

LIVELIHOOD GENERATION THROUGH BAY LEAF PLANTATION IN JALPAIGURI DISTRICT

Bay leaf, botanically named as “*laurus Nobilis L*” is also known as sweet laurel leaf. It is a dried leaf or evergreen shrub that belongs to the family of “*Lauracea*”. The plant is



indigenous to Asia. In India, bay leaves are popularly known as “*Tej Patta*” in Hindi and is mainly used as culinary herb. It works as a flavouring agent, especially in preparation of biryani, soup, meat, stews and sauces. Apart from culinary use, the oil extracted from the bay leaves are used for many medicinal purposes.

These trees require full sunlight. They grow well in warm and moist climates. Bay leaves grow well in fertile, well drained soils with good organic matter. They thrive best in the soils with PH of 6.0 to 8.0. Jalpaiguri district has ideal condition for growing bay leaves. Keeping



this in mind the District Administration decided to promote bay leaf cultivation in Jalpaiguri. To start with, nurseries were raised through grafting method in convergence with Horticulture department. 32 SHGs were selected for raising nurseries. Two-phase training was provided to the SHG members, first in the class room and thereafter hands on

training at District Horticulture Farm, Mohitnagar.

No. of Nurseries	No. of raised Nursery	Plants per	Person-days generated per Nursery	Material Cost per Nursery	Expenditure per Nursery
32	1000		66	Rs.7433.00	Rs.18927.00



In addition, bay leaf saplings were also supplied from National Horticulture Mission and some were also locally purchased. It was decided that Plantation will be done on the land of individual beneficiaries. In 01 bigha of land, 83 bay leaf saplings can be planted. Accordingly, beneficiaries were selected from

amongst those having land between 0.5 Bigha to 1.00 Bigha.. Following table gives an idea of the quantum of work executed in implementation of this initiative in the first year (2015-16).

No. of beneficiaries	No. of Saplings Planted	Total Person-days generated	Area in Bigha
1814	75085	44619	527



It is estimated that after the end of the third year the farmers will earn about Rs. 500.00 per plant per year and after 6 years the farmers will earn around Rs. 1,000.00 per plant per year. In the meantime, the farmers have also been encouraged to resort to intercropping. Vegetables or pulse can be practised for inter-cropping for initial 1 to 2 years and later any shade loving crop can be cultivated. It is hoped that the farmers will get financial security by growing bay leaf.