

Bitter gourd cultivation - a promising crop for socio-economic change in Binpur-II Block, Paschim Medinipur of West Bengal

Rice based crop production system is prevailing farming system in the red & laterite agro climatic zone of Paschim Medinipur. Under the prevailing geo-hydrological constraints, farmers are bound to grow rice as a mono crop with a nominal income. Likewise, the villages namely Rajpara, Nichintapur, Dhobakuria, Kantasole and Chiapara under Ergoda GP of Binpur-II used to cultivate its resource base with traditional wisdom with available critical input support. Nearly 377 families with available 450.55 ha of total geographical land were bound to migrate for their livelihood sustenance. The farming communities were bound to lead a life of abysmal poverty and degradation. The situation further aggravated during the Maoist Movement. In meanwhile, Eva Bharati Krishi Vigyan Kendra made a diagnostic team visit in Rajpara village during 2005 and conducted a PRA for agro-eco system analysis, prioritized the problems for needful intervention through training, FLD, OFT, and other extension activities and mobilized the creative and active participation of the farmers interested group even in kishan mela, exhibition and other activities.

- Name of Villages- Rajpara, Nichintapur, Dhobakuria, Kantasole and Chiapara under Ergoda GP of Binpur-II
- Total geographical area-450.55ha
- Total families-377 (SC/ST216/others-161)
- Previous Farming System: Paddy-Fallow-Fallow
- Source of irrigation water-WHS
- Income:Rs.2500/ha



Lastly during, 2010-11, 20 numbers of vegetable growers hailing from those villages were trained on nursery raising of vegetable saplings and scientific vegetable cultivation practices and they started growing vegetable in their respective patch of area. The lack of knowledge on diseases and pest control, water management, and marketing support were found to be a constraint. The need of the farmers were properly addressed by SMS and concluded that Bitter-gourd cultivation shall be an option for cultivation in the rabi season. Group dynamics intervention would be a solution to assure the critical inputs-seeds, pesticides and a scope of bulk production for creativity of market tie-up. Accordingly, necessary technological back up was given to FIGs on scientific Macha cultivation of Bitter gourd in the areas. Resultants, presently nearly 192 ha of cultivable lands has been brought under bitter gourd cultivation outputting with average income of Rs656250/ per ha with input cost of Rs 156250/ within six months.

- Present Farming Situation-Paddy- Bitter Gourd-Fallow
- Method of cultivation-Macha
- Source of irrigation-ground water(Deep Tube well)
- Income- Rs656250 per ha
- Marketing facilities creation as Bitter gourd production hub for traders from Tatanagar, Kharagpur, Jhargram silda and Bankura district
- Social impact- prevention of migration from the villages on assurance of created 281 mandays /ha in the village itself. Enhancement of purchasing power i.e inclusion of motorbikes, Pick up van and construction of pucca building. Increased frequency on participation in developmental events.

By getting the promising benefits from bitter gourd cultivation, a new vista has been created towards socio-economic change in this area through intervention of SBKVK by mobilizing the creative and active participation of the FIGs.