

SUCCESS STORY OF NREGA PASCHIM MEDINIPUR, W.B.

Water harvesting scheme implemented under NREGA at the Astapara village of Paschim Medinipur, West Bengal



Astapara under Kapgari GP, Jamboni block, Paschim Medinipur, West Bengal is one of the adopted villages of Seva Bharati Krishi Vigyan Kendra. The main constraint to agriculture and livestock production of the locality is scarcity of water. Agro-eco System analysis followed by PRA method conducted by Seva Bharati KVK in the said village revealed that if Rai Bandh, a heavily silted water harvesting structure in the village could be re-excavated then the water body would have substantially solve the problem of water scarcity in order to go for higher cropping intensity and other agricultural ventures.

Seva Bharati KVK developed a participatory plan for re-excavation of Rai Bandh (Bandh means a “waterbody”) with necessary provision of grass turfing, fruit plantation, irrigation channels. However, arranging necessary fund to carry out the developmental plan was the main constraint.



District Magistrate visited the project site on 22.01.2008 along with the Sabhadhipati of Paschim Medinipur Zilla Parishad to assess the participatory mode of operation adopted by KVK. The participatory model on resource utilization developed by the villagers was discussed. The village people justified the need for re-excavation of Rai-Bandh through their presentation and asked District Magistrate, Paschim Medinipur for necessary financial support for the benefit of the farming community of the village. Having assessed the project proposal District Magistrate sanctioned the project with fund involvement Rs. 9.43 lakhs under NREGS in the financial year 2008-09 and Seva Bharati KVK was entrusted to act as PIA of the work.

PARTICIPATORY IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT

Following the norms of NREGS, Seva Bharati KVK played the role of facilitator to ensure active participation of Village Unnayan Committee, Asthapara Palli Unnayan Sangha and also the Gram Panchayat for the said programme. Health camp was organized at work sites for labour folks. Seva Bharati KVK is the second oldest one in West Bengal.

Regular monitoring and follow-up was taken for transparency, accountability and participation.



Village community used the earth which was a mixture of good quality moorum for upgradation of the village road on their own effort. No extra fund was spent for it and it was done by the villagers voluntarily.

CONVERGENCE OF DIFFERENT PROGRAMMES FOR EFFICIENT UTILISATION

Subsequently, 80 acres of land under the catchment area of Rai bandh was identified and fund was sanctioned by District Magistrate for promotion and production of Mango under National Horticulture Mission. The need based intervention like, land development for SC/ST people, drought proofing measures, nutritional food security measures were envisaged in the project by the team of scientists of Seva Bharati KVK. Out of above sanctioned project of 80 acres, 40 acres of land has already been converted into mango orchard with nearly 90% survivality during the year 2008-09.

LESSONS

It is too early to conclude the impact of the project in terms of socio-economic enhancement profile. However, effects of participatory implementation of the scheme under NREGA are reflected in the following:

1. Encouragement of the enthusiasm of local people to participate in the adoption of improved technology.
2. Increased cropping intensity.
3. Active participation of people in participatory planning and implementation of the project.
4. People's commitment to convert unproductive / fallow land into fruit orchard to supplement the family income.

Thus, a single project of NREGA implemented in a participatory mode is in the process of opening up new vistas in the livelihood pattern of the village community