

Best Practice 1:

Title of the practice: "Socio-economic upliftment of Tharu community"

Objectives of the practice

- To provide sustainable livelihood opportunities to the people of "Tharu" community (Scheduled Tribes) for their socio-economic upliftment
- To provide agricultural and other resources free of cost to the community
- To establish the computer lab to educate the children of the community
- To organize skill training to women on different aspects

The context

The Tharu tribe is an ethnic group of indigenous people living in the Terai plain on the Indo-Nepal border of Uttar Pradesh (UP). Tharu as a tribe closely connected with Land (*Jamin*), Water (*Jaal*) and Forest (*Jungle*) for their habitat and livelihood. The total population of Tharu in UP is 105,291 (53,687 males and 51,604 females) and mostly engaged in agriculture, raise cattle, hunt, fish, and collect forest products. The university conducted the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) surveys to assess the socioeconomic condition of Tharu community in Balrampur and Bahraich districts covered under university jurisdiction and observations revealed that the socio-economic status of the Tharu community in both areas was characterized by significant deprivation.

Most of the people of the community were unaware about technical agricultural and animal husbandry practices. In order to ensure the sustainable livelihood of the Tharu community, it is imperative to equip them with technical expertise in agricultural and animal husbandry operations, as well as offer them with financial assistance. Following the identification of a significant need, the Narendra 97 rice variety has been disseminated to farmers through a front line demonstration. A tribal support initiative has been implemented to enhance the socio-economic status of the Tharu community. Tharu communities have embraced the practice of fishing subsequent to the introduction of the Frontline demonstration of fish seed and fingerlings. The adoption of animal husbandry and fishing, along with agricultural practices, has led to an enhancement in the livelihood of the Tharu population. The university has also made effort for establishing the computer lab in their area for imparting the basic computer knowledge to Thru children.

The practice

The university conducted the survey in Tharu dominated areas in Balrampur and Bahraich districts and after identifying the gaps, demonstration with multi disciplinary approaches on oil seed (147), pulses (149), cereals (4036), vegetables (11), poultry (3), fisheries (44) dairy (48) and goaterly (12) has been carried out since inception of TSP in 2016-17 as per their requirements and needs of the area. The university has also organized 63 agronomical practices training with 2140 beneficiaries and 60 Vocational Trainings with 1362 beneficiaries. The training and demonstration has direct transformed the farmers into income-generation activities in different enterprises. Through its Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Pachpedwa, district Balrampur (U.P.), the university distributed free Kadaknath poultries, Barbari, and Sirohi goats to Tharu people in Balrampur.

Through field demonstrations, trainings, goshties, and awareness programs, the university is helping the Tharu population in the areas where they are the majority in the Uttar Pradesh districts of Balrampur and Bahraich. Free fish fingerlings and training sessions on fish farming were provided to the Tharu people on September 21, 2021. Seeds, PVC pipes, a battery-powered Napsek Sprayer, a steel tank for storing grain, the university's own "NDR-2065" paddy seed variety, fruit and vegetable saplings, and fish fingerlings are all being distributed for free by the university.

During the Rural rapid appraisal (RRA) Survey conducted in September 2020 to understand the relationship between the socioeconomic status of the Tharu, it was identified that the Tharu Community lacks the computer knowledge necessary to disseminate the latest development via the internet and other communication systems. The university made efforts for establishment of computer lab with 15 computers in Balarampur.

The socioeconomic upliftment of the Tharu Community was pursued through the establishment of Women Self-Help Groups (WSHG), namely Puja Women Self-Help Group, Ekla Women Self-Help Group, Shanti Women Self-Help Group, Suraj Women Self-Help Group, and the Farmer Producer Organization (FPO) known as "Balrampur Spices Farmers Producers Company Ltd., Kohargaddi, Pachperwa, Balrampur".

Evidence of success

Socioeconomic condition of the community plays a significant role in the physical, social and mental health of individuals, education, enterprise etc. In this regard, the university contributed significantly in enhancing the livelihood and socioeconomic upliftment of Tharu community by

providing technical knowledge and need based input through field demonstrations, trainings, goshties, and awareness programmes regarding technical agricultural, animal husbandry, fisheries and other practices, and free of cost distribution of improved varieties of seeds, fertilizers, Napsek sprayer, PVC pipes, goats, backyard poultries and kits.

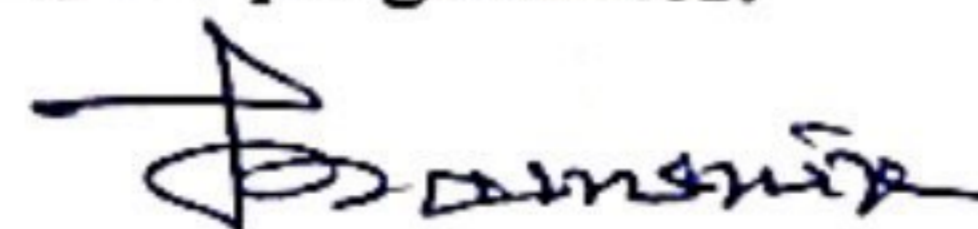
The evidence of success was reported as Tharu community initially engaged in traditional farming practices and they have improved their household income by adopting improved agronomical scientific practices. The implementation of diversified agricultural practices led to an increase in the average annual income derived from agriculture, amounting to INR 1,12,007. This income was comprised of INR 57,537 from crop production and INR 54,470 from livestock & fish production. The gross return of livestock production was found to be higher than that of agriculture. In a nutshell, it was found that livestock production was more beneficial than crop production. A sustained endeavor led to approximately 35% of the Tharu farmers being involved in commercial-scale agricultural practices, while the remaining 65% were engaged in subsistence farming. The farmers regularly contact to the experts for problem diagnosis through WhatsApp or ask for diagnostic visits to their farms in order to gain scientific solution of their problems.

The university has made a significant contribution to the socioeconomic upliftment and sustainable livelihood of Tharu people through the distribution of free sewing machines to Tharu women during rural youth training. This has resulted in direct employment for the women, as they are now performing tailoring and selling beautiful dresses that they have made themselves as an entrepreneur.

Through the initiatives undertaken by the university, the children belonging to the Tharu community are being provided with educational opportunities to acquire theoretical and practical knowledge in the field of computer science.

Problems encountered and resources required

The practice requires financial support for executing the programmes.



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