



# ACCESSING TECHNOLOGY AND INFORMATION: CHANGING THE WAY OF AGRICULTURE PRACTICES

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**It takes a while for community** to shift from traditional way of livelihood practices to bring more income and changes in the community in a sustainable way. Efforts by Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP), Women Federation and Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) and Agriculture Universities paved the way for villages in Marathwada region to implement adaptive practices to sustain in severe drought and climatic risk conditions.

This is the success story of drought affected villages in Marathwada on how women are mobilised in agriculture groups, equipped with knowledge and resources and implemented climate adaptive practices. Women groups are actively involved in mixed and intercrop farming, accessing technology like drip and sprinkler, focus on household food consumption, testing small part of land with nutritional food crops and creating awareness and knowledge among communities on sustainable agriculture and livelihood practices.

## ADAPTIVE FARMING

Members of Krishi Mahila Mandal have taken minimum half acre to one acre land for cultivating food crops for local consumption. These women groups accessed training from KVK and SSP on drought resistant varieties and options for sustainable livelihood. The villages faced scarcity of water for irrigation for many years. Due to the efforts by women groups in partnership with local government have accessed Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment

Scheme (MGNREGS) to recharge water sources. New wells are constructed and ponds are revived thru collective effort. Desilting fertile soils extracted while recharging the water sources and deposited in the farm land which gives good production in agriculture.

Pushpa Basule, a leader from Wolgud village said, she had shifted to vegetable cultivation due to Krishi Mahila Mandal's mobilisation of groups and accessed training from Krishi Vigyan Kendra. She has cultivated Pappaya and Onion as inter crop and got profit of Rs. 6000 on using drip technology in this season.

"This is a big change. Earlier we used to cultivate only cash based crops. Now we are convincing our husbands and families to shift form cash based agriculture to food crops that needed for the family." says Pushpa Basule.

Azola and hydroponic fodder cultivation has changed the life of many people in this area. This has happened with partnership of KVK where they provided training for women groups, organised exposure trip to Agriculture University in Parbani. Trained women leaders came back and started cultivation of Azola and Hydroponic which are highly in demand in the market. In the beginning they cultivated azola and hydroponic fodder for feeding their own animals and Kadaknath chicken. Leaders like Vaishali have already started selling Azola and Hydroponic in the villages. Due to this initiative, they get additional income, good yield of milk from cows and eggs from chicken.





## ACCESSING NEW INFORMATION

Introduction of Azola, Hydroponics and Kadaknath breed chicken are slowly changing the life of drought hit regions in Marathwada.

The motivated and emerging women leaders who implemented best practices in drought situation are teaching other communities. Women leaders participate in various training and learning events organised by KVK and SSP. They learn new adaptive practices in agriculture and try to implement to demonstrate and scale up to other communities.

As an example, women groups started poultry farming with Kadaknath breed of chicken which is very popular among the Adivasis in Jabua, Madhya Pradesh, mainly due to its adaptability to the local environment, disease resistance, tasty meat quality, texture and flavour and high medicinal value. Protein content in kadaknath is higher than 25% in an ordinary bird it varies between 18-20%. This species has lower cholesterol (0.73-1.05%) than white chicken (13- 25%).

## PARTNERSHIP

Women federation facilitated training on Azola and Hydroponic making partnership with KVK and ATMA at Tuljapur in February 2015. After one day training women groups organised a learning visit to Buldana district in Maharashtra to see Azola, Hydroponics and Kadaknath chicken breed. Ten women leaders were participated in the learning visit and they learned the benefits of business opportunities in preparation of Azola, Hydroponics and Kadaknath varieties. They were impressed with health and nutritious aspects and business opportunity in starting this initiative. Encouraged from this visit, they brought 100 Kadaknath variety breeds and came back. Now women groups have started poultry of Kadaknath varieties in many homes. They are selling chicken and earning additional income.

## IMPACT

Archana Bosle, a leader from Devsingha made a profit of Rs. 20,000 only from sale of egg of Kadaknath Varieties within 6 months. Now she brought 50 more chicken to expand the business. She says, "Drought situation brought me to do something different to earn income. So I started this chicken breed which gives me good income."

"Now I want to expand my small business such as Green house in half acre, chilli and haldi powder packing and marketing," Says Archana.

Vaishali another leader from Andhura village have started her community initiatives 9 years ago. Now she is a recognised leader among many villages and provides training on community entrepreneurship. Vaishali has trained more than 3000 women members across many villages in Marathwada. She is marketing and selling Azola at rs. 30 per kg and earn a good income.

"Earlier I was not aware about what to cultivate to get income from agriculture. After accessing trainings and learning visits I am fully confident of implementing sustainable practices and teach other communities" Vaishali.

She says "Life is difficult due to climatic changes and it affects our daily earning, but we should not run away from it, we should face it with new knowledge and courage".



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