

## VILLAGE LEVEL CAMPAIGNS ON SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Village level campaigns on Sustainable Agriculture are organized in all the 230 project villages of AF, under its awareness generation and capacity development program. The purpose is **“To sensitize farming community in particular and the public in general about; (a) the benefits of practicing Sustainable Agriculture, (b) the hazardous effects of chemical fertilizers and pesticides on human beings, flora and fauna, (c) the ill effects of mono cropping and the need to practice crop diversity with food grains, fruits, fodder & bio-mass and (d) the need to maintain bio-diversity etc”**.

These campaigns, which are conducted twice in a year in each of the 230 project villages, are well attended by about 200 participants (About 100 men & 100 women on an average in each village. The Grama Sasyamitra Samakhyas (GSSs) are responsible for organizing these campaigns, supported by all the Sasyamitra groups (SMGs) in the village. AF staff are providing guidance and playing a supportive role in the process. **During the reporting period the village level CBOs (SMGs & GSS) have mobilized their own financial and material resources for organizing one of the two campaigns in each of the 230 project villages, all by themselves!**



Of the two campaigns conducted every year in each village, only one campaign is funded from the project budget. The second campaign doesn't have budget at all and is solely sponsored by the village CBOs (SMGs & GSS), with contributions from farmer families. The women is SMG and GSS have been playing an important role in mobilizing the resources as well as the people for the campaigns. Awareness is being created among the farming community on how best they can utilize the cheap, locally available material and prepare bio- pesticides and fertilizers at their homes/farm lands, as substitutes to the costly chemical pesticides and fertilizers. Emphasis is also laid on crop diversity, tree crops, crop rotation, importance of food crops, dairy, livestock, introduction of new improved varieties of groundnut and other crops, increase in productivity and reduction in cost of cultivation. Local art forms by village level artists are also performed to combine entertainment with awareness on Sustainable Agriculture.

### **Process of organizing campaigns :**

- Planning of campaigns is done by the GSS, SMGs and AF staff jointly.
- The responsibilities are shared between the GSS, SMG members and staff.
- Education material like visual aids and literature are used to educate the farmers on the preparation of bio-fertilizers & bio-pesticides.
- Exhibition of locally available bio-ingredients like Neem products, local wild plants used for making decoctions etc. is arranged at the venue.

- Rallies are organized in the villages involving women and men holding banners and placards with slogans.
- The area teams and sometimes Agriculture department officials create awareness on Sustainable Agriculture and other ecological aspects.
- The farmers, who have followed NPM practices and adopted non-negotiable practices will share their experiences and motivate other farmers.
- Role plays are organized and thematic songs are rendered on Sustainable Agriculture, the hazards caused by Chemical farming, the value of local seed and the need to protect bio-diversity.
- Awareness on Government schemes related to agriculture is also created in these campaigns.

During the reporting period 486 village level Sustainable Agriculture campaigns (106 % Of the planned 460) were conducted in the 230 villages of AF's project area. Of them only 230 campaigns were funded from AF's budget. The remaining 256 campaigns were solely sponsored by the village CBOs themselves (SMGs & GSS), with contributions from farmer families in the village. These campaigns covered 40,894 farmer men & women (89% Of the planned 46,000). Of them 18,923 (82 % Of the planned 23,000) are women farmers and 21,971 (96 % Of the planned 23,000) are men farmers.