

Dhaatri Trust
Resource Centre for Women and Children

Annual Report
April 2015-March 16



Annual Report for Dhaatri Trust Activities
April 2015- March 2016

1. Women Empowerment and Gender Equality:

- a. **Tribal Women Farmers:** Adivasi agriculture is traditionally based on subsistence farming where meeting the community's food consumption needs was the main objective. The unique farming practices of the adivasis is considered ecologically and economically very valuable and diverse. They grow a variety of millets, pulses, legumes on their slash and burn swiddens. They also grow a variety of traditional cash crops like turmeric, ginger, niger, and other oil-seeds. After the introduction of coffee and pepper by the government, there is an increase in hill-slope area for cultivation of these crops. Women are the main cultivators who do multiple activities in their farms whereas men primarily take responsibility for ploughing and harvesting. However, women's role and the emerging problems related to traditional agriculture do not receive much attention.

Therefore, Dhaatri Trust has a focus on promoting the visibility of tribal women farmers who are engaged in most of the agricultural activities on the hill-slopes and valleys. There are clear changes in the variety of crops and acreage under cultivation leading to lack of food security. In order to strengthen their self-reliance through traditional farming and to link government programmes with adivasi women farmers, Dhaatri Trust has started working with village level collectives of women farmers. We conducted a series of community workshops and village level meetings where women shared that the main problems were related to shortage of seed varieties, lack of technology for weeding and processing of harvested crop as they have to spend a lot of time in grinding and pounding. One of the important activities we started was collection and exchange of seeds and strengthening village level women's collectives.

In May-July 2015 we procured seeds from different sources and distributed among the women farmers. In January-February 2016 we again procured seeds, this time, from within the area soon after the harvest. In March we started distributing the seeds to community women's groups in 14 villages for-----farmers. Further, we have been having continuous meetings with women on revival of crop species like Korralu which are getting extinct in the area.

We are coordinating with the state agricultural department for procurement of seeds and have applied for setting up of processing units to reduce women's labour. We have sent village wise details of farmers' requirement. The department has responded positively and have agreed to supply the seeds. We are in the process of distributing to 100 women farmers in 15 villages for 2016.

- b. **Forest Rights Act:** The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act 2006 is an important constitutional safeguard created for welfare of adivasis dependent on land and forests. In order to assist adivasi communities in making

effective use of this law, our community animators have been facilitating the formation of Forest Rights Committees, preparing supporting documents along with claims forms for individual and collective forest rights. We have helped 20 villages in the last one year to set up FRCs and to submit claims at sub divisional level. We have undertaken a survey of settlements done so far and have helped villagers submit applications for resurvey where they did not receive pattas satisfactorily due to lack of proper documentation. We also helped some of the villages do mapping of CFR boundaries in five villages for community right.

A strong focus of this activity is to enable women to participate actively as FRC members and in Gram Sabhas and to learn the process of making claims. Especially single women, widows and women headed households were assisted in submitting their applications. Total area of forest land in 18 villages applied for FRA individual pattas was 3624 acres of which only 929 acres has been settled so far.

- c. **Welfare and Medical support:** We have been providing medical and maintenance support to one family where all three members are HIV/AIDS positive and have no means of survival. The support given by our donors to this family has helped us provide basic sustenance for food, medicines and fees for the two children of the family. We also provided emergency surgery support to one tribal student from very poor background.
- d. **Women leadership building in panchayat bodies:** As part of strengthening women's leadership, and linking their roles in constitutional bodies to development programmes and laws, we have been conducting series of orientation workshops with women elected representatives of local bodies like panchayats and PESA committees. We conducted orientation workshops with PESA committee members on their role in implementation of the FRA Act, the Right to Education Act and other welfare schemes like pensions and housing programmes. After these orientation workshops, we have received active participation from women members in facilitation of claims under FRA by participating in FRC meetings, verification of documents and submission to sub collector's office.
- e. **Community Youth Training on Gender and health:** A key area of Dhaatri's work is related to upholding gender equality to prevent violence against women and adolescent girls. Adolescent and reproductive health issues are major challenges being faced due to increasing malnutrition, lack of food security and sanitation, migration and modern influences that are changing the social security situation for adivasi girls. Dhaatri has organised four community level youth training programmes in two clusters and monthly adolescent girls' sexual health and sanitation orientation meetings. At least 120 girls and boys have participated in these local meetings and trainings. We have also compiled and printed a booklet on gender and health for adolescent girls and distributed them in high schools.
- f. Support to construction of eco-friendly and low cost community training centres for women and youth: In order to revive traditional knowledge and science in agriculture, house construction and forestry programmes as well as to create space for women and

youth group meetings, Dhaatri is supporting the youth in coming up with their own low cost community centres using local natural material. These two centres are in the process of construction in Buruguchattu and Poolabanda villages with the help of women and youth. Some of the youth received training and orientation in house construction from alternate experts and this gave additional inputs to their construction work in the community.

2. Children's Rights and Protection:

- a. **Right to Education Act and tribal children-training School Management Committees:** Dhaatri works with tribal communities with a focus on improving the quality of primary and high schools in tribal areas. This year we have worked in 20 villages in two panchayats of Paderu mandal-Salugu and Vantlamamidi, by admitting children who have dropped out of primary school, motivating all parents to enrol their children in school and to monitor the functioning of primary schools. This year we admitted 45 children in ashram schools, and helped them with caste certificates and income certificates. We worked with the School Management Committees in the girijan primary schools in two panchayats to monitor teacher attendance, mid day meals, and other facilities like uniforms and class-room material. We motivated the parents to attend the monthly review meetings and demand for proper attendance of teachers and class room teaching. We have also conducted school annual day programme for 100 children from 13 primary schools at Malkapalem High School, Paderu mandal where academic, sports and cultural competitions were conducted. As government is only giving text books and many children are not able to afford note books, we have donated note books to 70 children in the primary schools in Salugu and Vantlamamidi panchayats, and we will continue this activity in the coming academic year.
- b. **Higher education support:** This year we have provided student scholarships, fees and support for books, transport and other education material to 17 students at undergraduate level. We helped them get admission in colleges and hostels, provided orientation classes regarding academic and social challenges in hostels, guidance in lessons and other support like medical help. They are studying in Visakhapatnam, Vijayawada, Araku and Paderu. In this academic year in Vijayawada we have also started a Training Centre and accommodation for girls going for graduation and under graduation level.
- c. **Gender training in schools:** In order to sensitise children on gender equality and to address issues of adolescent health, sanitation and sexual rights issues, we conducted workshops in government hostels at Paderu, Malkapalem and Visakhapatnam. Our team conducted follow up meetings with the girls and boys who underwent training in order to provide a platform for interaction and communication. This year around 250 students (168 girls) received gender training.
- d. **School environment and cultural programmes:** In order to promote environmental and cultural richness of adivasi knowledge, we have been conducting high school student

programmes using the themes of traditional agriculture, forest resources, festivals, recipes and wild food. This year we conducted quiz programmes and student projects on agriculture, hunting, wild food and festivals at high schools in Paderu and Malkapalem boys and girls high schools.

- e. **Promoting sports activities among children:** In order to encourage children and teachers to have stronger interest in school activities, we have conducted mini sports activities, distributed sports items and prizes for children in the government schools in Paderu, Salugu and Vantlamamidi panchayats. We have also sponsored poor children with exceptional talent in sports with sports material. This year we sponsored one student from Vijayawada who is a national level hockey player.
3. **Field animators' training:** In order to build the capacities of field volunteers and animators in community awareness and motivation and to understand the laws related to forest rights, education, and gender, we have conducted training for field animators and have also taken them for exposure visits to other organisations who have expertise in this area.
 - a. Exposure visit and training in Karnataka: a team from Dhaatri received training from Sakhi Trust, Hospet, Karnataka, on gender equality and youth issues and on waste management. This has enabled them to return to the field area and conduct gender training for tribal youth and initiated a waste management programme in one village, Buruguchattu where the weekly market has just been set up. Youth and children are coming forward to clean the waste every week after the market is closed. We are initiating dialogue with concerned authorities on government cooperation in the management of waste.
 - b. Exposure visit and training in Madhya Pradesh: The team of animators visited Panna district in Madhya Pradesh to understand the problems related to tribal women and children and on the forest rights issues. Our team also gave a training to the team in Prithvi Trust on procedures for filing claims under the FRA for individual and collective entitlements.
 - c. Exposure visit to Tamil Nadu: the community animators and some of the community women and youth leaders visited Kotagiri, Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu to study the traditional farming, adivasi producer cooperative functioning for processing and marketing of traditional food products, beekeeping and rammed earth construction. Based on this exposure, the team has strengthened its community activities in forming adivasi women farmers' collectives, exchange of seeds and construction of the community centres using rammed earth techniques.
 - d. Training programmes at Vijayawada: The field animators received regular training at Vijayawada on the focus areas of our work and follow up actions related to school children's retention and enrolment, facilitating the SMCs in monitoring of primary schools and conducting social audit, in traditional agriculture, follow up on claims related to FRA and gender training for youth.

Activity Photos 2015-16

Primary School Annual Day



Education Support /Student Aid





Seeds distribution

Exposure visit to Kotagiri



Millets Processing



Honey Processing



About low cost housing



Amla drying process

Exposure visit to Panna





Gender Training in Vijayawada



Gender training visit to Sakhi





Youth Programme



Waste management process





Weekly market at Buruguchettu



Cleaning and Waste management



Community Centre Buruguchettu





Grass for Community Centre at Poolabanda

Women Farmers meeting





Ward Members Training

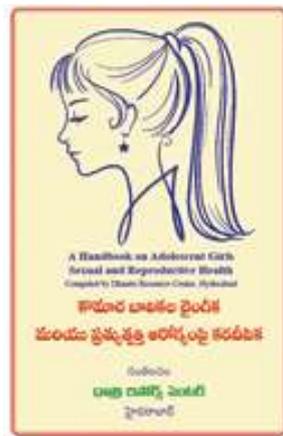
Distribution of Education material in schools





Gender training at Government school





Environment and cultural education



