

Alternative livelihood

During the days when Southern & Western Odisha is suffering mostly by LWE movements & violence, Educated & non educated youths are easily influenced by the ideologies of Naxalism because of many causes. One of the major reasons may be lack of employment opportunities in & around Rural Odisha added by inability of extension workers to spread the awareness on beneficial schemes, programs to the interior parts of hilly tribal terrians. In such a scenario tribal dominated villages are most affected & youths prefer choiced migration which is otherwise forced one to not only other districts but also to other states like Kerala, Gujrat, Karnataka (Bangalore) & Telangana (Hyderabad). Many more people follows the early migrants with lot of hope to make good money in few days, but after few months they returned with broken hearts with crushed dream, adding to their misery with different diseases. Though dozens of civil society organizations are working in the South-West Odisha for improvement of livelihoods of similar families through Horticulture, Agro Horticulture plantation, vegetable cultivation & a lot of off farm initiatives, but all the activities are not either sufficient enough or well designed for real beneficiary with proper planning to handle the migration & inclination to LWE groups like age old disease in real terms. A few Organisations have realized the issues & concerns of the youth.

Harsha Trust is working in South Odisha since 2004 for the upliftment of the rural poor through various activities like Horticulture, Agro Horticulture plantation, vegetable cultivation, health, sanitation and drinking water and many more. But after few years of traditional intervention we realize that the real development will take place when youth would be a part of the change process. In 2015 with the financial support of TATA TRUSTS, Livelihood Improvement Program for South Odisha (LIPSO) is implemented by Harsha Trust. The livelihood intervention under LIPSO aims to enhance the annual income of a family to an average of Rs75000/yr by the end of the project period of 3 years from the current level annual income of Rs 29000/ per family (As per the base line data collected recently). Another most important objective of the Program is developing the skill of the youth through need based training for wage employment. To address such objective, Harsha Trust started Mason training programme for the youth. In which landless, vulnerable & educated youth participated.

The Mason training is started on 2nd October, 2015, on a auspicious day of Gandhi Jayanti at Tadingpai village. Total 23 participants participated in the programme from 9 villages. For the training we arranged Rs-150/- for the trainees as stipend per



day to compensate the daily wage which they would have earned if they attend any other wage employment in place of training. The



The duration of the training programme was 30 days. For the easy understanding all the materials like bricks, stone, sand, cement and all masonry tools like Thapi, Ulama, Right Angel, Gajabadi, Gurmila, mutula, measurement Tape was provided to the trainees. The training was open for all those youths having minimum competency of reading, writing & calculation in odia within the age group of 18 to 45 years. During the days both theory and practical courses were offered to the trainees. For theory classes Sarat Kumar Sahoo (Team Leader) Harsha Trust, Bissamcuttack & Master Mason Mr. Sebili Bhubane were the resource persons. For 25 trainees one master mason was deputed. To complete the training one course curriculum was prepared and accordingly the training was imparted. Courses like measurement, layout, foundation, bricks joint, plastering, roof casting, flooring, pan fitting, rod binding were offered to the trainees.

During the training session trainees were also exposed to practical works in different villages like Water Tank foundation making, water tank boundary wall (bricks joint) & plastering of wall, etc. After completion of the training 12 youth opened bank account in SBI with our support and inter personal relationship developed between the trainees. Mr. Prasad Gadaba a landless guy of Ghadeiguda village expressed his gratitude towards Harsha Trust initiatives and told ***“henceforward my family will***



never face financial crisis because now I will not be helpless & wait for other’s mercy, I am confident that I can earn minimum Rs-250/- daily with the knowledge gathered from the training”. Jandu Kulusika another landless fellow of Duruguda village quoted that ***“Thanks to Harsha Trust to provide me such a skill to lead my & my family life happily & dignifiedly as because I could not find any suitable job with my little education. This traing at least provide me year round work with good money as a Mason than any unskilled worker.”***

The training session was closed on 24th November, 2015. Mrs Basanti Hikoka Sarapancha Paika Dakaluguda G.P, Bibhu Prasad Sahu Programme officer TATA



TRUSTS, Mr. Shrikant Mohanta Programme Coordinator Harsha Trust, Sarat Kumar Sahoo (Team Leader, Harsha Trust, Bissamcuttack with all staff participated in the closing ceremony. Sarapanch highly appreciated the effort of Harsha Trust and requested to continue the training for more youths of the locality. Now people are saying those have no land the training is like a blessing for them. Horticulture & agriculture can be affected by draught or flood

but if one can know the mason work he will never sit idle in the home and it is an alternative livelihood for them. One can easily earn at least Rs. 50-75000/-in a year easily & perhaps that's why some aged people are saying" ***it is the Raja Kama among all Kama***".

Sarat Kumar Sahoo