

Scaling up SRI in Bihar Toward food security





Intervention towards food security

Indian Grameen Services with support from Sir Dorabaji Tata Trust, Women Development Corporation and National Agriculture Innovation Project is promoting System of Rice Intensification in Bihar. The objective is to scale up the SRI system of rice cultivation and increasing the income of farmers through enhanced productivity.

In 2009 Kharif, a total of 5227 farmers have been registered by the 24 women SHG federations promoted by Women Development Corporation, Bihar in 24 blocks and 9 districts of Bihar for adopting the package of practices (PoP) followed during the complete cycle of rice cultivation.

To extend the implementation of the PoP by the registered farmers 300 VRPs (Village Resource Persons) had been selected and trained through regular training programmes and motivated through motivational trainings and performance based incentive schemes. 22 women SHG federation and its members had been trained and oriented on the principals of SRI. 60% of VRPs are women members of SHG federations.

These local human resources are trained and motivated to disseminate and transfer the knowledge and skills for large scale adoption of SRI by farmers of Bihar. This intervention had been successful in proving the role of women in promoting SRI for food security and economic empowerment of small and marginal farmers of Bihar.



The, 2008 India State Hunger Index Study states the following facts

- Bihar among other twelve states falls into the “alarming” category of hunger.
- Improving child nutrition is of utmost urgency in most Indian states and more so for Bihar because of its large contribution to the ISHI¹ scores. The state also need to improve strategies to facilitate inclusive economic growth, ensure food sufficiency, and reduce child mortality.

So as to deal with this serious food crisis and acute hunger “SRI” a new system of cultivation had been 'discovered' that requires half the water needed for conventional rice cultivation, would increase per acre grain yields by at least 100%, would substantially reduce or eliminate the need for chemical fertilizers, would cut seed requirements by up to 95% and yet make rice cultivation more sustainable and profitable for farmers. Thus introduction of this new system of rice cultivation in the drought prone southern Bihar has the major objective to motivate farmers to adopt it and increase the productivity of rice that ensure food security and increase in household income.

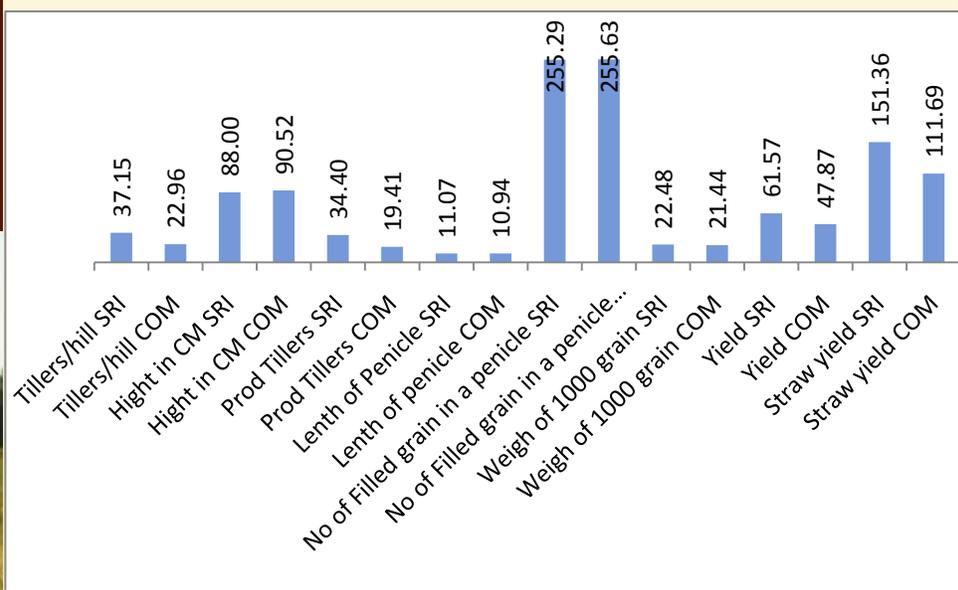
In spite of draught 5227 farmers were agreed for adopting the SRI method of rice cultivation. As per the study conducted for 159 farmers, reduction in seed by 50 to 80% as compared to conventional method of rice cultivation had been observed by the registered farmers, however due to draught majority of farmers were failed to cultivate the rice. The increase in straw yield had been observed by majority of farmers, as per the sample study conducted for 159 farmers average straw yield per hectare in SRI is 151.36 quintal as compared to 111.69 quintal in conventional method. The average number of productive tillers in case of SRI is 34.40 as compared to 19.41 in case of conventional method. The average weight of 1000 grains in case of SRI is 22.48 gram as compared to 21.44 grams in case of conventional method. Yield in case of SRI is 61.57 quintal / hectares as compared to 47.87 quintal / hectares in case of conventional method. Due to draught this year the yield per hectares is low.



These SHG federations had adopted the SRI and able to aggregate the demands of SRI registration, inputs and successfully distributed the inputs. Linkages had been developed for input supply.

Fee based model was introduced for extending the extension services would keep on fetching revenue for SHG federation along with cost of VRPs, however professional inputs in terms of grants is required for two to three years for establishing the concept and further value addition required for up scaling the SRI.

There is a need to sensitize and enhance the knowledge of these local resources on issues of retaining soil fertility through green manuring and use of vermi compost, as the results of these been observed in longer duration of time.



BASIX

BASIX is a livelihood promotion institution established in 1996, working with over *a million and a half customers, over 90% being rural poor households and about 10% urban slum dwellers. BASIX works in 16 states* - Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Orissa, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Tamilnadu, Rajasthan, Bihar, Chattisgarh, West Bengal, Delhi, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, Meghalaya and Assam, 205 districts and over 25,300 villages. It has a staff of over 6,260 of which 80 percent are based in small towns and villages.

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BASIX strategy is to provide a comprehensive set of livelihood promotion services which include Financial Inclusion Services (FINS), Agricultural / Business Development Services (Ag/BDS) and Institutional Development Services (IDS) to rural poor households under one umbrella.



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