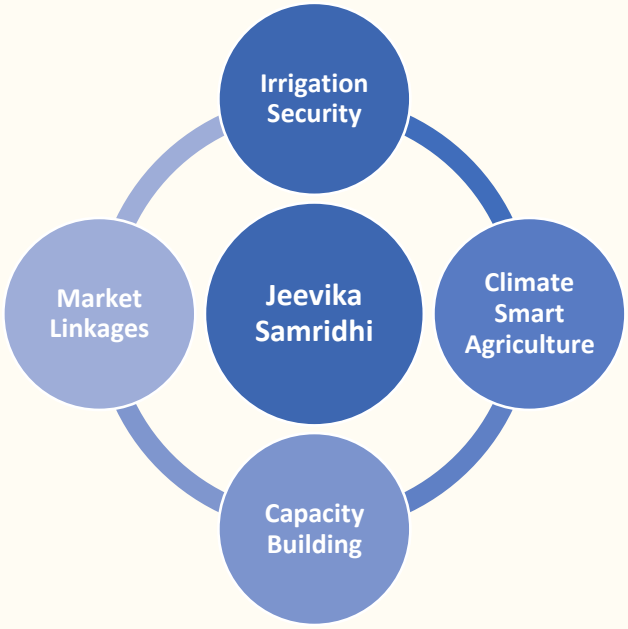
Jeevika Samriddhi

Sustainable Agriculture Through Land And Water Management

"Jeevika Samridhi Project- Phase III" aims to improve the sustainable livelihood and standard of living of the farming community through adaptation of "Climate Smart Agricultural Practices" and its allied interventions in 3 villages of Jharsuguda & Kolabira blocks of Jharsuguda district, Odisha. It is a one-year project from July 2023 - June 2024, aiming to benefit 717 families. For this project our project partner is 'Vedanta Limited Aluminium & Power'.

Project Objectives

- Secured irrigational facilities through soil and water conservation.
- Increased cultivation area through supplementary irrigation facilities.
- Promotion of climate smart agriculture.
- Developing market linkages for farmers.
- Capacity Building of local institutions.



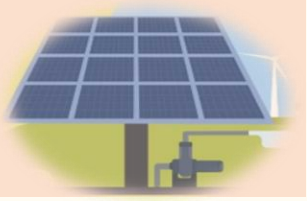
Key Interventions

Interventions commenced with stakeholder consultation of AFPRO regional team, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Jharsuguda and Vedanta CSR team exploring scope of sustainable agriculture practices. Major interventions in this project period focused on irrigation infrastructure development and climate smart agriculture practices.

Project launching event was successfully conducted by AFPRO team and graced by the presence of Vedanta CSR team, District and Block level Government officers, Gram panchayat members, Ward members and farmers from the 3 project villages.

Irrigation Infrastructure Development

Installation of 3 Solar Irrigation Pumps
Coverage: 2 Villages, 15 Farmers, 15 acres land



Climate Smart Agriculture

Systematic Rice Intensification (SRI) Paddy Cultivation
Coverage: 2 Villages, 14 Farmers, 11 Acres Land

3 Units of WADI Model Promotion
Coverage: 3 Villages, 3 Acres Land

Allied Agriculture Practices

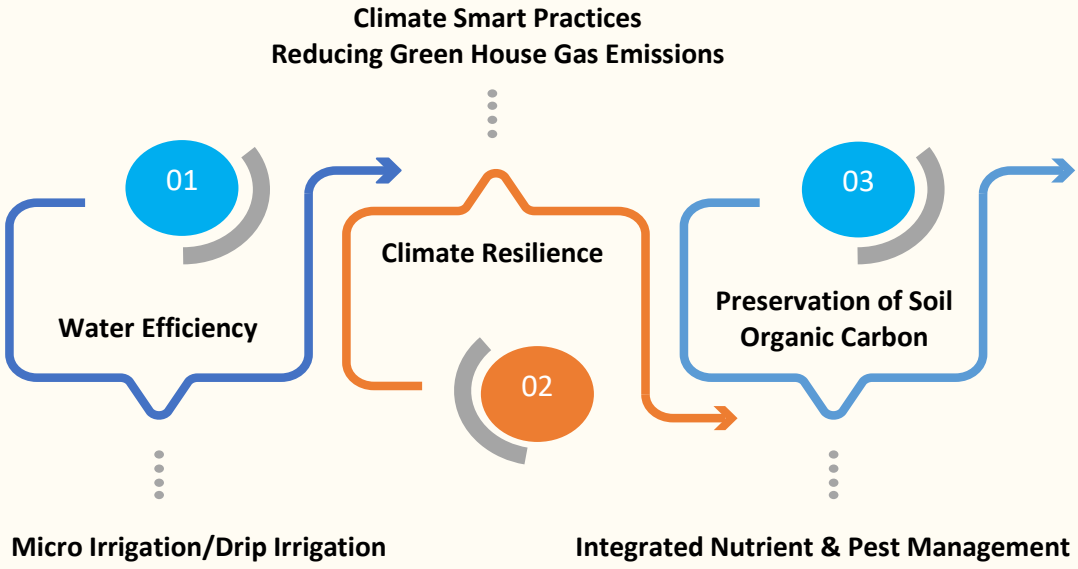
Promotion of back yard Kitchen Garden
Coverage: 3 villages, 18 farmers

Fish Rearing
Provision of Input Materials
Coverage: 2 Villages, 3 Farmers' Groups, 32 Women

Promotion of Pulses and oil seeds
Coverage: 3 villages, 14 farmers

Climate Resilient Farmer Group Development To Support COVID-19 Recovery For Small Holder Cotton Farmers

The objective of the Technical Assistance is to support COVID-19 recovery for smallholder cotton farmers to enhance resilience against climate variability through strategic interventions and technology demonstration for efficient management of soil and water resources. The project aims to benefit 4087 farmers in 25 villages in Gangapur Block, Aurangabad District of Maharashtra. This is being implemented with our project partner Asian Development Bank and Louis Dreyfus Company India Pvt Ltd.

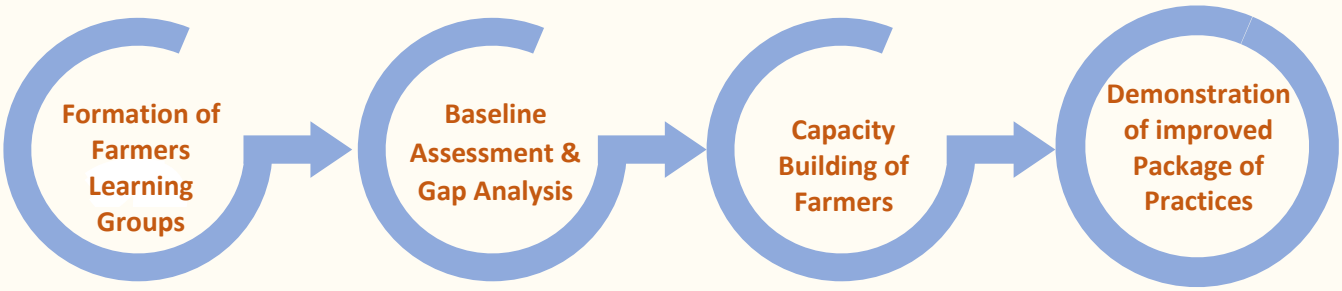


Project Interventions

As an entry point, orientation meetings were held in 25 villages and 4087 small holder farmers have been enrolled. Further, to inculcate the habit of peer group learning and stimulate collective actions on the farming system, Farmers Learning Groups (FLGs) comprising 35-40 farmers each have been formed. Post baseline surveys, 50 training events have been organized for generating awareness on the concept of regenerative agriculture. For demonstration of better agriculture practices, interventions like soil and water testing and provision of vermi compost units have been undertaken.

Project Interventions & Coverage

- Formation of FLGs – 4087 farmers
- Baseline and Gap Analysis Assessment in 25 villages
- Capacity building on regenerative farming- 4087 farmers
- Soil Testing Awareness in 25 Villages
- Water samples Testing- 75 samples in 25 villages
- Vermi compost bed for low income category HHs- 40



Highlights of Events

Capacitating Small Tea Growers Towards Sustainable Farming

The project's activities began on October 12, 2023, in Dibrugarh, Assam, with a training session for the small tea growers of Ranglal Tea and Industries Private Limited, Kadamba Tea Factory, Surya Tea Industry and The Teliojan Tea Company limited. The programme included integrated pest management, leaf handling, and plucking standards. This will encourage small-scale tea growers to practice sustainable growing.

Cocoa Life Program

Inauguration program of Agro Forestry Project phase-2, 2023 was conducted in the presence of the Cocoa life global team (Mondelez) at Kallacheruvu Village, Eluru district in Andhra Pradesh.

Celebrating World Cotton Day

Threads That Weave Us All

Under 'Promoting Better Cotton Standard System' Project, we celebrated World Cotton Day with total 130 participants on natural resource management at Gondal block, Gujarat. lead and progressive farmers, Gujarat Green Revolution Company Ltd Officer and Reliance Foundation representatives joined the programme.

More Power To Women
Revolving Fund for Enterprise Development

Under AFPRO Better Cotton Initiative Program in Gujarat, organized a programme in collaboration with Mission Manglam (Gujarat livelihood promotion company-GLPC) for distribution of cheques as revolving fund and credit (loan) for enterprise development to more than 17 Self Help Groups (SHGs) in the presence of Block development Officer- Tankara Block, GLPC Officers, Block Agriculture development Officer-Tankara, Rajkot District Cooperative Bank and SBI Bank.

Scientific Dialogues on Sustainable Cotton Production

Under AFPRO Better Cotton Initiative Program, a training program was conducted on the occasion of World Cotton Day at Cotton Research Station, Junagadh Agriculture University (JAU), Gujarat. AFPRO, Reliance Foundation, Mahindra Krish -E, Rashi Seed, Veda Seed have conducted training program with AFPRO Staff, cotton farmers, workers, and agriculture Rural Agriculture Work Experience (RAWE) students. For the celebration of World Cotton Day Honorable Vice Chancellor JAU - Dr. V.P. Chauvatia, other officers, and various scientists from Cotton Research Station JAU – Junagadh addressed the participants.

Inspiring Stories from Innovative Farmers

Learning and Earning from Lac Cultivation in Chhattisgarh

Under the "Mor Jal Mor Maati" program, AFPRO has been working with the tribal community in Korba district of Chhattisgarh state on climate chage adapation for improving livelihoods through land and water management with support of Bharat Aluminium Company Ltd. (BALCO). Under this program, extensive work has been undertaken for improving livelihoods also from Non Timber Forest Produce (NTFP). The community that once possessed skill for lac cultivation lost hope due to repeated failures and gradually the skill had became extinct. AFPRO regional team, conducted a baseline study to understand the situation and issues in NTFP collection and its value chain, specifically for Lac cultivation. AFRPO sought advice from a scientist at the Indian Council for Agricultural Research , Ranchi and learned that reintroducing lac cultivation with the help of scientific package of practices would make a crucial turning point in this region.

Farmers were able to successfully increase lac yield by choosing the right season for inoculation, providing regular care, and applying the right insecticides at the right time to protect larvae from pest attack. Initially, 110 farmers participated in the activity, two trees per farmer. Currently, 330 farmers have joined the initiative, out of which 114 are female farmers. Each farmer received 9 kg of seeds as support, resulting in an average harvest of 84 kg per farmer. The total lac produced in the chosen villages is 27597 kg. Following the deduction of the cost of cultivation of Rs. 1299 per farmer, there is an average net revenue of Rs. 5512 per farmer throughout the entire process. Farmers are now selling the Lac seed to other farmers.

Augmenting Income from Lac Cultivation

With a meagre income of Rs 30,000 annually, Amrika Bai, a landless female farmer from Parsakhola village, was struggling to make ends meet. After receiving guidance under the project, she adopted improved practices and began the inoculation of the lac in two trees. After 6 months of planting seeds, she received her crop. Lac productivity increased to 110 kg per tree after training from mere 20 kg per tree prior to interventions. From each tree, she is able to produce about 55 kg of lac now. She also got support of market linkages under the project and fetched good price of Rs. 800 per kilogram, thus augmenting her income approximately Rs. 88000 annually from lac. Due to increased income, she can now afford to send her children to school and meet medical needs.

Action For Food Production

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