



CONSOLATION

Kesho Phou – improved paddy variety

Wahengbam Kesho Singh
Bishnupur, Manipur

Farmer Wahengbam Kesho Singh (68) has developed a high yielding paddy variety through selection method.

The eldest among eight siblings Kesho Singh did not have much interest in studies. The

family's financial condition also required more earning hands hence he discontinued studies after class ten. As a child, carving toys from bamboo and wood was his favorite past time. As a student playing games like Kangjei (traditional form of Hockey made from



bamboo) and Yubi lakpi (traditional form of Rugby using greased unpeeled coconut) were his passions.

Many years back, he undertook work contracts but due to irregular payments, he settled down to become an agriculturist. Kisho Singh and his son are the main bread earners of the family. He lives with his wife and son's family. His daughter is married and settled elsewhere. Kesho's wife gives full support in his work. He believes that advancement in science and technology has resulted in improvement in agriculture, which has in turn resulted in more income for the farmers. In addition to paddy, he cultivates bottle gourd, pumpkin, tomato, bean, french bean, potato, cucumber, maize, carrot and onion and runs a fish farm in his own 3/4th hectare land.

Genesis

In 2010, while passing by his pond Kesho Singh saw three paddy plants growing near it. Nearby, four different paddy varieties Ayanleima (East), Darum phou (North), RI 64 (South) and Tampha phou (West) were growing at the adjacent fields. Initially, he thought that the plants were of other local popular variety (RCM-9). Therefore he took extra care till harvesting and at maturity, saved the seeds (approx. 180g) for sowing in the next season. In 2011, the saved seeds were sowed following SRI method. But the characteristics of the plants were found superior to that of RCM-9 in terms of tillering habit, flowering time, yield and taste. Then he saved some seeds and sowed them again in 2012 to check the inheritance of the superior traits. As the characteristics were found to be retained, he saved the seeds and sowed subsequently in the

years 2013 and 2014. Since all the desirable characteristics were found to be stable, the variety was named as Kesho Phou after his name Kesho (Phou means paddy).

The variety

The salient features of the variety are high yield (80-95q/ha), non-lodging, with long panicle, high number of seeds /panicle (310-320), broad leaves and semi-erect culms, spreading tillers and high number of tillers/plant and good taste. The variety is also tolerant to stem borer. It is suitable for summer crop in alluvial soil and sub-tropical climate and has high grain recovery % (86-87) as well.

The experimental trial was conducted during *Kharif, 2016* at *Central Agricultural University, CAU, Imphal, Manipur*. The report revealed that *Kesho Phou* possesses high yield contributing characteristics like high number of tillers per hill and number of filled grains per panicle. Thus the average yield (79.76q/ha) was found to be higher than the check variety (62.76q/ha) under rainfed conditions. It was also found to be moderately tolerant to stem borer and neck blast. The application for registration of the variety has been submitted to PPV&FRA, New Delhi.

The variety has been distributed to several farmers of Bishnupur district and other nearby districts. He has won many awards for his work at district and state level. Kesho Singh wants to convey a message to his fellow farmers as "We should gain endless knowledge about different crops from concerned experts to get good produce for the betterment of self and the society".