

Turn! Turn! Turn!

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Invaluable Transformations

A unique feature of Sanlaap 2022 was live attendance of participating farmers on stage, who elaborated on the various transformations that have brought about many positive changes in their lives.

Shibani Mandi of Amjore, Chhatna, Bankura said, “Before this intervention, we could not muster the courage to talk to outsiders like you ... but now, if required, we can directly go to the block office or Panchayat office and talk to the Pradhan or, even the BDO without any hesitation.

“In fact, we did it to realize our demand for the construction of this road. Otherwise it would have been impossible for you to make your vehicle enter our village from the main road.

“Previously, if we had planned to go somewhere, we had to ask for money from our husbands. But now, their permission is enough for us. After the group has been formed, all of us have individual bank accounts, where they have saved money. Now we can use that money according to our own sweet will. Unlike the yesterdays we do not have to depend on others for giving us money to fulfill our desires.”

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Opening session of Sanlaap 2022 in progress at Park Hotel, Kolkata. Seated from L to R Ms. Usha Ramesh, CGM NABARD, Kolkata, Mr. A. R. Khan, retiring CGM, NABARD, Mr. Ardhendu S. Chatterjee, Founder and President, DRCSC and Mr. Dilip Kumar Sarkar, Secretary DRCSC

Lessons of the first AFB sanctioned project in India shared in Kolkata

Kolkata 22nd July, 2022: Since 2015, DRCSC has been developing climate adaptive capacities for 5,000 climate-impacted families across 40 villages in two of the driest districts in West Bengal – Purulia and Bankura.

Funded by the Adaptation Fund Board and supported by NABARD, this program over the past five years has encouraged collective stewardship of soil, water, and green cover, driven the adoption of diversified, integrated farming practices, and strengthened food and livelihood systems for the marginalized tribal communities. This is through the introduction of climate smart technologies, nature-based solutions, and strong program design principles.

As a result, today, 84% of the target households are practicing agriculture for at least two seasons now (as compared to only 2% in 2015), and 86% of the target households do not experience any hunger period (as compared to only 2% in 2015). While no households were practicing fisheries and nutrition gardens before, today 62% and 68% of the target households practice them, respectively. Fur-

thermore, hyperlocal weather advisory services, one of the key interventions in the program areas, have helped reduction in farm input costs by 35% among the target households.

These impacts are a direct result of careful designing, piloting, iterating, and gradually scaling up innovative practices, which are potential lessons for policymak-

ers, practitioners, Governments, and institutions in maximizing their impact.

Sanlaap 2022 a National Conclave was organized in Kolkata to disseminate eight key lessons which have emerged from the program. The conclave participants witnessed three thematic expert panel discussions, experience sharing by adopter farmers, and the launching of the lessons learned publication.



Farmers Convention on Climate Change adaptation in Purulia



Kashipur, June 01 2022: The Farmers Convention at Sonathali Community Hall from May 31 to June 01 was a platform for the community, experts, and project team to share their experiences, success stories, and struggles to develop climate adaptive and resilient livelihood systems through diversification, technology adoption, and natural resource management. DRCSC has motivated and enhanced the adaptive capacity of the vulnerable farm families in semi-arid regions of Purulia and Bankura districts of West Bengal by introducing measures to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change on their food and

livelihood security.

At the Farmers Convention, there was a solid evidence base, first-hand impact stories, inspiration, and practical solutions for climate change practitioners, policymakers, government, and private organizations who want to implement similar climate change adaptation programs in drylands, drought-prone areas, and semi-arid regions of India. 470 small and marginal farmers attended the Convention. They described the impact of the interventions experienced by them and the practices that they have adopted which delivered the change.

Celebrating the role of women in securing food and livelihood



Patharpratima, April 14 2022: Whenever we imagine a farmer, a male farmer comes to our mind; but from seed savings to harvesting the crop, women play a very important role. Women work more than men, but they are not considered as farmers, because they are not allowed to take part in the decision-making process. DRCSC wants to empower and make women assume the role of decision makers. This message was very emphatically stressed by all the speakers at the Farmers Convention on climate adaptation program in Sundarbans. DRCSC works with at least 4000

women farmers from places like Gopalnagar, Durbachati, Frazerganj etc. Trainings are organized on climate adaptive livelihood and agriculture. The techniques which DRCSC teach and share have proven to be quite effective and stable during cyclones and storms. Deepanjali project also carried out on policy level to bring change in the policy by doing advocacy. DRCSC also works on safe food campaign to follow the proper food consumption pattern. Registration of a Farmer Producer Company is under process where the farmers themselves will be the profit sharers.

Sorjan Technique of Integrated Farming applied in Sundarbans



Indraprastha, July 15, 2022: The sorjan cropping system is an intensive method of growing crops on alternately raised beds and deep sinks. Sorjan is an Indonesian term referring to a cloth with colored stripes. The system is a traditional technology in Java where the population is high and space for planting is limited.

Sabitri Mondal of Indraprastha village under Biswanathpur post is a widow of about 65 years. Her husband died at an early age. Now she lives with her only son, daughter-in-law and a granddaughter on a homestead land measuring about 17 katha (1 katha = 720 sq. ft.). But, due to a saline drainage canal flowing by

its side, often there was saline intrusion, which made this low land unproductive till recent times. About a couple of years back, Sabitri joined a women's group formed by DRCSC. There she was advised to do a creative land-shaping, whereby the existing pond was cleaned and in the rest of the land alternately raised beds

and water channels or drains were excavated. The raised beds have been used to grow different vegetables like amaranth, basella, eggplant, ridged gourd, striped gourd, bitter gourd, esculent root etc. and arum has been grown in the water.

Bamboo trellis have been constructed over the water channels to grow creeping vegetables.

Carp (Rohu, Katla etc.), catfish (Shingi, Magur etc.) and Bhetki (survives both in saline and sweet water) have been grown in the pond and the water channels.

According to Sabitri, "We're a family of four. After consuming vegetables to our heart's content, we've been able to sell in the market vegetables worth two thousand five hundred rupees. We've not sold the fish. Whenever required, we catch the fish from the pond and have it with our meals." Sorjan has been a proven technique to address the problems of waterlogging in low land, saline water intrusion etc. which events are on the rise with the advent of the global phenomenon of climate change.