

Support for the organisation:

APOWA seeks support from organisations and individuals who wish to join hands with us and our community-based sea turtle/habitat conservation programmes. We provide desperately needed conservation programmes, nest and habitat protection as well as vital fishermen education at the world's largest olive ridley mass nesting site in the region. This project is a great way of involving communities in the process of finding a sustainable way forward. Sea turtles are highly migratory during all stages of their lifecycle, so conservation action taken in any one place can have profound and positive implications for their survival throughout Orissa – and beyond.

Role within the network:

APOWA has been continuing to save, protect and help conserve the endangered sea turtles and their habitat along the Orissa coast, which falls under one

of the major objectives of TAG. TAG encourages sea turtle activities throughout the country, and as a member of the TAG, APOWA seeks cooperation, guidance, and technical help to continue its sea turtle conservation programmes in its geographical area of work in Orissa.

Contributed by Bijaya Kabi, Honorary Director, APOWA.

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Alacrity Orissa

Background of the organisation:

Alacrity was founded in April 1995 with a vision to promote conservation and awareness of the marine ecosystem in Kendrapara, Orissa, through the participation of local community and self-help women's groups.

Objectives:

The main objectives of Alacrity are:

- To serve down-trodden sections of society through community development and capacity building,
- To work towards conservation of the environment, including protection of the coastal stretches of the region that are nesting sites of the olive ridley turtle, and

- To facilitate women's empowerment and promote social justice.

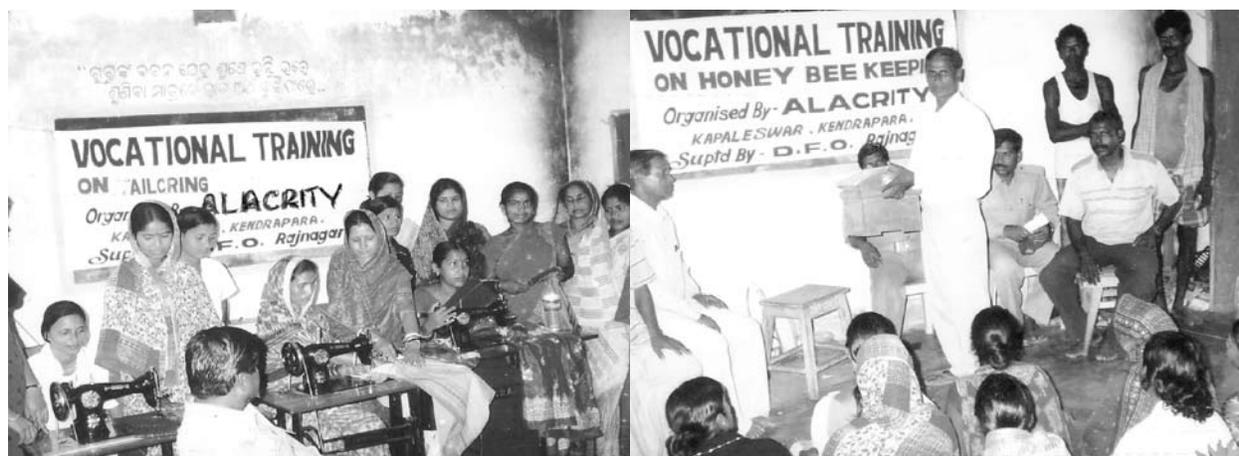
Activities:

The focus of our activities is to involve local community members in conservation initiatives and to provide alternate sources of livelihood for people dependent on coastal and marine resources in and around protected areas. Our sea turtle conservation activities involve imparting awareness to fishing community members residing within the periphery of the Gahirmatha area. We have also established 'eco-development' groups within the region for conservation and protection of sea turtles and their nesting habitats, and for the conservation of natural resources including mangrove forests. Currently, 30 such eco-development groups have

been functioning within the fishing communities of the region.

There are two major groups of people who live within and around the Gahirmatha sanctuary area. They include the Odiya speaking community and refugees from West Bengal and Bangladesh. These communities primarily depend on the mangrove forests within and surrounding the sanctuary area for their livelihoods. In the recent past, however, a large portion of the mangrove forest area was cleared for paddy cultivation in Jamboo and the Mahanadi delta area. This adversely impacted the fishing communities inhabiting the adjoining delta area

who were harvesting fish from the river and from creeks. Expansion of agriculture by encroachment on forest lands also hampered their access to firewood and fodder from the mangrove forest area. With Alacrity's intervention in the area falling under the Batighar gram panchayat, members of this community have expressed their desire to work with us in order to enhance their skills and explore alternate livelihood opportunities. Apart from illegal encroachment onto forest land, and the expansion of agricultural land, restrictions imposed by the Coastal Regulation Zone Management Notification (CRZ) have presented further hindrances to their access to resources in the area.



In addition to these activities, with the financial support of D.F.O. Rajnagar, Alacrity has imparted skill upgradation training programmes on tailoring and honeybee keeping. Our tailoring programme has benefited around 80 fisherwomen belonging to eco-development committees. Alacrity provides training and equipment and regularly monitors the programme. The local forest department office has also been supportive of the initiative. Members benefiting from this scheme now earn between INR 1,200 and INR 1,800 a month.

The honeybee keeping programme implemented by Alacrity benefits around 60 fishermen and women, including the youth in the community. Alacrity invites experts in the field to provide the necessary training and guidance, and provides

beekeeping boxes. The sale of honey has proved to be a sustainable and viable alternate source of livelihood to the community.

Alacrity's net mending programme, an initiative that is completely supported through financial contributions to the organisation, involves the youth in the fishing community. Currently, 25 young men and women have undergone training and are pursuing this option of securing a livelihood.

Support for the organisation:

Alacrity receives financial support from the District Forest Office of Kendrapara to support its alternative livelihoods programme. Voluntary contributions from members and individuals, and local/state

government donations are also sought to sustain other activities and programmes of the organisation.

Role within the network:

Alacrity is happy to be a member of TAG. With our aim to conserve the olive ridley turtles in the area, in addition to horseshoe crabs, dolphins and the habitats they utilise, we hope to benefit from the experience of others who are part of this national network.

We are willing to contribute to the network's growth by providing information on sea turtles in the area, and keeping members informed of our activities.

Contributed by Kalpana Mallik, Chief Functionary, Alacrity.

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Podampeta Ecotourism and Olive Ridley Protection Club
Orissa

Background of the organisation:

The Podampeta Ecotourism and Olive Ridley Protection Club was founded in 2008. 12 people from the village of Podampeta came together to form the organisation with the mission to conserve olive ridley turtles that visit the beaches of Podampeta and Rushikulya. Most of the members of the organisation were previously working independently or with other NGOs and the Forest Department. These members decided to involve the local community in their conservation efforts and approached the self-help groups in the village. Currently, the membership of the organisation includes the founding members along with 10 representatives of women's self-help groups in the area.

Where we work:

The organisation carries out its awareness activities in Podampeta and surrounding villages of Rushikulya in Orissa. Sea turtle conservation activities are carried out along the Rushikulya coastline.

Support for the organisation:

Currently, all financial support for the organisation comes through voluntary contributions from members. We hope to soon have the support of the Forest Department and government and other funding agencies to expand our activities.

Activities:

The problems that face the particular stretch of coastline that Podampeta Ecotourism and Olive Ridley Protection Club addresses are not unique to the area but are common across many stretches along Orissa and the rest of the country. Threats to nesting turtles and eggs/hatchlings include poaching by people and predation by stray dogs and crabs. To address these particular problems, we carry out awareness programmes that inform people in nearby villages regarding the importance of turtles to the coastal ecosystem and the illegality of such activities. Ignorance of the importance of conservation is the primary cause for destruction of turtle nests and habitats at the local scale. Volunteers also patrol the beach at nights during the nesting