

Success in Organic farming

Adu Nayak belongs to other backward caste (Rana). He lives with his wife, son and mother in Gunthaguda village of Mahadeiput GP. He has five acres of land but due to scarcity of man power he cultivates only three acres and puts the rest two acres to share cropping. He used to grow paddy in two acres and Ragi and Niger in the rest part. His annual harvest consists of 10 quintal of paddy, 2 quintal of Ragi and 1 to 2 quintal of Niger. However he used to sell away Niger (Rs 1500/- to 2500/- on an average in a year) to meet his daily consumption needs (vegetables, salt, oil, etc.).

Since last four years he has started vegetable cultivation in one acre of land as the income from sale of Niger was not adequate to meet the other expenses of his family. He has been selling vegetables worth Rs 3000/- to Rs 4000/- per annum besides catering to consumption needs of his family. But he thinks that in comparison to investment for chemical fertilizers and pesticides (on an average of Rs 2000/- per annum), the profit is quite insignificant. He was quite convinced that without using chemical fertilizers and pesticides, vegetable cultivation would not be possible.

In June 2007 Adu got an opportunity to participate in a training programme on SRI and organic practices organized by Pragati at Koraput. Though he was quite skeptical that by adopting organic practices he may not be able to earn a profit, yet he decided to experiment in a small patch of land. He purchased 20gm of brinjal seeds and cultivated 20 cents of land. He applied only cowdung, farm yard manure and 10 kg. of vermi compost and kept a close watch. Only once there were some pests but, it was prevented only in two to three days due to close watch and precaution. In August he started the first harvest which continued till January 2008. Fellow farmers of his village and nearby village were astonished to watch his crops and asked about the secret.

Adu had earned Rs 10,000/- from sale of brinjal and besides this he has used 40 kg. for household consumption, distributed 30 kg among his neighbors and sent 1 quintal on the occasion of marriage of one of his relatives (a custom among local people). This was totally beyond his expectation. Previously he used to earn Rs 3000/- to 4000 from one acre of land by

investing Rs 2000/- on chemical fertilizers and pesticides. He also observed that plants had a longer longevity due to use of organic manures. Besides meeting his household expenses he has opened a savings account in the local post office and saved Rs 6000/-.This time he did not have to make a loan for purchasing new clothes for his family and meeting expenses for hospitality during festivals.

Adu and other farmers of his village are now convinced about organic farming practices. He has decided to start organic SRI in this Kharif. 10 other farmers of Gunthaguda village are also doing organic vegetable crops this summer.

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