

SUSTAINABLE RAINFED AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT FOR MADHYA PRADESH - BUNDELKHAND REGION

Venue: Hotel Palash Residency, Bhopal, , Madhya Pradesh | September 28, 2018

A Consultation was organised by DA, INTACH, PSI, Green Economy Coalition, and RRA Network on developing strategy for rainfed farming systems in Bundelkhand region on 28th September, 2018 at Hotel Palash Residency, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. Objective of the consultation was to develop rainfed farming system to bring rainfed farming families into the growth story of Madhya Pradesh in 4 districts of Bundelkhand region of MP of which 2 will be aspirational districts. The meeting was attended by 65+Members. There was participation from CSOs working in Bundelkhand region of MP, farmers, Additional Director Agriculture, NABARD.



Consultation started with welcome address of Ms. Anshul, Development Alternatives who welcomed the participants and gave introduction of relevance of rainfed farming in Bundelkhand and also spoke about the expectation of the consultation.

Followed by her, the context setting of the consultation was done by Ms. Seema Ravandale who spoke about the rainfed agriculture, issues and challenges in Bundelkhand.

Prem Narayan ji, a farmer spoke about the main issues of Bundelkhand. Run-off of fertile soil takes place which leads to low productivity. Gradual replacement of hybrid and HYV varieties of crops by local varieties has led to malnutrition problem so there is need of local seed conservation programmes. Use of chemical fertilisers should be reduced and organic fertilisers should be maximised. Issue of farmer migration needs to be reduced. Farm mechanisation is leading to loss in production of agriculture which is ultimately leading to loss of cows. Caste/class/gender discrimination is leading to local politics because of which politically powerful farmers are only getting benefitted. Apart from Premji, other farmers from Orcha, Umaria, Panna discussed issues of agriculture in Bundelkhand. The key issues were timely availability of seeds, water holding capacity of soil, reducing landholding size, reduced animal rearing, less focus on fishery. Farmers also shared that organic farming does not reduce the yield of crops and livestock rearing can help in promotion of organic farming.



Mr. Sandeep said that farmers are doing agriculture only on basis of market demand and annual average farmer's income has gone down to only Rs 15000-20000/annum.

Dr. Sabyasachi Das, introduced the RRA Network and introduced about rainfed farming system, investments in rainfed agriculture its relation with Natural Resource Management and livelihood.

Mr. Ahirwal, Additional Director of Agriculture, spoke about social problems and local politics in Bundelkhand which is stopping development processes in the region. He said that sustainable agriculture should be promoted along with Natural Resource Conservation and biodiversity conservation (especially local seed conservation). He spoke about the departmental schemes and how can these be useful for the farmers. He was in favour of working in collaboration of ATMA with NGOs.

Apart from farmers, department, CSO members shared that work should be done on water and soil conservation and local language and technology should be used, for this lokgyan is also required, traditional crop pattern and its importance should be understood. When talking about soil health, most important component of soil which is helpful for yield of crop should be understood. Along with agriculture, livestock rearing should be considered together and mutual benefits should be seen. There should be focus on forest lands also on which a lot of forest dwellers livelihood is dependent. Convergence programs with water resources department and MGNREGA can help in *medhbandi, khet talab* construction. Through agriculture department, provision of supplying timely availability of seeds should be there.

The consultation concluded with identifying next steps to take the agenda of agriculture growth of Bundelkhand forward. CSOs committed to build this informal network for identifying improved and better strategies for comprehensive agriculture in the region. The CSO partners expect to work closely with District and State officers to develop a prototype of a more comprehensive and holistic planning and implementation of agriculture policy with the triple of aim of – reducing risks of small holder farmers, ease of doing farming; and enhancing income of the small and marginal holder farmer.