



SRI Doubled Rice Productivity



Rice cultivation found to be non-profitable and area is declining day by day in Kerala due to several technical and social problems relating to rice sector. Erratic rains, non-availability and high cost of labour and high input prices are some of the major factors responsible for decline. KVK Trivandrum initiated to promote System of Rice Intensification (SRI) as a new rice production method in 2003. KVK tested SRI at farmers field for identification of local adaptability. KVK worked in collaboration with Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore for technical back up and supply of critical inputs for promoting SRI. As a first step, KVK selected Nellanad panchayat which is 30 km North of Trivandrum. Name of the place itself means The Land of Rice but due to high cost of cultivation and less profit from rice cultivation, area under rice was fast dwindling. Due to KVK intervention, all 66 farmers of Nellanad padasekharam (10 ha) are cultivating rice in SRI method for the past five years during *Kharif* and *rabi* crops. KVK trained over 3000 farmers and 800 extension workers of government, non-government, voluntary action groups and private agencies on SRI in several districts of Kerala and motivated hundreds of farmers to adopt the practice, without any discontinuance. Along with SRI, KVK introduced rotary marker, rotary weeder, leaf colour chart (LCC) and *Pseudomonas fluorescence* for the first time in Kerala. A total of 375 individual farmers adopted SRI in an area of 250 ha. KVK has successful in doubling the rice yield (7.0 t/ha) as compared with the state average of 3 to 3.5 t/ha. Farmers said this was the highest yield ever recorded. Elated by the unexpected bumper yield, farmers organised a harvest festival in the locality and shared their happiness and experiences.



Salient Features

- SRI saved cost of seeds, labour, chemical fertilizers and pesticides
- SRI gave double yield due to profuse tillers, increased panicle length and grain weight
- Multiplied seeds easily and effectively by the farmers themselves
- Promoted SRI through Government of Kerala

Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture Shri Mullakkara Ratnakaran inaugurated rice cultivation with SRI at 3 ha low land fields of Poojappura central jail, Trivandrum on 16th December, 2008 and Shri Ratnakaran himself participated harvest festival of the same crop. This was mooted to implement SRI in the farm of Open Jail at Nettukalthery under the technical guidance of Mitraniketan KVK.

KVK has organised series of workshops on SRI. Responses were high towards mass media programmes conducted by KVK through AIR and Doordarsan. Success of KVK for increasing rice production through SRI served as a means to develop a policy note by the Government of Kerala to promote SRI in the state. For the first time KVK SMS has bagged Karshakamitra 2004-2005 - a prestigious award of State Government of Kerala for the best extension functionary in the field of agriculture. Thus, an extension design adopted by KVK was highly successful for the promotion of SRI at different levels in Kerala.

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