

## ***Young and Venturous***

Sachin Jhade turned to agriculture a bit reluctantly; in a 'no option' state of mind after his schooling. However, today he has no regrets and has completely made up his mind to continue to be a farmer. What has contributed in changing his mindset is his association with BAIF among other things.

Twenty-two years old Sachin is a resident of Bhamb village in Ralegoan block in Yavatmal district. Bhamb is one of the core villages in the block where BAIF is working with farmers to introduce improved agricultural practices.

Sachin got involved in agriculture, his family occupation, after passing Class X. "I was not interested in studying further and therefore my father suggested me to lend his hand instead of sitting idle," tells Sachin, who could not disobey his father. His family owns 5.5 acre land with well and mostly cultivated cotton, soybean in Kharif and wheat in Rabi with traditional methods till last year.

BAIF encourages farmers to try out new techniques under improved agriculture intervention of SRLS of NAIP (3). It is mainly through developing demonstration plots and also sharing of knowledge among them through formation of Village Development Committees (VDC). Sachin became member of VDC, constituted in his village 2008 as part of this programme. His involvement in committee meetings and exposure motivated him for experimentation.

Initially Sachin developed a demo plot for cotton in last *kharif* season. The results were quite telling; the yield on demo plot was 4.40 quintals on half acre, whereas it was 3.5 quintals on the same piece of land with traditional methods. Feeling assured Sachin also developed demo plot for wheat in subsequent *rabbi* season and the outcome was two-times more yield compared to conventional methods. Wheat produce was 6 quintals on half acre on demo plot as



against 3 quintals on half acre on his regular plot. Sachin learned systematic approach towards farming through the process of developing demo plots. "We were not well informed previously. We mostly relied on shopkeepers and used whatever seeds, fertilizers and insecticides/pesticides they recommended us. But the inputs from the project helped us learn

new and improved techniques,” admits Sachin. He particularly appreciates the way programme people supported the farmers with their presence whenever required. “We would call them whenever we encountered any difficulty and they would visit the field to sort out the problem,” says Sachin, who feels that his interest in agriculture increased due to exposure to this new information.

For Sachin water resource development has further enhanced opportunities for production. He constructed a Temporary Check Dam in October 2008. The project provided him gunny bags and he contributed required labour. Later the project also supported him partially for the well deepening. BAIF supported with Rs. 4,000 and Rs. 9,000 was contributed by Sachin. TCD and well deepening together complemented in increasing availability of water for irrigation. With increased water availability Sachin, for the first time, cultivated vegetables in summer. Thereafter he now regularly cultivates vegetables and sells them in the nearby market twice or thrice a week.

In one of his village visits Mr. Sohani, president BAIF, visited Sachin’s farm. Looking at the broad patches of land wasted as farm bunds, he suggested Sachin to narrow them down. Sachin followed his suggestion and leveled the land spending Rs. 30,000. Now he has one acre more land available for cultivation.

Sachin is not only receptive to new ideas, but he adopts them once he is convinced. “I like to try out new methods. I continue with those I find beneficial,” says Sachin. Now he is following package of improved practices for cotton and wheat for his total land.

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