

EVALUATION OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE PROJECT ON GENERATING AWARENES & CULTIVATION  
OF LAC AT CHANDRAKONA 1 BLOCK, PASCHIM MEDINIPUR DISTRICT AND THE BENEFITS ACCRUED  
TO THE VILLAGERS

1. Evaluation of the scheme at the project site reveals that the Plantation Programme with the innovative host plant Semialata for Lac cultivation has reached the targeted figure of 2250 and in fact over-achieved the target by a figure of 78000 of Semialata Plants.
2. Because of the strong motivation and awareness created in the block by means of repeated sensitization meetings & Awareness camps an area of 3 Hectare Plus was put under this plantation , where as the requirement of the original targeted plantation as per the scheme was less than a Bigha.
3. For demonstration purpose, it was decided initially to distribute 15 Saplings each to 10 farmers in each village and to cover 15 villages in this way. This was fully achieved but because of the very small amount of land involved for the demonstration purpose, many other farmers with larger holdings came forward to offer their substantial but hitherto uncultivated holdings for the plantation of this new crop. A few land holdings in the vicinity of the riverside area were also offered for the same purpose. So in all 179 farmers with a total land to the tune of 3 Hectare plus was put under Semialata Plantation in the very first year of the Programme.
4. Initially, the villagers exhibited the total indifference in accepting either the idea of Lac cultivation in their region or the new Plant as both the concepts were alien to them. Because of the sincere motivation that was created through repeated training and awareness programme, farmers in large numbers accepted the programme. Instead of targeted 15 villages, the programme was landed in 42 villages.
5. To create the awareness IMAP has vigorously conducted four training programmes both at Chandrakona1 and at IINRG, Ranchi ( Resource Institute under ICAR)covering 304 farmers.
6. Another interesting fact is, according to available scientific literature, the plant is adaptable to lateritic soil only and has no record of its adaptability in the alluvial soil belt and in the flood-prone areas. Because of the novel effort put forward by IMAP, the plant was not only successfully introduced in the District, but also reduces the initial gestation lag of harvesting.
7. IMAP could also devise certain new management practice for the flood affected plants where the siltation could pose a standing problem.
8. The introduction of the new crop has ushered a new era in providing a new income generating activities for the farmers in the poor areas of the district of Paschim Medinipur.
9. The market for the new product Lac which was hitherto unknown would be developed eventually as the area under the plant Semialata expands over a period of time. IMAP, at present, is exploring the market linkages and imparting training to the unemployed youth for taping the market. Hence, when the Project will be at its desired scale, it will bring about a significant change in the income and employment opportunities in the District.

10. The Project is also found to be beneficial to the small and marginal farmers, SC/ST population and women whose participation level is recorded as 35%,63%, and 21% respectively.
11. So far the implementation of the Scheme has resulted in creation of man days to the extent of 5000 plus.
12. Operationally, it is found that the women-folk can manage the plantation as well as Lac cultivation well because of the shorter height of the Plant compared to Kusum, Behr, etc.
13. It is significant to note that this new plant can produce lac on half yearly basis each year after completion of gestation of only 11 months. However, a cash income can be generated out of seed yield within six months from the plantation which is absent in the traditional lac harvesting in the lateritic belt. Further, income can be generated out of intercropping of vegetables like tomato, papaya and others in the space between host plants.
14. Although, the per plant yield of Lac in Semialata is less compared to the host trees grown in lateritic belts, the high plant density attainable in alluvial belt of Chandrakona<sup>1</sup> of Paschim Medinipur give rise to more production per unit area.
15. Because of the organised nature of the plantation, the plant density, the production of lac, the employment generation out of this venture and such other key economic indicators are easy to compute compared to the traditional dissipated method of lac cultivation. This can ensure drawing up of a minimum economic viable unit (Unit Cost) so as to help the financial institutions to come forward to support these types of Projects in future course.
16. The implementation of the scheme so far has resulted in harvest of first crop which phenomenon is very encouraging. This is bound to generate income to the participants and will bring other social benefits related to it.

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