

## **Technology Assessment, Refinement and Dissemination through Group Approach by KVK, South Tripura**

KVK has initiated the concept of group approach during the year 2009 for technology assessment, refinement and dissemination. Earlier an individual approach with farmers was utilized by the KVK, but owing to its limited advantages, other constraints of time, labour & cost, the KVK-South Tripura is going to initiate group approach to address the emerging problems and needs of the farming community.

The program was started in the Kakraban block of the district using Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques. First, the existing farm practices among farmers were explored through analysis of present resource use. A focused group discussions (FGD) was held on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2009 with farmers, farm women, rural youth, members of Farmer's Club (Ankur Club formed by NABARD) and Self Help Groups (SHGs) in Dudhpushkarni Gram Panchayat. Secondly, with the help of a number of well-informed farmers a rapid census is done to determine the existing land use and annual farm income of each household in a written datasheet.



In this PRA programme, it was learnt that willingness to KVK activities for agriculture development was displayed by the majority of farmers. The KVK is working in this village since 2007 under the guidance of ICAR, Tripura Centre and providing capacity building through FLD (Frontline demonstration), OFT (On-farm trial) and training.

It was observed that if agriculture formed a major livelihood source, then the farmer was more enthusiastic about trying out new agriculture varieties and techniques, mushroom cultivation, vermicomposting, livestock related enterprises and fisheries.

Lack of irrigation facility was found one of the major problems in this Gram Panchayat. Availability of irrigation water is not only encouraged farmers to take agriculture more seriously, but also facilitate with and adoption of new practices because farmers generally deemed as it as prerequisite for any improvement.

Likewise, farmers, for whom dairy was a main livelihood source, wanted to experiment with improved breeds, fodder crops and enrichment of low-grade roughage. It was observed that even while considering a new input or practice for experiment, farmers weighed its chances of success based on prior knowledge and beliefs. Further, absence of local market for certain crops (like jute, mesta, pigeon pea, etc.) demotivated farmers to take up new crops. Many farmers had economic and trading linkages with local shopkeepers, who were often unwilling to purchase such new crops. Carrying small quantities of produce for selling in urban market is not economical for farmers. Thus it was found that generally farmers do experiment in agriculture within the constraints posed by resource availability and livelihood preferences. Such attempts also result in the

evolution of unique farming practices to cope with the environmental uncertainties and risks.

Based on the information gathered in this PRA programme, the KVK will be establishing an Innovative Farmers Interest Group (FIG) to innovate and modify the technology at the farmers' field level. The basic objective behind formulation of Farmers Interest Group is to achieve the dissemination of technology at macro and micro level. The KVK is also identifying some of the active Self Help Groups (SHGs) in the district at micro level to involve the women in some agriculture enterprises like mushroom cultivation, establishment of nurseries for production of planting materials, vermicomposting, dairy, goatary, duckary, etc. so that they can also support the livelihood security of their family.

---