

Empowering Women through Knowledge and Skills: Creating A Labour Army of Women

Labour army is a team of 15 women agricultural labourers formed under TCHFL Vandavsi project to carry out the SRI – System of Rice Intensification Technology in farmer's field. System of Rice Intensification (SRI) is a methodology for increasing the productivity of irrigated rice by changing the management of plants, soil, water and nutrients particularly by eliciting greater root growth. This system of SRI involves the skilled women labours to carry out paddy transplanting as well as formation of nursery.

NAF reached out to the women labourers in the villages, who are largely unskilled workers and motivated them to effectively improve their skills and knowledge in agriculture related activities. Nineteen women were identified and trained in SRI technologies. These women already have knowledge of conventional method of planting and were eager to learn the new SRI method of planting. The training focussed on understanding the SRI technique viz - a - viz the conventional farming techniques, advantages of SRI methods, benefits derived out of SRI cultivation, nursery preparation, main field preparation, how to do line sowing, how to prepare the rope with correct spacing and also how to use the cono weeder method

to do weeding. These women were well motivated and quickly learnt the skill and they completed all the Paddy FLDs under the Tata Capital Projects in Vandavasi. They earned INR 3000 per acre for transplanting and INR 2000 per acre for raising nursery from this initiative.



Having witnessed the efficiency of SRI method in Paddy cultivation, many farmers started seeking out these women to work in their fields, as a result the Labour Army was born and women united to form a group and this turned into a profitable and sustainable livelihood option for the women in Vandavasi.

Earlier they used to travel to other villages up to 25 kms from their villages in search of work, but after the training and formation of the labour army, they

are productively engaged within their own village and are able to earn a decent income from the work. They are very grateful to NAF for providing such knowledge enhancing opportunities for women farmers.