

Launching event of Project on “Ensuring livelihood security of small and marginal farmers using ICT”

The Pragati-Digital Green Project entitled, “Ensuring livelihood security of small and marginal farmers using ICT (Information and Communication Technology)”, was formally launched by Pragati, Koraput on 25th May 2010 in Ektaguda village in Mahadeiput Panchayat of Koraput Block. The Chief Guest Sri R.K. Sadangi, Deputy Director of Horticulture inaugurated the event by lighting the lamp in the presence of other guests and 200 farmers from four Gram Panchayats and the media. The Gram Panchayats represented were Mahadeiput, Mastiput, Kendar and Manbar. Sri Narayan Murmu, the Block Development Officer, Koraput, was the Guest of Honor of the event.



The Programme Coordinator of Pragati welcomed the guests and participants. She briefly shared the objectives of the project which will initially cover 40 villages in four Panchayats. The Project is supported by Digital Green Foundation and has started in April 2010. The project objectives are to improve the cost effectiveness of existing people based extension systems in field by improving operational efficiencies, and to increase the rate at which farmers adopt better agriculture practices through production of videos in local language and mediated video disseminations. Overall, the Project will be implemented in 150 villages of Koraput and Nandapur Blocks and in the initial phase it is taken up in 40 villages of Koraput Block since April 2010.

Pragati has prepared an Odiya Booklet of the Project proposal and booklet which was released by the Chief Guest, Deputy Director of Horticulture and distributed among the participants to ensure transparency and participation of stakeholders in project implementation.



Mr. Prabhakar Adhikari, Secretary Pragati in his address said that Pragati is a voluntary organisation having its roots in Koraput District and is focusing its work on livelihood security of marginalized families of the District. The project on “Ensuring livelihood security of small farm holders using ICT” as extension services will be implemented in 150 villages for

enhancing agricultural production for food security and reducing cost of investment for agriculture by use of organic farming practices and create a platform for farmers to exchange their indigenous knowledge and best practices using digital video shows for extension services in agriculture. Videos will be produced on tried and tested technologies suitable to local context, farmers’ local practices and innovations, land and water management models and the same will be disseminated in the villages for better adoption among farmers. The Secretary also expressed that there will be Facilitators from

the local areas (each one covering 3 to 4 villages) to disseminate the video shows using Pico projectors. The Village Facilitators were introduced to the participants from operational villages.



The Chief Guest, Mr. R.K. Sadangi in his address said that nowadays, the young generation people are more attracted to wage labour in outside places rather than taking up agriculture activities in their own villages, though agriculture is a primary means of occupation and also at the same time by adopting better agriculture practices farmers can be able to enhance their income. Now the Government has realized the importance of water conservation for agriculture and started implementing activities like farm pond under MGNREGA which can be availed by people in the areas. He also discussed about schemes of National

Horticulture Mission which can supplement the income of people through orchard raising and floriculture. He is optimistic of the Project which will be a popular technique for extension services in agriculture as the people will learn and adopt by seeing the success of their fellow farmers.

The Block Development Officer emphasized the importance of agriculture to improve livelihood of people. People have been adopting traditional agriculture practices as most often they do not have access to information and in this context he expressed hope that Pragati interventions of using ICT in extension of agriculture practices will be very innovative and helpful to farmers in adopting new technologies and at the same time he also appealed to the farmers that they should also be having the mindset to learn and adopt the new practices. He disseminated about the Government schemes like Farm pond and land development for the forest lands under MGNREGA.



Sri Surendra Masti, President of Koraput District Forest Federation, said

that he is excited about the project because it will be an opportunity for the farmers to see and learn from the successful fellow farmers who are the real protagonists and innovators in the field of agriculture. The project will create an environment for exchange of ideas among local farmers and help in quick extension of practices.

The day ended with a vote of thanks to Guests and participants.

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