

Organic Agriculture for Better Income- Chintamani Hans shows the way

The broad face and clear expressions portrays confidence that comes with experience. Chintamani Hans, a young man, only 29 years old of village Krishna in Nuapada district took up responsibilities of his family at an early age. He married young at 22, when the family needed an extra hand for support. Managing a family and his fields together was difficult, but his education and adventurous nature helped him sail through. Like his ancestors, Chintamani too cultivated paddy on his six acres of land, but soon noticed the heavy inputs of fertilizers and pesticides that he used for its cultivation. These inputs were a financial burden which increased with each passing year. The thought that his ancestors never used these fertilizers to increase production always troubled Chintamani. He then set out to look for alternate options.

He was introduced to organic farming by community volunteers of SVA. The idea of producing manures, fertilizers and pesticides for the entire crop by himself impressed Chintamani and in 2009 he took the initiative of forming a farmer's club in the village. They called it "Bhoodha Raja Krushak Club". It was supported by NABARD and SVA. Chintamani was chosen as the president of the farmer club. The club started off with ten female and ten male members. One of the most important things that were supported by NABARD was the construction of two Vermi Compost tanks in the village.

These tanks provide manure for several farms in the village. A charge of 3-4 Kgs of Vermi was needed to initiate the bio-degradation process in the tanks. After that cow-dung is regularly fed into the tank and compost is obtained regularly. The two tanks can easily provide enough compost for two acres of land at a time. This serves as an excellent fertilizer for not only paddy but various other vegetables too.

The other things provided by NABARD and SVA to the club were a Television set, DVDs on agriculture, six drums for production of Magic Compost, one spray machine and four weeding machines. All these are used collectively by the club members. The television acts as glue for the farmers of the village. They not only watch shows related to agriculture but also they watch news and entertainment shows. This brings inquisitiveness amongst men and women who strive to achieve a better lifestyle.

Chintamani was also the first person to cultivate paddy through SRI method in his village. In the first year, he experimented SRI method only on 30 decimal of land. After getting a bumper crop the next year he cultivated one acre of land and harvested approximately 30 quintals of paddy. This motivated other farmers in his village to follow his lead and adopt SRI method. He also cultivates vegetables like tomatoes, brinjals, beans and onions in about one acre of land. He uses this for personal consumption and also earns a good income by selling them in the market. His increased income has helped him buy a power tiller and also install a lift irrigation pump in his



The Vermi Compost Pit of Chintamani Hans visited by Mr. S.S. Ram, Former – DDM, NABARD – Kulahandi and Mr. S. Khadanga, Consultant of SVA.

fields. He admits that the low inputs in organic farming are a big factor which leads to the increase in his net income. The irrigation pump comes as a boon for Chintamani and his family. Now they are even able to cultivate more vegetables which add to the family income.

He also has four Cows and thirty Hens. The milk from the cows and the meat of the hen are additional sources of income. Chintamani has been able to establish a model method of farming and income generation for his peers in the village.

A father of three, two sons and one daughter, Chintamani speaks with a sparkle in his eye about educating his children. He understands the importance of education and aims to help them to complete their graduation. He is also particular about saving money in the bank and investing some to implement new technologies in his farm. A young man who looks at the holistic picture at an early age is definitely an inspiration for the village. Prakash Hans, Chintamani's father is proud of the achievements of his son at this early age.