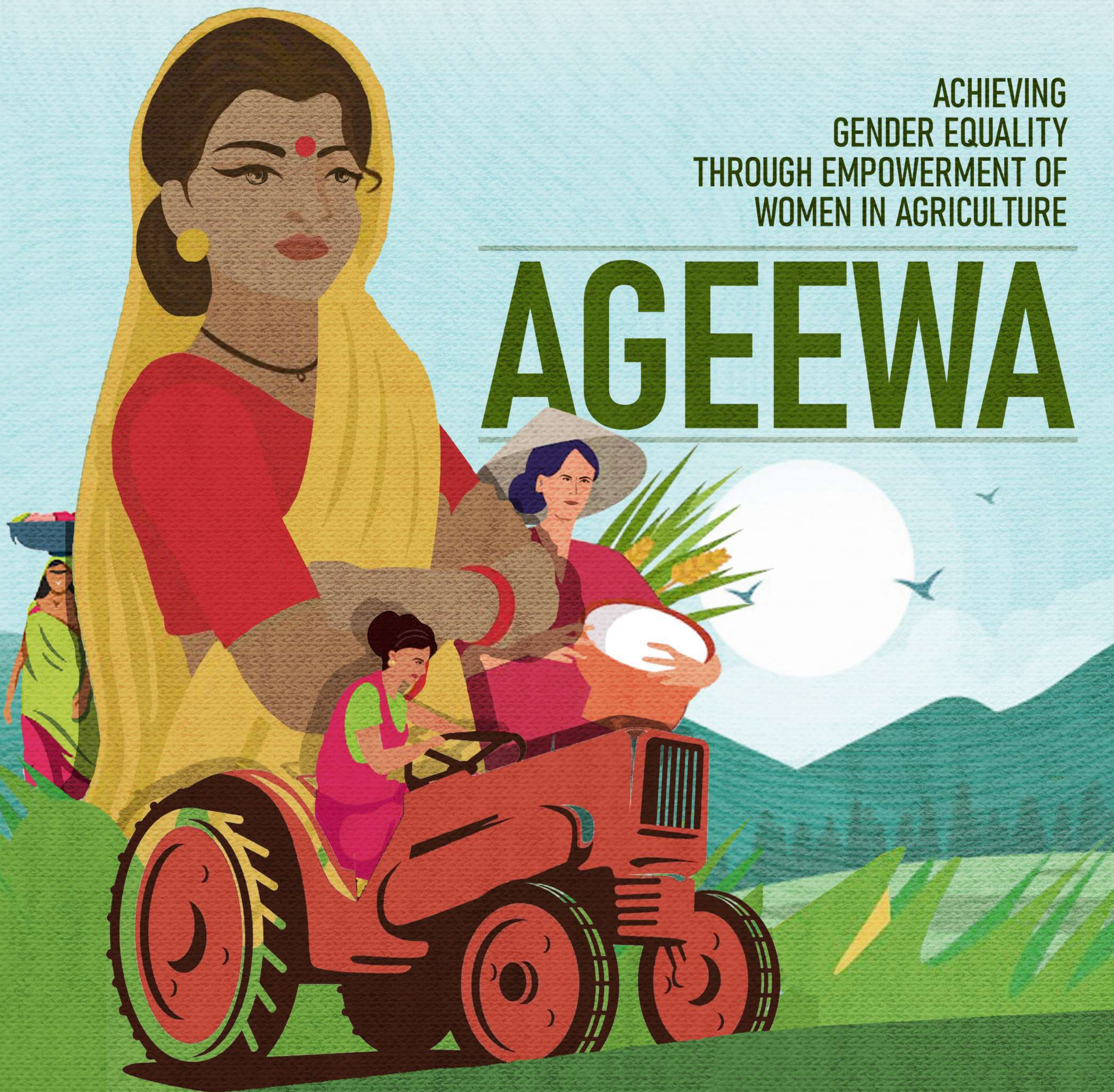


ACHIEVING
GENDER EQUALITY
THROUGH EMPOWERMENT OF
WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

AGEEWA



BACKGROUND

According to census data from 2011, 65.1 % of the total female workers in the country are involved in agriculture. Women form 32.9 % of the total cultivators, 38.9 % of the total agricultural labourers and 39.02 % of the total agricultural workers. But the sector evidently appears to be dominated by men, where the key decision makers are mostly male farmers. The large number of women in the sector remains as 'invisible contributors'. The root of the problem begins with the lack of official recognition of female farmers and agricultural workers. This results in the institutional invisibility of women in Indian agriculture.

Women's contribution to the agriculture sector has been traditionally undervalued and even invisible in various statistical measures. Even though women play a significant role in agriculture, much of their work figures into the 'informal' economy. They are usually engaged in non-mechanised farm occupations that include sowing, winnowing, harvesting, and other forms of labour-intensive processes such as rice transplantation and weeding. Their employment is seasonal and provisional, adding up to all sorts of uncertainties in their income cycle. Over the years, there has been a continuous increase in the presence of women in agriculture, mainly due to an increase in the migration of rural men to urban spaces in search of better economic opportunities. Time is witnessing a change; roles of many rural women are changing very rapidly from homemakers to labourers to cultivators and even entrepreneurs. Hence, an important step towards achieving the socio-economic and political empowerment of women in India is through ensuring the visibility of women across the agricultural value chain.

APMAS, as an organisation, has always upheld gender mainstreaming as one of its core values and it has ensured women empowerment to be a prime focus area. It is in this context that AGEewa project was conceptualised, with financial support from AEIN, Luxembourg. The principal idea, which inspired this project, is the empowerment of women farmers and enabling them to gain visibility across the value chain.



Established in 2001 to strengthen the women Self Help Groups (SHGs) and SHG federations in the erstwhile State of Andhra Pradesh, APMAS has grown in scope, scale and strength, established its credibility as a national level Resource Organisation engaged in diverse partnerships with a strong presence in field implementation and as a capacity-building institution. APMAS primarily focuses on the advancement of self-help institutions (SHGs, SHG federations, Cooperatives, FPOs, etc.) through microenterprises & agriculture value-chain development, built on strong cooperative values & principles to become member-owned, member-managed, and member-controlled institutions.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

GOAL

To achieve gender equality through enabling institutional platforms of the women in agriculture

OBJECTIVES

Promote and capacitate
Women Farmer Producer Organisations (WFPOs)



Capacitate WFPOs in practicing sustainable agricultural practices and undertaking value chain interventions viz collective procurement and marketing



Support and capacitate landless women with supplementary livelihood opportunities



Support advocacy platforms for women farmers to access various services and assertion of their rights as farmers



PROJECT COMMUNITIES

3020
women
farmers

&

100
landless
women farmers

PROJECT AREA

TELANGANA
YADADRI BHUVANAGIRI DISTRICT



MANDALS

1. Bommalaramaram (Dheesali FPO)
2. Yadagirigutta (AGEEWA FPO)

MANDALS

1. Ananthapuram Rural (Anantha FPO)
2. Dharmavaram (Bhumatha FPO)



ANDHRA PRADESH
ANANTHAPURAM DISTRICT

TIMELINE

1 April 2017 – Pilot phase of one year with four FPOs: AGEEWA and Dheesali FPOs in Yadagirigutta and Bommalaramaram mandals in Telangana, and Anantha and Bhumatha FPOs in Ananthapuram Rural and Dharmavaram mandals in Andhra Pradesh

2017

Considering the importance and the need for working with women farmers, AEIN extended the project for another three years; in the second phase, in addition to the four FPOs, small support was provided to two women FPOs promoted by APMAS, one in Ananthapuram district (Peddavaduguru mandal) and the other in Chittoor district (Kurabalakota mandal), for capacity building and business development

2018

In the third phase (January 2021 to December 2023), the project continues support to the four FPOs to make them sustainable; and ten more FPOs in Jangaon district, Telangana, are being supported with gender sensitization programs for promoting participation and leadership of women in FPOs; along with focus on evidence based policy advocacy at the state and national level

2020

IMPACT

Enhanced capacities of the FPO Board of Directors (BoD) in management of their FPOs, sustainable agriculture practices, and business activities.

Women members of the FPOs, especially BoD members, became confident; these women are setting examples and showing that they are capable enough to run successful business enterprises.

FPOs started to identify and leverage various technical, financial and market linkages.

OBJECTIVES FOR THIRD PHASE OF AGEEWA

Achieve sustainability of the four Women FPOs through capacity building, linkages and business activities

Reduce gender barriers in 10 FPOs for women farmers' entry, leadership, and participation across the entire agricultural value chain, through capacity building and gender sensitization

Promote women's leadership in FPOs across India through knowledge management and evidence-based advocacy



FPO PROFILE

1	Name of the FPO	AGEEWA Farmers Producer Company Ltd	Dheesali Rythu Mahila Producer Company Ltd	Anantha Grameena Rythu Utpathidarula Paraspara Sahayaka Sahakara Sangham	Bhumatha Mahila Rythu Utpathidarula Paraspara Sahayaka Sahakara Sangham
2	Legal status	Producer Company	Producer Company	Mutually Aided Cooperative Society	Mutually Aided Cooperative Society
3	Date of Registration	27-09-2018	17-09-2018	15-09-2018	27-03-2018
4	Area of Operation	Yadagirigutta mandal, Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District	Bommalararamam mandal, Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District	Ananthapuram Rural mandal, Ananthapuram District	Dharmavaram mandal, Ananthapuram District
5	Total number of shareholders	500	500	217	323
6	Amount of share capital (as on 31/03/2021)	Rs. 5,00,000	Rs. 5,00,000	Rs. 1,08,500	Rs. 3,23,000
7	Social composition of shareholders	SC - 88, ST - 68, BC - 310, OC - 33	ST - 68, SC - 34, BC - 346, OC - 52	OC - 74, BC - 75, SC - 68	SC-98, ST-7, BC-180, OC-38
8	Licenses obtained	Seed & Fertilizer	Seed & Fertilizer	Seed & FSSAI	Seed
9	Collectively marketed commodities	Paddy, Redgram, Millets & Mango	Paddy, Vegetables, Millets & Fruits	Groundnut, Millets & Pulses	
10	Output Marketing – Turnover	Rs. 1,33,91,638	Rs. 37,88,838	Rs. 18,25,207	
11	Inputs services provided	Seeds, Fertilizers, Tarpaulin & Bio- pesticides	Seeds, Fertilizers & Tarpaulin	Seeds, Tarpaulin & Bio-inputs	Seeds, Tarpaulin, Cycle Weeders, Sprinklers & Farm Implements
12	Input Marketing – Turnover	Rs.78,00,000	Rs. 42,19,680	Rs. 20,20,724	Rs. 2,74,840
13	Other services/activities	Organising Demo plots & Farmer Field Schools, Custom Hiring Centre, Procurement Centre (MSP), Leverage of government schemes			
14	Implements available under Custom Hiring Centre	Sprayers, Weeders, Paddy cleaner, Tarpaulin sheets, Weighing scale, Moisture meter	Sprayers, Weeders, Paddy cleaner, Tarpaulin sheets, Crates, Weighing scale, Moisture meter	Power weeder, Sprayers, Tarpaulin sheets, Millet grading machine, Weighing machines, Stitching machine, Packing machine	Sprinkler sets, Chaff cutter, Tarpaulin sheets, Cycle weeders, Plastic pipes, Plastic bowls, Three layer bags, Spade paddle, Spade, Water tanker
15	Involvement in MSP under price support scheme	Redgram & Paddy	Paddy	Groundnut, Maize & Millets	
16	Linkages established	NABARD, Government departments of Agriculture & Horticulture, Coramandal International Limited, e-fresh Agribusiness solutions		Government department of Agriculture & APSEEDS, e-fresh Agribusiness Solutions	NABARD, Government department of Agriculture & APSEEDS, e-fresh Agribusiness Solutions
17	Amount leveraged from Government and other sources	Rs. 61,500	Rs. 20,81,000	Rs. 1,45,000	Rs. 75,000
18	Promoting Organisations	PEACE & APMAS	GMM & APMAS	REDS & APMAS	AF Ecology Centre & APMAS

KRISHNAMMA'S KITCHEN GARDEN



Krishnamma, a 30-year-old from Kamarupalli village in Ananthapuram Rural mandal, utilised the small plot in front of her government-sanctioned house to raise a kitchen garden. Krishnamma's plan to make use of the unused front area for a meaningful purpose started taking shape when she attended a meeting held under the AGEEWA project to promote kitchen gardens. Under the guidance of staff from Anantha FPO, she made an organic kitchen

garden ('Suryamandal' model). With an initial investment of just Rs. 60, she was able to generate Rs. 1,800 per month by selling the produce to fellow villagers after meeting her personal needs. She also separated good seeds from her kitchen garden and sowed those seeds for the second round of crops

STORY OF UMADEVI

Umadevi, a 45-year-old single parent from Rudrampeta village in Ananthapuram Rural mandal, lives with her two children. With no other source of income, she is solely supported through collective farming under the AGEEWA project. She is now enrolled as a member of the Collective Farming group, which comprises single women who have come together to be self-dependent. She receives an average monthly income of Rs. 2,500, by selling the produce from the one acre of land allocated to her. Apart from this income she also gets paid Rs. 100 as daily wage, for her work in the field.



AGEEWA FPO

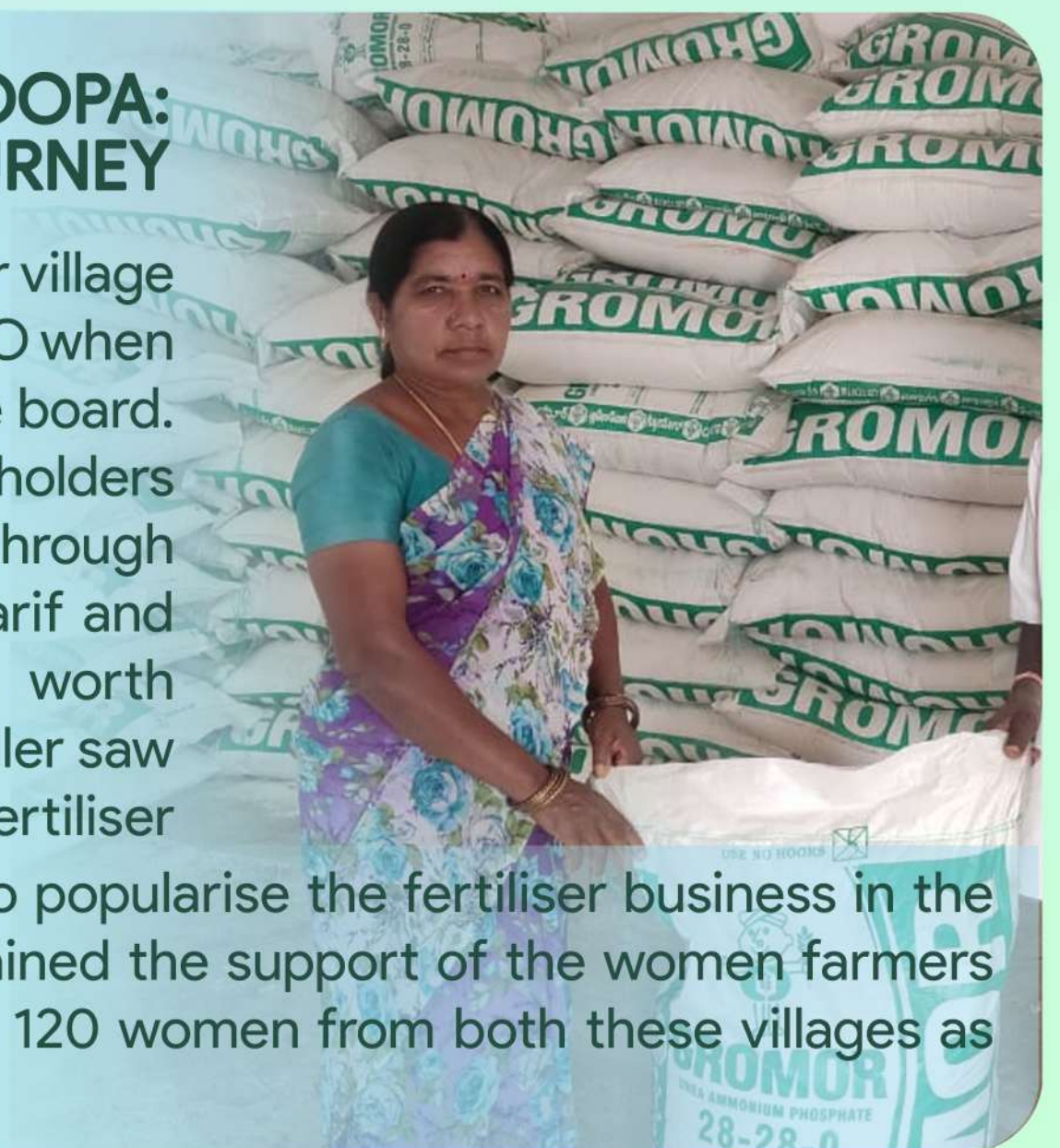
REDGRAM PROCUREMENT CENTRE

Minimum Support Price (MSP) centre was launched through AGEEWA FPCL, with Red gram procurement at Gouraipally village of Yadagirigutta mandal on 1 February 2019. During the period 1 February to 5 March 2019, AGEEWA FPCL procured 1,292 quintals of Redgram from 234 farmers belonging to Yadagirigutta, Rajapet, and Aleir mandals, and supplied to Hyderabad Agricultural Co-operative Association (HACA). All the farmers benefited from the Minimum Support Price of Rs. 5,675 per quintal. In the market, the buyers usually offer a price of Rs. 3,500 to Rs. 4,000 per quintal, and the price depends on hamali charges, price variations, quantity deductions, etc. With the MSP, the farmers

got a benefit worth of Rs. 28,10,100 for 1,292 quintals and each farmer got a direct benefit of Rs. 2,175 per quintal. After the success of the procurement centre, the farmers realized the benefits of the Farmer Producer Company and 80 farmers came forward to join AGEEWA FPO.

SWAROOPA: HER LEADERSHIP JOURNEY

Swaroopa, a 50-year-old from Choller village of Yadagirigutta mandal joined AGEEWA FPO when it was formed and became a director of the board. She played a vital role in mobilising shareholders and contributed to business development through the sale of fertilizers and seeds. In the Kharif and Rabi season of 2020, the business was worth around Rs. 18 lakhs. The sales point at Choller saw huge success because farmers got the fertiliser delivered to their doorstep. She was able to popularise the fertiliser business in the villages of Choller and Marrigudem, and gained the support of the women farmers there. Within a short period, she mobilised 120 women from both these villages as shareholders of the FPO.



SUCCESS STORIES OF LANDLESS WOMEN

To support landless women, Bhumata FPO in Dharmavaram mandal gives a loan of Rs. 5,000 through the AGEEWA project. Many women were able to start their own small businesses with this loan. The beneficiaries have to repay only 50 per cent of the loan amount, once they generate adequate profits.



IN THEIR WORDS

NAGAMMA-

"Earlier I used to avail loans from banks, where the interest was a huge burden for me with my minimal income from the garment business. With the loan from Bhumata FPO, I am now able to earn around Rs. 9,000 to Rs. 12,000 per month and save enough for my family"

ADI LAKSHMI -

"I was a daily wage labourer earlier. I couldn't save enough even for my children's education and always ended up in debt due to the huge interest rates. The loan from Bhumata FPO enabled me to start an animal feed business. Most farmers in the area started purchasing from me since my feed resulted in more milk production. Currently, I earn around Rs. 8,000 to Rs. 10,000 per month, and I am able to put my children in schools."



ARUNAMMA-

"Earlier I was a daily wage labourer and it was difficult to make ends meet. With the support of Bhumata FPO, I was able to purchase a sewing machine. Now I am earning around Rs. 4,000 to Rs. 5,000 per month. I am happy to do something that I like and earn money for my family through that."

DHEESALI FPO

SRI METHOD OF PADDY CULTIVATION AND STORY OF LALITHA

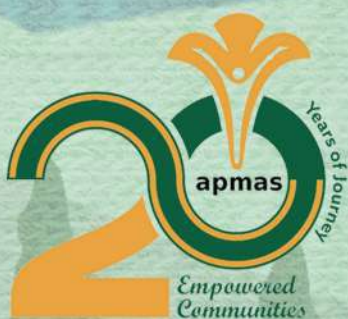
The 34-year-old Lalitha, who belongs to Pedda Parvathapur village in Bommalaramaram mandal, belongs to an agricultural family and is dependent on 4 acres of family land. Even though 90% of villagers cultivate paddy, the area has very limited access to irrigation facilities and agricultural output is completely dependent on the vagaries of the monsoon. Through the AGEEWA project, Lalitha implemented the SRI method of paddy cultivation on 1 acre of her land and the traditional method on the rest of 1 acre land. The adoption of the SRI method of paddy cultivation resulted in reduction of input cost and high increase in yield. Later, many farmers in the mandal adopted the SRI method of paddy cultivation, following Lalitha's steps.



MADHAVI: SUCCESS OF PANDAL SYSTEM CULTIVATION

Madhavi is a farmer from Pedda Parvathapur village in Bommalaramaram mandal. She took up farming when she lost her husband and became the sole breadwinner of the family. With the government subsidy scheme and support from Dheesali FPO, she was able to establish a Pandal system in her land to grow bottle gourd. She invested Rs. 3,000 from her side and availed subsidy amount of Rs. 1,10,000. Reliance store management comes to her field, and chooses the pieces and plucks them, according to their grading system. She received Rs. 8 per piece, and she was able to sell around 300 pieces per day for a month. She was able to save labour charges, transportation costs, with no risk factor and instant payment. She made a profit of Rs. 22,000 from 20 cents of bottle gourd, making her popular and inspired others in the village to shift to the Pandal system.





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