

Improved agriculture practices for better home nutrition

I am a small farmer with 0.9 acres of land. I also cultivate an additional 1 acre of government land to meet my family needs. I usually grow paddy, finger millet, and mixed cropping of maize, pigeon pea and other vegetables; but the traditional method of cultivation results in low yield and the quantity does not meet the year round food requirement of my family.

I came to know that farmers in the neighbouring village, Banuaguda got higher yields through a Farming System for Nutrition approach introduced by M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation staff under the LANSa project. I learned that the farmers received technical advice on cultivation of finger millet, maize,

pigeon pea, pulses and other vegetables and this gave them good yield and higher returns. Farmers from Banuaguda mentioned growing of maize and pigeon pea in rows. This was new for me since we used to mix the seeds of maize with pigeon pea and other vegetables, and broadcast. I was motivated and contacted the MSSRF staff in 2016. They gave me improved varieties maize and pigeon seeds pea along with technical guidance on land preparation, layout, line sowing and other crop management practices like fertiliser application and weeding. I used intercropping of maize and pigeon pea in my 0.4 ac area in 1:1 ratio with an inter-row distance of 3 feet. I also applied required amount of fertilizers, and saw a yield of 2 quintals maize and 1.5 quintals pigeon pea. Earlier, pigeon pea yield from the same patch of land was only 20 – 30 kg and this was insufficient for my family requirements. Similarly, maize production was poor and was over soon with my family and relatives using the produce. Now, I do not dependent on the market for buying pigeon pea dal. With higher yield from both the crops, I am able to distribute maize and pigeon pea dal among my relatives and keep a sizeable amount for my family for a year. The line sowing method has also made hoeing, weeding and earthing-up, a lot easier.

I have also taken up nutrition garden activities in and around my home and now grow tomato, brinjal, papaya, banana, broad beans and pumpkin. The vegetables grown in my garden not only cater to my family needs, but also provide additional income. This has been a good learning experience for me. I shall continue using the technologies and methods that I have learnt in future as well, to continue to get better yields that will satisfy the food and nutritional needs of my family.



Name : Sahadev Paraja

Village : Dumuriguda,

Block : Boipariguda, District: Koraput

Age : 53 years

Caste : Paroja (ST)

Occupation : Farmer (1.9 acres)

Family size : 5 (3 adults, 2 children)

