



Finger Millet: A Successful Journey from Back Yard Cultivation to Main Field Commercial Cultivation in Riga Village of Siang District, Arunachal Pradesh

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Most of the districts of Arunachal Pradesh inhabited by different tribal groups and these groups of the state are traditionally grow some millets for their house hold level beverage preparation in the back yards. Out of 25 districts of the state under a project “Popularization of small millets in north eastern hill regions of arunachal pradesh” preliminary data regarding cultivation of millets has been recorded for 12 districts of the state through primary and secondary data collection methods. It has been observed that a contribution of 17 % in beverage and food production by finger millet. Because of the climate change and at the same time demand of quality food for the growing population made all scientific community to rethink on the minor millets. Inevitably world needs an alternative for the staple food crop (Except Rice and Wheat), with good nutritional quality where our millets are the only the best opportunities and no other choice too. Hence the problems to over come the yield gap of finger millet in the district of Siang were planned at Riga village.

Challenges

- As all of we know the millets are grown in marginal lands as they don't require much of the nutrients, but in Arunachal Pradesh we faced one more problem *i.e.* millets were grown in small patch of lands like back yards not in the large major fields as field crops.
- Millets are the neglected crop as yields were not up to the mark and the demand of the produce is less as Villagers know only “ Apom” as major source of consumption and they does not know about the other consumption methods of millets as well.
- The major one more issue in the millet popularization was the agrotechniques practiced in the state were traditional and age old practices they were need to be replaced by the modern agro techniques to improve the yield gap.

Initiatives

Under IIMR Funded project, project team already analyzed the problems for specific region (Riga Village, Siang District, Arunachal Pradesh) and worked on the solution for all the problems mentioned.

The team organized many training programme before the onset of monsoon and briefly enlightened the villagers about importance of the different sowing methods, sowing dates and all other new agrotechniques for better yields of the crop.

The project team also conducted awareness programmes and health campaigns for the popularization of millet consumption in many alternate ways not only in the form of Apom. The health benefits of the millet consumption were discussed in all the forums to ensure the consumption ability and love towards the cultivation.

Project team also find the solution for the selling of the produce which was grown surplus for the village and their by ensures the additional income for the farming community in the fallow period of rice belt.

With the Help of IIMR funded project the team was able to provide all the required inputs like, (High yielding variety seeds, Chemical Fertilizers, Herbicides & all other small equipments) for the farmers who were interested in the cultivation of millets.

Details of the demonstrated practices and farmer's practice:

S.No	Name of Input	Demonstrated Practice	Farmer's Practice
Agronomic practices			
1	Improved variety	Four Varsity of Finger Millet New variety of Foxtail Millet	Local variety
2	Method of sowing	Line sowing Transplanting	Broad casting
3	Spacing	22.5 X 10 cm	No lines were maintained
4	Plant nutrients	All inorganic nutrients are recommended and practiced	No manures and fertilizers were in use

Impact/ Key Results

All new agrotechniques introduced were yielding better results, like higher yield than the farmer practices. All newly introduced varieties perform well in the hill track and foot hills of the place. Line sowing reduces the work of harvesting and practicing the inter-cultivation enhances the growth of the crop and reduces the weed growth and results in the better yield. All the agro-techniques and new methods used in the village results in the drudgery reduction in the agriculture and aimed at achieving highest productivity were full filled. The millet cultivation spreads like anything from back yard to main field it reached such height farmers are selling the millets in quintals to the super markets of the city. Villagers practiced consuming the millets in many ways rather than the Apom and this helps the socio economical reform of the society. Farm-women's of Riga know many delicious dishes after the intervention for the consumption purpose as a stable food in day-today life.



Training & Awareness Program Organized in Riga village to popularize the Millets in the specific Area.



Seed material Distributed and Method demonstration of the Line Sowing & Seed treatment in millets.