

MANAS RURAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

Activity Report



OUR WOMEN ORGANIC RICE GROWING FARMER

Year 2011-2012

Address

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MANAS RURAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

Annual Activity Report for the Year 2011-2012

Manas Rural Development Institute (MARDI) has pleasure to present this Seventh Activity Report for the year ended 2011-2012. The Company is registered under the provisions of Section 25 of Company Act, 1956. The provisions depict the Company as "Non Profit Company".

Programmes implemented during the year 2011-12

1. Rice Seed Production Programme at the Villages

Manas has been undertaking seed production programme of paddy crops with the market linkage of Mahabeej since long. This year too Manas with the Mahabeej Officials has undertaken series of awareness programmes at the select villages on post harvest technology and preparation of farm well for the seed production. This has helped the farmers to secure better remunerative prices for their paddy crop. As in the past Manas has been already pioneer in Rice seed production programme in Shahapur, Wada and Bhiwandi Talukas of Thane district. This has resulted increase in number of farmers and total procurement of paddy seeds. During this year around 8 tonnes of paddy seeds mainly of Karjat 3 and Karjat 5 variety was distributed to 200 farmers from 11 villages of these blocks. The total production was more than 255 tonnes and on an average price received by the farmers was Rs. 1250 to 1320 per quintal against Rs. 700 per quintal in open market. Thus the farmers could gain of Rs. 600 plus per quintal which is about 90 per cent excess than market prices. It is also heartening to note that average yield of Karjat-3 variety of paddy is 10 quintals per acre but due to adoption of improved technology our farmers could produce around 20 to 25 quintals per acre. Thus there is substantial increase in their farm income from the paddy seed production programme undertaken by Manas with the help of Mahabeej. Looking to this success, more and more adjoining villages now had shown their willingness for joining this paddy seed production programme in the ensuing season.

2. Famers Meet at Manas Krushi Farm, Sajivali

In order to increase the income level of the rice growing farmers Manas has arranged farmers' meet at Manas Krushi Farm, Sajivali on 7th Dec, 2011 on the subject of Vegetable and pulses cultivation. The programme was chaired by Shri R.S.Naikwadi, D.S.A.O. of Thane district. Shri V.B.Barve addressed the farmers on the subject. The programme was also attended by the members of the women SHGs from the villages in large numbers. Dr S M Kshirsagar gave in brief about the promotion of SHGs in rural areas and agro-based income generating activities to be undertaken by the groups. Shri Vyankatesh Kulkarni, Chairman, Manas also addressed the gathering and appealed the farmers to grow vegetables and pulses organically so that Manas will help them to develop the marketing linkage most profitably.

3. Distribution of Bio-dynamic Agriculture Calendars to the farmers

As done in the past this year also we distributed 1600 agricultural calendars to the farmers from Thane district from Maharashtra, Khargon and Indore districts from M.P. and Rajkot and Surendranagar district of Gujarat engaged in organic farming practices. Agricultural Calendars which are also known as Bio-dynamic Calendars are based on the principle that the life pattern of all living organisms are interwoven into cosmic rhythms. Human life, as well animal and plant life is strongly dependent on the rhythms of the earth and moon. On the basis of such influences, agricultural calendar is prepared for the year, 2012-13. It needs to be emphasized that there is definite loss of forces which can be observed while cultivation, sowing and planting are carried out on these particular days, in the same way as positive cosmic forces are active at other times which stimulate plant growth, improve health and increase the yield. Since moon is closest to the earth, hence its movement has much pronounced effect than other planets. Every page of the agriculture calendar has been the full of information by pictorial presentations on Organic farming, how to prepare bio-enhancers and bio-pesticides and their application methods, Agnihotra and its impact on atmosphere and plants, package of practices for the important vegetables like Okra, Tomato and Brinjals etc. The farmers found these calendars very handy and useful to carry out their

agricultural operations and reap the harvest. There was also demand from the other NGOs working in the field of organic agriculture from Thane District. There have been also enquiries from the farmers from Rajasthan about the supply of these calendars to them. We have supplied calendars to them free of cost for the benefit of farmers. This year also we distributed Biodynamic Calendars to our associate NGOs Durvankur from Vashind and Prasad Chikitsalaya from Ganeshpuri of Thane district for the use of farmers clubs and rice growing farmers.

4. Village level Meets of Farmers and Women Self Help Groups

Series of village level meetings were arranged with the association of Prasad Chikitsalaya, an NGO from Ganeshpuri in their villages for creating awareness on soil health, soil and water conservation for preserving soil bio-diversity, organic farming systems, income generating activities to be undertaken through women self help groups etc. Dr Kshirsagar gave brief idea about the organic farming systems and importance of self help groups in rural development. Shri Ashwin Raghuwanshi highlighted the importance of organic food in daily diet instead of foods produced by using chemicals. The products made available by this prescribed method Manas shall support them in marketing and distribution to direct consumers in order to fetch the remunerative prices. Shri Vasant Hulyalkar gave the idea about the Rice Seeds Production programme being implemented through Mahabeej. The villagers and especially members of the women self help groups have shown tremendous interest in the Manas activities and shown their willingness for active participation in these rural development programmes.

5. Women Meet on the eve of Women's Day Celebration

Prasad Chikitsalaya, NGO from Ganeshpuri celebrated Women's Day and arranged huge gathering of the women members of the Self Help Groups. In all more than 850 members participated in the meet. The SHG members presented various programmes on different topics related to women health, agriculture, environment and other social

aspects. Dr Kshirsagar was invited as a Chief Guest. He congratulated the women members for their awareness in these fields and talked at length the role of women SHGs in rural development. The various income generating activities likely to be undertaken by the SHG members individually and in groups were also suggested since the Thane district offers good scope to start small business on agro-processing and allied activities to agriculture. Shri Ashwin Raghuwanshi talked in brief about the marketing support offered by the Manas in the field of organic agriculture and traditionally processed organic food products. Shri Vasant Hulyalkar appealed the women farmers to participate in the Rice Seed Production programme implemented by Manas in the Wada Taluka.

6. Free Eye Check-up Camp at Manas villages

In continuation of an Eye Check-up Camp was organized at Manas Krushi Farm last year, Tulsi Eye Hospital, Nasik started visiting our villages regularly and conducting the eye check-up session at the villages itself. The eye checking is being done in the well equipped mobile van of the Tulsi Eye Hospital. It is a step towards humanity by providing eye check-up for the needy village folks and backward tribal community of the society. Villagers now receiving the benefit of the free eye check-up. Some beneficiaries were also provided eye drops for eye lubrication. As the saying goes, prevention is better than cure, MARDI's eye check-up camp is a step of prevention from any eye problem in any villagers. During their visit vision disorders were identified and treated subsequently. As these beneficiaries belong to the weaker sections of the society, MARDI bears all the expenses for conducting the camp. The camp witnessed experienced doctors of Tulsi Eye Hospital which is pioneer in eye treatments in surgeries, providing the best of check-up sessions and giving advices to the villagers who either had some vision disorders or were suffering from an eye-related ailment. The women Self Help Groups members of almost more than seven villages viz Sajivali, Saralambe, Sawarshet, Pimpalpada, Kalepada, Khutadi and Arjunali wholeheartedly participate in such camps and got the benefit. So far 3 cataract operations have been successfully performed free of cost during this year.

7. Drinking Water Facility to villages

The villages from Shahapur face acute shortage of water in summer. Manas have taken an initiative for supplying fresh water to the village Sajivali through Tap system. Special overhead tank was constructed at Manas Krushi farm Sajivali and from this Water Tank the drinking water has been supplied daily through taps to the villagers. Thus the entire village including tribals started getting good amount of fresh drinking water which has diminished incidence of water borne diseases due to contamination. Manas has plans to provide such drinking water facility to other adjoining villages also in near future with participatory community involvement and management.

8. Lighting Tribal Houses

There are certain tribal villages which are still starving of electricity supply. As such they have yet not seen the light from the electricity in their houses. Manas have continued distribution of rechargeable solar lantern and tube lights to such tribal household in the tribal padas in Shahapur taluka. This has especially helped the school going children to complete their study at night also. In addition to this Manas have installed one Electricity Transformer with the help of MSEB and supplied electricity to the remote hamlet of Sajivali Village. Around ten houses now got the electricity connection with our initiatives.

9. Ecological Survey

Manas have undertaken ecological survey of the surrounding villages and Manas Krushi Farm with the help of experts from Pune. A survey Team from Oikos Pune has already submitted a detailed Bio-diversity survey of Manas Krushi Farm and surrounding area. Completion of such survey which is expected to take about three months the implementation planning would be accomplished that will uphold and enhance bio-diversity with local species of flora and fauna. This exercise is being conducted for the first time understanding the necessities of rich bio-diversity in valley of Bhatsa before the development of Bhatsa Dam.

10. Film on Soil Bio-diversity

Healthy soil depends on the vibrant range of life that lives below the ground, from bacteria and fungi to tiny insects, earthworms and moles. Together this rich bio-diversity brings immeasurable benefits for life on Earth. These bring recycling of nutrients and enhancing plant health, storing and purifying the water, providing antibiotics and preventing soil erosion and even mitigating climate change. And although these benefits are largely invisible to us, we benefit from them more than we could ever know. They are of vital importance to our world. Soil bio-diversity is central part of our natural systems. But it is also under ever increasing pressure from human activities. Healthy soils are essential for sustainable agriculture and forestry. The diversity of our soils is shown by the wonderful range of biodiversity on display above ground. This means that if we do not care of soil we put even greater strain on our biodiversity and ultimately on our own sustainability. Looking to these Manas have taken an initiative to put this vital subject before people by means of documentary media films. Shri Sambhaji Sawant, an expert film writer is working on this film and we are sure this will be the best documentary film to highlight the importance of soil biodiversity and its management for our survival.

11. Organic Training Centre

Manas Rural Development Institute has already conducted various training programmes in respect of agriculture and rural development since a decade. We have now created essential infrastructure like Training Halls, Office Buildings, Guest Houses, Demonstrations structures, unique composting systems from wood chips and other organic material including cow dung and urine. Our dream will come true of establishing International Knowledge Centre at our Manas Krushi Farm at Sajivali in Shahapur Taluka of Thane district. We wish to promote the traditional indigenous knowledge and systems used in areas like organic farming, biodiversity conservation and are also involved in imparting training to farmers, NGOs and students. The Centers main focus would be specifically in three areas, biodiversity conservation, organic agriculture and

Ayurveda and Aahaar Sanhita for human wellness. To begin with a batch of 30 students will be trained for the period of three months with the campus placement assistance for gainful employment at the various Farm Houses in Thane district.

12. Support to Marketing of Organic Produce

We had already made inroads for organic movement in five districts of three states with the farmers' participation. Group certification is in progress. Now in order to fetch good prices for the organic produce we are going to start own marketing organization to meet the consumers demand for the organic produce and also to benefit the farmers for providing them a common platform for the marketing and fetching good remunerative returns. We are planning to launch our organic products in the market through our associate companies very soon. Special website has already been launched for this purpose i.e. www.manasorganicfood.com.

13. Organic Agriculture: Promotional Publications

Books Published in Marathi

1. Sendriya Sheti : Shaswat Sheti Ani Pramanikaran (Organic farming and Certification)
2. Mazi Gir Gai (Gir Cow)

Dr Kshirsagar, our Chief Coordinator, Rural Development actively participated as an Guest Speaker in the workshops, seminars and training programmes arranged by Agriculture Finance Corporation Ltd, Mumbai on the subjects of Joint Forest Management, Promotion of Self Help Groups for development of forests, Global Warming, Climate Change and Eco-tourism in the States of Maharashtra, Gujarat and Goa. He has been visiting Professor at YCMOU, Nasik for the subject of Agro-journalism

. He has developed the following Training Material essential for Organic Certification

- A Booklet on Organic Certification
- A Training Manual on Internal Control System (ICS) for Group Certification

Books to be published in Marathi:

- Why Organic Agriculture and its Certification
- Organic cultivation of Cereal, Pulses and other Cash Crops
- Organic Cultivation of Vegetables
- Organic Fruits Plantations
- Bio-dynamic farming and Homa Jaivik Krushi
- Organic Manures and Bio-pesticides

The drafts of the books have been finalized and the printing of these booklets is in progress.

Acknowledgement

MARDI is very thankful to everybody and every organization that helped in organizing various programmes and activities throughout the year. We are also sure to receive the same co-operation and patronage in our future endeavors.



Organic Training Centre at Manas Krushi Farm Sajivali



Workshop on Organic Vegetable Cultivation



Manas Chairman Shri Kulkarni discussing his plans on organic vegetables production and its marketing



Shri Naikwadi DSAO, Thane addressing farmers and members of Women SHGs



Shri Tapase, Dy.R.M. Mahabeej addressing participants about paddy seed production programme



Farmers and members of Women SHGs at workshop



Shri Vasant Hulyalkar explaining paddy seed production program with the villagers



Shri Ashwin Raghuwanshi discussing marketing linkage of organic farm products



Village levels meet organic farming at Tribal village



Farmers Meet on organic farming at Village Kalmbun



Dr Kshirsagar addressing women participants at Mahila Milan Program at village Gorad of Wada Block



Huge participation of members of SHGs at Mahila Milan Program at village Gorad of Wada Block



Eye check Camp for the benefit of Villagers



Wood Kutti for organic compost making at Manas Krushi Farm



Performance of Agnihotra at Manas Krushi Farm



Paddy seed production program at village Saralambe



Organic Mango Production at Manas Krushi Farm



Organic Sunflower production at Manas Krushi Farm