

As usual Rabi crop season of the state is almost coming to an end by April; and the summer began with soaring temperatures, sometimes it is crossing 40 °C. Summer vacation holidays were declared for schools; and farming related works are also going to complete by end of April. Even, Rabi season is also not witnessed any significant changes related to alternative crop patterns and the problems associated with conventional methods. During Rabi season, there is a huge pressure on underground water for irrigation purpose. The depletion of ground water sources and hailstorm rains are leading to crop failures; and resulting as financial burdens on farmers. Even though there is enough information on sustainable farming in public domain, but still adoption rate on field is very less. The lack of hands on experience and visible impacts are keeping farmers away from change. So, as an experiment we piloted a small project called 'farm incubator' to encourage farmers' to experiment sustainable farming practices before they are going to adopt it in large scale.

Dear friends, well wishers and kind supporters, it is time for the first quarterly News Letter of 2019. Here, we are happy to share the activities of past three months.

Farm Incubator

The idea of Farm incubator is inspired from maker space concept. Maker spaces are the collaborative work spaces for making, learning, exploring and sharing knowledge for individuals. Even, our farm incubator is also work like a maker space, where farmers can get resources, knowledge and tools to experiment sustainable farming practices before they are going to adopt them in large scale. We started piloting this project with two farmers. The incubated farmers were supported by providing seeds, tools and knowledge expertise support. The following are the results of experiments

Foxtail millets: It is one of the oldest cultivated millets. Foxtail millet provides a host of nutrients, has a sweet nutty flavour and is considered to be one of the most digestible and non allergic grains available. It contains fibre, protein, calcium and vitamins. It is nutritive food for children and pregnant women. It is rich in dietary fibre and minerals such as copper and iron that keep one's body strong and immune. (Source: iimr). One farmer experiment it in 1/8th of Acre and got a good yield. We are happy to share that foxtail millet returned to village after 60 years and these efforts were appreciated by fellow farmers and youth. After successful experimentation, many farmers are coming forward to grow millets in atleast 20 Acres.



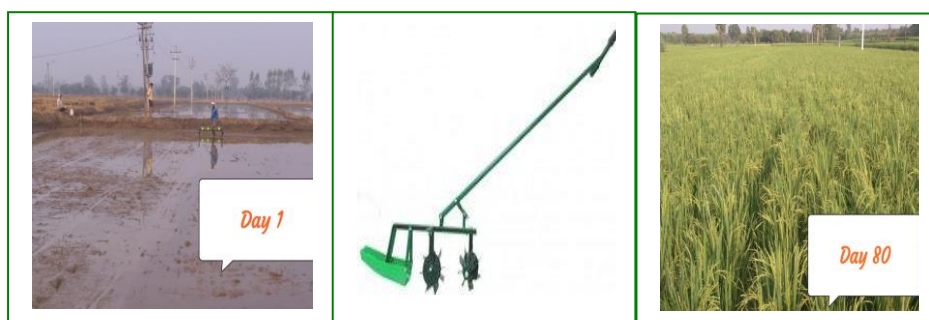
Finger millets: It is an annual plant extensively grown as cereal in the dry areas of India. It contains high amounts of calcium, proteins and well balanced essential amino acids along with Vitamin A, Vitamin B and Phosphorous. Protein content in finger millet is high making it an important factor in preventing malnutrition also making ideal food for diabetics. (Source: iimr). One more farmer came forward to experiment them in his 1/8th acre farm and got a good yield. Millets are considering as ecologically friendly foods with low water foot print and carbon foot print.



Poongar rice variety: Poongar is one of the traditional rice variety grows in India with less water as well flood tolerant too. We collected these seeds from fellow farmer in Pondicherry and one farmer from Duginepally village came forward to experiment in 1/4th Acre of his land and succeeded in pilot stage. Others farmers from nearby villages are reaching him to collect the seeds for next crop season.

Drum seeder and Cono weeder: Drum seeder is a small scale farm implement for sowing germinated paddy seed directly into wetland field. It is alternative to transplanting method with less labor involvement. Cono weeder is another implement to control weeds in paddy fields. We arranged these tools for farmers and one farmer utilized these tools for 4 acres of paddy cultivation.

We are very happy to share that the objective of farm incubator was full filled by empowering farmers to acquire the knowledge on sustainable farming practices on one side while creating awareness to fellow farmers.



Awareness Programs

From last three months, we were part of several awareness programs to empower people about food and farming. Some of our awareness programs are

Empowering farmers about agro forestry practices: On Feb 4, 2019, Naresh attended the farmers gathering organized by SHARP Ngo at Anantharam village, Yadadri district and over 75 farmers attended the program to gain the knowledge on utilization of water and land for livelihood creation. Here, we helped the farmers to understand the economical viability and ecological feasibility of agro forestry models.

Food for Social Change: Our founder, Lingala Naresh got an opportunity to spoke about 'Food for Social Change' theme at the event organized by Entrepreneurship development cell at Ashoka institutions, Hyderabad on Feb 14, 2019. We strongly believe that the reconnecting people with nature can solve most of the global issues today and also involved with economic opportunities.

Scope of Food Literacy training programs in schools: We had an extensive discussion with the CEO of Nalgonda Sandbox, Venkata Gona Reddy garu regarding scope of collaborative work for conducting food literacy training programs in Nalgonda district, Telangana.



Dear Friends, well wishers and Supporters

The tharunam activities would not be possible without your support and contributions.

Therefore on behalf of all, we say thank you very much for your ongoing support. Thank you also by sharing this News Letter in your circle.

With Green Regards,

'tharunam' team

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<http://www.tharunam.org> Email- founder@tharunam.org