

FROM BALD HILL TO LUSH GREEN FOREST

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sundargarh, Dec 6: The remarkable success story of Sagarpali Van Surakhya Samiti (VSS) under Tangarpali block in Sundargarh district took centre stage in the second edition of the national-level webinar 'Community Conference on Commons' organised by the Foundation for Ecological Security (FES).

The selected success story, titled 'Transformation of Bald Hill into a Lush Green Forest', authored by SEWAK team leader Digambar Upadhyay, was presented in the prestigious forum during the first session of the three-day webinar.

Out of numerous success stories submitted by various government and private organisations as well as individuals from India, Bangladesh, and Nepal, Sagarpali VSS's story was among the top 80 selected for presentation.



REPRESENTATIVE PICTURE

The national-level webinar aimed to showcase and celebrate impactful initiatives from across the region. In the inaugural session of the first day, Digambar Upadhyay delivered a compelling presentation on the success story of Sagarpali Van Surakhya Samiti under the Sundargarh forest division.

The narrative covered the innovative initiatives for forest protection and management initiated by the villagers of Sagarpali

since 1985, highlighting the collaboration with the Odisha Forest Development Project-2 and the continuous support and guidance from the voluntary organisation 'SEWAK'.

Key aspects of the presentation included the 'Thengapali', 'Mutidhan' system, SHRAMADAN plantation, protection of paddy fields and forests from fire, and strategies to reduce community dependence on forests through income-generating pro-

grammes.

The presentation also emphasised on biodiversity conservation, alternative fuels, and wildlife conservation. The success story was highly appreciated by the audience, serving as a shining example of joint forest management, demonstrating effective collaboration with the Sundargarh forest division and the collective efforts of community forest management, supported by the Odisha Forest Development Project-II.

Representatives from Sagarpali VSS including Debanand Mahaling and Bharti Patel shared their experiences during the programme, highlighting the importance of community motivation, participation, and action in achieving sustainable conservation goals.

The virtual event witnessed active participation from members of Sagarpali VSS, Ujalpur Range Officer Debadatta Nanda, Forester Vinod Kumar Pattanaik, SEWAK

Secretary Pradeep Kumar Brahma, SEWAK Chairman Amiya Kant Naik, Finance Manager Nilambar Upadhyay, Development Officers Haripriya Naik, and Manoranjan Mallick, among other staff members.

The success story of Sagarpali VSS stands as a testament to the power of community-led conservation efforts, showcasing the positive impact of collaborative initiatives in preserving and enhancing natural resources. The recognition received at the national level further underscores the significance of such grassroots initiatives in fostering sustainable environmental practices.

The author of the case study, Digambar Upadhyay, expresses gratitude to RCCF Arun Kumar Mishra, Sundargarh DFO Pradeep Mirase, ACF Mohan Hemram, Sundargarh DMU, Ujalpur FMU, SEWAK management, and all the villagers of Sagarpali for their unwavering support and guidance.

Sagarpali VSS shines in national webinar