

Skill development in agriculture and planning begetting better yield- story of a marginal farmer of enhancing return from planned and knowledge based agriculture



Rankikala village is about 15 KM away from the block headquarters Manika, of Latehar district, Jharkhand. There is no *pucca* road to reach the village from the block, in the rainy days; it becomes more difficult to reach to the village. The village demography constitute Schedule caste, schedule tribe, other backward caste and very few of the general population, of them schedule caste has the maximum share in the population pie of the village.

Rankikala village is characterized by poor resources base, lack of accessibility to the state offered facilities, illiteracy, lack of awareness etc. Subsistence agriculture and manual labour is the only option of livelihood for the residence of the *Rankikala* village.

Jitendra Mehta, 35 years old, is a resident of *Rankikala* village. He studied till 10th and then left the study because of his responsibility of feeding his family. Presently he has total 5 members in his family, himself, his wife, two daughters and one son. He is mainly in agriculture and has total 1.5 acres of agriculture land. He used to take up only paddy in the 1.25 acre of the land and 25 decimal was utilized for vegetable cultivation. Paddy which he produced from the 1.25 acre of land was never sufficient to feed his family of 5 for 12 months in a year. Manual labour was the only option during the lean season.

Jitendra Mehta never wanted to leave his home and go to cities for manual labour work, but the situation was compelling him to think in this direction, he migrates to Sasaram, a district in Bihar and works there for 3-5 months in the brick making factory.

When he was in the village, he came to know about the Vocational Education and Training Programme being implemented in his area by Bihar Pradesh Yuva Parishad (BPYP), implementing partner of Centre for World Solidarity (CWS). Jitendra Mehta attended a village meeting organized by



BPYP being curious about the programme, there he came to know about different courses on offer. He put his application of the Sustainable Agriculture course and got selected for the training. He underwent the training and learnt how to maximize the crop and return thereof even in small piece of agriculture land. He used to do vegetable in 25 decimal of land and used to grow pumpkin, sponge gourd, cucumber etc. but production was never good. He even did not use to do nursery of many vegetables. He only bought the saplings from the market and planted them in which high mortality was an unavoidable problem.

After the training, he planned the vegetable cultivation in about 40 decimal of plot and grew Cauliflower, cucumber, pumpkin, sponge guard, tomato etc. he earned about Rs3000/- from selling cauliflower and cabbage. Tomato plants are there in his 15 decimal of land, apart from this, cucumber, pumpkin, sponge gourd are there in the field and he is expecting to make about Rs15000/- to Rs20000/- from this. Now he is applying the learning like application of bio fertilizers, pesticides, growing his own saplings etc. in the training in the field and also experiencing the benefits. He is also following the technique of crop selection and rotation. He has also included the arrangement of irrigation for his vegetable crop in his crop planning and hained the pump set to buy water from a nearby well. He is planning to take up System of Rice Intensification in paddy cultivation in the coming season to multiply the yield. He would also plan Maize and Split Red Gram (*Arhar*) in the tar land. Jitendra Mehata is now confident about utilizing his total land through proper planning with the help of his newly acquired knowledge on the sustainable agriculture practices.

He aspires to enhance his vegetable cultivation next year and wants to grown vegetable in 50 decimal of land compared to 40 decimal this year, he is of the view that summer vegetable, if grown properly, can enhance better return than paddy. He is also aspiring to open bank account and deposit the additional income in his account for his future requirement, now he says he does not need to borrow from the moneylender for initial input requirement for doing agriculture.

