Revolution will be planted

Quarterly Newsletter 1-2019

Two years passed when we had started our work with the community in Durdih Village. We enjoyed our work, made several mistakes, found many things more challenging than it appeared initially. But we made it. Now, we have our first agroforestry model implemented before us and the work is expanding in both intensive and extensive way. Intensive care is required to manage the model farm developed by us and an extensive effort is needed to scale our project. Here we are presenting some of the highlights of various engagements during this period.

Farm work and related engagements

We started our January month with the celebration of ‘Push Bhatta’ (Push stands for the month of January and Bhatta stands for Rice). This was the time of rice harvesting all around our locality. So, there is a tradition of celebrating one day by gathering and cooking rice in the field. We also made the celebration in our farm along with community and team members. During that period we spread ash in the entire field and did mulching all over the field with rice straws. This curbs the growth of insects and unwanted plants and helps in increasing the natural soil fertility. After that weeding work got started that goes on till date. In between farmers and the volunteers also did the sowing of some more seeds of maize in the boundary and those of Spinach, Bitter gourd, Lady’s Finger, some varieties of cucumber after having dipped in Bijamrita. We use to prepare Jeewamrita and Ghan Jeewamrita on regular basis and use them in the field. Neemastra is also prepared and used to control pests whenever required to do so. In these months we have harvested potatoes, marigold, Chillies and Pumpkins from the farm. Moreover,
the wall of the room constructed in the farm got plastered with mud. We also went to visit other potential project site in a village located in the valley of Sringi Rishi on 24th Jan. along with team members and community volunteers. Recently we have visited a village situated 25 km away from our location to observe and understand the fish farming through Biofloc technique. In coming time we are also planning to start this project in our village, Durdih.

**Campaign for water conservation and Global School Strike for Climate Action**

On 8th Feb. we initiated a campaign with the help of volunteers and 80 school children on water conservation raising the slogan ‘No Water No Farmer, No farmer No food’. Teachers also participated in this campaign. The postures used for this purpose were made by school kids and volunteers. Similarly, we went to various local government schools to convey the message of Greta Thunberg and thousands of similar school children protesting and going for Climate Strike worldwide and then supported them for organizing a similar one at our place. About 200 school children and 6 teachers from 3 different schools participated in the strike being organized globally on 15th march. They marched from their schools to Block Development Office sloganering we need to wake up, we need to wise up....’ and submitting the signed application in which public bureaucrats and government were addressed and informed about the global climate strike demanding for right action. We had registered to the Fridays For Future India in order to organize this strike in solidarity with Greta Thunberg and others students.
Volunteering
We got the service from volunteers of different backgrounds in our farm work as well as in the organizational work. Volunteered helped in sowing of seeds, weeding, documentation work and visiting schools in a meaningful way. In the month of February, two volunteers Campbell Waldron (from America) and Janneke Nooij (from Holland) came to Durdih to visit us, to understand our work and to spend some time in rural India. They stayed with us for three weeks and enjoyed as well as volunteered in various works. They visited school with us and explained various aspects of plastic pollution before school children. They also actively participated in the campaign regarding conservation of water. Moreover they got involved in various community engagements and farm work. Our team member Swati Yadav organized a photography workshop on 23rd Feb. along with Janneke Nooij who is a professional photographer currently based in Amsterdam. Our other team members and volunteers learnt a lot of new things essential for good photography. Campbell wrote an article on this village and Khetee Organization. Nooij also helped us in making good videos and photos for Khetee. Similarly, Shahin Muttalib came here from Canada. He stayed for two days and volunteered in farm work.

Participating in Seminars and conferences
In January our team member, Bablu Kumar Yadav went to Orissa to participate in Learning Societies Unconference 2019 held between Jan 15-20. Again in the last week of January he went to Ahemdabad to participate in the Annual Event of Global Action on Poverty (GAP) held between Jan 31- Feb 3. In the second week of February, Neeraj, the founder of Khetee Organization, went to Jodhpur to participate and present his paper in the 13th International conference Drylands Developments (13th ICDD) with the theme "Converting Dryland Areas from Grey into Green", organized by IDDC and AZRAI and hosted by CAZRI, from 11-14 February 2019. There he met with Dr. Javed Rizvi the Director of
South Asia Program, World Agroforestry and Dr. Dennis Garrity, the Chairperson of Evergreen Agriculture partnership. He also went to Kochi to participate in 13th annual ISOLA Conference and had a meaningful discussion and meeting with John D. Liu on Ecosystem Restoration Camp. He has talked with him for the collaboration to bring the Ecosystem Restoration Camp in Bihar. He also went to Kerala Agricultural University to meet Khetee’s technical advisor Dr. B Mohan Kumar.

**Community engagements**
During this period, in order to execute various events and spread awareness regarding agroforestry and natural farming we organized meetings on several occasions along with volunteers and community members. On 23rd Feb we organized such a meeting with 150 community members and volunteers on water conservation and prominent agricultural issues in our village relating them to the Impact of Climate issues at global level. We also went to school to organize a talk on various aspects of Plastic pollution and possible interventions that are being made and can be adopted. We also visited 6 different government schools to mobilize and support them for organizing the school strike for Climate action.

We also made a survey in February in the government school of Durdih village in order to get the basic language learning scale of students from class 4-8. In the last week of March, we organized a 10 days Madhubani Painting Course with the help of an artist willing to volunteer for the girls in our village.

**Dear Friends, Supporters and Partners,**
*We are extremely grateful to all who have made our venture possible to reach at this point. On behalf of all our team members, we say THANK YOU VERY MUCH for your ongoing interest and support. Also we thank you for sharing this newsletter within your network.*
*We wish you a wonderful spring time!* With very best regards,
The entire Khetee Team, Neeraj and Dharamjeet

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