

## Vegetable Seedling Production Unit

Details of success stories :

### 1. Background

Nedumkandam is an area which is mostly regarded as a hub for vegetable cultivation in the district. Many interventions were carried out over the years for the holistic development of vegetable farmers. All these were channelized and overall improvement was observed, but the cost of farming remained bit on the higher side despite of many labour saving methods adopted and input channelization. On critical analysis of the scenario, it was found that a majority of the initial input cost was towards planting material which was sourced from a distant place and at a high price. Further, the follow-up for gap filling on the main field posed a greater non-visualized problem, which lead to the ultimate reduction in yield. This lead to a thought among the vegetable growing folk of the region to have a well-established vegetable nursery in the region, which can cater to their needs round the year.

Training programmes were organized during 2013-14 for vegetable seedling production and nursery management. Of the many participants, **Ms. Manju Mathew**, Ullathu, Anjumukku, Valiyathovala, 685514, (mob: 9544761240), a lady with an urge to have this venture as livelihood approached ICAR KVK, Idukki and submitted an initial project proposal to start a vegetable seedling nursery in an area of just 5 cents. On scrutiny of their site with their proposal, it was found that the site could be made to ten cents with limited extra effort and could be submitted to the district panchayat for full funding. The unit, christened as Harithasree Nursery, was initiated during December, 2014 with limited resources. Ms. Manju Mathew, along with her family members and relatives struggled hard to get things into shape. The initial years were hardships for them as they could not get sales orders correctly at the right time. ICAR KVK Idukki intervened in this aspect also by meeting government machinery and clearing the obstacles. During the third year of their venture, they could break even on the input costs and move on with a minimum profit. During the year 2018-19, her input cost for the 10 cent poly house was Rs.7.12 lakhs for producing 5 lakhs of seedlings and the Gross returns were Rs.11.84 lakhs, getting Ms. Manju a net profit of Rs.4.72 lakhs. During this period, she had constructed additional rain shelters too for hardening the plantlets and for further expanding her venture.



### 2. Intervention process

- Feasibility assessment of the site earmarked for construction of rain shelter.
- Availability of all the basic input resources
- Project formulation and onward submission to District Panchayat for grant.
- Hands-on training on nursery production and management of vegetable seedlings.
- Timely intervention on different stages of seedling growth.
- Intervention for getting adequate sales tenders from department machinery.
- Advisory services.
- Follow-up visits and technical support as and when required.

### **3. Intervention Technology**

- Created a platform, where farmers could understand their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in current system of farming.
- Hand holding activities to all those who had entrepreneurial urge and to promote result oriented agri-business concepts.
- Timely intervention, not just for farming activities, but also for allied support inventory. Corrective deliberations and fool proof measures in all the stages of entrepreneurial development.

### **4. Impact Horizontal Spread**

M/s. Harithasree Vegetable Seedling Nursery, Valiyathovala is aimed at giving employment directly to 50 rural youth and many multiples of it, indirectly through the never ending increase in demand for quality vegetable seedlings at the right planting season *ex-situ*. This would reduce the cost of cultivation at the farmers end, making the demand increase every year. This is evident from the increase in seedling requirement in the vegetable growing area of Nedumkandam and adjoining blocks of Idukki district.

### **5. Impact Economic Gains**

An economic gain of around Rs. 5.00 lakhs per annum is now being realized on an average after getting the unit to a breakeven point.

### **6. Impact on Employment Generation**

Employment generation through self-employment ventures is the need of the hour. Those benefitted through these ventures are indirectly getting hands on experience also to be independent at a point of time. This venture provides employment to over 50 persons every year. It will also provide as a knowledge hub for trainings related to vegetable seedling, thereby paving way for further chance of employment generation.