

Farmers' Field Day on Finger Millet Cultivation

A Farmer's Field Day on "Rabi Season Finger Millet Cultivation" was organized in Chikima village (one of the intervention village under FSN study) of Boipariguda block of Koraput district on 29th March 2017 under the FSN study under LANSAs research programme. The main objective of the programme was to get farmers' feedback on millet cultivation in *Rabi* season. 207 farmers (153 men and 54 women) across 19 FSN villages from Boipariguda block participated in the programme. Besides 6 school teachers from Chikima High School, 4 field volunteers, 14 MSSRF staffs and 3 resource persons from Swayam Shakti Agri Foundation, Hyderabad also participated in the meeting.



Photo Caption: Mr. Akshaya Kumar Panda, Coordinator of FSN Study, Koraput welcoming the participants and gave overview of the programme. Dignitaries at the meeting (Right to Left): Mr. Bhagaban Mohanty, millet growing farmer from Chikima village, Mr. Veera Shetty, Dr. Ravinder Reddy, Mr. Akshaya Kumar Panda, Mr. Sania Majhi, Formers Samiti member of Chandrapada Panchayat, Mr. Trinatha Sukri, Millet growing farmer of Chikima Village and Ms. Ghasa Dalei, CHF member of Banuaguda village.

Mr. Akshaya Kumar Panda, Coordinator of FSN study, Koraput welcomed the gathering and gave a brief introduction of the FSN intervention in Koraput and objective of the programme. Thereafter all the farmers from different villages, visited the finger millet fields at Chikima and Kurukuti. All the farmers were excited witnessing finger millet cultivation in rabi season (provided irrigation facilities are there); contrary to their belief that it can only be grown during kharif.



Photo Caption: Farmers visiting the finger millet plots at Chikima village.



Photo Caption: Farmers in the finger millet crop field



Photo Caption: Farmers discussing with each other in the finger millet crop field

After the field visit, the meeting was resumed where Mr. Akshaya Kumar Panda, gave a brief overview on millet cultivation in terms of FSN perceptive and area and no. of farmers growing finger millet in *Rabi* seasons. Dr. Ch. Ravinder Reddy, Director of MSSRF, Jeypore talked about the importance of millets in daily life and also highlighted the millet scenario in Odisha. Mr. Sania Majhi, Former Samiti Member spoke about gradual decreasing in consumption of millet in tribal communities and ways to revive the process. He thanked LANSa project for taking an initiative to revive the millet cultivation in their area. Mr. Trinath Sukri shared experience of his involvement with FSN study from 2013. Ms. Ghasa Dalei highlighted about her involvement in LANSa project and how it was helpful for her as well as her family members and entire the communities of getting adequate nutrient rich food. As per Mr. Bhagaban Mohanty, "I used to depend on market for finger millet as I do not have uplands to grow it in *Kharif* but through FSN, LANSa project, I am cultivating finger millet since last two years during *rabi* season and the produce is enough to meet my family requirement. Now I no longer depend on market rather I have surplus amount. He thanked LANSa project and the team for initiating the intervention in their village.



Photo Caption: Mr. B.C.Baral, Teacher of Chikima High School addressing the gathering.

Mr. B. C. Baral, teacher of Chikima High School spoke about the importance of Finger Millet highlighting that finger millet is no longer a poor man food as it is well accepted by rich people in the society due its high nutrient content. He further mentioned that due to its growing demand in elite mass of the community, the price of finger millet will be increasing. He thanked the LANSA team for taking such initiative to improve the nutrition status of the communities through agriculture interventions. Finally Mr. Veer Shetty, CEO of Swayam Shakti Agri Foundation highlighted on importance of millet based food, which can be easily prepared and consumed by the communities. He gave an overview of the millet based food prepared by their organization and their acceptance by the people.

The programme concluded with vote of thanks by Mr. Jagannath Naik, LANSA, MSSRF staff.



Photo Caption: An overview of the meeting.



Photo Caption: A farmer tasting the millet food.

Reported by: Akshaya Kumar Panda