

MIGRANT LABOUR HIT BY CORONA PANDEMIC FINDS NEW HOPE

Background :

During Covid-19 pandemic, a 28 years old tribal youth Sri Janardan Pradhan, a brother of three belongs to Penala village under Tikabali block of Kandhamal district returned home from Kerala with lots of despair, grief and hunger. He had no idea of his future as his family is having marginal land holding with no background of modern agricultural practices. He has only a land holding of 0.4 ha rainfed medium land for paddy cultivation and 0.4 ha of irrigated upland on which his family was cultivating various vegetables like tomato, brinjal and cucurbits following traditional practices. They could earn an annual income of Rs. 50,000/- from their existing land and bound to sustain miserably.

KVK Intervention:

Fortunately, Mr. Pradhan came across with the scientists of Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Kandhamal who were surveying in their village and searching for some young, energetic and enthusiastic farmers for inclusion in an upcoming DBT funded Biotech KISAN project. Under this project, KVK included Mr. Pradhan as a beneficiary under the activity of cultivation of off-season chilli during Kharif 2020. He was advised to conduct the demonstration which included, use of highly pungent HYV chilli, var. Suryamukhi with tolerance to wilt & thrips, application of Vermicompost @ 5 qtl/ha, soil test-based fertilizer & micronutrient application and application of VAM @ 20 kg/ha & bio-consortia @ 12 kg/ha and following need-based plant protection measures. All the critical inputs were provided from the project fund and regular monitoring and field visits were performed by the KVK Scientists. The demonstration started during July 2nd fortnight by raising nurseries, the 1st picking was done after 70 DAT and continued for as long as 4 months with a total of 11 pickings.

Outcome :

After completion of the crop period, it was found that, Mr. Pradhan could able to harvest a total of 64.4 qtl green chilli from his 0.4 ha land which accounts to a yield of about 161.2 q/ha, with reduced disease and pest incidence. He got a higher price of Rs. 5,000/- per qtl due to more market demand in the peak season as well as the high pungency character of the variety. He got a net profit of Rs.2,11,000/- from his 0.4 ha land which was around 65 % more than the traditional practice followed by other farmers in his village.

Output :

From this success, Mr. Pradhan could able to purchase one motorbike for easy transporting of his produce and an android mobile set. He could able to engage 02 labours for 4 months in his farm and renovated his dilapidated house.

Impact

The outcome of the demonstration has motivated the other nearby farmers to adopt chilli cultivation with recommended package of practices during off-season period to fetch more and more net profit. Mr. Pradhan's success was recognized by many leading farmers, govt. officials and other NGOs during the crop period and got him lots of confidence. He also got selected for getting fellowship under the Biotech KISAN project during 2020-21 by district selection committee.

