

Madhya Pradesh farmers turn seed producers to enhance income

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Little better: Good quality seeds are available at the right time and place.-Photo: Special Arrangement
Growing crops, harvesting and selling the produce lead to earning of revenue. Another way is growing crops for seeds that can be sold to government authorised seed centres. "In fact seed production is comparatively more beneficial in terms of revenue for a farmer. From this he can get a better income since the marketing is assured," says Dr. I.S.Tomar, Programme Coordinator, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Jhabua, Madhya Pradesh.

Project

Under the National Agriculture Innovation Project (NAIP) of Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) a project on seed production among small farmers in the region was introduced to make good quality seeds available for farming operations. To start with, many of the farmers were not very open to the idea but following discussions with them to create awareness that seed production can ensure a better income they were prepared to try it out. They got together and formed about four societies named Laxami Beej Utpadak Shakari Sanstha Maryadit, Golabadi, Sharda Beej Utpadak Shakari Sanstha Maryadit, Narsingrunda (Rotla) with each society comprising 22 and 21 growers as members.

Trainings on formation and management of societies, quality seed production, maintaining good standards were regularly arranged for them through the Krishi Vigya Kendra of the ICAR. "Today the society members are able to produce good seeds, process and store them for marketing to the Government seed departments in the State. The beneficial effects of these societies on farmers' lifestyles are clearly visible as they are getting better prices for their produce. Good quality seeds are available to others at the right time and place. With increase in profit margins the farmers in the area have become entrepreneurs in seed production and marketing," says Dr. Tomar. All the four societies have till date produced around 307.2 tonnes of quality seeds in the last two years in an area of 6,223 hectares from six crops. The major crops being grown for seeds are soybean, maize, pigeonpea, black gram, wheat and gram. The quantities of seed produced were 72.2 tonnes from soybean, 61.0 tonnes from maize, 3.0 tonnes from pigeonpea, 3.1 tonnes from black gram, 115.7 tonnes from wheat and 52.2 tonnes from gram in a short spell of time.

In Jhabua district alone there are 21 seed societies presently functioning, out of which the above mentioned four societies are functioning with the help of experts. "In the last two years, the four societies registered under the project have been able to generate an income of Rs. 63.87 lakhs," says Dr. Tomar. On an average, farmers get a profit of Rs. 33,034 per hectare annually from production and marketing of the seeds.

Better profit was observed in gram that generated an annual profit of nearly Rs.38,000 followed by wheat at Rs. 30,000, soyabean Rs. 30,000 and maize Rs. 14,000, while it was noted that profits from black gram and pigeon pea were minimal and ranged from Rs.12,000 and Rs. 10,000,"explains Dr. Tomar. All the above mentioned crops are being cultivated only for seed production by the growers to be supplied to authorised government seed agencies.

Apart from the revenue generation another impact the societies have been able to create is improved seed varieties from the above mentioned crops in an area that gets low rainfall. Today the farmers, apart from supplying the seeds to government seed agencies. are also supplying to many other parts of the region. Influenced by the success of these four societies, farmers in neighbouring villages and districts are also doing the same. Presently 21 seed societies in neighbouring Dhar district are also offering similar services to other cultivators.

Major problem

Sourcing good seeds is a major problem and if demand is quite high then one needs to wait till next season to get the seeds. In fact some Agriculture Universities encourage farmers to go in for seed production as it will benefit both the grower and the seed supplying agency.

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