

Addressing Barriers to Rice Seeds Trade between India and Bangladesh

Compendium of Partners' Activities in the Extended Project Phase

Introduction:

CUTS International is implementing the project titled “**Addressing Barriers to Rice Seeds Trade between India and Bangladesh**”, (RISTE project) from June 2013 till June 2015. The project is supported by Bill and Melinda Gated Foundation. The goal of the project is *to develop an enabling environment to promote seeds trade and knowledge-sharing on High Yielding Varieties (HYV) rice seeds between India and Bangladesh*. To achieve this overarching goal, the objectives of the project are: to comprehend factors driving demand and flow of HYV rice seeds in selected Eastern States of India and Bangladesh; to identify varieties with bilateral trade potential; to identify systemic enabling factors and challenges to bilateral knowledge-sharing and trade of rice seeds between the two countries; and to advocate and facilitate formal rice seeds trade and knowledge sharing through changing policies and practices.

To achieve the objectives of the project CUTS partnered with four organisations from India, namely, Bihar Water Development Society, Bihar; Indian Grameen Services, Jharkhand; Samrudhi, Odisha; and Mukti, West Bengal; and Unnayan Shamannay from Bangladesh.

Through action research, networking and advocacy with the support of its partners in India and Bangladesh, CUTS has contributed to a constructive dialogue on trade and cooperation between the two countries. In the project extension period, the partner organisations have conducted several Kisaan Goshthis (Farmer Group Discussions) and meetings with stakeholders, specifically key government officials. The overall objectives of these activities are:

- To help the RISTE project team in building consensus among relevant stakeholders in India and Bangladesh
- To develop an enabling environment for cooperation in rice seeds between India and Bangladesh.

The activities of the respective partners conducted in the project extension period are delineated below.

Unnayan Shamannay, Bangladesh

To achieve the above mentioned objectives, Unnayan Shamannay organised two one-to-one meetings. One of the meetings was with **Mr. Anwar Faruque**, Additional Secretary and Director General, Seed Wing, Ministry of Agriculture and the other with **Mr. Asadul Amin Dadan**, General Secretary, Bangladesh Seed Association.

The main motives of these meetings were to find out the potentiality of formalizing the relationship between Bangladesh Seed Association (BSA) and National Seed Association of India (NSAI), thereby furthering the prospects of rice seeds trade between Bangladesh and India.

Meeting 1:

Mr. Anwar Faruque, Additional Secretary and Director General, Seed Wing, Ministry of Agriculture, Bangladesh



According to Mr Faruque, about 20-25% of Indian origin HYV rice seeds are being cultivated in border belt of Bangladesh in addition to cultivation of local HYV, traditional and hybrid seeds. He said, “BR-11 is being cultivated in Aman Season and BRR1 dhan-28 and BRR1 dhan-29 in Boro Season in the Indian states of West Bengal and Assam States of India”.

The seeds requirement for 2012-13 was about 306,000 metric tonnes (MT) where 160240 MT seeds were supplied by BADC, DAE and private companies. The rest of 48% seeds were supplemented by the farmers preserved seeds. Seeds replacement rate is very high in Boro season (about 80%). Germplasm exchange between BARC and IRC was happened through signing of a MoU between these two institutions which formalised about 5 to 7 years ago. He said, “There are no regulatory barriers as such in agricultural seeds policy to import HYV seeds to Bangladesh. Any business entity can release HYV seeds after formal trial for 860 days”.

Mr. Faruque highlighted that knowledge sharing between the two countries became intensified when Indian Secretary came to Dhaka after the RISTE conference held in December 2013. He personally feels that MoU between the two countries’ business associations is must to speed up the exchange. Consequently, the scope HVY rice seeds exchange through trial and error basis will happen with increased momentum.

Meeting 2:

Mr. Asadul Amin Dadan, General Secretary, Bangladesh Seed Association

Mr. Dadan said that it is a good idea to formalize rice seed (HYV) trade between the two countries through bonding the MoU between them. He also pointed that formal movement of seed across the border, in present time, is a regular feature. Technology transfer, exchange of meteorological information, marked demand and scientific information sharing is requirement now. Therefore, MoU between two association of India and Bangladesh will pave the way



of better seed system.

He appreciated that RISTE project played an important role to gather/collect on-ground information regarding trade between our two countries and its sincere effort has assisted in bringing together the two associations and formalizing their relationship.

Mr. Dadan is of the view that breeder seeds of Swarna and Minikate varieties can be replicated within the countries which will give better outcomes in rice production if made available through formalized channels. The MoU between BSA and NSAI will further create the opportunity trade facilitation in HYV rice seeds thereby benefitting all the relevant stakeholders.

TV Talk Show on Bangladesh-India Rice Seeds Cooperation: Problems and Prospects

Unnayan Shamannay arranged a TV Talk Show recording on April 06, 2015 at Rtv studio, Dhaka Bangladesh, which composed of one panel discussion titled “**Bangladesh-India Rice Seeds Cooperation: Problems and Prospects**” and telecasted in Rtv on April 11, 2015 at 10.10 am & 11.30 pm.



The programme can be accessed by clicking on the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ZAzpKbXmy0&feature=youtu.be>

Samrudhi, Odhisa

Samrudhi, Odhisa conducted a workshop at Singhberhampur village of Delang block in Puri district on 21st February 2015. It was a farmers-scientists-students interaction camp on seed production and marketing in the state of Odisha. It was attended by about 40 students of the Department of Agribusiness Management, Orissa University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT), Bhubaneswar and about 29 seed farmers of 10 villages from three adjoining districts of Puri, Khurda and Cuttack.



Another training workshop was conducted at Juanga village of Niali block in Cuttack district on 8th March 2015. It was basically a farmers-scientists interaction meeting entitled “*Rice seed production Karmasala: Farmers-Scientists Interaction*”. It was attended by about 36 rice farmers of 5 villages from Cuttack district.

Mukti, West Bengal

Mukti organized a Kisaan Goshti on 3rd February in Theor and Hili district of West Bengal. The objective of the meeting was to share the findings of the ongoing research under RISTE project and develop an enabling environment for cooperation in rice seeds between India and Bangladesh. This meeting was attended by around 175 participants consisting of farmers,

government officials, farmers clubs, academicians, scientists, etc. Another Kisan Ghosti was organised in Petrapole on 24th March 2015 with the same objective as mentioned above. It was attended by 95 participants.

Indian Grameen Services, Jharkhand

Kisan Gosthi was organized in the month of February 2015 in Baredih, Ranchi. Around 365 farmers (313 females and 52 males) attended this workshop. The main objectives of the workshop are as follows:



- To create awareness about the different techniques of Paddy Cultivation
- To create awareness about the HYV seeds and its benefits
- To create awareness about SRI method of doing paddy cultivation by introducing HYV seeds

In the following blocks the High Yielding Varieties were introduced:

1. Goilkera (W.Singhbhum) - Abhishek
2. Manoharpur (W.Singhbhum)- Sahbhagi
3. Bundu (Ranchi)- Lalat
4. Karra (Khunti)- Abhishek
5. Satbarwa (Palamu)- Naveen
6. Kolibera (Simdega)- Lalat, Naveen



IGS, Jharkhand organised a total of 7 Village level Kisan Gosthies in the month of March. The theme of these meetings was about the promotion and usages of high yielding varieties and the seed replacement. On 31st March a workshop was organized at IGS office premises in Jharkhand. It was attended by IGS officials, JSLPS-Farm-Head, NABARD officials and some other agriculturists. On the whole, the question on the model of seed production unit was discussed in this workshop. Consequently, it was decided that a detailed plan on this will be developed by IGS-Jharkhand.

Bihar Water Development Society

Bihar Water Development Society, Bihar organised a one-day “Farmers’ Training-cum-Awareness Generation Programme” at Patna on 10th February 2015. The objective of this training programme was to educate farmers about the need for cultivating HYV rice seeds. It also laid emphasis on other aspects of rice seeds trade in the state. Following this meeting some articles have been published in local print media newspapers. A book in Hindi entitled “Dhan Utpadan Barhane Ke Upay” is under preparation and will be published very soon.