



JEEVIKA NEWSLETTER

July 2024/ Vol. 81

JEEVIKA's Commitment to Greenery : Harit JEEVIKA, Harit Bihar 5.0

Introduction

Harit JEEVIKA Harit Bihar – 5.0 initiative has commenced its tree plantation efforts for this financial year. For several years, JEEVIKA Didis have taken on the challenge of maintaining environmental balance to combat extreme heat and conserve water. Annually, they undertake tree planting with specific targets, also ensuring the saplings' proper care and maintenance. To promote environmental balance and economic self-reliance among JEEVIKA Didis, JEEVIKA nurseries known as "JEEVIKA Didi Ki Paudhshala" have been established across nearly all blocks of Bihar. These nurseries are operated by JEEVIKA in jointly collaboration with the Department of Forest and Environment and Climate Change and JEEVIKA under the 'Mukhyamantri Niji Paudhshala Yojana,' with each nursery preparing 20,000 saplings. This initiative not only fosters a greener environment but also empowers JEEVIKA Didis economically.

Historically barren areas, such as pond edges and roadsides, are now adorned with trees. This afforestation effort is crucial, as large-scale deforestation for industrial and residential development has disrupted



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Lead Story : Harit JEEVIKA, Harit Bihar



environmental balance and water conservation. Recognizing the urgency, JEEVIKA has spearheaded extensive tree planting through JEEVIKA Didis, ensuring their active participation.

Annually, before the monsoon, pits are dug in all state panchayats, and saplings obtained from the Forest Department and MGNREGA are planted. These saplings are nurtured in 'Didi Ki Paudhshala' and distributed through designated drop points in each

panchayat, where JEEVIKA Didis collect and plant them in pre-dug pits.

Community-level tree planting has heightened environmental awareness among people, motivating them to protect existing trees and plant new ones wherever possible, even in spaces as small as home balconies. JEEVIKA Didis, understanding their responsibility towards society and the environment, are committed to providing a prosperous environment, clean air, and mitigating water scarcity for future generations. Since June 28th, preparations for tree planting have begun, with a statewide target of planting 8 million saplings.

Harit JEEVIKA Harit Bihar 5.0

In the wake of environmental conservation, combating climate change, and enhancing forest cover, the government of Bihar has initiated an extensive campaign, where women from the JEEVIKA self-help groups are actively participating. Under the ambitious 'Mission 5 Crore Tree Plantation Campaign,' JEEVIKA is spearheading the 'Green JEEVIKA Green Bihar 5' program. This initiative entails intensive tree planting from World Environment Day on June 5th to Earth Day on August 9th, aiming to plant 5 crore trees through the 'One Didi-One Tree' model. This campaign not only promotes environmental protection but also serves as a significant step towards fulfilling the nutritional and other essential needs of families.

To ensure the longevity and growth of the planted trees, JEEVIKA Didis are being trained in proper planting techniques. Correct planting methods are crucial for the survival and development of trees, fulfilling the objectives of the afforestation efforts. Here are some essential guidelines for planting trees effectively:

There are commendable accomplishments and experiences of our dedicated JEEVIKA Didis in contributing to environmental conservation. Under the ambitious 'Mission 5 Crore Tree Plantation Campaign,' JEEVIKA Didis have actively participated in the 'Harit JEEVIKA Harit Bihar 5' program, showcasing their commitment to fostering a greener future. Through their tireless efforts, we have successfully planted and nurtured 5 crore trees, significantly enhancing the green cover across Bihar.

Our journey, spanning from World Environment Day on June 5th to Earth Day on August 9th, has been marked by dedication and perseverance. By adhering to proper planting techniques, Didis have ensured the longevity and growth of these trees. We are proud to present the essential steps and experiences of JEEVIKA Didis in this successful afforestation mission:

Lead Story : Harit JEEVIKA, Harit Bihar

- **Comprehensive Site Selection:** The JEEVIKA Didis meticulously selected appropriate sites for tree plantation, avoiding areas prone to water logging. They chose locations where the trees could be easily maintained, such as roadsides, riverbanks, and institutional premises. By planting trees in these strategic locations, they ensured that the saplings would receive proper care and thrive.
- **Strategic Pit Digging:** In June, Didis dug pits for planting, ensuring they were exposed to ample sunlight to prevent fungal growth. For fruit-bearing trees, they dug 2-foot-long, wide, and deep pits to allow proper root expansion. For timber trees, they prepared 1-foot-long, wide, and deep pits, maintaining an 8 to 10 feet distance between timber trees and a 10 to 25 feet distance between fruit trees to facilitate optimal growth.
- **Detailed Pit Preparation:** Before planting, the Didis prepared the pits by pulverizing the surrounding soil. If the soil was not naturally loamy, they mixed it with wet sand to improve its quality. They enriched the soil with vermicompost or well-decomposed cow dung manure, adding a small amount of Gamaxin powder to minimize fungal attacks, creating a healthier growth environment for the saplings.
- **Methodical Sapling Planting:** During the rainy season, Didis planted the saplings, ensuring that the top of the root ball was level with the ground surface. They carefully removed the poly bags from the saplings, placed them in the center of the pits, and filled the pits with the soil mixture, gently pressing the soil around the roots. They adapted their planting methods based on rainfall conditions, ensuring proper moisture retention around the roots.
- **Regular Maintenance:** Proper maintenance was key to the successful growth of the saplings. Didis conducted initial hoeing and weeding 10 to 15 days after planting, followed by subsequent sessions after 1 to 5 months and again after approximately 2.5 months. They formed rings around the plants, applied DAP and urea fertilizers, covered the fertilizers with soil, and watered the plants. Regular irrigation every 3-4 days was essential, although this was adjusted during the rainy season.
- **Ensuring Sapling Protection:** To safeguard the saplings, Didis created protective barriers using available materials such as thorns, sticks, bamboo, or barbed wire. This simple yet effective measure significantly enhanced the survival rate of the planted trees, protecting them from grazing animals.



Through their meticulous efforts, JEEVIKA Didis have ensured the survival and growth of the saplings, contributing to the success of the afforestation mission. Their hard work has not only promoted environmental protection but has also addressed the nutritional needs of families and provided economic stability.

Empowering Communities Through Knowledge and Skills

The training provided to JEEVIKA Didis in effective tree planting techniques has been a cornerstone of our success. This knowledge dissemination has empowered Didis, equipping them with the skills needed to undertake the planting process

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efficiently. Their education has enhanced the success rate of tree plantations and fostered a sense of responsibility and ownership within our community.

Addressing Nutritional Needs and Economic Benefits

Our plantation campaign has also addressed the nutritional needs of families by encouraging the planting of fruit-bearing trees. This approach has provided a dual benefit: enhancing the green cover and offering a sustainable source of nutrition. The economic benefits derived from fruit and timber trees have significantly contributed to the livelihoods of the participating families, promoting financial stability and self-reliance.

Enhancing Biodiversity and Ecological Balance

Increasing the green cover through extensive tree planting has played a crucial role in enhancing biodiversity. The diverse plant species have created a balanced ecosystem, supporting various forms of flora and fauna and contributing to soil health. The trees act as carbon sinks, absorbing carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen, thus mitigating the effects of climate change. Additionally, they prevent soil erosion, maintain water cycles, and improve air quality, leading to a healthier environment.

Community Engagement and Long-term Sustainability

The success of our large-scale afforestation campaign hinges on sustained community engagement. By involving local communities, we ensure long-term maintenance and care of the planted trees. Continuous monitoring, regular maintenance, and protection measures are integral to the survival and growth of the saplings. The collaborative efforts of our community members instill a sense of collective responsibility towards environmental conservation.

Overcoming Challenges and Ensuring Resilience

Despite the numerous benefits, our tree planting initiatives have faced several challenges, including adverse weather conditions, pest infestations, and grazing by animals. Addressing these challenges has required resilience and adaptive strategies. Proper site selection, soil preparation, and protective measures such as barricading and fencing have been crucial in overcoming these obstacles. Additionally, ongoing training and support for Didis have enhanced their capacity to tackle unforeseen challenges effectively.

Conclusion: A Path Towards a Greener Future

The 'Mission 5 Crore Tree Plantation Campaign' and the 'Green JEEVIKA Green Bihar 5' program exemplify a comprehensive approach to environmental conservation. By combining proper planting techniques with community engagement, these initiatives pave the way for a greener and more sustainable future. The meticulous process of site selection, pit preparation, sapling planting, maintenance, and protection has ensured the successful growth of trees.

Through continuous training and empowerment, have played a pivotal role in transforming their communities and the environment. The benefits of these initiatives extend beyond environmental conservation, addressing nutritional needs, enhancing biodiversity, and providing economic stability. As the trees grow and flourish, they symbolize the collective efforts and resilience of our community, marking a significant step towards achieving a balanced and healthy ecosystem.

JEEVIKA Didis have demonstrated that with proper techniques, dedicated efforts, and community collaboration, we can achieve remarkable results in afforestation. We are proud of their achievements and remain

Programs & Initiatives**Addressing Low Female Labour Force Participation in Bihar : A Multi faceted Approach by JEEVIKA**

The issue of low female labor force participation in Bihar, particularly against the backdrop of improving educational outcomes for women and girls, remains a significant concern for policymakers. According to the latest national data (PLFS 2022-23), women's labor force participation for ages 15-59 years in Bihar stands at 23.9 percent. This figure is even more alarming in urban areas, where it plummets to 13.8 percent, compared to 24.8 percent in rural areas. For younger women aged 15-29, the participation rate is even lower: only 7 percent in urban areas and around 12 percent in rural areas, averaging 11.6 percent across both settings.

Barriers to Female Labor Force Participation

Evidence suggests that the safety and mobility of women and girls in public spaces are key concerns that hinder their access to education and employment opportunities, thereby impacting their overall quality of life. Restricted daily mobility and limited access to various facilities profoundly affect women's participation in education, employment, health, and wellness, negatively influencing their socio-economic empowerment indicators. A 2018 study in Delhi highlighted that girls often choose lower-ranked colleges due to fears of sexual harassment in public spaces during their commute, underscoring the link between safety concerns and educational choices. This issue is not unique to Delhi; Bihar also faces similar challenges with poor female labor force participation rates.

Programs & Initiatives

JEEVIKA's Role in Empowering Rural Women

For the past fifteen years, JEEVIKA has been working with rural women from low-income backgrounds to alleviate poverty. Recently, JEEVIKA has integrated principles of gender equality into its initiatives, with guidance from the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM). Collaborating with the Centre for Catalyzing Change (C3), JEEVIKA aims to create gender-responsive and safer spaces for women both at home and in public. A critical focus of this gender integration program is ending gender-based violence in private and public spaces. Over the past two years, several initiatives have been undertaken by JEEVIKA's community-based organizations (CBOs) to promote gender equality and create violence-free communities.



Safety Audits: A Tool for Creating Safer Public Spaces

One of the important tools introduced by JEEVIKA CBOs to ensure safety in public spaces is Safety Audits. From December 2023 to March 2024, a total of 22 safety audits were conducted across Rajgir (Nalanda), Dhanarua (Patna), and Minapur (Muzaffarpur). These audits involved JEEVIKA CBO members mapping their villages and marking key spots frequented by women and girls. The audits, supported by the C3 field team, involved evaluating areas on parameters such as availability of light, openness, availability of paths and roads, safe public transport, and the presence of women at different times of the day.

Actions Taken

JEEVIKA leaders presented the findings to local authorities, including the Gram Panchayat Mukhiya, police, and other stakeholders. Some immediate actions included the installation of street lights and the repair of smaller roads, prioritized by the Panchayat Mukhiya. Additionally, convergence between the Panchayat and Police led to measures like increased patrolling to address street harassment and illegal alcohol brewing. In some cases, JEEVIKA collective leaders undertook patrolling of unsafe areas themselves and warned perpetrators.

Conclusion

The efforts by JEEVIKA and its collaborators to address low female labor force participation through safety audits, economic empowerment, and community mobilization are commendable. By creating safer public spaces and providing economic opportunities, JEEVIKA is paving the way for greater gender equality and socio-economic empowerment of women in Bihar. These initiatives not only improve the quality of life for women and girls but also contribute to a more inclusive and equitable society.

As JEEVIKA continues its mission, it is essential to maintain the momentum and expand these initiatives to more regions, ensuring that every woman and girl in Bihar can achieve her full potential without fear or limitation.

Transforming Lives

Hema's Revolutionary Impact on Farmers' Lives: A Journey from VRP to Drone Pilot

Hema Kumari, hailing from Rachiahi in Matihani block of Begusarai district, has been making waves as a VRP (Village Resource Person) with JEEVIKA. Her journey is not only a testament to her perseverance and dedication but also a beacon of hope for many women in rural Bihar. In her role as a VRP, Hema imparts knowledge about new agricultural techniques to the farmers in her area.



She ensures the availability of superior quality seeds and fertilizers and facilitates the marketing of agricultural products. Her efforts have significantly uplifted the local farming community by introducing innovative practices and enhancing productivity.

Hema's story is one of resilience and determination. "I was married to Vinod Kumar when I was in matriculation," she recalls. "I felt that my dreams had come to an end." However, her in-laws supported her desire to continue her education, and today, she proudly holds a graduate degree. Before joining JEEVIKA, her financial situation was precarious. She yearned to contribute to her family's income and found the opportunity to do so in 2017 when she joined a JEEVIKA group.

Joining the group was a turning point in Hema's life. It brought significant changes and opened doors to new opportunities. She availed loans on two occasions from the group, which she judiciously used for various purposes and repaid on time. Recognizing her potential, she was selected as a VRP. Hema began working closely with local farmers, and her dedication and effectiveness soon made her a popular figure in the community. This role not only brought her recognition but also improved her financial stability.

A remarkable chapter in Hema's journey began when she had the opportunity to undergo drone training. "The training was extraordinary," she says. "Operating a drone, something I had never seen in my life, was a thrilling experience." Hema successfully mastered the skills required to pilot a drone, an achievement that symbolizes her remarkable transformation and forward-thinking approach. Hema believes that drones will revolutionize agriculture. "In the coming days, this drone will change our lives," she asserts. The technology is expected to enhance efficiency in farming practices, from crop monitoring to precise pesticide application, ultimately leading to higher yields and better livelihoods for farmers.

Hema's story is a powerful example of how determination, coupled with the right opportunities, can bring about revolutionary changes. Her journey from a village girl to a VRP and now a drone pilot is not just a personal success but also a source of inspiration for many others. She has shown that with education, support, and perseverance, women can break barriers and contribute significantly to societal transformation.

August

Calendar of Events

COMING UP IN THE NEXT EDITION

→ Women of Bihar are changing the narrative of Aquaculture in the State

The Success Story of the "Jal-Jeevan-Hariyali Abhiyan" in Bhagalpur: Planting 2.68 Lakh Saplings

In the ongoing endeavor to promote environmental conservation, JEEVIKA has once again set ambitious targets for tree plantation this year. Aiming to further the cause, the initiative "Harit Jeevika Harit Bihar-5.0" has been launched, with the goal of planting at least 1 crore saplings. This monumental task is to be achieved with the active participation of Jeevika Didis.



In Bhagalpur district, a specific target of planting 2,68,253 saplings has been set for the year. Each Jeevika Didi is encouraged to plant at least one sapling, under the campaign slogan "Ek Jeevika Didi-Ek Paudha-Ek Sankalp" (One Jeevika Didi-One Sapling-One Resolution). With a membership of 3,24,000 in the district, this collective effort is poised to meet the plantation target with ease. The saplings will be supplied by the Department of Forest, Environment, and Climate Change. To ensure the success of this campaign, the Chief Minister's Private Nursery Scheme has been introduced to guarantee a steady supply of saplings. Under this scheme, nurseries are allocated to Jeevika Didis by the Department of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change, as well as by MGNREGA. Across 251 blocks in the state, nurseries are being created with the help of the Forest Department, while in the remaining 283 blocks, nurseries are established under the MGNREGA scheme. Currently, there are 409 operational nurseries managed by the Didis, with 221 supported by the Forest Department and 188 by MGNREGA.

The Didis' nurseries, operating under the Chief Minister's Private Nursery Scheme, receive both technical and financial support from the Forest Department and MGNREGA, ensuring meticulous supervision throughout the process. The saplings, once ready, are purchased back by these departments and then distributed to the Didis for planting. Each nursery, managed by the Didis, is committed to supplying a minimum of 20,000 saplings. Consequently, the Jeevika Didis are collectively preparing over one crore saplings, with a focus on biodiversity. The saplings include a variety of species such as mango, guava, gooseberry, lemon, coconut, black plum, jackfruit, drumstick, and bael, along with timber plants like teak and mahogany. Additionally, medicinal trees like peepal, neem, and banyan are planted to enhance environmental conservation and maximize oxygen availability. These saplings not only contribute to environmental preservation but also promise future nutritional and income benefits for the Didis' families.

In Bhagalpur alone, 14 nurseries are being managed by the Didis, each supplying at least 20,000 saplings to the Department of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change. For every sapling supplied, the Didis receive a payment of 20 rupees. This means that each nursery, managed by a family, earns approximately 4 lakh rupees annually. This initiative not only bolsters environmental conservation but also generates significant income, thereby improving the economic condition of the families involved.

The Scheme has transformed the lives of Jeevika Didis. Each nursery supplies 20,000 saplings, fetching 20 rupees per sapling, resulting in an income of 4 lakh rupees. Even after accounting for the cost of preparing and maintaining the saplings, which averages between one to one and a half lakh rupees, the net income is substantial. This initiative has thus enabled the successful achievement of plantation targets while creating a new livelihood for the Didis.