

**‘SRI’ the Pole Star for Dharma, a debt ridden farmer**  
**(Case Study)**

Happy going 48 years old Dharma Gamango, the only son of his parents happen to be a farmer ,who had his primary education and then early marriage at 18 years of age now lives with his wife, two sons and two daughters in his village Mahulapada, G.P. Malasapadar, Mohana Block of Gajapati District.



During the critical delivery period of his third child, Dharma borrowed Rs 2000/- keeping half acre land out of one acre parental property on lien from local money lender at 5 % interest per month. It was difficult for Dharma to return the capital and growing interest from the sales proceeds of agricultural produce from half acre under his possession.

His sad days began.

Agricultural produce from his left out half acre land was too insufficient to meet family’s food requirement. The couple had no way but to resort to shifting cultivation. Despite financial difficulties, Dharma sent his children to Govt. school where his son studies in class IV and daughter in class III - thanks to Govt’s initiatives and encouragement for students of less privileged & weaker section to pursue education.

It was painful for Dharma to search for solution to his plight. Daughters were growing. Eldest daughter already reached marriageable age. Second daughter was approaching the age to be married. More mouths were to be fed. During such critical time, Dharma happened to be present in one of the farmers “SRI” awareness meeting conducted in his village by NGO ‘SACAL.’ Very keenly he listened to the prospects and assured gains of SRI methods. At first he was skeptic. Despite, he met the staff of SACAL and showed his willingness to accept the package and practice of SRI. To be honest, he later confirmed, he was hopelessly hopeless and was in search of a way out of his misery.SRI appeared to him as a Pole Star.

With half acre land and habitually obedient family members he did SRI following every process minutely with heart and sole. He and his family members worked hard to add locally available desired inputs to embrace organic “SRI” production method. Rain played bad game with him. Climate change was visible. He continued with his effort. His patience paid the dividend. Dharma harvested Nett 13 quintal paddy from half acre of his own land, a figure beyond his imagination.

Earlier, he used to get maximum 7 Quintals paddy from an acre of land adopting age old traditional practice taught by his father and other senior aged tribal farmers. He was obsessed with the resolution to get back his ancestor’s land by paying the loan amount and growing interest. Harvest of 13 Quintal of paddy was always reminding him to sale 4 quintals of paddy at Government’s declared MSP (Minimum Support Price) rate, i.e., Rs 8.50p per Kg. He sold 4 Quintal paddy and received Rs3, 400.00p.

On the following day he paid Rs 3,400/- to the Money lender. The calculation as per loan agreement stood to Rs4500/-. By this time, his achievement in SRI production was the talk of the town. To his good luck, the village money lender excused him for further payment and with his good gesture returned his land documents ignoring all un-paid amount.

Dharma, from his humble experiences keeps broadcasting his achievement to others with assurance of all possible support from his end. A Krushaka Sangh (Farmers club) has been formed by his effort and persuasion. The joint effort of a group of farmers would be easier to do weeding and transplantation job, so also harvesting. Government is also in search of such farmers group to assist in imparting training and supply of low price inputs for SRI. The farmers group made contacts to the Block level officers and is going to grab the help and support of Govt. pertaining to establishment vermin compost pit, certified seed supply, soil testing, compost preparation and other benefits and assistance.