

Report

Block Level Consultation: ‘Farming System for Nutrition to address Malnutrition’

Venue: Panchayat Samiti Hall, Karanja

Date: Tuesday, May 09, 2017

A block level consultation on “Farming System for Nutrition to address Malnutrition” was organised by M S Swaminathan Research Foundation under the aegis of the TATA TRUSTS and the LANSAs research programme in Karanja block, Wardha district on Tuesday, 9th May 2017. The consultation was jointly organised with the office of the Block Development Officer (BDO) at the Panchayat Samiti Hall, Karanja Block office. The meeting was organised to share and discuss the experience and insights from the ongoing Farming System for Nutrition (FSN) study under LANSAs in Karanja with block level officials from different departments, administrative personnel, Panchayati Raj institution (PRI) members and farmers. The Agenda is in Annex I.

A total of 128 participants from government departments such as: Block Administration, Taluk Agriculture Department, Taluk Health Department, Taluk Livestock Department, Karanja; PRI members: Sarpanch and Panchayat Samiti members from 59 Gram Panchayats under Karanja block, progressive farmers, NGOs and MSSRF staff participated in the consultation.

Prashant Deokar, Coordinator FSN Study, MSSRF, Wardha, welcomed the gathering.

Keynote address by B. D. Yawale, BDO, Karanja:

Yawale highlighted the importance of nutrition awareness in today’s lifestyle among rural and urban community. According to him, despite various efforts for nutrition awareness in the community, the malnutrition status remains high. Hence it is necessary to bridge the gap through consumption of nutrient rich foods. He emphasized the importance of health and hygiene, nutrition gardens in Anganwadi centres and schools where the produce can be used to nutritionally enrich the Mid Day Meal (MDM). He also acknowledged the efforts taken by MSSRF in Wardha, to address malnutrition through agricultural interventions.



B.D.Yawale, BDO addressing the gathering

- **Dr. Aliza Pradhan, Coordinator of the FSN study, LANSA, MSSRF** gave a brief review of the LANSA research programme highlighting its focus on leveraging agriculture for nutrition and the rationale for the Farming System for Nutrition (FSN) study. She pointed out how FSN is different from other agriculture related programmes as the interventions under FSN are designed taking into account the nutrition dimension as a major component to be addressed by the farming systems along with other regular components such as productivity, profitability and sustainability. She also mentioned about the study sites, purpose of their selection and major steps included while finalizing the core agriculture interventions for the area.



- **Prashant Deokar** made a detailed presentation on farming system approach to address malnutrition. He started with the core objective of farming systems for nutrition (FSN) followed by explaining the individual components and study location. He focused on the agriculture-nutrition disconnect of the study area and the potential activities included under FSN to address the nutrition deficiencies. He mentioned that the project started in 2013 in five villages under Karanja and Arvi Block with 556 households with detailed baseline survey on socio economic, agriculture and nutrition status of the communities.

Some of the key findings of baseline survey were:

- 63% of the people are involved in cultivation, 33% are agriculture labourers, 4% are engaged in non-agri labour.
- 39% are small and marginal farmers; 32% are landless and 29% are medium farmers.
- Key challenges identified in the area were negligence in usage of biofortified crops, poor seed replacement, low production and crop diversification.
- With regard to nutrition status, 43.3% people were underweight, 27.5% wasted and 40% reported stunted growth and 85.9 % non- lactating non- pregnant women were anemic.
- Consumption of pulse was less than 75% of the Recommended Dietary Intake (RDI). Foods such as roots and tubers, vegetables, fruits, milk and milk products consumption was also found to be very low at less than 50 % of RDI.

Deokar further explained various components of the FSN model highlighting intercropping of red gram with cotton as well as sole cropping of green gram, red gram and sorghum in kharif and cultivation of wheat and Bengal gram in rabi. He further mentioned about backyard poultry practiced in 25 landless and marginal

households along with organising several animal health camps jointly with Maharashtra Animal and Fisheries Science University (MAFSU), Nagpur on artificial insemination and vaccination. He also highlighted growing different groups of seasonal vegetables (roots, leafy vegetables, fruits, tubers etc) along with planting of naturally fortified plants such as moringa, lemon, papaya in 363 backyard nutrition gardens across the five villages as well as in three community nutrition gardens.



Prashant Deokar, Coordinator, FSN Study under LANSA in Wardha, explaining the study

Nutrition gardens have been established in three schools (including a genetic garden in Heti) where the produce is being utilized in the MDM. Awareness and training programmes were organised on nutrition and health particularly for adolescent girls, women and children. Similarly, trainings on improved package of practices of nutritious crops, integrated pest management, integrated nutrient management, seed treatment, seed storage and value addition of roots and tubers along with exposure visits were organized, especially for small and marginal farmers. By the end of 2016-17, a total of 492 farmers in kharif and 111 in rabi were practicing one or more FSN intervention. He further mentioned that various sustainability measures such as distribution of triple layered polythene bag for safe storage of seeds, discussions on installation of community dal processing mill, formation of community seed bank are underway. He highlighted the establishment of farmer knowledge centre (FKC) in two villages, to support the households in the activities.

- **Kishor Jagtap**, Coordinator, Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP), MSSRF moderated the farmers' experience sharing session. He also gave a brief introduction of activities under MKSP in Wardha and Yavatmal districts.



Kishor Jagtap, MKSP, MSSRF moderating the farmers' experience sharing session

Experiences shared by Farmers:

- **Indira Meshram, Takali village**, president of MKSP women's federation from Ralegaon block stated that work under the MKSP project started in her village in 2013. As of now, 72 women shetkari samitis have been formed involving 152 members from 20 villages. She said that she owned three acres of land in which she is practising organic farming and mixed farming (sorghum, redgram and cotton). Based on training from MSSRF, she has also initiated a vermicompost pit and a biopesticide unit in her farm; as a result she has been able to reduce cultivation cost and earn an annual income of Rs 81000 from 3 acres of land.
- **Gangadhar Udgirkar , Susund village**, owns 2.5 acres of land in which he did soil testing with support from LANSa; with application of recommended fertilizer dose, he was able to reduce excess fertilizer cost. Earlier he was not cultivating onion but with support under the FSN project he cultivated and produced 9 quintals from 15 cent of area in 2016-17, getting additional income. He is also practicing inter cropping of cotton with green gram/red gram in kharif and sole cropping of bengal gram during rabi season. He has established nutrition garden in his backyard and also retains vegetable seeds for re-sowing. He was able to get the benefit of triple layered bag for safe seed storage. He was happy that his family got enough food from farm production. He thanked LANSa project and MSSRF staff members for the support.
- **Dadarao Kamble, Heti village**, a progressive farmer, owns 5 acres of land in which he used to grow cotton and soybean earlier. Through FSN, he got trained on seed treatment, improved package of practices, and soil testing which helped him have good crop production. He cultivated two improved varieties of wheat i.e. Nethravathi (NIAW1415) and Sardar (AKAW1445) in half acre of land under each variety during rabi season and obtained 22 quintals from that one acre and also supplied seed materials to neighbouring farmers. Earlier he experienced wilting disease in his Bengal gram field but through seed treatment training and IPM strategies, and changing the variety to Jaki 9218, he got a yield of 12 quintals per acre. He thanked the LANSa, MSSRF for their support.



Dadarao Kamble, Heti village, a progressive farmer, sharing his experience on wheat and gram cultivation

- **Chanda Kumble, Paloti village**, a community resource person under the MKSP project, developed a community seed bank with other group members in her village. She maintains the seed bank which

has seeds of cereals, pulses and vegetables. She practices organic farming and has established a biopesticide unit in her farm. She adopted mixed farming and cultivated pulses such as black gram, red gram and cowpea intercropped with maize. She has also developed backyard nutrition garden and is an active participant in nutrition awareness programs.

- **Bebby Kaurati, Borgaon village**, one of the members of community nutrition garden in the village expressed that LANSA project helped her group members to identify common land in the village to establish the community nutrition garden (CNG). She developed community nutrition garden with her group members and cultivated different vegetables which was sufficient for their home consumption. Every household in her village has nutrition garden either in backyard or on farmland. She also joined the exposure visit to Bhilli, Dhamangaon railway for training on community seed bank. She saw 255 seed varieties of vegetables, pulses, cereals and fruits, which inspired her to develop community seed bank in her village. She thanked LANSA, MSSRF for providing technical guidance and seed material for the nutrition gardens.



Bebby Kaurati, Borgaon village, sharing her experience on CNG

- **Sarika Thul, Chodhi village**, one of the community resource persons under MKSP practiced mixed cropping following organic farming practices on 1 acre with technical guidance from MSSRF; she said that earlier her husband was against her decision, but after seeing successful result, he was happy and allowed her to follow the same practice on 5 acres. She prepared 200 litres of neem based biopesticide from her unit and sold to neighbours. In the year 2016-17, she spent Rs 20000 to 25000 in her field and got an income of Rs 1 to 1.5 lakhs.
- **Balakrishna Pethe, Borgaon village**, expressed that earlier there was not enough knowledge on nutrition among the community. After intervention under the LANSA project, farmers gradually realized the importance of nutrition. He obtained technical guidance from the project and conducted soil test in his field. As a result, he was able to reduce the cost of cultivation through better fertilizer management. He also expressed that farmers would get additional benefit if they get involved in value addition. He emphasized that mixed farming gives crop diversification and varieties of foods in daily diets. He got opportunity for an exposure visit to linseed farm and is now interested in linseed cultivation. He is also a member of farmers' group to be linked with ATMA project.



Balakrishna Pethe, Borgaon village, sharing his experience

Special Remarks by Invitees:

- Taluk Health Officer, Karanja** expressed that 60 per cent of the population in Wardha district are malnourished and farmers' suicide are common in the area. He advised the gathering to consume multivitamin rich foods such as roots, tubers and milk. Nowadays people consume junk foods and adulterated foods which are unhealthy, leading to obesity and various health disorders; he advised people to consume healthy nutritious foods such as vegetables and pulses in addition to consumption of milk. He also requested to conduct such programmes in all the other villages of the block.



Remarks by Taluk Health Officer, Karanja

- Ranjnatai Triple, Deputy chairperson, Panchayat Samiti (P.S.) Karanja**, expressed that more fertilizer usage leads to pollution, further leading to health disorders and also increased cost of cultivation. She suggested to farmers to practice organic farming, especially usage of farm yard manure in the field and to cultivate and consume nutritious foods, to overcome malnutrition.



Remarks by Ranjnatai Triple, Deputy chairperson, P.S. Karanja

- Saritatai Gakhare, Member, Zilla Parishad (ZP) Wardha, Kannamwargram Circle**, explained the importance of neem for safe storage of seed materials and also suggested that farmers should be involved in group farming. She also mentioned importance of linseed cultivation and its consumption in daily diets. She requested for implement of similar program in all the villages.



Remarks by Saritatai Gakhare, ZP Wardha, Kannamwargram Circle

- Nitatai Gajam, Chairman, Social welfare, ZP Wardha** expressed that the program helped her to understand more about farming and malnutrition. She encouraged farmers to go for mixed cropping, diet planning and to establish nutrition gardens in their backyard. She also insisted that farmers should be involved in dissemination of nutrition knowledge to others community members.



Nitatai Gajam, Chairman, Social welfare, ZP Wardha expressing her views

- Mangesh Shivajirao Khaweysi, Chariman, P.S Karanja** expressed that he found the Farming System for Nutrition project incredible. He also suggested farmers to cultivate mixed cropping such as cotton, green gram, black gram and marigold. He also insisted to include poultry and livestock such as goatery as this would not only enhance income but also improve health. He suggested using minimum fertilizer in crop cultivation and encouraged households to consume fruits such as citrus for vitamin C, milk for calcium, leafy vegetables for iron and oilseeds for fat.



Mangesh Shivajirao Khaweysi, Chariman, P.S Karanja sharing his thoughts

- B.D. Yawale, BDO, P.S. Karanja:** Mr. Yawale in his concluding remarks expressed that he was impressed with the initiatives undertaken by MSSRF under the LANSA programme in Wardha district, specifically to address malnutrition. He specially mentioned that many of interventions under FSN used to exist in earlier days but somehow they had vanished over the years. Therefore, he appreciated MSSRF for reintroducing the FSN approach in the community. Further he explained the

importance of balanced diet and appealed to extension officers to make efforts to disseminate them in their area.

He made a special request to MSSRF to prepare a plan for all 59 gram panchayat villages in Karanja block to implement the FSN approach. He further mentioned that he was willing to extend support and suggested to prepare and submit a plan within a month.



B.D.Yawale, BDO, Panchayat Samiti, Karanja, giving his concluding remarks

NGOs, representatives of Kamalnayan Jamanlal Bajaj Foundation, Jankidevi Bajaj Gram Vikas Sanstha and Dharamitra participated in the programme. Some of them from KJBF and Dharamitra, had shown their interest to visit the FSN field sites.

The programme concluded with vote of thanks by Ms. Rupal Wagh, Research Associate (Nutrition), FSN Study, MSSRF and Mr. Anil Adewar, Agriculture officer, Panchayat Samiti, Karanja.



Rupal Wagh giving vote of thanks

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Agenda	
Topics	
Registration	
Welcome	Prashant Deokar, Coordinator, FSN Study under LANSA in Wardha, MSSRF
Keynote Address	B.D. Yawale, BDO, Karanja
Overview of Programme	Aliza Pradhan, Coordinator, FSN Study under LANSA, MSSRF
FSN Study in Wardha	Prashant Deokar, Coordinator, FSN Study under LANSA in Wardha, MSSRF
Sharing of Experience by Farmers	Indira Meshram, Takali Gangadhar Udgirkar, Susund Dadarao Kamble, Heti Chandra Kumble, Paloti Beby Kaurati, Borgaon Sarika Thul, Chodhi Balkrishna Pethe, Borgaon (G.)
Feedback from Participants	Moderated by: Kishor Jagtap, Project Coordinator, MKSP, MSSRF, Wardha
Special Remarks by Invitees	Chairman, Panchayat Samiti, Karanja Deputy Chairman, PS, Karanja Taluk Agriculture Officer, Karanja Taluk Health Officer, Karanja Livestock Development Officer, Karanja Range Forest Officer, Karanja
Concluding Remarks	B.D. Yawale, BDO, Karanja
Vote of thanks	Anil Adewar, AO, PS, Karanja Rupal Wagh, RA (Nutrition) FSN Study under LANSA, MSSRF, Wardha
Lunch	