

Bikrampur – The Organic Farmer’s Village in Nuapada District (Success Story of Jay Shriram Farmers’ Club)



JangalaAamaJibana... (Forest is Our Life) The precious forest of ChandelDongar which is protected and managed by the villagers of Bikrampur.

Bikrampur is a small village in Dabri Gram Panchayat of Khariar block in Nuapada district. The village was settled in the early nineteenth century when Late Bikram Singh Deo was the Raja of Khariar and the village is named after him. At present the village has a total population of 210 of whom 34 households belong to SEBC and 6 household belong to Scheduled Tribe. The village is surrounded by Chandel Hill which has also a dense forest. A number of hill streams passes through the

village which irrigate to about eighty percent of the crop land of Bikrampur. Total forest area of Bikrampur is around 250 hectares which is protected, maintained and managed by the villagers.

INITIATIVE FOR FINANCIAL INCLUSION:

Khariar is the nearest town and market place for Bikrampur which is at a distance of about 20 kms. At present there is no road to the village for which they take a footpath through the hilly terrain up to Manitritarai and from there they can go to Khariar by bicycle or by a four wheel vehicle. This year under MGNREGA, a road is under construction and after its completion Bikrampur will be connected by all-weather motorable road.

During the year 2010 Sahabhagi Vikash Abhiyan (SVA) motivated the villagers to organize a farmers club and take up collective action for the overall development of the villagers, following the principles of a Farmers’ club. Initially, 25 men and 25 women became the members of the Club which was named “Jai Shriram Farmers Club”.

At the beginning the members decided to create a savings fund so as to get rid of the private moneylenders who were exploiting the villagers at their time of need. Gradually all the families opened their bank accounts in State Bank of India, Khariar Branch. At present the farmers club has a community savings fund



Farmer Club Members with the Scientists of NRCOG, Rajgurunagar...

A group of 20 farmers from the Farmers Clubs of Kalahandi and Nuapada Districts went on an exposure visit to see various programs of BAIF (Urlikanchan) and National Research Centre for Onion & Garlic (NRCOG), Rajgurunagar in Maharashtra from 3rd January 2012 to 8th January 2012. The programme was organized by SVA and funded by NABARD, R.O. Bhubaneswar.

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of 35,121 which they use to lend to the members at the time of their need.

ROLE MODEL FOR ORGANIC FARMING:

SVA has organized a number of training for the villagers on Sustainable Agriculture and also few farmers were sent to see horticultural activities in Rajgurunagar area of Maharashtra. Following the training and exposures of SVA the villagers have shifted to organic agriculture and now all the households are producing their own manure using improved organic farming techniques. Five farmers have been producing vermi - compost using low cost technology. 20 households are producing magic compost and using them for manure as well as for pest control in vegetable and other crops. All the households in Bikrampur have cattles, goats and sheep and hence they are getting enough dung to produce good quality organic manures for their fields. Even though the farmers in the nearby villages have shifted to various high yielding varieties of paddy the farmers in Bikrampur are particular about conserving the traditional varieties of paddy like Jajati, Chinger, Huna etc. They understand the importance of local varieties of crops and they are not allured for high production at the cost of their own health as well as the soil health and the ecology. The Secretary of the Farmers' Club Shri Dasharathi Gahir proudly says that because of the organic farming they are getting poison free food and they do not have to waste money for chemical fertilizer and pesticide. Bikrampur has already become a total organic agriculture village and it has set the role model for others.

FOREST IS OUR LIFE AND WE HAVE TO PROTECT IT:

The villagers are collectively protecting the forest of Chandel Hill and in this forest there are many precious tree species such as Mahul, Char, Gendul, Bamboo, Kusum, Karla, Sina etc. From the forest, the villagers are getting fuel wood and timber for their house construction as well as for the agriculture. A survey conducted by SVA during 2011 has revealed that each household in Bikrampur on an average makes an annual income of Rs.7500/- by selling non timber forest produces. Because of the improvement in agriculture production and planned development in Bikrampur this year only two persons have gone outside in search of work. Earlier every year 15 to 20 persons were going outside in search of work.

TOWARDS ALL ROUND DEVELOPMENT:

The Farmers' Club has been regularly conducting their village meetings and taking up various self help development activities because of the adult education programme taken up by the Mrs. Dura Gahir of Bikrampur village. In Bikrampur, all the households have varieties of fruit trees and vegetable crops in their kitchen garden. They no more depend on the market for vegetables and most of the fruits. All the adult persons have become literate and now they can read and write. The members of the farmers club along with the Self Help Group members, regularly clean the village road, tube well surroundings and the community institutions. Apart from using water from tube wells, the villagers also use the water from two open wells but they regularly put bleaching powder to the wells. The club has decided to take steps for provision of latrines and pipe water supply to all the members during next years. This year the villagers have vaccinated 310 cattle, goats and sheep with support from local veterinary technicians.

FARMERS CLUB-BECOMING A MOVEMENT:

The farmers club regularly celebrates their annual function during the month of November when they also make their Annual Action Plan. Seeing the activities of Bikrampur the nearby villagers are now inspired to form farmers club in their villages and farmers club is becoming a movement in this region.