

IMPACT STORY

SECTOR - VEGETABLE

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Chinumaya's profit through tomato farming inspires farmers in Tanahun district



Chinumaya Darai, 28, is a farmer from the village of Dumsichaur - a part of Tanahun district in western Nepal. She has access to 1 ropani [500 sq. meters] of farmland to support her entire family of six members. In the past, she grew maize and finger millet in her farmland, but only for domestic consumption. The family was therefore dependent on her husband's income from overseas employment – he was one of the almost two million Nepali migrant workers currently in the Middle East – to meet their daily needs.

This is a story shared by the entire Darai Community in her village, a disadvantaged ethnic group in Dumsichaur, with 49 closely knit households, where

commercial farming was minimal and at least one member of each household went abroad to find work. The community neither had the required technical information on vegetable cultivation nor did they have access to essential products and services like quality seeds, pesticides and visits by agro-vets.

In the beginning of 2013, in order to initiate a lasting change in the vegetable sector in Tanahun, Samarth-NMDP partnered with a local agro-vet-cum-seed wholesaler, Mr. Baikuntha Mishra, who had been operating his business - Tanahun Beej Bhandar - for the past 18 years. The technical and advisory services provided by Samarth-NMDP encouraged him to start testing off-season tomato cultivation in Dumsichaur.

On July 2013, Chinumaya was approached by the agro-vet, to establish her land as a tomato demonstration plot for 2 varieties of high quality tomato seeds - Unsari and Shrijana - suitable for that specific ecological region, in ½ ropani of her land. Along with Chinumaya, 30 other farmers received training from the agro-vet on commercial vegetable farming, which included seed production, nursery management, integrated pest management and information on off-season vegetables.

Empowered by the trainings received from the agro-vet, Chinumaya labored for 4 months. She was also assisted by her husband Khim Bahadur, who had returned from the Middle East, and one other laborer

whom she hired on daily basis. The agro-vet visited the plot regularly and provided technical advice.

As a result, the produce was excellent. Chinumaya was able to produce 700 Kgs of tomatoes from her plot, and she has reported earning a net income of Rs. 50,000 (approximately £300), based on the accounts she maintained after receiving the book keeping training, that was provided by the agro-vet. She is expecting to earn Rs. 50,000 more from the crop after the second harvest of the year: enough for her to comfortably meet her domestic expenses, her children's school fees and even to put aside some savings.

Intrigued by the profit generated by this new venture, more than 200 farmers have visited her demonstration plot. The success in Chinumaya's plot has also motivated the agro-vet to establish 4 more tomato demonstration plots around her village. To date, 21 households have already started off-season tomato

farming, using the two varieties of high quality seeds. "We are planning to expand tomato cultivation area in the next season because we never got so much of income from this land," says Chinumaya. In the meantime, the agro-vet has already advised her to plant cucurbits such as cucumber, radish, pumpkins and beans. Due to the support that her community is receiving from the local agro-vet, she is very optimistic about developing her entire village as a 'tomato production' pocket.

Samarth-NMDP is currently working with six vegetable input wholesalers, building their ability to reach out to a network of agro-vets, to stimulate the demand and sale of high quality seeds and provide embedded advice and support to vegetable farmers in six districts in Western Nepal. If successful in this pilot year – when results are assessed in early 2014 – these input wholesalers and agro-vets are expected to scale-up their outreach to an even greater number of farmers



Chinumaya setting up the nursery bed



Agro-vet giving training in the demo plot



District Agriculture Development Office (DADO) chief interacting with the farmers



Chinumaya sharing experience with the DADO chief



Neighbors adopting tomato farming



Chinumaya participating in practical training for cucurbits nursery preparation

About Samarth-NMDP

Samarth-NMDP is a rural market systems development programme that aims to reduce poverty in Nepal by increasing the income of 300,000 smallholder farmers and small-scale entrepreneurs. The programme follows Making Markets Work for the Poor (M4P) approach and aims to improve the underlying pro-poor performance of rural sectors, leading to opportunities for better access and improved growth for poor and disadvantaged people.

Samarth-NMDP's seed intervention is co-facilitated with iDE Nepal.

Samarth-NMDP is a DFID-funded programme managed in partnership with the Government of Nepal by a consortium comprising Adam Smith International, The Springfield Centre and Swisscontact. For more information on the programme, please visit www.samarth-nepal.com.