

Workshop and Field Visit Report- Palamu
26-28 February 2017, Panchayat Bhawan, Palamu, Jharkhand

Training for farmers took place on 26 February at Panchayat Bhawan, Lahlahe Panchayat, District Palamu, witnessing participation by 50 farmers from all 5 selected panchayats of Jharkhand. The training was facilitated by agri expert from Birsa Agricultural University Dr. RP Singh and Dr. DK Rusia, Ms. Sunita Kamal from KVK Chianki, BCPH Convernor Mr. Soumya Dutta, PAIRVI Programme Coordinator Ms. Nirma Bora and staff of Humanity- BCPH partner organization in Jharkhand.

The workshop began with Ms Bora sharing the broad programme objectives and possible areas of activities for the coming 1.5 years with farmers and team Humanity. Following which atleast 2 farmers from each village provided a brief narrative of the challenges facing agriculture and allied activities. The details of these challenges are mentioned below.

The challenges **of Village Bhogu, Panchayat Lahlahe** as shared by farmers Satish Paswan, Ramjeet Majhi and Renu Devi are -large part of the land being fallow, canal is rainfed, lack of irrigation facility, no farm ponds in the village, govt provided handpumps yield less water indicating a drop in water level, pest on wheat and paddy crop, damage to cops by wild boar, monkeys and elephants at times.

The challenges **of Village Kushi, Panchayat Polpol** as shared by farmer Vikas Kumar Paswan are- lack of water for irrigation, canal collecting water from Malahe dam being broken leading to further wastage of water, indebted farmers, no consideration on the request application submitted to local authorities for reconstructing the canal.

The challenges **of Village Pidiya, Panchayat Jhabar** as shared by farmer Jairam and Tetri Devi are- village is at a height from Badka pond thereby irrigating only 4 kattha farmland, broken canal leads to further wastage of water, no soil test ever conducted on fields, damage to standing crops by neelgai.

The challenges **of Village Ganke, Panchayat Kaudiya** as shared by farmers Surya Narayan and Balram Singh are- the village is at a height from the canal causing shortage of water for crops and livestock, the rocky surface causes water in the farm pond to percolate within a month, only one crop is harvested per year, half the village is not electrified though poles have been erected few years back, potato crop gets damaged during fog.

The challenges **of Village Salo, Panchayat Sarja** as shared by farmer Subash Kumar Singh are- the canal running across the village being fed by Malahe dam is perennial in nature, need for lift irrigation facility to supply water from canal to far off farms, seeds and manure from government stores are priced equivalent to private stores.

After issues in agriculture were briefly shared, Prof RP Singh, Director, Extension Education from Birsa Agri University (BAU) share valuable recommendations with the farmers as mentioned below:

1. Sowing of short duration paddy to save time for 2nd crop preferably using zero tillage machine.
2. Uprooting maize weed and burying them back into the soil to act as manure.

3. Using SRI method saves $\frac{1}{4}$ seeds while sowing
4. Rice sowing should have a distance of 25 cm from line to line and 25cm from seed to seed.
5. Rice weeds can be uprooted from conoweeder and buried back into the soil.
6. Pulses and oilseeds require fewer resources and can fetch a better price.
7. Medicinal plant like Sindhuwar, forest tulsi, roots and barks of custard apple that grow in the region can be promoted as marketed.
8. Farmers can also prepare panchgavya at home for promoting growth and providing immunity in plant system.
9. Build orchards of orange, guava, litchi,
10. Rear smaller livestock like goats and try fish farming in farmponds.
11. Attempt value additions of food crop and food processing by forming a collective.

Dr. Singh concluded his remarks by recommended farmers to refer to agri extension services in the city like the Zonal Research Centre, KVK, and for advise and training related to agriculture.

Dr. DK Rusia, Head, Dept of Agricultural Engineering from BAU shared that the canal of Malay Dam being referred to in the discussion earlier was constructed by the Water Resource Department 3 decades back and, as reported by the farmers in the meeting, requires immediate renovation. He assured to check whether its renovation is proposed else a request can be sent to the concerned department for renovation under the PM Agricultural Irrigation Scheme. He also shared information about the subsidy in Lift Irrigation for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe. In response to the query on excessive water percolation from farm ponds, Dr. Rusia suggested a mixture of cowdung, limestone powder, DAP and rice husk to be coated on the base of the pond. He encouraged farmers to go with the government scheme of making farm ponds as it contributes to recharging underground water which inturns recharges dug well. He also recommended farmers to plough their field using big oxens as it plough field as deep as 6-8 inches while small oxen plough it not more than 4 inches. Deep ploughing prevents weeds and trains soil moisture. He advised farmers to feed their cattles with ginni, napier, barsim grass, barley, African tall variety of maize, etc.

Ms Sunita Kamal from KVK Chiaki (District Daltonganj) shared experiences where KVK led training on value addition of food products helped farmers increase their earnings, eg. limewater treatment of maize lead to increase in the shelf life of maize flour by one year, malting in ragi is also being practised as the flour of malted ragi grain is used as a nourishing food for infants, sprouting of wheat is another process being followed as sprouting activates the dormant vitamins and minerals in grains. Apart from value addition, training by KVK was also delivered on mushroom cultivation to women farmers of Daltonganj.