

SRI CULTIVATION IN MANIPUR

As developed from an interview of Mr. Shamu Kabui, Director, Agriculture, Govt. of Manipur, and other field Officers by Dr. Rajkumari Sunita Devi, Scientist/GIS Expert, State Level Nodal Agency for Watershed Management (IWMP) Manipur, India (HHH Fellow 2008-09, Cornell).

Manipur, a landlocked state in the far north-east corner of India, is one of the most remote states of India. The state is surrounded in all sides by hills, and only 25% of its total geographical area of 22,327 Sq Km is valley. The main staple food of the state is rice; in fact, 100% of the population consume rice for their sustenance.

SRI method of cultivation was first introduced in Manipur by two Extension Officers of the Agriculture Department, Govt. of Manipur, Mr. Th. Tomba Singh and Mr. S. Kennedy. It was first initiated after they attended a training programme at Hyderabad in 2005, wherein they spent one whole year trying persistently to cultivate rice by SRI method at their own homestead. Their work was under the supervision of Mr. Shamu Kabui, Director of Agriculture, Govt. of Manipur, who believed in their effort and himself became a pioneer in this field.

With their endeavour, they managed to persuade a farmer named O. Bamonjao of Bishnupur District to try on his land of 2 acres in 2007. They have to promise the farmer that if his yield by trying SRI method failed, the Department would compensate four times what he lost. It was a venture for these officers in trying to introduce this method. In the same year, the Department also published a handbook of SRI both in English and Manipuri.

What started as a small endeavour seven years back today is now booming. It has now become a state policy, and the Government of Manipur has made SRI a programme for the Agriculture Department with budget allocation. Now the state boasts of 26,321 acres of land under SRI cultivation which first started only with about 60 acres in 2007. Accolades can be given to Mr. Shamu Kabui and his team of dedicated SRI soldiers in bringing about these changes. With SRI methods, yields have been increased by 30 to 50 percent.

Performance of SRI in Kharif 2007

	Imphal West	Imphal East	Bishnupur
SRI	7.80 t/ha.	6.98 t/ha	8.20 t/ha
Conventional	4.5 – 6.00 t/ha	4.5 – 6.00 t/ha	4.5 – 6.00 t/ha
Advantage	3.3 t/ha	2.48 t/ha	3.7 t/ha

Source : Agriculture Department, Govt. of Manipur.

One of the success indicators of SRI method is in the production of Chak-hao (a black aromatic glutinous rice) which has high demand by an American company Lotus Foods. Mr. Ken Lee of Lotus Foods and his team visited Manipur to check the quality of the rice produced by this method and they reported that it is the best quality found nowhere else.

SRI awareness has become important since rice is the staple food for the people of Manipur, and in far-flung hill villages, importing rice from the mainland is very difficult since there are no roads reaching these areas. With 75% of the state area being hills, the people in these areas solely depend on their *jhum*(slash-and-burn) production and cost of rice becomes three times than that of the valley areas.

The Watershed programme covers all this hills, and SLNA under the initiative of some active Watershed Development Team (WDT) members and Miss Devi is trying to promote SRI in the hill districts. In many of the capacity-building programmes, the team is trying to create an awareness about SRI methods. Mention could be made about one WDT member of Tamenglong district (the most remote district in Manipur), Mr. Kirankumar, a horticulture officer who is working effortlessly in 22 villages of Tamenglong district to promote and create some awareness about SRI during his training programme on watershed management.

Miss Devi working as a Scientist/GIS Expert in the State Level Nodal Agency (SLNA) for Watershed Programme (IWMP) is also trying to make SRI a convergent programme by working together with the Agriculture Department.



Mr. Shamu Kabui, Director, Agriculture, Gov. of Manipur (left), with Dr. Rajkumari Sunita Devi, HHH Fellow 2008-9, Cornell, showing the handbook of SRI published by the Department of Agriculture.



Training at village level by Mr. Shamu Kabui



State-level training at Imphal, the capital of Manipur



WDT Member, Mr. Kirankumar, creating awareness in Tousem village.



Mr. Ken Lee and his team with Horticulture officers of Manipur visiting a rice field.



Black aromatic glutinous rice produced in a SRI field

Official circulation only

**SYSTEM
OF
RICE INTENSIFICATION (SRI)**
(An innovative technology to produce more crop per drop)



**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
MANIPUR
2007**

Handbook of SRI published by Department of Agri

অহেনবা চাথোক্কীদমক
সিষ্টেম ওফ
রাইস ইন্সেনসিফিকেসন (এস আর আই)



ডিপার্টমেন্ট ওফ এগ্রীকলচর
মণিপুর

SRI Handbook in Manipuri language