



Nutri-Homes Project Report

Project title: Nutri-Homes

The Context: Tribal girls are deprived of access to basic education, nutrition, health and livelihood opportunities throughout India. Being 'First Generation Learners' (FGLs), these girls often lag behind in schools or become school dropouts and do not have a mentor to guide them in the right path. Across the year, many in these tribal communities remain unemployed for months due to lack of available earning options and also migrate to other States for work. They work mostly as farm and construction laborers. In these communities, while girls grow up malnourished, pregnant women also face health challenges. Their daily diet consists of edible leaves, rice or rice starch only. They cannot afford nutritious fruits and vegetables from the market. Inadequate knowledge and lack of awareness play significant roles in their deteriorating health conditions.

The Project Concept: A pilot 'Nutrition gardening' project was started in 2019 with 25 village households. The women from the houses were given seeds of nutritious vegetables to create kitchen gardens in their backyards. They were also given small training along with the seeds. In 2020, lack of food security within the community worsened with the onset of the pandemic covid-19 leading to lockdown and increased unemployment. Given the demand due to the present situation and based on the success of the pilot, in 2020, Shreeja India scaled up the initiative and supported 70 households. Seeds were distributed in August 2020.

Project Objectives: The primary objective of Shreeja India's Nutri-Homes initiative is to help marginalized tribal communities to:

1. Become resilient and cope with the negative effects of sudden food crisis
2. Assure their regular food security
3. Make the women of the community socio-economically independent and provide livelihood opportunity for the community

Project Description: One woman from each household has been identified as the primary beneficiary of this project. They were provided with seeds of nutritious vegetables (Hyacinth Bean, Cucumber, Tomato, Ladies Finger, Radish, Spinach, Ridge Gourd, Bitter Gourd, Coriander Leaves, Chili, Egg Plant, Papaya, Beans, and Malabar Spinach). A senior Shreeja Girl, Shibani has been appointed as a community program coordinator who is recruited to monitor and document the project progress in eight villages (Latultala, Jhikra, Chhatina, Borkonda, Manik Dihi, Koirabad, Shankarpur, Babupur. She is being provided remuneration for her service to her community as a leader. With the feedback from the beneficiaries, special training on organic farming is being planned for them. The organization is in talks with the Govt.'s Horticulture department in Birbhum to plan these workshops.

Impact:

1. Enhanced health and nutrition of the beneficiaries.
2. Awareness of the community about the benefits of nutritious food and maintenance of good hygiene
3. Decreased rate of human mortality from malnutrition and poor food habits
4. Generating employment and building women community leaders
5. Economic empowerment of approximately 1000 women from the rural sector



Project Monitoring: A project monitoring and regulation committee (PMRC) has been formed with members comprising of the local monitoring agents, community program coordinator, and project manager, for monitoring project progress every month. Feedback from the nutri-gardening households every two months is taken. Later, benefits of the intervention in terms of a livelihood project will be evaluated by appraising the market demand for the crops from the nutri-gardening homes. Based on this, support will be rendered to the beneficiaries.

Observations & Limitations:

1. Every household under this endeavour as well as other households in the intervening villages have expressed their interest in kitchen gardening and want to continue to be a part of this project
2. Villages like Agay badhi, Gurkata, Keledi, Nijuri stated that they have trouble yielding crops because of water shortage and infertile soil in the area.
3. The beneficiaries have refrained from planting some vegetables now as they plan to do it during spring and summer months in 2021.
4. The beneficiaries still require advanced training in organic gardening to yield best quality vegetables in the garden. They need to be trained in making vermi-composts at home.
5. The beneficiaries need to be supported in creating an infrastructure in their backyards so they can yield exotic vegetables as well and start earning from their kitchen gardening initiative.

Scope for Future Development:

1. We are further planning to organize advanced training for every beneficiary on integrated organic farming, organic pest control, and market linkages.
2. Beneficiaries will be provided infrastructure and training for stake farming. The stake farming will have self-sustainable crop farming as well as production of special vegetables. The recipients will be supported in their linkages to the local market for economic opportunities in the next phase of the project.
3. As part of the training, the women will also be coached to compost their generated biodegradable waste and use it for harvesting better crops.
4. Once the kitchen gardening project is established and sustained, the next step would be to introduce poultry farming and animal husbandry.

The detailed report of Nutri-Homes is given in the attached sheets below.