



Fostering Sustainable Agriculture and Livelihoods Together, We Grow

A Focus on Bodla, Pandariya, Lormi, Odgi and Basna blocks of Kabirdham, Mungeli, Surajpur and Mahasamund districts of Chhattisgarh



Cultivating Resilience, Harvesting Diversity through Seed Banks and Indigenous Varieties

- **Community Seed Banks:** Established in 4 blocks

Despite the influx of exotic and hybrid seeds, tribal farmers persist in using a variety of indigenous vegetable seeds, paddy, and millets in specific regions. Samerth team identified 129 varieties of different seeds held by the farmers, including paddy, millets, vegetables, pulses, maize, etc. To inspire farmers and raise awareness of the importance of indigenous seeds, both in terms of resilience to climate variability and nutritive values, seed festivals (Beejotsav) were organized in three blocks: Bodla, Lormi, and Odagi.

During the indigenous seed festivals, practicing farmers showcased the local varieties of seeds they were cultivating. These farmers were honored for their noble work, and they were motivated to preserve and continue using local seeds. To institutionalize the preservation of indigenous seeds, four community seed banks have been established in the Bodla, Lormi, Odgi, and Pandariya blocks.

- **Indigenous Varieties:** 129 identified
- **Farmers Empowered:** 123 cultivating local seeds
- **Beejotsav and Seed Festivals:** Celebrating the richness of local seeds

Kitchen Gardens & Poshan Wadis:

Samerth is diligently working to support rural poor households, including the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG) community like Baiga, in establishing Poshan Wadis to meet the nutritional needs of families and generate income from any excess production.

The promotion of Poshan Wadis ensures an economical, regular, and accessible supply of fresh vegetables, fundamental to nutrition. Emphasis is placed on utilizing bio-manure and compost in Poshan Wadis to produce healthier and more nutritious food.

So far, 2173 families have received support with quality vegetable seeds from the horticulture department to promote Poshan Wadis.

This initiative contributes to promoting nutritional awareness, education, and behavioral change in rural areas, involving farm women and lactating mothers. It harnesses traditional knowledge through local recipes to overcome malnutrition and adds to the family's additional income by selling surplus produce.



- **Beneficiaries Supported:** 720
- **Quality Seeds:** Provided by the horticulture department
- **Organic Production:** Promoted in Nutri-gardens

Low - Cost Technology for Sustainable Farming

Farm production is significantly reliant on adopting best practices in seed selection, treatment, sowing, land preparation, timely irrigation, and the application of appropriate manures. The Samerth team has conducted village and community-level training sessions for 1699 farmers, focusing on techniques such as seed selection, seed treatment, and line sowing of crops. The implementation of

proper seed selection and treatment practices by farmers before sowing has resulted in the cultivation of healthy plants, leading to a reported 25-30 percent increase in farm produce, particularly in crops like paddy.

Additionally, Samerth team has played a pivotal role in facilitating the provision of agricultural equipment to 219 farmers through collaboration with the agriculture department. Farmers have received essential tools such as solar-operated micro irrigation facilities, sprayer machines, vermi-compost beds, and pipes for water supply.

- **Interventions:** Line sowing, SRI method, vermicomposting.
- **Beneficiary Farmers Trained:** 1,642
- **Access to Government Schemes:** Facilitated for equipment and irrigation inputs



Plantation



Line sowing



Seed Treatment



Seed distribution by Agriculture department



Poshan Badi

Bridging the Gap Between Policies and Beneficiaries

Since the initiation of the project in April 2021 until September 2023, a total of 18,990 beneficiaries have been assisted in accessing the benefits offered under various government schemes. In a concerted effort to enhance farmers' income, the government has initiated numerous schemes. Samerth is playing a pivotal role as a bridge, actively connecting communities with government departments such as agriculture, horticulture, and fisheries to bring these schemes directly to the beneficiaries' doorsteps. Through community meetings, potential beneficiaries are informed about various Government schemes, their advantages, and the application process, with Samerth's team actively assisting individuals in navigating the application procedures.

Samerth is actively involved in facilitating the application process for key schemes, including Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee (MGNREGA) Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana, Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana, Fasal Bima Yojana, Matsya Sampada Yojana, among others. Samerth has been at the forefront of pioneering interventions aimed at facilitating individual and community assets supportive of livelihoods through MNREGA in the project areas. A total of 515 assets have been established under MNREGA for individual beneficiaries, encompassing activities such as land bunding, land development, farm ponds, wells, and animal sheds.

Similarly, 318 small and large community assets have been initiated under MNREGA, comprising projects like community ponds, check dams, contour trenches, boulder checks, pond renovations, and the development of pastureland. Through these interventions, assets totaling INR 22,76,68,528 have been leveraged to date, encompassing both individual and community initiatives.

Under Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana, 1017 farmers have received financial assistance totaling Rs. 61,02,000 through direct cash transfers to their accounts. Samerth's facilitation has also

led to 561 farmers receiving support from fisheries departments. Moreover, the team has secured insurance for a total of 300 Tendu leaf pluckers, and the KYC process has been completed for 2379 Tendu leaf pluckers through Samerth's efforts.

- **Beneficiaries Supported:** 6,060
- **Direct Benefit Transfer:** 970 farmers
- **Fisheries Department:** 269 beneficiaries supported
- **Tendu Leaf Pluckers:** Secured insurance for 300



Fisheries



Distribution of plants from Horticulture department



MGNREGA Work



Market Linkages and Community Outreach

Millets such as Kodo and Kutki hold significant importance as crops cultivated by tribal communities. Despite their nutritional value, there is a lack of a proper market for the sale of these superfoods. To promote millet cultivation, the government has established provisions for the purchase of millets from farmers under the Minimum Support Price (MSP) program. Samerth team played a crucial role in facilitating the registration of farmers with the agriculture department. As a result, 35 farmers were able to sell their millets under MSP, reaping the benefits of Rs. 7,56,300.

The fair pricing of millets under MSP at Vandhan Kendra is acting as a motivational factor for farmers, encouraging them to engage in more extensive millet cultivation.

- **Linkages with Van Dhan Kendras:** Ensuring fair prices
- **NTFP Sales:** Bodla block benefited with 4,00,000 INR
- **Vegetable Cultivation:** Promoting income augmentation



Inclusive Policy Implementation

In addition to boosting the income of marginalized communities through farm and forest -based livelihoods, Samerth is actively facilitating the connection of these communities with various social security schemes and entitlements. This inclusive effort encompasses women, landless laborers, elderly individuals, widows, and single women within the community. Accessing these schemes often involves the submission of various essential documents such as Aadhar Card, ration card, and Ayushman card, and Samerth has played a crucial role in facilitating the acquisition of these documents.

As a result of these efforts, a total of 3621 beneficiaries have been enabled to access social security schemes and entitlements, contributing to the overall welfare and empowerment of the marginalized community.

- **Beneficiaries Supported:** Over 6,000 across 5 blocks
- **Collaboration with Government Departments:** Agriculture, Forest, P&RD, WCD
- **Successful Support:** Bodla, Pandariya, Basna, Lormi, and Odgi blocks

Navigating Complexities, Building for the Future

Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP) represent a significant source of income for rural and tribal communities. However, the escalating population has led to forest degradation and unsustainable harvesting of NTFP, contributing to a decline in production. Unfavorable climatic conditions, including frequent unseasonal rainfall in recent times, have further adversely impacted NTFP production. The challenges and complexities associated with marketing NTFP are exacerbated by the low-scale production resulting from these factors.

To fortify forest -based livelihoods, particularly NTFP, there is a pressing need to bolster Community -Based and Led Forest Resource Management, preferably under the framework of Community Forest Rights. The formulation of an improved Community Forest Resource Management Plan holds the potential to enhance forest density and biodiversity, leading to increased NTFP production. Community Forest Rights Management Committees (CFRMC) can play a pivotal role in devising policies and plans for the more effective management of community forest resources. Furthermore, CFRMCs can actively participate in the aggregation and marketing of NTFP, thereby securing better prices for NTFP collectors.

Market Linkages for NTFPs: Ongoing efforts

- **Aggregation for Optimal Volumes:** Aiming for effective negotiations
- **Continuous Learning:** Adapting to changes for better outcomes

Strengthening Community Led Forest Resource Management

The forest stands as a significant source of livelihood for the community, second only to agriculture. Samerth is actively engaging in mobilizing and empowering the community through training and awareness programs, encouraging them to assume a leading role in the management of the community forest under the Forest Rights Act of 2006 (FRA 2006). Samerth team has successfully facilitated the formation of Community Forest Resource Management Committees in four villages, and the ongoing process involves the development of a comprehensive Community Forest Resource Management plan.

The primary objective of this initiative is to ensure the protection, regeneration, and conservation of the forest, aiming to enhance the declining biodiversity within it. Additionally, the initiative seeks to promote the sustainable use of forest resources by the community for their livelihoods. Through this approach, Samerth is working towards fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility among the community members for the well-being and sustainable management of their forest resources.



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