

## **Food Security through System of Rice Intensification ( SRI) Method of Paddy Cultivation**

In the village of Pandarapathar (Komna Block) Gajman Rout is a household name. He is known not only because everyone in the village lives harmoniously as a community, but because of his record breaking yield of paddy by SRI (System of Rice Intensification) method of cultivation. He was the first person in the village who received accolades at the state level from the Agriculture Minister. Every villager is not only proud of Gajman, but shares his story as an achievement of their community and their village.

Gajman is a Progressive farmer in his village with a land holding of 2.5 acres.

He had heard about the miracles of SRI from community workers of SVA and decided to try it at his own field. In 2009, he decided to cultivate only 25 decimal of land with SRI method. He used one Kg of seeds during the initial days of sowing and transplantation. For about two weeks his field looked empty when compared to other fields in the village where paddy was sown. His fellow villagers used to mock at his folly. They thought that it would be impossible to get the same yield with just one Kg of seeds. But Gajman did not lose his calm. He trusted the community monitors of SVA and periodically weeded and irrigated his fields and gradually it turned rich green. With time all the villagers realized that the yield in that 25 decimal of land was definitely more than the usual. Some thought it was the result of some new miracle seeds that Gajman would have used in that area. After the harvest many people came to him from the neighboring villages to borrow seeds. The next year, he cultivated 50 decimal of land through SRI method and he got almost double of the normal yield.

The third year he cultivated 1 acre of land by SRI method and harvested 32 quintals of paddy. That year his yield was the highest in the district and one of the highest at state level. However the most important part was that he cultivated paddy entirely through organic methods of farming. For manures he used cow dung and to save his crop against pests and insects he used Magic Compost which is a decomposed mixture of cow-dung, cow urine, various leaves and Jaggery. He was invited by the Agriculture Department that year, to attend a conclave where he was awarded a trophy and a certificate for his achievements.

Gajman is completely dependent on rains for his crops and also the water from the canal, which is available only once in two years. Irrigation is a general problem in the district but most of the farmers have learned to deal with it. Gajman agrees that SRI method, certainly needs less water and he promotes all the innovative techniques amongst his fellow farmers. He was unanimously voted as the president of the farmer club, Jai Laxmi Krushak Club at his village. The club has twenty one members of which eleven are women. The club is a beneficiary of the various welfare schemes promoted by NABARD and sets a brilliant example of collective farming at the village level.

Gajman himself has studied up to seventh standard but has tried his level best to educate his younger siblings and his children. He takes pride in financially assisting his younger brothers to study, find work and eventually helping the family with all their marriages. A father of four, three sons and one daughter, Gajman also talks proudly of his sons who now handle his farms. One of his sons has completed his graduation and works at a private school as a teacher. The other two help him with his work in the fields. He also talks of his regular habit of saving money which would help him and his

family in the long run. He own land and six cows and two calves, He proudly talks of all his savings in the Co-operative Bank, Utkal Gramya Bank (UGB), Post Office and State Bank of India. Deep into the conversation, Gajman thinks of retiring now, he wants his sons to handle all the work in the farm while he enjoys his old age. Also he wants a regular source of income and plans to buy two Jersey breeds of cow, whose milk can be sold in the market for direct and easy source of income. His energy and industrious nature is reflected with each new idea which he plans to implement in life.

- Akanksya Srivastav