



Second quarterly newsletter-2021

Tharunam is a non-governmental organization working on a mission to use food as a medium for social change and make it universally accessible and affordable. Since 2018, we working on two interventions to achieve our goals.

The first intervention has been initiated with a mission to empower at least every school in India to include food literacy as part of their school. We partner with schools and different outreach partners to promote food literacy curriculum. It has been two years since schools didn't opened due covid pandemic. It has been tough time since schools have not yet opened this year. We have been working on digital strategies to spread the idea and develop an interactive digital curriculum. In order to achieve our goals, we are looking for volunteers; and for financial support. We will create video tutorials, school level competitions and a food literacy tool kit for digital platform. If you are in a position to support us with this, then please make a donation via this link <https://tharunam.org/makeadonation/>Any amount helps. thank you very much .

The second intervention is to empower farmers with ecologically feasible and economically viable farming models. Promoting millets, agroforestry and other semi arid crops whichever suits according to geographical conditions. Being a starting stage non-profit organization, now, we are promoting agroforestry intervention in Duginepally village. Duginepally is located on the banks of Godavari river and surrounded by forests in Telangana, India. Due to the abundance of water availability, people mainly grow rice, Red chilly. However, it has been burdening farmers with higher input costs and lower returns. So alternatively we are pitching for crop diversity which will create afforestation and different income streams.



Photo: Farmers community who supported us to establish food forestry



Kesari mango variety

Thai Lemon variety

chakkarakeli banana

Our activities from last three months

Afforestation: In Duginepally village, we have been developing food forestry with different food crops such as mango, banana, lemon, malta, kashmir ber, coconut, and legumes. A food forest is a place where we can make a visible impact on our fellow farmers using a diversity of crop patterns. This plays a vital role in preserving farmer friendly food varieties. We successfully completed planting 400 number of trees and 3 varieties of vegetables. The monsoon rains providing plenty of water. Developing a healthy food forest involves several important steps from soil preparation to plant protection.

Soil Preparation: it is a key step to safeguard our farm from future diseases. Healthy soil, healthy farm. We tilled soil two times in summer time to cut down weeds at the farm. The tilled soil is added with healthy compost which was collected from one farmer in my village. We mixed compost with neem powder and applied it to the soil to prevent root-based diseases. The tilled soil was measured and converted into pits and trenches.

Fencing: Open grazing of animals is in practice at my village, so protecting farm from animal and human movement is crucial. So, we installed iron fencing supported with cement poles. After the installation of fencing, we almost stopped animal movement inside the farm.

Plants procurement: Plants procurement is a crucial step and the success of a farm depends on where we procure plants. Trusted plant suppliers is a challenge for many farmers. However, our earlier networking with trusted nurseries helped us to collect healthy plants despite covid challenges. We procured plants from ameya krishi vikasa kendram which is located near Bhuvanagiri, Telangana.

Planting drive: We successfully completed planting all trees and plants on 1 acre of land. It is a memorable moment while realizing the crop diversity model farm despite covid challenges and labor shortage. We are eagerly waiting to see it as a fully grown forest soon.



Adding compost with soil



Unloading compost at farm



Tilling farm land



Group of cows stopped by iron fence at farm

Fencing installation

Iron fencing installation around the farm

Nurturing plants: Plant's mortality is a common issue which needs to be tackled for the first three months after plantation from heavy rains, pests, viruses, fungus etc. Daily observation, preventive measures are important to save plants. Yes. We are taking necessary steps to nurture food forestry.

12A certificate allotment from government

We are pleased to inform you that tharunam has received the 12A certificate from the income tax department. We are grateful to the Government of India for this recognition and tax exemption for the organization while considering our activities. Hopefully, we will get an 80G certificate which will benefit our supporters from income tax exemption very soon.

Why should massive plantation drives not miss value preposition opportunity?

I still remember, being a school kid at Duginepally village, I used to walk more than 2km to reach school. However, I am lucky enough though as my seniors used to walk at least 10 Kilometers to reach their school. Whenever I remember my school-days, the first thing that comes to mind is walking all the way to school. Oh yes! We walked on that route for years and have a special bond. It was a green way and surrounded by full of native edible vegetation, wild fruit trees such as gooseberries, Camachile (*Pithecellobium dulce*), tamarind and many more. It was fun for us to collect those fruits while going and coming back from school. So, whenever I travel on that route all my childhood memories come in front of my eyes.

A few days ago, I was on my way to my school and it was shocking to see most of the earlier native vegetation was removed on both sides of the road. It was heart felting to see and they not only demolished trees, but also erased memories of many people who connected with that route. The disturbing fact is that local authorities planted another set of plants, however none of them has edible nature. On behalf of tharunam, we are concerned about such acts, and kindly requesting the authorities to consider massive plantation drives shouldn't become a missed opportunity to create ecological and economic returns. If such huge plantation drives make food forests, it will nurture other species.



Plantation

Transporting the plants from nursery



Monsoon rains

The south-west monsoon is in a great phase and brought good rain for Telangana state. The lakes in the state are well-known as the shining jewel of the Deccan plateau, and this jewel started shining with brimming water filled lakes. Farm works kicked off while farmers are busy with cleaning, composting and ploughing their farms.

Challenges

Due to the covid pandemic, thousands of people lost their lives and millions of people were pushed into poverty. The essential commodity prices rose up and it became challenging to organize regular organization activities with estimated costs. And the shortage of labor is another issue for farm works. Somehow, we can manage most of the work while I am able to spend most of my time on day to day farm work.

Dear Friends, well-wishers and supporters, the tharunam activities would not be possible without your support and contributions. Therefore, on behalf of all, we say thank you very much for your ongoing support. Thank you also by sharing this Newsletter in your circle. Stay safe! Stay healthy!

With Green Regards,

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