

## Paradigm shift

A Kachha walkable road winds up towards Godiput, a remote hamlet village, 5 k.m. away from the Gram Panchayat headquarters of Badel in Nandapur block. The village houses 35 families out of which 19 families belong to scheduled tribes and rest 16 hail from other backward castes. It is quite surprising that even after six decades of independence, the village still lacks of communication facility. No wonder that the govt. people at the grassroots on whose burden lies the responsibility of catering essential services and safety nets to the poor, seldom visit the village to render the much needed services. You have to make your way through the agriculture fields and on the earth bundings of the low lands to reach the village. During the rainy season, the villagers face a lot of difficulties to access essential services and even to the Panchayat headquarters.

Agriculture being the primary source of their livelihood, the villagers rear cattle to use them in ploughing their agriculture fields. However, every year, particularly during the rainy season there is high mortality rate of cattle. 6 cattle heads lost their lives last year due to unidentified diseases. This kind of mortality rate affects the economy of these poor villagers and pushes them to a state of indebtedness.

When Pragati starts implementation of Shakti Sahaya Scheme in the village in 2006, it is a major finding that the livestock casualties are largely due to lack of preventive measures and ignorance of the villagers to access veterinary services. It is also revealed that the villagers have inherent belief that these casualties occur due to wrath of the village Goddess, and hence it is necessary to appease her through prayer and offerings like coconut, banana, incense sticks, and flowers etc. The village priest is called to perform a ceremony called *Panee* in local language. There is no recorded evidence of vaccination in the history of the village.

Keeping in view all the blind beliefs, superstitions and social practices of the action areas in view, Pragati conducted a training programme on cattle care and management for the beneficiaries covered under Shakti Sahaya Scheme, the CBO leaders and facilitating staffs on 28-29 Aug, 06. Without hurting local beliefs and practices the participants were imparted participatory training on symptoms and kinds of cattle diseases, why and how of preventive measures (Vaccination), information on government facilities, preparation of scientific rest shed and first aid. The local VAS and LI were involved in the training programme with a twin purpose to sensitize on cattle care and management and liaisoning. Besides the two days residential training an action plan was also prepared to take up necessary follow-ups by facilitating staff, VDC & CBO leaders.

The training has bore fruits. The two beneficiaries who attended the training programme got convinced that immunization is necessary as preventive measure and the cattle need care and proper medication once they fall victim to diseases. Since then, they have started sensitizing the villagers in the monthly VDC meetings. As a result of this, the villagers took a collective decision in the monthly meeting of VDC in February 2007 to vaccinate all cattle heads in the village and made contact with the concerned livestock Inspector Mr. Prasanna Kumar Das and finalized the date for vaccination.

On 9<sup>th</sup> March 2007 a total No of 118 cattle (100 %) were vaccinated due to joint initiative of L.I Prasanna Kumar Das, VDC leaders and SSS beneficiaries. They have also paid @Rs 2/- for one cattle head. "We will continue to take advantage of government sponsored preventive Measures like Vaccination for our cattle in future also," Says Tankadhar Sukri, President of Godiput VDC. SSS has proved to be a blessing in disguise to all the villagers who have been only onlookers to cattle casualties.

**Prepared by  
Pragati, Koraput**

