

Lalita Hans and her successful march as a progressive farmer

Jagannathpali is a small village in Komna block of Nuapada district. The village has about hundred households and almost all of them depend on agriculture. However, there is one women farmer named Lalita Hans who is quite different from others. In our society which is a male dominated one it is difficult to find a leading woman farmer and Lalita Hans is one like that. Lalita has a small family with his husband Harindra Hans and two children. Because of poor health her husband could not give enough attention to agriculture and her family was at the verge of facing a crisis to meet their basic needs like food and clothings. In such a situation, the family would have disposed some of their assets including the land but Lalita did not allow for it. She dared to come out of the home to take control of the agricultural activities and within a short time she could convert her small patches of land into an ideal farm which has established her as one of the most progressive and successful farmer in the whole district.

Adjacent to her house they have half acre of land with an irrigation well. By manually irrigating this plot Lalita grows a varieties of vegetables during winter and summer months. She has also about one and half acre of low land in which she grows paddy during the rainy season. After harvesting paddy using the retained soil moisture she grows green gram, black gram and some other pulses. This plot meets all the requirement of rice and pulses for her family. In the border of the plot she has planted Sweet lime, Banana, Coconut, Jackfruit, Mango etc. which gives a beautiful look to the field and also it gives a substantial cash income to her family. From her vegetable field, during the winter of 2013 she could sell 50,000 rupees worth of Ladies finger and during the summer months she earned additional 50,000 rupees from various vegetables.

Earlier she and her husband often used to work as labourer in others field or selling fuelwood and bamboo by collecting from the forest. But now they are nomore dependant on others.

Whenever the agriculture officials intend to bring in farmers group or senior officials to show any agricultural or horticultural activities they most often bring them to show the fields of Lalita Hans. Whether the district level exhibition or a State level exhibition, Nuapada district is most often represented with the vegetables from the farm of Lalita Hans.

As Lalita manages the field activities her husband helps her in harvesting the crops and take them to sell in different weekly markets of Komna and Khariar blocks.

While talking to Lalita Hans about her activities she feels that since the vegetables are of highly perishable in nature they are unable to keep it for longer time and hence they cannot get better price during the peak period of harvest. Lalita has been an active member in the farmers club of Jagannathpali as well as in the Matrushakti Cooperative Society of Komna. Now she is taking a lead role to form a vegetable producer group in her village so that they will be able to collectively undertake marketing and processing activities for their produces.

(Report: Bauri Bandhu Pattnaik, S.V.A., July-2013)