

# CULTIVATING HAPPINESS- The SRI Way!

## I.

Halapanka is a very small village of Mohana Block in Gajapati district having a population of 264. Kandha Sabara, a landless farmer resides in this village. His family consists of 6 members and his entire livelihood depends on the small piece of cultivable waste land provided by the village committee. Kandha Sabara used to cultivate Ragi and Brinjal in this land. He managed to maintain his family for 4-5 months from the produce of the land. The remaining 7-8 months, he worked as a daily labourer to maintain his family.

With each passing day, the condition of Kandha Sabara as-well-as other the famers of the village became worse as they did not receive the expected yield from their lands. In this difficult jucture, came the workers of SACAL, who were encouraging the people to do the cultivation following the technique of SRI. The SACAL workers organized meetings in the village and persuaded the people to use organic compost instead of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Kandha Sabara came across such meetings organized by SACAL and decided to take up 'SRI' cultivation.



He approached the workers of SACAL and learned the details regarding the SRI technique of cultivation. He decided to cultivate Ragi through SRI technique. Keeping in mind the minute details of SRI like: preparation of nursery bed, right time for transplantation, use of weeder, etc., he cultivated Ragi. He prepared a raised nursery bed and sown Ragi seeds after treatment by cow-urine. He transplanted 10 days old seedlings in the furrows at a distance of 10” from plant to plant. He was overwhelmed to see that within a period of one month, profuse tillering had started. However, his excitement was short-lived as he noticed that the Ragi plants were turning yellow. It shocked him and he thought that **“All my labour went in vain. Ragi Plants are turning yellow and they will soon die. What will I do ?”**



Again SACAL came for his rescue. Acting on the advice of SACAL's agriculture specialist, he added 3 pots of liquid manure to the field. Within a period of 5-6 days, the Ragi plants turned green and healthy. This brought back the lost smile on Kandha Sabara's face. He received 440 kg of Ragi from 80 decimal of land which was a remarkable achievement for him as-well-as for the villagers of Halapanka against the normal yield of 1 to 1.5 quintals from the same land. The villagers were extremely happy to see the record yield of Kandha Sabara. The impact of SRI and Kandha Sabara's success motivated the other farmers of that village.

Motivated by the promising result of SRI technique, farmers of that village have decided to cultivate Ragi during the next Kharif season.

## **Blossoms in the mountain**

In the hilly terrain of Eastern Ghats, there exists a tiny village: Tangiachor in Mohana Block. It is 5 km distant from Malaspadar Gram Panchayat having 16 households. Most of the farmers are marginal farmers. They depended mainly shifting cultivation. In the small land holding, they raised crops like maize, Paddy, Millets, Paddy depending on monsoon.



Manga Gomango is a small farmer of that village belonging to Saura tribe. His family consists of his wife, 2 sons and a daughter. They have 3 acres of land. He cultivated paddy every year in  $\frac{1}{2}$  acres of land which gives a yield of about 4 quintals of rice. The rest  $2\frac{1}{2}$  acres of land is used for the cultivation of Ragi, Suan, minor millets and some pulses. Kandula serves as cash crops for Manga Gomango. He sells some amount of pulses and earns Rs. 1000-Rs.1500 which serves the family for 6-8 months.

This was the prevailing condition of almost every household of the village. A number of cases of malnutrition, starvation and migration in search of employment had increased in that village. During that time, SACAL intervened to improve their food security in the village by helping them to gradually emerge from the poverty stricken condition to sustainable growth.

Several meetings were organized to create awareness and the salient features of 'SRI' and Manga Gomango attended each and every meeting to have a clear idea on SRI techniques. Slowly and gradually several farmers came forward to adopt SRI technique. By seeing their interest Manga Gomango too decided to take up 'SRI'. He decided to take up 'SRI' cultivation in 30 decimal of land on trial basis. He

raised seedlings on raised nursery bed and transplanted 12 days old seedlings at a spacing of 10 inches. He weeded twice and used liquid manure twice in his land. To his utter surprise, he received 12 quintals of rice from 30 decimals of land. He used to get about 4 quintals earlier from the same patch of land. Even he now decided not to purchase chemical fertilizers and pesticides. This amazing result of 'SRI' technique of cultivation has spurred six more farmers to 'SRI' cultivation in this village.