

AGRICULTURE AND ORGANIC FARMING GROUP - INDIA  
(AOFG - India)

Annual Report 2006 - 2007

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## Agriculture and Organic Farming Group - India (AOFG - India)

### ANNUAL REPORT 2006 - 2007

#### 1. Introduction

The year started with a new project being promoted in the States of Kerala, Andhrapradesh, Maharastra, Uttranchal and North East India. 35 NGOs continue to get support from AOFG India who are geographically spread over North East India, Orissa, Jharkhand, Andhrapradesh, Uttranchal and Kerala States. The focused programs to benefit the 35 NGOs are capacity building, human resource development, organic agriculture in rural development, technical training, marketing, documentation of traditional knowledge for validation. Technology development and its application have taken centre stage in all the promotional activities. The participating NGOs has shown considerable interest in getting training on manpower development in organic agriculture in rural development, extension, quality production, value addition and marketing by setting up local markets directly addressing poverty reduction and area development.

#### 2. Study program

AOFG India has initiated a field study program on small and marginal farmers and their role in National Development, food security and reduction of poverty. The study has shown that the small and marginal farmers at the mercy of middleman, money lenders, input suppliers and they always fleece them and driving them into suicides. The alarming new of farmers committing suicides in the cotton belts and other areas of the country has been a pointer. Suitable model programs required to be initiated with an End to End Approach in extension, production, value addition, farmer's organizations and marketing. AOFG has been successful in promoting such a project to study the impact of farmers venture in poverty reduction.

#### 3. New Initiatives

The new initiatives are in the area of a model program for cotton, coffee, spices, fruits and specialty rice from Uttranchal. The projects are implemented by AOFG India and a project office is set up at Hyderabad. The Uttranchal program is implemented by one of the partner NGOs SJS, Rishikesh. The new initiatives is a project with an "End to End Approach" in extension, quality production, value addition and marketing. The field areas are:

1. Adimali, Idukki District, Kerala for coffee and spices - 1,000 farmers
2. Adilabad district (Kagaznagar & Wankidi) for cotton - 5,000 farmers

3. Amaravati, Maharastra for cotton - 2,000 farmers
4. Rishikesh for Basmati Rice - 1,500 farmers
5. Manipur hills for fruits - 5,000 farmers

The Adilabad and Manipur project areas are benefiting the tribal communities. However, the overall scope of the project is for small and marginal farmers. For the marketing of farmers produces a marketing company has been set up namely Zameen Organic and is undertaking the marketing of farmers produces.

The project is promoting fair trade and organic including certification. This is an attempt to make the farmers to make the environment better and earn better prices for their commodities.

#### 4. Biodiversity and environment

AOFG India is working along with 35 NGOs in the difficult regions of India. The livelihood problems are reflecting largely on the biodiversity and environment. The communities are unable to protect and conserve the environment and biodiversity. Natural resource management is negligible and the result is less productivity and less income from all sources resulting in increasing poverty conditions.

AOFG India and the NGOs from North East India have taken up several measures for the promotion and protection of the environment and biodiversity.

#### 5. Shifting cultivation

Shifting cultivation is one of the traditional methods of crop introduction and crop production practiced by the indigenous communities living in India. The practice was good when the fallow period was longer to over 25 to 30 years. This practice is still prevailing in North East India parts of Orissa and Andhrapradesh States. AOFG India has linked dialogue with ICIMODE, Kathmandu to promote studies and promotional activities for better crop production and marketing of tribal farmer's produces.

#### 6. Forests and Forest management

The forests of North East India are very precious. The forests are part of the rainforests of the Indo-Myanmar bio-sphere spread over 200,000 square kilometers. The area is a biodiversity hot spot as per Conservation international and National Forest Research Institute, India. Vital importance has been accorded by Government of India and a Moist Rainforest Research Institute has been established at Jorhat, Assam State by Government of India, Ministry of Environment and Forests. The area is populated by 200 odd numerous indigenous tribal commu8nities and the land rights are protected under Indian Constitution. However, unfortunately, the State Forests Department of the

Seven NEI States has given least importance to the Constitutional rights of the tribal communities by using the forests as revenue to the Department by timber trading and taxing on the NTFP. This has given a lot of resentment among the tribal communities. The much promoted and largely funded Joint Forest Management (JFM) is in the hands of the Forest Department and communities who are protecting and preserving the forests has not given any importance nor support and involvement in forest conservation and protection of the forests. Community management of forests has been a good opportunity since the forests are not physically and legally owned by the Department. The destruction of forests are blamed on to Jhumias (Shifting cultivators), but the fact is otherwise. AOFG India is educating the communities for better management of the forests, NTFP directly and through the Net Working NGOs.

One of the important areas in India for AOFG India is the Jharkhand, Tribal Orissa, Tribal West Bengal, Tribal Madhyapradesh, Tribal Andhrapradesh and Chattisgarh States. Majority population is the indigenous tribals. Some of these areas and the land rights are protected under the Indian Constitutions. Promotion of village owned community forestry is a wonderful opportunity in promoting biodiversity, conservation and use of NTFP for poverty reduction among the indigenous population.

#### **7. Rain-fed Farming Areas**

The un-irrigated, rain-fed regions were largely by-passed by the Indian Green revolution. Out of the 142 Million Ha cultivated land in India, 34% land area are covered by conventional farming with irrigation facilities and produces 55% of total food production whereas, 66% of land areas are classed under rain-fed region which produces 45% of total food production. The area is 90 Million Ha and majority of farmers living in these areas are small and marginal farmers and indigenous communities. The new initiatives of AOFG India are geographically positioned in the rain-fed farming areas. Cultivation and farming activities are the only means of livelihood to these people. Compounded issues of desertification, loss of biodiversity and environment, non conservation and lack of management of natural resources, increasing poverty conditions are on the increase in these areas. AOFG India and its efforts may prove useful to other NGOs and institutions.

#### **8. AOFG India Networking NGOs**

The year 2005-06 has seen a lot of changes taking place. AOFG India and Community Development Organization, Manipur jointly visited Both End Office, Amsterdam, SHGW, AC Laren, FFT, Thiel, The Netherlands, Misereor Office Aachen and Siemenpuu Foundation Office at Helsinki. 18 Projects were assisted by AOFG India for NGOs and now, they are getting funding from Government of India Ministries. The current members/ associate NGOs under the net work are:

1. MATA Foundation
2. Jhumia Farmers Society (JAFAS)
3. Catholic Medical Center (CMC)
4. Community Builders Society (CBS)
5. Women Union for Prosperity (WUFP)
6. Tamei Organic Farmers Association (TAOFA)
7. Senapati Tribal Farmers Association (STFA)
8. North East Development Association (NEDA)
9. Community Development Organization (CDO)
10. Social Upliftment & Resource Dev, Agency (SURDA)
11. North East Welfare Society
12. Valley Welfare Association (VWA)
13. Development Association of Nagaland (DAN)
14. Charity Multi Purpose Society
15. Jorsong Asong, Diphu, Assam
16. Tezpur Social Service Society (TSSS)
17. Bongaigaon Gana Seva Samity (BGSS)
18. North East Social Forum
19. Mendipathar Multi Purpose Society (MMPS)
20. Bosco Reach Out (BRO)
21. St. Johnes Society Mangaldai
22. Dev Bhumi Vikas Sansthan (DBVS)
23. Shri Jagadamba Samity
24. Society for Integrated Resource Development Initiatives
25. Social Trust for Empowering People (STEP)
26. Peoples Development Trust
27. Chaitanya Welfare Institute
28. Pragati Mahial Mandali
29. B.Palam Harijan Women Welfare Society
30. Siddartha Youth Welfare Society
31. Sumer Memorial Rural Welfare Society
32. Aadi Cultural Center
33. Peoples' Community Health Care Services
34. Munda Development Association
35. AOFG India Regional Group Adimali

The 35 NGOs meet together once in every year and the AOFG India staff and Executive Members visit these NGOs during various joint programs at their respective places. There is no membership fees but are aligned together for the cause of empowerment, organic agriculture in rural development and conservation and protection of biodiversity and environment.

#### 9. Education, training and HRD program to NGOs

Technical training on human resource development, social organizations, project management, and technology dissemination were imparted to all the

35 NGOs during the current year. 175 Staff members are trained by AOFG India. 105 Executive Members of 35 NGOs are trained in organization management, fund raising and lobby activities. Regular informative circulars are sent to all the 35 NGOs on funding support and various schemes of the Government.

#### 10. [Training on organic agriculture in rural development](#)

AOFG India Technical Team on Organic visited all the 35 NGOs to conduct on the spot training program on organic agriculture in rural development. OARD is a focal theme of AOFG India. Capacity building and human resource development in OARD is vigorously taken and the NGOs are fully geared up to promote such activities in the villages. Now we have taken up the promotion of fair trade certification and fair trade marketing. State level seminars have been conducted at Imphal, Kohima, Guwahaty, Shillong, Bhubaneswar, Hyderabad and Ernakulam.

We are now linked up Rajagiri Institute of Social Work, Rajagiri Institute of Management and Technology for professional training support.

#### 11. [Farmers training program](#)

35 NGOs are assisted to promote farmers organizations and conduct farmers training program in their respective areas. The target was to train 500 farmer leaders by the NGOs. The farmers training program includes use of local manuring, preparation of farm yard manure, compost, vermin compost, vermin culture, use of local plant based pesticides and input production, marketing and distribution. The training programs are conducted with an object to build farmers as progressive and front line farmers who can train their fellow farmers in all important aspects of livelihood opportunities.

#### 12. [Farmer's Self Help Groups \(SHGs\)](#)

The AOFG India project and all the Associated NGOs are encouraged to promote and set up Farmer's Self Help Groups. In many cases, the SHGs are a mixed group with over 75% members is women. The current numbers of F-SHGs are 1050 with a membership of 15,750 Members. 7,800 Members are women. They are promoting savings, credit, production, packing and marketing activities for income generation. Wonderful achievement has been made by many of the SHGs is in income generation and poverty reduction activities. Marketing is one of the important area and serious capacity building and trainings are required. Local market development and local marketing will be promoted with adequate training and promotional activities. Value addition and processing is yet another important are which requires attention. AOFG India is in the process of setting up of 4 farmer associations of small and marginal farmers with a membership of 10,000 farmers. Also we are on the process of setting up of two state level farmer trusts to promote various activities.

### **13. NGOs and business development**

A new thinking is being promoted by AOFG India in terms of production linked, value added marketing. Value addition will help in overcoming the distress sales. This is optional for the associated NGOs in promoting technology application for local production, processing and marketing. Rural development can be achieved only by institutionalizing marketing of local produces at the farmers place itself. The bulk of the profits in commodities are pocketed by the middleman. Therefore, promotion of business development is one of the important concepts promoted by AOFG India and 11 NGOs from the group are getting involved. However, the SHGs are being promoted by all the 35 NGOs and the respective SHGs are implementing savings, credit, production and local marketing activities. These efforts are gaining momentum and getting wider acceptance in the rural villages. AOFG India is assisting the NGOs to work with Government of India through the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR) and the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). The 42 Research Laboratories of CSIR is developing technologies and the AOFG India and the Net Working NGOs are eligible to get and obtain suitable technologies for income generation, production and development activities.

### **14. NGO Resource Support Center, New Delhi**

AOFG India is being an NGO networking organization and placed at New Delhi. The member NGOs are frequently coming down to Delhi for various purposes, submissions of projects to Government of India Ministries including consultations. Fund raising for the promotion of field projects are very important to demonstrate most of the activities promoted by the NGOs and AOFG India. The Central Government Ministries are one of the sources of project funds. Therefore to discuss, submit and negotiate for projects, NGO Officials and representatives has to come to Delhi as and when required. The NGOs does not have own accommodation and support facilities at New Delhi and have to depend upon hotels and private facilities and is very expensive. The present Office of the AOFG India is not sufficiently spaced to accommodate the people for overstay and office works. Accommodations at Hotels are very expensive. Further, a news letter on funding opportunities from Government Ministries and Departments are very useful to our NGOs. After a project submitted, follow up actions are required to get a project approved and funded. Support services in the form a liaison works for NGO projects are required. To meet all these needs, an NGO Resource Support Center is proposed at New Delhi with minimum office facility, liaison support, support services of expert consultants, and accommodation for three persons at a time with a vehicle for movement in Delhi and a quarterly funding news letter. Efforts are continuing to search a one time fund for this purpose. In spite of all constraints, AOFG India could facilitate the sanctioning of 21 Projects during the current year with an overall outlay of Rupees 51.00 Million from Government Ministries. AOFG India is working hard to find a suitable funding



agency to support a project for this purpose. Currently the NGO Resource Center is functioning from Mayur Vihar Pahse I.

**15. Board members of AOFG India 2006-07**

1. Mr.E.M. Koshy, Chairman
2. Dr.(Ms)Lily Gangmei, Secretary
3. Mr. Manish Kumar, Treasurer
4. Mr. Sudhir Bahuguna,
5. Mr.B. Rath, Member
6. Ms. Rachel John, Member
7. Ms. Jely Gangmei, Member

**16. Financial auditors of AOFG India**

M/S Sandeep Jain & Company are the auditing firm for AOFG India. The financial audit is carried for one calendar year from April to March every year. The current budgeted program expenditure for the year 2006-07 is Rupees 256.00 Lakhs.

**17. Bankers to AOFG India**

Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) Janpath Branch, New Delhi - 110 001 are the bankers to AOFG India. **The AOFG India Bank Account with IOB, Janpath is: S/B A/C No. 31771. SWIFT Code: IOBA IN BBA 065 Fax: 91+11+ 23321868.**

**E.M. Koshy  
Chairman cum Managing Trustee  
AOFG India**