

Sweet potato- a Wonder Crop for generating incomes and nutrition in rainfed district of Odisha

A pro-active farmer's success story supported under Generating Advances in Incomes and Nutrition through Sweetpotato(GAINS) Project.

Name : Simanchal Acharya
Father : Late. Arjun Acharya
Age : 43 (two sons and one daughter)
Village : Naibandha of Gangadharpur
P.O : Kurula, Via:-Konkarada
Block : Sheragada
District : Ganjam (Odisha)

Mr Simanchal Acharya, a small farmer, possessing 1.5 hectare of land, one power tiller, has one bore well which can directly irrigate 2 acre of his land with supportive irrigation from a lift point to cover his additional area. Mr Acharya, followed the cropping pattern of Rice- Vegetables- Maize or Rice- Groundnut or Rice- Pulses as per the need and market demand.

After the intervention through GAINS project implemented by International Potato Center (CIP) and supported by Directorate of Horticulture, Government of Odisha through RKVY scheme during Sept-Oct of 2013, Mr Acharya first accepted Sweet potato as a new and first attempt to introduce the crop with project support. He received training on cultivation of Sweet potato focussing using modern package of practices for improved production and value addition in Sweet potato. He was supplied with a promising variety of Sweet potato "Kanjangad" for multiplication in his field in 1 ha. In span of two months the vines were multiplied sufficiently to be used in demonstration farms. Having received timely technical training on cultivation, he has experienced good growth of the crop, using optimum inputs supplied through subsidy. With collective efforts and support from the project, he was happy to continue to further produce and supply vines to other beneficiaries. Mr Acharya played a pivotal role in spreading and promoting Sweet potato cultivation by identifying new farmers in additional 10 ha in Gangadharpur and Kurula of Sheragada block, Karakhandi and Khalingi of Sanakhemundi Blocks. The farmers adapted similar practices

(other than the training provided by GAINS project team) that Mr Acharya followed in raising Sweet potato vines and using in demonstration plots. All the farmers could get bumper yield of 14-15 t/ha (against traditional yield of 6-10 t/ha), that could be sold at price ranging from Rs.9-14 per kg. Earlier the price ranged only between Rs 7-10 per kg. Mr Acharya himself could obtain net profit of Rs.70,000/- from two acres. He had similar response from the other farmers whom he provided the vines. Mr Acharya realised he could get income not only from produce but by also selling the vines that he raise.

In Sweet potato production, cost reducing efforts were made by introducing farm mechanisation (using ridger and harvester), practising integrated pest management and minimising post-harvest losses. Mr Acharya realised having combined efforts to improve production using new technologies can get maximum profit compared to other traditional staple food crops. He coincided his farm operations especially the harvest of Sweet potato with the festive season in October and November to fetch good market prices. Mr Acharya could purchase a ridger for land preparation with his profits and used his power tiller for cultivating the land for maximising yields. He saved labour costs doing mechanise farming and motivated others by showing the path for obtaining maximum yields. Looking at his innovativeness, CIP selected him as a facilitator for popularising Sweet potato in Ganjam district. His enthusiasm and promotion of the crop for better incomes and nutrition has propelled new beneficiaries in Sweet potato cultivation and is being grown in following areas under his supervision.

Sl.No	Village	Gram Panchayat	Block
1	Dhenkisala	Mahupadar	Sheragada
2	Gobindapur	Gobindarpur	Shragada
3	Karadakana	Karadakana	Sheragada
4	B.Chikili	Kulad	Sheragada
5	Alarigada	Alarigada	Sheragada
6	Pallipadmanavpur	Pallipadmanavpur	Hinjilicut
7	Karakhandi	Konkarada	Sanakhemundi
8	Khalingi	Khalingi	Sanakhemundi
9	Pailipada	Pailipada	Belaguntha

Mr Acharya says both innovation and integration is the key for success of any crop and he could see this in Sweet potato. He and his family consumes Sweet potato as its nutritious and energy provider and sells the surplus in the market for income generation. He received more than what he expected from Sweet potato when compared to other crops. He says that he is much more satisfied when farmers are being motivated by him and obtaining better incomes and nutrition. The income from Sweet potato has given him an opportunity to use to maintain better standard of living and by providing better education to his children. He says that the GAINS project has opened new opportunities and avenues in cereal based cropping systems. He has changed and many others have moved into cropping system of Rice-Sweet potato vine nursery- Vegetables/Groundnut/ Sweet corn or Rice- Sweet potato- Sesamum

CIP under GAINS project has experienced inclusiveness of more beneficiaries during the project period through innovation and integration as in the case of Mr Simanchal Acharya who spearheaded and motivated other farmers to expand more and more area under Sweet potato throughout the year.



Mr Simanchal Acharya- a progressive Sweet potato farmer from Ganjam district