



*My Words .....*

For reasons unknown the issue of soil health has been left by the wayside. In the quest to increase farm productivity, the soil has been the recipient of undesirable doses of agro-chemicals whereas in the race to enhance industrial output, the land has been used as a dumpyard for toxic wastes. Further, there are other reasons like salinity ingress and sodic conditions that adversely affect soil health.

Lead story in this issue of newsletter reflects dramatic results achieved on account of soil treatment with gypsum followed by mulching. In one case, paddy harvest has multiplied 12 times. The gain in other crops, including vegetables, is equally astounding. Economically speaking, quick return on investment makes it worth the investment, both by the proponent as well as the landowners.

Buoyed by the success achieved over last one year, the soil health program is being extended to more saline and sodic lands in Uttar Pradesh. We will report about the progress and the challenges encountered as we move further.

- K.G.Wankhede  
Chief Executive

*Your Words .....*

"I am very impressed by the work of IFFDC. Our dream of contributing to environment upgradation and reducing global warming is being done by IFFDC in a lyrical manner. Keep going."

- Dr. U.S. Awasthi  
MD, IFFCO

I was impressed much to read this e-news, carrying such wonderful achievements made by the excellent leaders like Mr. Dina Nath Singh.

I may wish to document your works in order to report this in celebrating the UN International Co-operative Year 2012.

- Chan-Ho CHOI  
Regional Director - Asia & Pacific  
International Co-operative Alliance

Iffdc  
**Reflections**

**ECOLOGICAL RESILIENCE**

**Healthy, wealthy and wise**

Aziz Ahmad finds it tough to believe what he's recently experienced. From a low of 4 quintals / ha. a year ago, his paddy harvest has jumped to 48 quintals / ha. from the same land. No less than a magic, the incredible feat came about on account of soil rejuvenation through addition of gypsum followed by green manuring. Ahmad is one amongst several farmers in Bighapur block of Unnao district of Uttar Pradesh whose healthy soil has not only made him wealthy but wise too.



Dr. Uday Shankar Awasthi, Managing Director, IFFCO, seen talking with farmer Mr. Krishna Pal who earned profit of ₹ 40,000 per acre from green cobs of hybrid maize

From a small beginning in 15 villages in 2009, the program has now been extended to cover all villages (122) in the block. To IFFCO's financial contribution for this program, the beneficiary families are contributing between 15 to 20 per cent of the total investment on their sick soils. Tests reveal that the soils in the area are predominantly deficient in essential nutrients like nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, sulphur and zinc.

While sulphur deficiency has been met through gypsum supplementation, over 6,250 hectares has been covered under green manuring to provide other nutrients. From grains to pulses and from flower to fruit plants, a diversity of crops is now being cultivated on land which was unsuitable for cropping only a couple of years ago. Using tissue culture technique, Santosh Kumar of Harishchandpur village could get net profit ₹ 1 lakh from his half hectare banana crop.

Under the soil rejuvenation and productivity enhancement project, farmers are being trained on preparing quality compost as well as on crop introduction through field trials. Some 447 single plot and 242 multiple plot trials have been conducted in the villages to encourage farmers to adopt hitherto uncultivated crops in the area. Crops like papaya, banana, mustard, chickpea, lentil and eggplant have been introduced through field trials.

A new beginning has been made on the saline and sodic soils of Unnao. Given the extent of unhealthy soils in the region, the task of rejuvenating unhealthy soils is far from finished.



Bumper paddy crop in sodic soil under soil rejuvenation project in Block Bighapur District Unnao (U.P.)



*Hem Shankar in his shop*

## ***Social discard no more..***

For Panna Lal Lohar, 60, it is no less than a miracle that his elder son, Hem Shankar (see picture), who was till recently a 'social discard' has become a 'social asset'. A school-dropout without any skills, his attempt at earning a living by migrating to Mumbai had miserably failed. Much to the disliking of Panna Lal, Hem Shankar had no option but to return home empty-handed.

Had he not availed entrepreneurial training imparted by IFFDC under the 'mainstreaming endangered rural artisans' program of the Rural Non-farm Development Authority of the Government of Rajasthan in 2006, this school dropout would have been languishing in the backyards of society. Interestingly, he had avinced great interest in the training and had taken the task at hand seriously. Hem Shankar now owns a small outlet of *meena kari* work in Fatehnagar town (Udaipur). The shop not only acts as a sales outlet for the group of villagers engaged in reviving this dying art but has encouraged the likes of him to join the mainstream as well. At times, Hem Shankar acts as trainer, travelling to places like Nathdwara to impart skill to others. By his own admission, his monthly profit from the outlet is around ₹ 5,000.

## ***Collaboration, convergence and consequence***

One cannot expect 'below poverty line' households to contribute cash towards availing reliable water supply and sanitation services. Had that been so, there would not have been a crises-like situation in village Malisahi in Ranpur block of Nayagarh district of Odisha. Located 30 km from the block headquarter the village has 130 households, of which 80 have been BPL families.

When the village was chosen during 2006-07 for its all-round development under IFFCO funded 'Livelihood Improvement through Integrated Rural Development' project, safe drinking water and sanitation had emerged as the prime needs of the village. However, the project had instead focused on enhancing income by organizing the disintegrated community.

However, a year later the demand for safe drinking water and household sanitation had assumed priority. Leveraging the 'Total Sanitation Campaign' being implemented by the District Rural Development Authority in collaboration with a NGO 'Gram Vikas', IFFDC aimed at covering each of the houses in the village with a toilet, a bathroom alongside water supply for drinking & domestic purposes.

The program was designed on cost-sharing basis, DRDA and Gram Vikas contributing 25 and 35 per cent respectively whereas remaining 40 per cent contribution in the form of material and labor had to come from the beneficiary families. Expecting each family to contribute ₹ 10,000 towards the program was like expecting the sky. There was an air of disappointment in the village.

A series of meetings were held in the village to resolve the matter but there was no way the BPL families could contribute as much. Interestingly,



*Water supply tank (left) and a toilet-bathroom unit (right)*

however, the APL families finally agreed to make their contributions. Of the total cost of ₹ 30 lakhs, it was left for IFFDC to make contribution towards material costs (₹ 4 lakhs) with the remainder being chipped in by the BPL families as labour.

This collaborative initiative has been able to achieve what was seemingly difficult a couple of years ago. Collaboration between agencies to achieve a common goal has led to convergence of resources towards a positive consequence. It has been a win-win situation for each of the stakeholders, the net gainers being the BPL households in the village.

Following the cost and work-sharing agreement, the village has now found a place in the water and sanitation map of the state. Not only have they attained a new social status, the women have been the prime beneficiaries of this convergence. The time gained on account of reduced drudgery of carrying water from long distance need to be converted to productive vocation for women.

### **NEWS UPDATE ....**



## ***IFFDC AT GLOBAL COOPERATIVE EXPOSITION***

IFFDC participated in the Global ICA-Expo 2010 held during December 8 – 10, 2010 at Bengaluru (India) and laid an exhibition within the IFFCO pavilion. Several handicraft items prepared by women groups from Orissa and Rajasthan were displayed at the expo that had participants drawn from 130 cooperatives from as many as 23 countries. The Expo was inaugurated by former Prime Minister Shri H. D. Devegowda.



*Preserving Nature . Nurturing Lives*

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