



Cumin

Public private community partnership for cultivation of cumin and its marketing

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Barmer is one of desert districts of western India. More than 80 per cent of the population in Barmer depends on agriculture and natural resource based activities, such as livestock rearing, dairy, etc. Water is the most limiting factor in this sector and drought is the recurrent phenomena. Large section of the rural population is from excluded communities like dalits and minorities, with lesser land holding and, therefore, facing poverty.

Engagement with cumin farmers : Though the whole district lives under the curse of recurring drought and major part of the land falls under the category of 'cultivable waste' or 'uncultivable land' it is suitable for producing important cash crops like cumin and Isabgol. Barmer is the highest producer of cumin which is one of the high value agricultural produce.



Cumin is used for various medicines, which is exported to countries like China, Japan and Korea. Farmers generally sell their cumin in Unjha (Gujarat), which is the biggest Mandi (Agricultural wholesale market) of Asia for cumin. Traditional methods of cultivation makes cumin field susceptible to 'wilt', one of the deadly diseases. As a result farmers need to stop cultivating cumin after continuous cultivation of 2-3 yrs. Additional problem faced by poor and excluded communities was middlemen. Since they generally had small landholding the quantity of cumin to be sold in market used to less. Travelling 200 km for reaching Unjha Mandi is never a feasible option for small producers since they cannot rent whole truck individually. Middlemen, therefore, buy cumin from farmers in very low price only to sell the same in higher price in Unjha.

Intervention : KVK working in 8 block of Barmer district. KVK analyzed the situation and decided two pronged strategies, 1) form farmer's group and share technical knowledge and appropriate input for better production, 2) Selling of the surplus produce through linkage with better markets. Ultimate objective was to get better prices for produces, additional household



income, improved purchasing power as well as increased spending and overall improvement of economic status. KVK came out with a tailor made module applicable for small farmers of Barmer. This

specific module for cumin cultivation because at present farmers use huge amount of insecticide and pesticides. In this purpose KVK and one of the renowned corporate house of India, ITC developed a IPM Module for cumin with the consultation of ARS, SKRAU, Mandore, Jodhpur. ITC, was involved in this process since they agreed to procure the entire produce. 68 farmers in 120 ha from 03 cluster were given specific technical input for growing cumin. Each household was given 6 kg cumin seed of GC-4ⁱ and RZ – 223, in the month of October 2010. These seeds were different from traditional variety used in Barmer. Besides this, seeds were specifically treated, before broadcasting, in order to have low chemical impact on cumin. These households were supposed to cultivate on 0.5 hec. of land. Seed cost was Rs. 1500/- per family, which came from ITC. Beneficiaries had to get their soil and water tested in KVK and follow suggested nutrient Management. This caused an average expense of 750/- to 1000/- per household.



KVK team continued regular monitoring for ensuring implementation of suggested methods. Village level farmer-groups had monthly meetings with project team for sharing of various experiences and learning.

Output : Cumin was harvested in the month of March. Each household got on an average 515 kg per ha., which was 20 per cent much higher than adjoining farmers (415 kg. per ha). The middlemen offered Rs. 120-125/- per



kg. while targeted farmers earned Rs. 145/- to 148/- per kg. Each household got Rs. 24560/- extra on an average from cumin with is an increase of 24 per cent.

The biggest benefit was ITC agreement to procure cumin from farmers in villages and give the same rate of Unjha Mandi. All farmers from one farmer-group come together and sell cumin to ITC. A committee is formed having members from farmer's group, KVK and ITC to decide the rate. They study rates of various qualities of cumin in Unjha, prevailed previous day and finalize price. ITC pays the freight of carrier.

There is no written terms of reference between farmers groups and ITC as of now, but informally ITC agreed to procure all the produces that followed the agreed

method of production.

Challenges : Middlemen got irritated with the project initiative. They tried to sabotage the experiment by influencing some of the farmers, by offering money in advance in exchange of an agreement to sell the produce to them. They have also tried to run negative campaign about this initiative.

Possibility of upscaling : This initiative has got huge potentiality of up scaling. These initiatives developed a self depended linkage with ITC and farmers group and ITC deputed permanent staff for this work and KVK is going to involve extending technical support to growers and monitoring every stage. These initiatives have horizontal and vertical expansion in terms of scientific adoption of cumin IPM and multiply in nearby villages and approx. 120 tone of IPM cumin was purchased by ITC during 2011.

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