



The Focus

Groundnut - a possible choice in the climate change era

West Medinipur, the district that received a lot of political attention in recent times, suffers from a long dry spell. It is not caused by less rainfall, but heavy to very heavy rain occurs within two-three months and after this not a drop falls from the sky in the rest of the year. The situation has aggravated due to unpredictability in the oncoming and cessation of rain especially during last 5-6 years.

In 2008 winter, farmers of Hanumantneguria tried ground nuts instead of the resource consuming boro paddy. They cultivated groundnut on a 13 acre plot. DRCSC supported each farmer with 20 kg ground nut seeds for 1/3rd acre along with 300 gms of biofertilizers viz. rhizobium and trichoderma viridi. Farmers having more land bought the extra seeds from outside.

A comparative statement of profit has also been prepared by them which is as follows.

Cost of Ground nut cultivation on 1/3 rd acre

Irrigation	189.00
Plough (4 times)	400.00



Seeds	720.00
Fertiliser	100.00
Labour	500.00
Total expenses	1909.00

Total yield was 4 qtl.

The sale price of 4 qtl ground nut 9200.00

Therefore the profit was Rs. 7291.00

Cost of Boro paddy cultivation in on 1/3rd acre

Irrigation	672.00
Plough (5 times)	500.00
Seeds	150.00
Fertiliser	500.00
Pesticides	150.00
Labour	1500.00
Total Expenses	3472.00

Total yield 8 qtl.

The sale price of 8qtl paddy 5600.00

Therefore the profit was Rs. 2128.00

Farmers are happy with the ground nuts because the water requirement is less, need for fertilizer is nominal, risk is much less. Ground nuts also help to keep the soil alive. As a cash crop it's demand is also high.

Right to Information: breaking the silence

Case Study I

Md. Iqbal Hasim of Chandmuni GP, Block Ratua I, Malda, took an agricultural loan from bank. As the news of waiver of agricultural loans by the govt. reached Hasim through the media, he went to the Branch Manager of the Bank. But the Manager was not convinced about the waiver and pressed for repayment. Finding no other way, Hasim made a RTI application to the Bank requesting them to provide him the information about waiver of agricultural loans. The application acted like a magic. Instantly the manager refunded the mortgaged deed and requested Hasim not to pursue his application any further. Being satisfied, Hasim complied with his request.

Case Study II

Tushar Acharjee of Ashokenagar, Habra was dissatisfied with the utilization of a land belonging to the R R & R Dept. of West Bengal. A market was built on it and shops were offered to persons against money without any receipt. Tushar wrote to various

authorities but it was of no avail. Ultimately he resorted to move a RTI application to the concerned department. The West Bengal Information Commission served a show cause notice on the concerned SPIO. Ultimately the curtain was raised when it was revealed that the land was utilized illegally without any knowledge of the R R & R Department. Now, we will have to wait and see what steps do the concerned department

take to rectify the irregularities and punish the offender.

Case Study III

Bisram Oraon of Chulkapara, Nagrakata lost his father in 2005 who was working with Forest Department, Govt. of WB. He applied for job on the compassionate ground. The local office had sent the application with necessary recommendations to the higher authority but nothing has been offered to him as yet. Now, Bisram is

contemplating to move a RTI application. The RTI State Helpline assisted him with the name of the SPIO of the Forest Dept. at the State level but advised him to move slowly and judiciously because jobs on compassionate ground requires time taking decisions from many departments and unnecessary pressure may antagonise the people in power.

SCHOOL GARDEN - a living laboratory and source of nutrition in midday meal



Environment Study. It helps not only to learn about plants and environment (some examples: the interdependence of the elements in nature and food web, classification of leaves, stems, flowers etc., types of seed, germination and pollination, types

can be garden on the roofs, small tubs, tires or hanging pots.

A garden can also be considered as a platform to learn recycling of waste materials (like paper, tiffin waste and waste from the garden itself) through composting and vermicomposting.

Garden can be a very useful physical activity, the scope for which is decreasing in schools

A garden is a planned space with plants and other agents of nature, usually outdoors, set aside for the display, cultivation and enjoyment. A school garden offers a wonderful, creative space in which children of all abilities can experience or learn about nature, widen their knowledge of natural science that may be helpful in learning other subjects too. Within the school environment it is like a living laboratory. A school garden helps in shaping the child's intellectual, emotional and social capabilities and skills.

A garden grown and maintained by the children generates a caring attitude and sense of responsibility among them towards them.

School garden can be a part of

of soil, insects, friends and foes of tree, the impact of chemical pesticide and its alternatives etc.) but if planned properly, other subjects can also be taught at various levels.

In a school when a garden is planned, it is not necessary that there should be a big open space or a lawn for the garden. In most of the urban schools, there is not much space for a garden, so there



though its importance is increasing as the food habit and life style are ushering in a number of problems like obesity, diabetes and high cholesterol in blood.

In a rural setup, the ICDS centres, primary or high schools, usually there is ample scope to raise garden to supplement midday meals with vegetables, which can bring

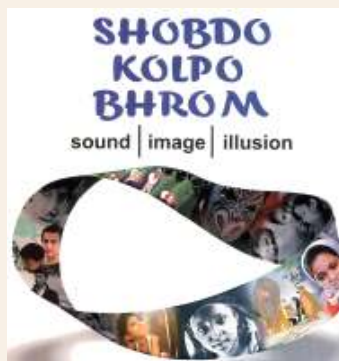
about a sea change in the nutrition status of the children. If we select plants that

- gives large amount of fruit vegetables (like various types of bean) or leaves (like Ipomia, bitter gourd leaf, pumpkin leaves)
- need less care, water
- is suitable for local ecology

it can meet the daily nutrition demand of children. A 20' X 20' space can supply vegetables 5 days a week to 30 children of age 3-6, 5 days a week.

Announcement

- District level conference cum consultation in Maldah, Jalpaigui, Uttar Dinajpur on RTI.
- Face to face: Govt. officials meet RTI Applicants in October.
Contact: 9433801622
- Seeking case studies on climate change adaptation/mitigation strategies or climate change witness' experiences for the next issue of Debacl.
- A film festival for the young to experience and discuss films from different corners of the world during 25th-28th August. First time in West Bengal, where we project film as a pedagogic tool.
Contact: 9831955628.



We have developed the concept and tried out the same with a number of schools and ICDS centres of different scopes, capacity and locale during last 2-3 years with large number of cases showing improvement of health/nutrition status, capacity and learning ability of children of various age groups. We are looking for



opportunities for large scale replication and mainstreaming of the idea.

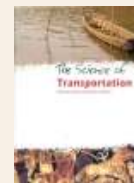
Happenings

- A Consultation was organised on 13 th July 2009 to discuss the scopes of regenerating the agriculture and livelihood of the AILA affected area. Funding agencies, NGOs, farmers, resource persons from various sectors showed us some hope. For detail report log on to www.drsc.org.
- A discussion session on Paulo Freire's thought and work by Sri Salil Biswas, as a monthly seminar was held at DRCS on 3rd August.
- The Annual General meeting of DRCS was held on 12th July this year. The election of the Executive body including Secretary, President and Treasurer were made.
- A series PRA was conducted in villages of Sundebans to gauge vulnerability, understanding and strength of the community to fight Climate Change.

New Productions

Chasher Katha

Vol. XII No. 4 has been published with special focus on right to information in West Bengal.



Series of Science Booklets

DRCS in collaboration with NCSTC have brought out the series of Science Booklets for the children to demystify scientific phenomenon in daily life. This series will encourage the children to search for a larger picture, dig deep into mysteries of science & successes of technology and of course sustainable living alternatives. The series have titles like Science of Transportation, Science in the Kitchen, Science of Construction, Science of Chemicals we use and Science in the Garden. Write to us for copies.



For information, training, ideas, books, films, techniques on alternative development through natural resource management contact

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