

Experience of growing orange coloured sweet potato: Kamala Sundari



Name : Jagabandhu Mali

Village : Maliguda,

Block : Boipariguda, District: Koraput

Age : 38 years

Caste : Mali (OBC)

Occupation : Farmer (3 acres)

Family size : 6 (2 adults, 4 children)

I have 3 acres of land where I grow paddy, finger millet, sweet potato and different types of vegetables. In 2014, staff of the LANSAs project from M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) came to our village and discussed about an orange coloured variety of sweet potato called 'Kamala Sundari'. Some of my fellow villagers and I underwent training on cultivation of Orange Flesh Sweet Potato (OFSP) at the MSSRF regional centre in Jeypore. They also provided the planting materials of the variety. After the training, I prepared my land and planted the 'Kamala Sundari' OFSP variety. Earlier, I grew the traditional (white flesh) variety of sweet potato in 0.20 acres of land. I did not know about the right quantity of fertilizers needed and used to get around 5 quintals of tuber yield. However, with the OFSP variety and with recommended practices, the yield is now 7-8 quintals of tuber from the same land.

Before the training programme at Jeypore office, I had no knowledge about improving the shelf life of sweet potato. After retaining some produce for the family, I used to sell the rest in local markets at a low price. This was not profitable. I then came to know different ways of consuming and conserving the sweet potato tubers, and we now eat it raw, also boiled. We preserve the surplus sweet potatoes by cutting them into pieces dry them in the Sun and use them while making curry. Sometimes, we grind them into a

powder and mix with ragi/finger millet powder as gruel. This is tastier than plain ragi gruel. My children prefer to eat this variety because of the attractive colour, we have also learned that it is good for our eyesight.

In 2018, I have conserved the planting materials of Kamala Sundari variety in my home garden for the upcoming season. I have also distributed planting materials to few other farmers in neighbouring villages.

