



# IMPACT STORY

## EXPOSURE VISIT TO WEST BENGAL A PRODUCTIVE WAY OF PROMOTING AGRICULTURAL MECHANISATION IN SUNSARI, NEPAL

Despite four years passing since the formation of provincial governments in Nepal, the Provincial Government structures are yet to fully develop. Part of this means that plans to support sustainable agricultural mechanisation, which have the potential to benefit millions of smallholder farmers, are underexplored. The 'Roadmaps' project (funded by ACIAR and led by CIMMYT) functions to help provincial governments create an enabling environment for sustainable agricultural mechanization in Province 1 and Province 2 of Nepal. As part of this project, an exposure visit to West Bengal was formulated, to explore their experiences with mechanization.



Photo: Manisha Shrestha

*Province 1 working group visits SSCOP at Coochbehar*

The main purpose of this exposure visit was to observe on-going activities being implemented by Satmile Satish Club and cooperatives (SSCOP) in Cooch Behar, partner of the SRFSI project, to explore new learnings related to agricultural mechanization which can be successfully adopted in Sunsari.



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Eleven participants, six provincial government officials and five private sector partners, were escorted by CIMMYT to SSCOP where Amal Roy, secretary warmly welcomed and oriented on their business models and economics of farm equipment. Focusing on the introduction of Zero Tillage (ZT) technology and CASI technology supported by SRFISI, the secretary highlighted on reaching out to 70,000 farmers directly and indirectly in Cooch Behar.

The Secretary highlighted the way that SSCOP has helped form Farmer Producing Organizations (FPOs) and trained them in agribusiness, helping them to get the status of Farmer Producing Company (FPC) to scale up their businesses. SSCOP have also created a business which is dealing with farm equipment sales and maintenance and operating a 'Custom Hiring Centre'.

Another session focused on farm equipment used under CASI technology focusing on ZT Multi-crop-planter (ZT MCP) and rice transplanter, with in-depth discussion on its use, models and pricing, availability in the market and associated servicing and maintenance issues.

With on-farm demonstration on the use of rice transplanter in an unpuddled land followed by a visit to one of the self-help groups run by Hosne Ara Begum, the participants had ample opportunity to interact with members of the rice seedling factory and discuss their business models. Another on-site demonstration was also carried out for ZT MCP where the SSCOP team shared their experiences of using it for different crops such as wheat, maize, jute and lentils, and also discussed the issues related to machinery.

At the end of the three day exposure visit, the participants expressed their content and their interest to work together for achieving common goal of promoting agricultural mechanization in Province 1, Nepal.

*“It’s the right time for our farmers to consider starting a service providing institute so that more farmers are benefitted”*

*- Dr Rajendra Uprety*

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