



Climate Resilient Leasehold Farming Practice



Woman farmer engaged in agriculture production through contract farming. Belaka Municipality, Udayapur

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1. Status of piloting and scaling of the model:

The 'Climate Resilient Leasehold Farming Practice' that was first piloted in Bhagwanpur rural municipality (RM)-1, Siraha has been scaled out to ward No. 3 and 5 of the RM; Sakhuanankarkatti and Bishnupur RMs of the district, and then Belaka and Katari municipalities of Udayapur district. Currently, 13 communities

in Siraha and Udayapur are practicing leasehold farming. Province 2 and 5 (Lumbini) governments have also included the model in their policies. The leadership of model scaling has now been shifted to local governments from National Farmer Groups' Federation (NFGF), which had led the piloting and initial scaling of the model. Climate vulnerable and



Dinabhadri Farmers' Group, who are involved in contract farming, preparing organic fertilizer. Belaka Municipality, Udayapur

marginalised landless, land poor and women farmers primarily from Terai Dalit groups make up this model's impact population. Within a short period (2019-2020), 338 households (HHs) are practicing leasehold farming in about 18.7ha of land (0.06ha/HH). This figure increases if it covered also the farmers, who have taken to leasehold farming on their own inspired by the outcomes of this model.

2. Collaboration with boundary partners:

Building on the Bhagwanpur experience and learning, NFGF constituencies at different levels influenced several local and provincial governments to scale up the model. They are continuing their advocacy at different levels. Effective collaboration between five rural/municipalities (local governments-LGs) and two provincial governments resulted in successful model scaling there, while the remaining five provinces are in consultation with NFGF for the same purpose. LI-BIRD is supporting to build vulnerable and marginalised women farmers' knowledge of climate risks to agriculture, appropriate agronomic practices, market system and helping them to use climate resilient crop varieties and initiate seeds production.

3. Model scaling phase:

The model has been institutionalised in Bhagwanpur as it is incorporated into its policy and programme with budget for implementation. Belaka and Katari of Udayapur, Sakhuanankarkatti and Bishnupur of Siraha and province 2 and 5 governments are in institutionalising process. In view of the model gaining attraction among increased number of local and provincial governments, it seems to be gradually reaching the critical mass.

4. Process adopted in model scaling:

Discussions with rural/municipality elects and CSOs helped build shared understanding on the model's concept, implementation process and required policy arrangements. Official agreements were signed with the local governments, and municipal and village executives endorsed the model scaling. After identifying appropriate land, discussions were held with concerned landowners and the local governments on agreement terms and conditions. This was followed by farmer group formation together with the concerned ward office bearers and agreements among local governments, NFGF, land

owners and impact groups. The women farmer groups were supported to make group rules and regulation, group mobilisation process, etc. and the leased land was divided equally among them. Preparation of the land for cultivation, development of crop calendar and support for irrigation, seeds and saplings, etc. followed. Cropping and harvesting processes were continued and model scaling process, achievements, success stories and learning were documented and published.

5. The model's added value and key outcomes

Leasehold farming attracting local governments:

Given the tangible results of leasehold farming, an increased number of local and provincial governments are accepting it as one of their priority areas for investment. Many LGs and all provincial governments have allocated budget for supporting leasehold farming in the current fiscal year.

Policies and programmes:

Several LGs and provincial governments -- Belaka and Katari municipalities, Udayapur, and Sakhuanankarkatti, Bhagwanpur and Bishnupur RMs, Siraha, and province 2 and 5--have included the model in their policies and programmes and developed leasehold farming guidelines. Golbajar municipality, Siraha has adopted the model as part of its existing programme, while some LGs in Kailali and Kanchanpur have planned to tie up this model with their existing target farmer programmes for supporting freed Kamaiya.

Extension work:

'Farmer-to-farmer', 'group-to-group', 'one NFGF structure-to-another' extension approach prompted marginalised women farmers to organise and engage in lease hold farming. Farmer to farmer and group to group exchange of experience and learning in such areas became a source of inspiration for other farmers and farmer groups. The entire NFGF network is dedicated to this model's extension across the country.

Land lying fallow becomes means of production:

This model has created a win-win situation for the landless women farmers and land owners. It has guaranteed the land owners' ownership of their land along with reasonable lease amount, while the landless farmers have accessed and used land as a means of production.

Productive use of subsidies:

This model has brought government subsidies within the impact population's reach. Aligning the agriculture related subsidies with this model has discouraged haphazard distribution of subsidy, through longer-term investment of these resources in productive practice such as subsidy on leasehold farming.

Model's contribution to building climate resilience of landless and marginalised farmers:

This model has enabled farmers practicing leasehold farming to address climate risks. Following orientation for women farmers on basics of climate change and adaption measures and resilience building, Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment, and group level action planning they started demanding and accessing government support for solar-powered irrigation facility, agriculture extension, weather forecast service, and risk transfer measures i.e. crop insurance. They did not face severe food crisis even during the recent lockdowns. They are using climate resilient crop varieties, bio pesticides, crop calendar, solar-powered irrigation and compost fertilizers.

Model's contribution to promoting inclusion and governance:

Prioritisation of poor and marginalised women as impact group has brought about evidenced change in their lives and their communities. The model has



contributed to women's empowerment in individual, social and economic spheres. It has enhanced their self-esteem, social status and recognition and confidence to negotiate with formal (i.e. government) and informal (i.e. land owners) power holders, claim their rights and entitlements and influence change in community's behaviour towards them. They are accessing, controlling and managing income from leasehold farming, taking decisions in family and influencing LG policies, plans and programmes as well as having their rights and interests reflected in them.

Multi-stakeholder engagement:

Smooth and effective scaling of the model can be attributed to the engagement and sense of ownership of multiple stakeholders (local, provincial and federal governments, NFGF constituencies, farmer groups and LIBIRD and land owners) in the adoption and scaling of this model. It has made the scaling process inclusive and consensus oriented.

6. Learning

- Tripartite land lease agreement between LG, land owner and farmer group increases the model's ownership among these key actors and ensures effective coordination in its implementation.
- The model's collective-responsibility-individual-benefit concept fosters healthy competition among the farmers, which enhances their productivity.
- LGs' ownership of this model opens up opportunities for the marginalised groups to engage in LG level policy & decision making and access public services.
- This model helps regenerate the fast degrading cultivable land turning it into a means of production and the produces and income from the farming enhances the vulnerable farmers' resilience to climate risks.
- Continued dialogues with the local, provincial and federal governments expedites institutionalisation of the model through its incorporation in LGs' policies



and programmes, which is also a sustainability imperative.

- Bearing in mind unforeseen disruptions, i.e. lockdown, it is important to have back up plan in place such as increasing the role of local campaigners, continuing coordination work virtually, utilising the time to complete desk-based work, if any, etc.



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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