

Multiple-use water services (MUS), Case Study; A Women's group with a difference

Torali women's group belong to the Tiwa or Lalung; a plains tribe community & represent a group of ethnically distinct indigenous people living in the humid tropical flood plain ecosystem, at Mikirbori village, Morigaion dist. Assam, India. Observing the ongoing MUS activities within the home garden and the farm fields, the ten members women's group during the second year of the project took the challenge and self initiated activities on MUS with a resolve to achieve what other had even though there was no major savings to support their activities. The group's determination to enter into the MUS ambit for deriving its opportunities restored to facilitate the option by major physical labor contribution in earth cutting, land development and bamboo cutting & fencing and with the limited savings bought seeds for vegetable crops & broadcasted before seeking any external assistance from the project; *Strengthening Indigenous people's response to Multiple Use water services* supported by ARYGHAM. The group members in their first initiative developed a home garden area of 0.09 ha to follow with a field crop area of 0.21 ha for rapeseed and potato cultivation and a farm pond of 900 sq feet for duckery. The members adhered to the advice imparted to groups based on soil & crop analysis findings during the second winter crop seed dissemination process and maximized the benefits of the available soil moisture by shortening the gap period between land developments & sowing leading to successful seed germination without additional watering effort. By adopting timely inter cultural operations not only helped resolve water management but also helped in pest & disease management, where health organic crops with good yield for mustard, 3229 kg per ha & a return by 3.75 per kg of investment for potato. While ducks provided as seeds with 10% mortality have achieved maturity to multiply.



Previously we used to only saved Rs 20/- per month and there was no other activity. Now we realize that by undertaking MUS activities in home gardens & farm field we not only have the opportunity to earn an additional rupee, but also have vegetables as additional food supplement. Besides if we are unable to sell our home garden farm produce we have the opportunity to feed upon which otherwise was not there. We would have achieved more had we joined the project early. This time we have learnt how to cultivate potato & other vegetable crops. We have saved the returns from the sale of the crops and will invest to buy seed for our next cropping season to grow on a larger scale. Now that the crops have been harvested our minds have become restless thinking for the next crop. Water availability is becoming important, as to do any activity we need water and this year we find that all the small & shallow ponds are drying up which otherwise would last till end January. We need to deepen & renovate our ponds so that water will last to almost reach the monsoon to benefit from extend fish & duck culture. Our farm field plot area is large; we were able to fence only half we are concerned about the remaining to ward of crop damage from free grazing animals. In the coming year we plan to expand our winter cropping area for potato & rapeseed by 0.64 ha and will follow with Jute. We plan to reclaim the flood ravage waste land and generate the cultivable area which will be free for use for three years without any resource sharing. This year we had to share our produce as the land was on lease. We have marketed our first produce of radish at the Guwahati market; (the nearest major urban city) we took the train to transport our produce.