

BUILDING FARMERS CAPACITIES DURING CLIMATIC UNCERTAINTY



Building farmers capacities during climatic uncertainty

Report by Dr. Pallab De, Thematic Manager,
Edited by Patrick Hansda, Caritas India



Amidst the changing climatic conditions and risk involved in agriculture, farmers from Uttoran project villages are learning sustainable agriculture practices and organic farming to earn their livelihood. The project is a live initiative of Caritas India to promote sustainable agriculture development practices among small and marginalized farmers in the region.

60 small farmers from 15 project villages were given exposure to learn simple ways to promote organic farming and other important things related to sustainable agriculture by the Seva Kendra Siliguri partner in collaboration with Centre for Floriculture and Agribusiness Management of North Bengal University (COFAM), Siliguri.

Head of Department, Dr. Sudip Ghosh, Asst. Prof. Dr. Randhir Chakraborty and Technical Officer of the Centre Mr. A. Pandey interacted with the farmers regarding agriculture interventions in the project areas. They discussed about the existing gaps and present challenges and scope for replication of organic models in the project

area with support from the COFAM Centre.

Discussion on improved ways of organic farming, promotion of multi cropping with legumes, bio pest control, sack farming, mulching technique for strawberry and vermin compost preparation was also done during the exposure.

Demonstration was given on the organic ways of making manure out of different available resources and wastes, bio pest control techniques, mulching, vermi wash, and also nursery raising for good varieties of papaya (red lady).

A follow-up is planned in the month of February 2017 by Seva Kendra Siliguri in the presence of Caritas India Thematic Manager/State Officer and the Centre Head to materialize the action plan for upscaling and replication in the 15 villages.

This meaningful collaboration initiated by the Seva Kendra Siliguri has ensured better access to technology and information on sustainable agriculture development and income generation of small and marginal farmers under Uttoran project.



Cancer care making its mark at Kochi International Book Festival

Report by Amalkrishna, Programme Officer – Ashakiranam
 Edited by Patrick Hansda, Caritas India

To promote reading and writing among masses to heighten awareness of literacy and literary art in Kerala, Antharashtra pusthakotsava Samithi organize Kochi International book festival (KIBF) every year.

Caritas India took the opportunity to participate in the event to promote Ashakiranam – Cancer Care campaign among wide spectrum of masses including children, academicians, professional and general public.

Organised during December 2-11, 2016, KIBF was an amazing cultural festival and forum for academic discussion on the major issues of contemporary significance.

Last year, Caritas India participated in a seminar on Cancer organized as a part of KIBF 2015 where experts from national and international stature came together to discuss on cancer and its treatment.

Capitalizing the opportunity this year, Caritas India put up a stall during the event which was sponsored by US based news media – Azchavattom.

On an average 2500 people visited Caritas India stall every day to gather information about the campaign. Various awareness creation materials and documents were displayed and disseminated through the stall.

Sketches and drawings prepared by children on prevention and reduction of hazardous effects of cancer were also exhibited at the stall.

Considering the festive season of the month, cakes, candles, eco-friendly cloth bags, normal bags, were sold to mobilise funds. The main attraction of the stall was Ashakiranam stars and stone ornaments prepared by the HIV patients.



Promoting bamboo craft among community

Report by Pramod Sharma, Micro Projects
Edited by Patrick Hansda, Caritas India

Urbanization has sprawl into the rural setup by converting small villages into concrete heavy multi-storied buildings and thus inviting danger of landslide, floods, earthquake and other calamities in the hilly areas.

Innovative architecture with renewable material is needed to control the damage. The use of bamboo as an alternative to concrete is the best option in constructing houses in the hilly areas.

Bamboo is not only environment friendly and locally available but also earthquake resistant. Despite its importance and usability, very less is been done to develop, promote and commercialise its use.

In an attempt to boost the use of bamboo in Kalimpong, Darjeeling and Sikkim, Caritas India has supported Anugyalaya to setup training cum processing unit for bamboo craft and construction in Darjeeling through its micro project.

Total 60 community members from Kalimpong and north Sikkim were trained under 3 batches in the art of bamboo craft like, decorative items, flower vase, artificial flowers, furniture, etc.

Though bamboo has been in widely used since ancient times as a low-cost material for houses, bridges, animal shelters and fencing in Darjeeling hills and Sikkim. Its traditional method lacked the knowledge of processing bamboo to make it last longer.

The average house constructed of bamboo without these knowledge last for up to 5 years as compared to the treated ones which are anticipated to last for at least 50 years if constructed using all the techniques of treating and cutting bamboo.

Mr. Titus Rai, one of the trainees of the first batch has become a main resource persons to impart such trainings to different Communities right from the local Community near Anugyalaya Farm at Pakang to the community of North Sikkim at their behest.

Rajbir Singh from pakang village of Gitdubling says that after attending the training he had learnt the proper techniques of using bamboo and it has given the alternate source of income. The training has not only benefited him but the whole community.

Though the people have not started selling bamboo products in the market but they have started making different bamboo products in different communities. The people have come to know the usefulness and value of the usage of bamboo so they have taken the initiative of cultivating good species of bamboo which were usually brought from outside of local area.

Though the demand for Bamboo furniture and crockery is in high demand but due to the lack of proper marketing in the area it is less flourishing.

