

MANGROVE ACTION DAY 2014

Mangroves, the life supporting eco-system (fisheries and food production, medicinal use, tourism, storm and cyclone buffers) those are critical to economic activities for many coastal communities. Mangroves have a high potential to reduce climate change-induced threats, particularly the impacts of cyclones and storm surges; simultaneously, they provide livelihood resources for local communities. It checks soil erosion due to flooding and carbon sink as a part of global climate changes and reduction of the environmental disasters. Sustainable management and conservation of these vital and life sustaining natural resources involving local communities and other stakeholders are needs of the hour.

'Climate's First Orphans...

Odisha has been called the disaster capital of India. The coastal areas of Odisha are counted amongst the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and extreme events. The combined effects of sea-level rise, increased frequency and intensity of tropical cyclones, storm surges, soil erosion, and salinity intrusion pose a serious threat. The once thriving and vibrant coastal social-ecological systems are undergoing many rapid transformations, both in the ecology and the socio-economic conditions in this region. Many of these communities witness the gradual disappearance of their homes, agricultural lands, and assets into the bottomless belly of the adjoining Bay of Bengal. Aptly described as 'Climate's First Orphans,' they have been left to fend for themselves in these hostile and uncertain conditions. The only support and refuge for these communities-at-risk is the surviving mangrove ecosystem.



Sea Erosion Pose a Serious Threat to Coastal Villages of Odisha

Odisha Loses Mangrove Forest...

The destruction of mangrove forest in Odisha at a very faster rate in recent years has been quite alarming. The recent report of Forest Survey of India (FSI) indicates that, Odisha has lost 9 sq km of mangroves forest between 2011 and 2013. It is high time for speed up the conservation and restoration measures to safeguard and increase mangrove forests in Odisha.

Community Stewardship in Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Management of Mangroves ...

Over the years, APOWA has been contributing innovative models for the restoration, conservation and sustainable management of the mangroves through community participation in Odisha. Though APOWA's initiatives such as developing VMC (Village Mangrove Council) as an appropriate grass root level institutional design for taking this initiative forward and increased the momentum of sustainable management of mangroves. APOWA has been successfully restored more than 100ha. of mangrove forest through community participation in Kendrapara district, Odisha, since last 10 years. We would like to extend our thanks to Integrated Coastal Zone Management Project (ICZMP), Odisha, Mangroves for the Future (MFF), India, IUCN, Mangrove Forest Division (WL), Rajnagar, and GEF/UNDP/MoEF/CEE SGP for their kind support and technical guidance for this initiative.



Restored more than 100 ha. of mangrove forest



Encouraging & involving community members in mangrove restoration & conservation process

Model Mangrove Village...

APOWA has been maintaining a Model Mangrove village i.e. Badkot of Kendrapara district in association with local community members and Maa Kharakhai Village Mangrove Council, Badkot. The agricultural field, grass land, mangrove resources surrounded the village have been maintained properly. APOWA has been restored 20 ha. of degraded mangrove forest around this village. This forest now protecting some rare and endangered species of reptiles, amphibians, mammals, birds, fish, etc. The biodiversity have increased i.e. fish, shrimps, many bird species like kingfisher, heron, etc, crocodile were reported coming back after some years. King cobra absent for many years now reappears. Income level of villagers increased due to increase of fisheries resources. In this village, we are also maintaining a mangrove nursery with the capacity of hundred thousands of saplings produce at any time and distribute mangrove saplings to neighbouring villages in every year. We are linkages with other institutions, school & college students, researchers, organizations etc and used as a tool in ways to successfully restore and conserve mangroves.

Mangrove Action Day 2014...

Every year, APOWA (Action for Protection of Wild Animals) has been observing Mangrove Action Day in Odisha. This year too, APOWA observed the same in association with District Environment Society, Kendrapara and Mangrove Forest Division (WL), Rajnagar, Govt. of Odisha at Madanpur High School, Madanpur, Rajnagar on 26th July, 2014.

Inaugurating the programme, Mr. Gadadhar Patra, Asst. conservator of forest of Mangrove Forest (WL) Division and Bhitarkanika National Park, said that more awareness and required to be raised about conserving mangrove resources in coastal areas. Mangrove is one of the important aspects in coastal ecosystem, which acts as a breeding & nursery ground for many marine organisms, said Mr. Bijaya Kumar Kabi, Director, APOWA. He said, both the community and authorities must see that the only mangroves forest to counter the natural disasters such as cyclones, Tsunami, storm surges effectively and protect the inhabitants as well as make them resilient to such hazards. We have learned lessons from cyclone 'Phailin' and super cyclone 1999, that mangroves proving to be a bio-shield against tropical cyclones and sea surges, said Mr. Bhaskar Routray, president, Rajnagar Press club and eminent journalist. Mr. Hemant Rout, environmentalist, Rajnagar, highlighted the importance of mangroves habitat, he said, "mangroves have been considered as eco-guards' for coastal areas. It should be conserved and protected at all cost, said Mr. Rout. Mr. Kapilendra Pradhan, forester, Mangrove Forest (WL) Division and Bhitarkanika National Park, also participated as resource person and delivered valuable suggestion to restore and conserve mangrove forest. He said that, without understanding the significance of mangroves, some people had been destroying the mangrove forest.



Regular visit of various college students to our model mangrove village at Badkot, Kendrapara, Odisha state



College students are studying mangrove ecology at our Mangrove nursery



Dirty work for a cleaner environment



Decline of fish due to mangrove degradation is a major concern for the livelihood of thousands coastal people



'Measures must be taken to create an awareness of the importance role playing mangroves. Mr. Abhimanyu Rout, Head master of the school was presided over the meeting. Totally, 105 students and 20 teachers from the school along with local forest staff participated in this conservation programme.

Way Forward...

The mangrove issues are complex and its management solutions is very challenging, especially in coastal areas of Odisha. We cannot achieve success in mangrove resources conservation by working alone: we must collaborate with governments, institutions and other agencies in order to meet our goals. In order to address the above issues, and to enhance the technical and skills of the coastal resource managers, volunteers and stakeholders, there is a need to establish a Mangrove Resource Centre. In future, attempts will be made to establish such a centre with the support of partners and stakeholders.

APOWA's rooting in the coastal area; expand on its work of advocacy, networking, coordinate mangrove conservation, education, sustainable livelihood initiatives and most notably our mangrove restoration programme raced forward. APOWA's relationships with community and stakeholders that have sustained and enabled us to lead the way towards our mission on mangroves.

For the Mangroves,

APOWA

[Action for Protection of Wild Animals]

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