



STATE

Improved traditional variety of Brinjal: Niranjan Bhata

Leela Ram Sahu  
Dhamtari, Chhattisgarh

A progressive farmer, Leela Ram (55), has improved and conserved a good quality traditional brinjal variety and has been maintaining the purity by mass selection. The variety, known for its fruit quality, is resistance to major pests and diseases.

Leela Ram lives with his wife and two sons, who are pursuing higher education. His three daughters are married and settled in their respective families. He owns about 7.5 acres of land where he cultivates paddy, gram, black gram, vegetables and traditional local crops like *lakhodi*, *bhains-teti*, and *dang kanda*. Prior to taking up agriculture he worked as a tailor briefly. Aware of the water scarcity problem in his area, he started making check dams, which helped in irrigation of the fields, for which he was much appreciated by the villagers. He thereafter took to farming full time and started devoting his time in his own farm experiments.



Leela Ram is also a social worker and guides villagers on the problems shared with him. He hopes one day, his variety gets diffused to all parts of the country.

Genesis

Niranjan Bhata is a traditional variety conserved by his forefathers. He has been conserving and cultivating the variety for the last 28 years because of its fruit length, yield and resistance to major insect-pests and diseases. He adopts mass selection method to get improved seeds for the next season. The criteria of selection are fruits length, spine on stem & calyx, resistance to pests and disease and more fruits per plant.

The variety

The Niranjan Bhata variety has long sweet purple fruit with spine on stem and calyx. The number of fruits per plant are more than other commonly available varieties. The variety is resistant to major diseases and pests. The report received from Department of Vegetable Science, Indira Gandhi Krishi Vishwavidyalaya (IGKV) Raipur, Chhattisgarh during 2016-2017 confirmed that the variety Niranjan Bhata possesses longer (45-60 cm) and good quality fruits. Report also confirmed that the variety has lower instance of insect pest & disease and is a valuable traditional cultivar for research purpose.

NIF facilitated the trials of this variety for dissemination in farmers' fields in Bihar, Kerala,



Manipur and Gujarat. The results revealed that this traditional variety of brinjal is also cultivable in Kerala, Manipur and Gujarat giving higher number and longer fruits.

A number of local editions of newspapers have written articles on this variety and Leela Ram has been felicitated at the local and regional level for his efforts to conserve the variety.