

River Bank Farming For Livelihood Promotion in Terai

(Innovative Program)



Final Progress Report
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Support by:

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Organize by :

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Janakpurdham, Dhanusha



**A Report On
"Riverbank Farming for livelihood Promotion in Terai"**



**Submitted To:
Poverty Alleviation Fund (PAF)**

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Executive Summary

Most of the river that are being flowed through the terai region , annually cause lots damage to river bank related agriculture fields. During monsoon season , the increase in water level and its stream in the results land erosion and sand coverage in river bed areas. after monsoon , this surface / riverbank remains waterless and sandy . Farmers are less interested in this fields for cultivation in cereals crops . This has led to low productivity and abundance of agriculture lands converted into *bagar* (sandy land). In order to alleviate poverty and ensure food security in such fragile environment and repair these natural habitats and ecosystem, it is proposed to introduce high value off- season vegetables & fruits that can be grown with fewer inputs and produce more nutritive items. so these fiels or banks utilized for providing in watermelon ,cucumber,pumkin,squapointeguard,bittergard,etc.

This project" Riverbank Farming for livelihood Promotion in Terai"(jibiko parjon ko lagi khola ko bagarma kheti karyakaram) is focussed in land less people , marginalized community ,Dalit women and conflict people living at jaladh khola in dhanusha district and kamala khola in siraha district. The project also help toget united for community farming and access to agricuture and income oppurtunities through reduce povert allevation in the project area.Some of the farmers are working in the river bank area; some organizations are also supporting technically and financially for promoting them to cultivate in these areas. JWAS is also supporting some land-less people around the river areas for farming in the *Jalad river* bank areas of Dhanusha district and *kamala khola* in Siraha District for income generation activities.

This project attempts not only to generate income but also rejuvenate the *bagar* lands. The project have operated different activities related to empower the people to work on *bagar* land, support the poor farmers about the technical ideas in one side, and marketing the technology around the Terai areas for promoting to use the *bagar* land for sustainable livelihood of the Terai people especially living around the river bank areas.

The total 15 groups are cultivated in the 8 VDC where 349 member involve in the project under male 280 and female 69. Most of the peoples are land less , and poor vulerenable social exclude peoples belong s of the activities. They have cultivated 190.83 hectere of land in 8 VDC . This program attempts not only to generate income but also rejuvenate the *bagar* lands. The project is undertake different activities related to empower the people to work on *bagar* land, support the poor farmers about the technical ideas in one side, and marketing the technology around the Terai areas for promoting to use the *bagar* land for sustainable livelihood of the Terai people especially living around the river bank areas.

All the fifteen groups have earned income on average rupees 45000. where as per person average income range is Rs 2500-7000. It has depend on the anxiousness of groups as well as individual labour. After getting the advantages from the project they are committed to do work in their respective villages and no any intention to go neighbour country for income generation. Almost all the groups are involving in saving credit and they are towards to register as cooperatives. This positive response will certainly helpful to sustain their livelihood in longer run.



Introduction

In *terai* areas, the cultivated land is converting into sand covered barren land at the bank of river due to flood every year. It is great havoc to the poor and marginal farmers and migration to other area is increasing. If sand covered barren land can be reutilized and high value off-season vegetables (cucurbitaceous) can grow and extend in large area, it can bring revolution to these flood devastate areas. So river basin cultivation technology package and practices or *Bagar Kheti Prabidhi* is basically needed for those areas which are basically affected by the regular flood, and people are forced to live under the poverty line.

From the nutritional view point, vegetable plays an important role to improve their nutritional status in rural areas in which over 80% of the population are residing in the country. If the people consume daily fresh green vegetables which content of vitamins and mineral. The potential lands for vegetable production are going to bared lands. It is estimated that more than 10,000 hectare of marginal river basin uncultivated land are available in the country. Such lands can be brought under cultivation. This would be possible if suitable vegetable crops such as pumpkin, bottle gourd, bitter gourd, cucumber, pointed gourd etc., capable of withstanding vagaries of harsh *bagar* are introduced. These flooded areas are increasing within five to six year timescale and this may devastate fast, so in these areas can be cultivated within short time, if upward pathways will take the result immediately. The main causes of problems are as follows :-

- The poor landless people have no options besides being staved of land lords.
- Absence of agricultural income opportunities leads to migrate for risky job opportunities in India and Gulf countries.
- Poverty and unemployed obliges/simulates rural youth to involve in anti-social activities.
- Local resources e.g, river bank are yet to be utilized for poverty alleviation support activities and income opportunities.
- Potential productive lands are going to become *bagar* due to continuous flood.

In project areas, farmers around the river bank areas are using the bare land of river side for different types of income generating activities. Some are also using the land for *Bagar Kheti* purpose. But the main theme is most of the *terai* areas are going to be bared cause of the regular flood. The productive lands are going to be agriculturally unproductive. In this context, it is essential to promote the community to use these types of land for agriculture purposes. We can promote or encourage the people living around the river bank area for cultivating these types of vegetables or fruits which are suitable on the river bank areas. So, it is important for marketing or transfers this low cost technology all around the *terai* areas where people are facing the problems of less agriculture productive due to river flood problems.

We prefer to choose this approach because while working in community, it provides us the opportunity to get interact of local people as well as better observe the local problems. The solutions are there but due to the hard and fast guideline, policy and sector restriction of financial backers/donor agencies. We seldom get our voice hard local community in practice is in general only the beneficiaries for what we think could best suit their need irrespective of their needs and approaches. This approach is not solely ours but also of local community wit whom we are planning to work.

While going to Jayanagar (Bihar/India) form Janakpur by railway we came to notice this type of project being done in the Kamala River in Indian land. After returning from there we discussed this idea with the community members of Kamala River in Nepal and NDM 2008 inspired us to propose for the project.

This idea is novel/ pioneering in its approaches that we've proposed just focusing on farming does not help to succeed in the intervention. Other activities are also necessary to motivate the target group to fully participate into this project. This project will try its best to motivate the target group through various socio-economic and other activities that will not only help the groups for farming but also promote their role in local development and community peace.

Other main theme, we are focusing on this project is the technical transfer of this approach to all over the terai region. It supports the poor farmer, who have badly affected by the flood and their cultivated land became bare and river bank. So the publication, demonstration, linkage and coordination with other organization support us to replicate this approach and technique in other areas also, but main focus areas are the river bank of whole terai region.

Objectives

The project aim at preventing conflict by providing access of basic agriculture services to the landless people to improve their socioeconomic well being through income generation and social inclusion. The following objectives are as follows.

- To uplift socio-economic status of landless people living at the banks of Jaladh river and Kamala river.
- To facilitate the landless people for riverbank farming to sustain their livelihood.
- To promote market linkage for the agriculture products specially focused in vegetable crop.
- To create opportunity self employment in local level for utilize in local resources.

Target Beneficiary

15 River bank farming groups focus to Terai Dalit, Janjati, women and land less people of the project areas

Project Area

Siraha and Dhanusha District River bank of Kamala and Jaladh River

Limitation of work

- Participation of women members in groups
- Lack of clear policy to provide the land on lease
- Degraded river bank land converted to farming land

Implementation

This project is implementing in a very low scale (only in some of the areas of Dhanusha & siraha district). Very few farmers are involving in this activities, and very little are cultivating on the river bank areas. But the main theme is we have more potentialities of same types of land all over the terai. Even it is not replicating all there. Probably this approach is not been widely replicated because of its drawback/constraints. Advocating for the rights of land less people are common mushrooming in Nepal. However, this project will give more emphasis on uplifting their social-economic well being.



There is high potentiality of implementing the project in the other parts of the country especially in the terai region. Most of the rivers follow up through terai, and every year more productive land are going to be river bank cause of regular flood. In this context, it is very necessary to use those types of land for farming and generating them in the income generation process, and also these lands are suitable for producing different vegetable or fruits, which we call river bank farming. As above mentioned that the techniques are not so hard for tackling, by this reason if we assist the farmers to utilize the bared river bank for re-farming, they may involve in this activities.

Implementation process.

After discussion with organization as well as with PAF the following process are adopted for implementation which are as follows:-

- *Basic survey & analysis* – conduct basic survey to find out the bagar land and possibilities for farming, identification of the community, resource identification.
- *River bank farming (RBF) group formation* – about 15RBF groups will form and mobilize them.
- *Technical assesment of the potential land* – for finilization of the crops' types, chances of the crops.
- *Divide the land* - for the RBF groups for cultivation.

- *Organize training* – training will be related to vegetable & fruits farming in the river bank areas, and the training will go for 3 days. The participants of the training programs are the members RBF groups.
- *Management of the land* – assist the farmer for management of the land for RBF process.
- *Cultivation* – as a group's purpose, the land will be cultivated as required agriculture items.
- *Technical support* – technical support will be continue for the farmer for the effective production and utilization of the river bank.
- *Agriculture cooperative formation* – agriculture cooperative will be formed and registered with the linked of the small farmer groups for sustainability of the program and financial possibility for contuning of the program.
- *Web side desing* – a web side related to the river bank farming will be designed and operate.
- *Documentation* – documents related to the river bank farming will be published in different local language, the documents will related to the technique and method of the farming.
- *Training related to the seed collection & management* – a training will be organized related to the collection of seed and its management, the focus groups are the member of the farmer groups.
- *Publication* – some of the major issues related to the techniques and the impact of RBF will be published and broadcast through local media like FM, and newspaper.
- *Demonstration* – a demonstration program will conduct related to this technque.

Activities

There are different activities operated in all fifteen river bank farming groups some important activities are as follows:

- Group formatin and orientation
- Vegetable seed distribution to the groups,(watermelon, cucumber,pumpkin,bottle guard,bitter guard,pointed gaured,bean)
- River bank farming training to all 15 groups
- Post harvest handling and market development linkages

Other regular activities

- Coordination with the local, district and national level organizations
- Regular monitoring & evaluation with the involvement of the line agencies.
- Public hearing and audit of the activities

Detail Information about groups are in Annexures. Please visit Annexures

Innovatives of the project

This project is innovative because:-

- Local resources being fully utilized. However local community participation and integrations are the widely used word among development sector. This project will not only utilize the local resources. River banks that are yet to be utilizes but also most importantly facilitated local community members role in it.
- Conflict and peace building is also mushrooming for indoor project activities e.g, workshop, research and publishing banner, books. But this project will directly facilitate the people prone to get affect from ongoing insurgency and promote their role in local community peace and better development communication among the community members resulting less conflict among them.
- Even it is very low cost technology and benefits are high, but it is not familiar among all level of farmers. The market of these vegetables and fruits cultivated in the river bank are raising, Nepalese markets have to depend upon the Indian's production.
- Other main thing is the project is focusing not only to trained the farmers for this techniques and assist them to utilize the river bank for RBF, but also focus for the technical transfer around the terai region through different medias. So it becomes very potential for implementing this technology all over the terai region of Nepal.

Achievements

- All the fifteen river bank farming groups are awared about bagarkheti and jibiloparjan
- 190 hectare of river bank land are using for income generation through watermelon, cucumber, pumpkin, bottle gaurd, pointed gaurd farming practices.
- 225 youth have involved and benefited from project activities.
- All the fifteen river bank farming groups are entered in saving and credit. They are towards to form cooperatives for sustainable development.
- 450 HHs are benefited directly as well as indirectly in Siraha and Dhanusha District.



Lesson learned

- Landless people were not aware about riverbank farming so it is very difficult to motivate
- Fruit stealing problem some times hinders to landless people to adopt river bank farming.
- Some times heavy rainfall invites flash flood that also discourages to farming in riverbeds
- Farmers are less motivated to avoid insecticide and fungicide

Conclusion

Most of the people are affected in terai due to floods. After monsoon, most of agriculture lands converted into bagerlands so agriculture productivities or agriculture lands towards barren land, in that cause ensure food security deficient and peoples becomes poor to poor in day by day. The waste bager lands are less expected for production of cereals crops like rice, wheat, maize and so on. Therefore, it is very necessary to adopt new innovative technology by poor peoples to sustain their livelihoods. For this, PAF provided support like **RIVERBANK FARMING FOR LIVELIHOOD PROMOTION IN TERAI (JIBIKO PARJAN KO LAGI KHOLA KO BAGER MA KHETI KARYA KARAM)**

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