

Meeting in the Office of the District Collector, Wardha, 12 March 2018

Participants: Shri Shailesh Nawal, District Collector (DC), Wardha; Shri Ajay Gulhane, CEO, ZP, Wardha; Mr. D A Bharati, DSAO, Dr. Ajay Dawale, DHO, ZP and participants from the M S Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF), led by Dr. R V Bhavani, Programme Manager, LANSA and Dr. R Rukmani, Director, Food Security.

The objective of the meeting was to share the results of the Farming System for Nutrition (FSN) Study in Wardha by MSSRF under the research programme on [Leveraging Agriculture for Nutrition in South Asia \(LANSA\)](#) and discuss leveraging agriculture for nutrition.

Following the presentation describing what had been done and the results, Shri Nawal expressed that some of the initiatives could be included right away in the district horticulture development plan. He enquired about agro climatic conditions and if the crops being recommended for better nutrition could be grown in Wardha. It was explained that the FSN design and crops had been finalized in consultation with the community and the PDKV, Akola. The experience and utility of mixed cropping of pulses of different duration in cotton fields so that there is regular cash flow was also explained. The agriculture officer Bharati said that kitchen gardens were being promoted and he was aware that a few anganwadi centres had started the same.

- The Collector felt that **nutrition gardens could be promoted in PHCs** as they have adequate land available.
- There was discussion that the mindset of people has to be changed, as they do not prefer to eat a lot of nutritious crops which can be grown easily such as curry leaves and moringa. Thrust on nutrition awareness is therefore required. The experience of the FSN study shows that if community members are made aware of the nutritive value and taught ways of cooking and eating the vegetables, they do so.
- The DC suggested having a **model Community Nutrition Garden (CNG) managed by women's groups in every Gram Panchayat** with vegetables such as curry leaves, moringa, ambadi and amla, Common land under the Panchayat may be identified for allocation for this purpose. The district administration can provide funding for fencing the garden, water supply and saplings. Village SHGs can be given 1000 Rs/month for maintaining and growing vegetables. Nurseries may be raised under MNREGS to provide necessary planting material. With an initial investment of Rs 40000- Rs 50000 per garden, he felt this could be easily done. A good business model could also be developed around the CNG. For instance, the group can compost the dry leaves and make and sell organic manure. It can become a nutrition hub. Management through SHGs maybe the correct model and sustainability could be achieved through a demand driven approach.
- Nawal also enquired about the expenditure on training of village level champions. The main investment it was explained was on two two-day residential workshops to infuse an

understanding of the concepts and following up with them on its practice at home and motivating others.

- There was discussion that bio-fortified seeds maybe expensive support would be required. It was felt that field level presence and follow-up is of utmost importance and the Collector enquired whether MSSRF would be available to support scaling up of the initiative.

Dr. Bhavani expressed that MSSRF would be ready to play a technical facilitator role in any initiative to take forward the leveraging of agriculture for nutrition. She thanked the Collector and CEO, ZP for their time.