

ANISHA

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'ANISHA'

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1. INTRODUCTION

In 2016, there has been a major drought not only in the local region but also in other districts of Karnataka. For many years, there has been minimal rainfall and farmers have been getting minimal yields. However, this year the farmers without irrigation, who depend totally on rain, saw their crops fail, and they were expressing they have never seen this kind of drought in 40 years. Under these conditions, ANISHA could not do much in the field. Other activities such as kitchen garden with landless families, self-help groups, seed conservation at the ANISHA resource center (RC) have continued. Following a pilot project in 2013 with school students, we implemented this year the organic kitchen garden project with 23 schools in three panchayats covering 1400 students. This was a well received project by the education department, teachers and students. Without rain, although the school students put in much effort, many of them could not keep alive all the plants in their gardens, despite a lot of struggle they got minimal yields. This drought no one expected.

2. ORGANIC FARMING

In General: 220 farmers continued organic farming cultivation; with their own sowing seeds and improved farmyard manure, despite the lack of moisture. Unfortunately there was total failure of germination for farmers without irrigation. Many farmers lost their sowing seeds supply; now they are worried as they have no sowing seeds for next year like pulses, peanuts, turdal seeds.

Farmer's field

	
Lourdmary's peanuts with pigeon pea field	Kempamma's - Finger millet with intercrop pigeon pea, pulses

Kitchen Garden with landless families: This year the kitchen garden beneficiaries increased from 375 to 410 families, from a total of 20 villages. ANISHA staff visit the villages about once per month. 352 families are now saving their own seeds; the remaining 58 families are given seeds from the ANISHA seed bank. In the month of

March snake gourd and tomato seeds were sown, again in July around 8 varieties of vegetable seeds sown. The same drought situation occurred here so only a few families successfully grew vegetables like radish, okra, brinjal, bitter gourd, field bean, sponge gourd, pumpkin and bottle gourd. In comparison to last year were an average yield was 80-180 kgs. Each family consumed 8-10 kg. of vegetables during the year. Overall, during the year 3786 kgs. of vegetables were grown by 410 families and saved Rs.1,13,660/- for one year.

Quantity of vegetables grown by 410 families in 2016

	Vegetable varieties	Qty. of vegetables grown (kgs.)	Cost of vegetables per kg. (INR)	Money saved (INR)
1	Snake gourd	520	30	15,600.00
2	Tomato	230	15	3,450.00
3	Radish	292	20	5,840.00
4	Okra	176	30	5,280.00
5	Egg plant	320	30	9,600.00
6	Bitter gourd	285	40	11,400.00
7	Field bean	360	40	14,400.00
8	Sponge gourd	448	30	13,440.00
9	Pumpkin	700	30	21,000.00
10	Bottle gourd	455	30	13,650.00
	Total	3786		113,660.00

Kitchen Garden with Tribal communities: The kitchen garden project with tribal communities was extended for a second year as they were very interested in kitchen garden. It took place in three villages. Even though there was a water scarcity in the village these 130 families grew vegetables like radish, okra, field bean, tomato pumpkin, bottle gourd and sponge gourd. 102 families saved seeds from the previous harvest and ANISHA provided seeds for the remaining 28 families. On an average 10-12 kgs. of vegetables was grown and consumed by each family. 130 families generated 1331 kgs. of vegetables and saved Rs.37,700/-. ANISHA staff visited the villages once a month to provide ongoing support.

Quantity of vegetables grown by 130 tribal families in 2016

	Vegetable varieties	Qty. of vegetables grown (kgs.)	Cost of vegetables per kg. (INR)	Money saved (INR)
1	Radish	182	20	3,640.00
2	Okra	153	30	4,590.00
3	Field bean	112	40	4,480.00
4	Tomato	102	15	1,530.00
5	Pumpkin	324	30	9,720.00
6	Bottle gourd	236	30	7,080.00
7	Sponge gourd	222	30	6,660.00
	Total	1331		37,700.00



Women kitchen garden

Self Help Groups: The 7 womens Self Help Groups (sanghas) continue with their activities of savings and credit, using the money as a revolving fund to buy items such as farmyard manure, fodder for livestock and paying ploughing charges. The eighty sangha members meet roughly once a month to discuss farming issues. Anisha staffs continue to give training and monitor the minutes and account books. So far all the investments are doubled and increased in numbers and the beneficiaries are happy.

Reforestation in farmer's fields: In 2015 we took up reforestation with tribal communities in this process during the rainy season we have distributed 300 fruit plants to 130 families to date 92 plants are surviving. A similar program was started during 2016 with farmers who are involved in ANISHA's program. We conducted meetings with the farmers and also distributed 300 plants before the rainy season. We intended to distribute some more plants but there was no rain so we did not carry this

out as more plants could not survive due to water scarcity. We are planning to distribute plants in 2017 depending upon rainfall.



Farmers taking collecting fruit plants at ANISHA

Simultaneously in March 2016, we also distributed 350 fruit plants to school children in two schools, Vodakalla and Bidarahalli Government higher primary schools. The children were very happy to collect the plants and they are safeguarding them well.



Fruit plants distributed to school children by school head master along with Rajan in March 2016

A Total of 650 plants were distributed for farmers and school children in March 2016.

Seed Bank and seed multiplication: This year was a big challenge for the ANISHA seed bank for seed conservation as there was no rainfall; most of the dry land seed were irrigated to ensure production. Out of 204 varieties sown we got produce from 192 varieties, 12 varieties did not germinate. ANISHA also participated in a local government run seed fair, and promoted their collection of seeds and organic growing techniques. (See Annex 1 for detailed report)

	
<p>Treating the seed before sowing</p>	<p>Collecting millets for Seeds from seed production plot</p>



During the year, the Deputy Director of Agricultural department, Chamarajnagar district, and also Assistant Director of Agricultural Department of Kollegal Taluk both visited the ANISHA seed multiplication plots.

Nursery shed at ANISHA Resource Center: Heavy winds last year destroyed the shed roof. This is happening every year so we planned to have a permanent structure for nursery, and this is in process, the steel shed 200 sq. ft. is installed and the roof poly house material will be finished in a month or two.

3. PROGRAMS WITH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Agricultural Sustainability through Children's Organic Kitchen Garden:

As the region is drought prone and the communities suffer from urban migration in search of livelihood, schooling becomes shaky for many children. The mid-day meals scheme of the State Government have shown positive result in retaining children in the schools, numerous studies have been conducted regarding the health and wellbeing of

the children. One study reveals that the Mid-day meal satisfies hunger but has not a the nutritional needs of a healthy child.

The primary aim of this project is to develop sustainable kitchen gardens to improve the food and economic security of participating students and their families in the panchayats of Martalli, Ponnachi, and M.M. Hills of Chamarajnagar District in Karnataka.

So the idea that establishing an Organic Kitchen Garden at School and the backyard of households would a significantly supplement the nutrition of children as well as their families is being systematically worked out in this project.

The secondary goal of the project relates to enhancing the knowledge of sustainable agriculture and the concepts of Organic farming and permaculture practices among students and their families.

(See Annex 2 for detailed report)



Educational support program: During the academic year ANISHA supported 65 children to continue their education. Those who passed 10th class are continuing their education like doing graduation, ITI, Diploma, Nursing and teacher. In 2015 one of the sponsored students was topper of the school in 10 classes. This year the 10th class students requested ANISHA support for special tuition in math as it is a board exam, and they are finding it very hard in maths. Accordingly, we identified a maths teacher

locally to teach the 10th class students. Out of 65 students, 15 dalit students were supported. An educational tour was also organized to Melkote, where the children learned about nature and environment, kahadi weaving and how to make natural dyes etc. The children enjoyed the educational tour.



Students collected 21 different varieties of seeds from the farm where the workshop was conducted. They learnt about the seed biodiversity also.

Case study:

I, Arogya Abraham, study in 10th class at St. Anthony's High School, Sandanapalya village. I have one elder sister who is a nun, and a younger brother studying in 7th class. My father died 10 years ago, my mother works as an agricultural coolie during the season and the family is managing with her income. We do not have agricultural land so we have to buy everything from the shop. My mother attended the kitchen garden training at Anisha 6 years ago. Since then we have grown vegetables in a small area which supports the family.



Arogya Abraham, studying in 10th class

Additional Activities at Schools:

During our orientation and trainings the teachers of the schools are very interested to do extra activities for the students. ANISHA is also interested to explore this idea and discussed it with the students along with the teachers. Many students want to do science activities and also teachers want to do activity based on the syllabus. Initially we decided to do the science experiments, and based on this the teachers and students selected the topics and took a half-day session to research the information, prepare the

text, topics and source the materials. In October 24-28, a detailed explanation was given to students on each topic for one whole day. The next day the students came prepared and started doing their activities. And for the next two days the whole preparation work was finally completed and before conducting the exhibition we had a demo presentation by the students. In the meanwhile, the school authorities invited all local schools, parents and public. This science exhibition is a first for the region so there was very good response from other schools and public. The parents were so impressed about their children's work. *'In the feed-back all the teachers expressed that they never thought their students are talented and we made a mistake in not identifying the students' talents till that date'*. Now we have some idea of each student's talent.



Science exhibition at St.Charles Rural High School

4. RESOURCE CENTER DEVELOPMENT & MAINTENANCE

During the year, we planned on more seed production to increase and to maintain 100% germination of the existing 300 varieties of seeds at the seed bank. The majority of seeds are dry land seeds. This year we have been forced to irrigate even for rainfed crops as there was no rainfall.

This year we could not do so many activities at resource center. From two bore wells only a very small quantity of water was supplied to the plantations through drip irrigation, while the remaining water is pumped to farm pond to grow 350 kgs. of peanuts. At present in small portion growing chili, vegetables, maize.

RC Plantation

		
Planted in June - July 2015	Growth till December end 2015	Growth till December end 2016

RC maintenance: RC land, solar panels & batteries, solar fencing, two bore-wells, buildings, cows, vehicles, water pumping motors etc are well maintained regularly.

In the month of November the bore-well motors were repaired with the help of a mechanic. With less water supply from the bore-well, the motor runs empty and often needs repair.

The solar fencing was cleaned twice a year for efficient functioning.

We purchased one chargeable sprayer for resource centre for Rs. 4000/- this is smooth and even women can do spraying. We sold two young male cows and two 3 year old cows and purchased two cows which can be used for ploughing and also give a small quantity of milk.

In 2016 the two mango trees in the RC gave 16 kgs. of mango, the trees were planted in 2010. We had put lot of effort to protect these mangoes from monkeys finally after monkeys and squirrel had their share we got our share of 16 kgs. It was very tasty!



Bala is holding the mangoes grown in RC

Trade Mark: There is not much progress in the ANISHA trade mark.

Benefits from government schemes: We purchased a power tiller from the government on subsidy, the total cost of the tiller is Rs.1, 54,800/- and we paid Rs.96,000/- remaining Rs.58,800/- we got subsidy from the government. Along with this the rotavator and cultivator was also purchased. ANISHA uses the tiller for ploughing the land it is very useful. Zilla Panchayat member of Martalli constituency, Assistant Director of Kollegal Taluk Agriculture Department and Agricultural officer of Ramapura Raitha Samparka Kendra handed over the tiller to the beneficiary (ANISHA/Valli) at Kollegal Agricultural Office.



Receiving the power tiller from the agricultural department

Farmers Study Tour: In 2016, we have participated in many programs organized by agricultural department. As they considered us an innovative farm, we were also one of the beneficiaries of schemes like farm pond, power tiller and tarpaulins (for covering the fodder). Every year the agricultural department takes the innovative farmers to other states to learn and to see the innovative farmers of other states. Valli and Chinnathayi (ANISHA staff) were selected for one week tour to Maharashtra on May 1-7th 2016.

We visited different Krishi Vignana Kendra, (agriculture research institutes), the Guava and Pomegranate Research Center, farmer's fields, historical places, Anna Hazari village. It was a very good learning experience from different agricultural centers. We gained more knowledge and learnt new things which we have tried to implement at our center.

In the tour, we mainly visited Krishi Vignana Kendra (agricultural science institutes) here many research and innovations takes place, mainly on horticultural crops. Maharashtra is one of the drought prone areas and most land is naturally dry land and farmers grow horticultural crops. It is a great challenge for farmers to grow crops like pomegranate, grapes, guava etc. with minimum water supply. It was very helpful for us as we too located in a dry region and we can implement some of the techniques we have seen. As a first step in a small way we have converted the vegetable cultivation plot into grape garden and planted around 10 plants, which are growing well.



Study tour of farmers 'Pomegranate Research Center'

5. AWARDS

In 2016, Valli Krishnaswamy, the program coordinator of ANISHA received an award from Bangalore Agriculture University for 'Young Women Farmers Award' for Kollegal Taluk. The award function was organized by the Agricultural University of Bangalore and the Agriculture Department, Government of Karnataka, on 5th December 2016. A certificate along with a cheque for Rs.5000/- was awarded.



Award ceremony photo. Valli is seated 1st on left side

6. CONCLUSION

2016 was a very bad year for all farmers of Karnataka as well as India, the monsoon totally failed and even the northeast monsoon failed, people are finding it difficult to get drinking water. With all this the farmers are hoping that they will get some rain next year to improve the situation of underground water source. The farmers have lost their crops as well as fodder and their seeds. In the last six years we concentrated on self sustenance on seed, fertilizers and pesticides and this was achieved, but now they have lost seeds like pulses, maize, peanuts etc. Currently ANISHA is concerned about seeds for next year, in the seed bank we have a limited quantity which cannot be provided to all the farmers of our contact. We have to source more quantity of these seeds for next season.

Even with no rainfall, we still succeeded in implementing kitchen gardens with schools and school students. We started with orienting, distributing seeds, training and practical demonstrations. We never expected that the school teachers and students would be so enthusiastically implementing. A few schools attempted different methods of gardens implemented like curtain, permaculture method, bucket/bag and bottle gardens. This made our team work rigorously to help students and schools to improve

and maintain the gardens. We got a very good response and the students tried their level best to grow vegetables, even though they had their own problems like water scarcity, monkeys and wild boar destroying the gardens. With all these hurdles, they have grown vegetables with a lot of interest and enthusiasm. Now the students wherever they see us, ask for seeds and recognize ANISHA. The education department is also encouraging the schools to continue this program.

The agriculture department has recognized our work and we have good rapport with the department

The educational support program is of great benefit to the children and most of the students who completed 10th std have continue further education.

However, with all up and downs we were able to achieve our program to some extent and also we understood that for our activities we depend on rainfall, if rain comes periodically and regularly during season our program will reach more people, otherwise it is very limited reach. In the last 7-8 years, the rainfall is drastically reducing year by year, this year there was no rainfall in the region. We always hope that we will get rainfall this year. But this hope remains as hope.

7. THANKS

Whatever work we did this year was because of the Helmer family, SD Germany, SD Britain, SD Norway, SDIA, SD USA and Guru Krupa Foundation's support. Our sincere thanks to all the individuals and institutions.

Support from SD Nationals and Individuals

1. SD Germany: January to December 2016 for follow up programs of Organic farming.
2. Helmer Family: Reforestation in farmer's field, expansion of kitchen garden program for tribal families.
Children's Organic Kitchen Garden Project (partly supported by Helmer's Family).
3. Guru Krupa Foundation and SD USA (partly): Agricultural Sustainability through Children's Organic Kitchen Garden Project.
4. SD USA: Educational support program for school children.
5. SD Britain: support to Seed Production project.
6. SD Norway: Educational support program especially for dalit children.



Thank you from the ANISHA TEAM

February 2017
Valli Krishnaswamy