



Background -

Some of you might know that ASHA (Alliance for Sustainable and Holistic Agriculture) Kisan Swaraj www.kisanswaraj.in is a pan-India network of people and groups with 4 main pillars of intent -

- 1) Income security for all farm households
- 2) Environmentally sustainable agriculture
- 3) Safe, diverse and nutritious food for all
- 4) Sovereignty for farming communities with resources like seed, land, forests, water and knowledge staying in their control

In the 2018 Kisan Swaraj Sammelan which took place in Ahmedabad in early November, amongst the different themes covered there was a session on 'Mobilising Youth for Farm Livelihoods' where more than 50 youngsters came together. There were some initial thoughts discussed and sharing of work done by different attendees where the focus was on how to engage more urban, tribal and rural youth for agriculture-related livelihoods on the basis of above 4 aspects related to viable, dignified, equitable and sustainable farm livelihoods.

At the same time, it was felt that it would be ideal for more youngsters to get involved in and take up an active role in different forums of work - whether it be on seed conservation, tackling genetic modification in agriculture, free trade agreements and areas of further interest! There was also a strong interest in doing a follow-up youth related event at a separate location.

Retreat in Muniguda, Rayagada District, Odisha

Since then, following a few discussions it was felt that a youth retreat in Muniguda in Rayagada district in Odisha with a primary objective for the interested youngsters to get to know each other better, focusing on relationship-building over a period of few days would be apt. At the same time, getting to know more about the Kondh Adivasi community with whom Living Farms (a key associate of ASHA, <http://living-farms.org/>) works with, and about the seed conservation work of Dr Debal Deb would be an ideal setting for informal learning. The retreat would also allow for the youngsters to start co-creating a future for the youth group, understanding each other's interest areas, dreams, aspirations, strengths and limitations whilst also starting to touch upon some themes of work which can be undertaken in future. The focus of the retreat will not be to get into any in-depth planning for this future work (which might be best taken in a Youth Sammelan at a later date) - this retreat is being visualised as one that will hopefully build the foundations and equations amongst the youth for undertaking work together.

When, Where, How?

You have to book your tickets to come to MUNIGUDA railway station (IRCTC code being MNGD). Rayagada is another nearby station, if there are no trains or tickets possible for Muniguda directly



and should only be a second option. There is reasonably good train connectivity and frequency from Howrah, Raipur, Bhubaneswar and Visakhapatnam. Participants should plan their itinerary in a manner that they can begin arriving by 27th March evening/28th March morning onwards and all participants in the retreat should certainly reach latest by 28th March afternoon and not later than that. **You can plan to leave after 31st March (Sunday) afternoon.** Those willing to come are recommended to make travel bookings as soon as possible to ensure confirmed travel. Attendees are expected to make their own travel arrangements and bear their own travel costs.

We have a total of 35 spaces (on a first-come confirmation basis). Please do confirm as soon as possible if you and someone with you will be coming (after which date we plan to open this to a wider audience). You are encouraged to bring along one more rural/tribal youngster working in agriculture domain in your know-how. Whilst Hindi and English might end up being the two link languages, if someone can translate in/from other language - other language compatibilities will work too.

A per attendee expense of Rs 2000 is expected for the retreat logistics for those arriving on 27th evening (and Rs 1800 for those arriving on 28th) and is the suggested contribution per attendee. However those who cannot afford this expenditure could let us know – we do not want this to become a barrier for anyone interested to attend the retreat. If you can and are willing to pay additional amounts - please do consider, this will also help us subsidise the expenses for those who cannot afford the costs.

Also please note that this is a malaria-prone area, preventive measures will be shared in a logistics note later on.

Please do confirm to us as soon as possible at asha.kisanswaraj@yahoo.in along with the monetary contribution you will be able to make. Contributions are to be made during registration after arrival in Muniguda.

Warm Regards,

Some of us helping with the retreat coordination :)

For any queries please do get in touch at asha.kisanswaraj@yahoo.in/ 8414850885