

While delineating the significance and before contemplating various facets of problems and prospects of Katarni paddy in Bihar, it will be desirable to briefly count and include the emergence of aromatic rices in India. Actually, India is the largest rice growing country of the world. It also produces some of the finest quality aromatic rices. Of these, Basmati, which is grown mainly in the foothills of Himalayas, is considered the best quality rice, and fetches highest premium in the world market. There are two basmati rice growing countries: India and Pakistan. Apart from basmati, a large number of 'non-basmati scented rices' are also grown in pockets in different rice growing states of the country. Katarni paddy (rice) is one of such rare varieties that is distinctly and exclusively grown in particular and very limited areas of Bhagalpur, Banka and Munger districts of eastern Bihar. However, as an aftermath of green revolution, growing demand for high yielding rice varieties and excess use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides in **the past and presently too**, many of these are either lost, or at the verge of extinction.

In Bihar, although aromatic rices are grown all over the state, they are mainly concentrated in Bhagalpur and Magadh divisions. Bhagalpur, Banka and old Munger districts have been traditional aromatic rice growing areas, where varieties, such as: katarni, tulsimanjari, badshahbhog, Br-9 and Br-10, Katarnibhog, shyamjeera, karbank, marueya and lakhisar are grown: However, lower productivity of these aromatic rices, these varieties being short grained, and consequently of low export values could be contended to be some of the remarkable factors for large decline of areas under katarni paddy in this region.

In view of the distinction of this variety from other and popularity in the region, this Centre proposed the study entitled "**Problems and Prospects of Katarni Paddy Production in Bihar,**" which was assigned by the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India to be undertaken.

Findings of the study leave 'no point to blink the facts' that area under katarni paddy has fallen, fragrance eroded, cost of production increased, consequently low return fetched by the farmers. No doubt, use of higher doses of chemical fertilizers; pesticides and delusively using adulterated seed have led to decline in productivity and most distinguished fragrance. However, if well planned initiatives are taken to preserve the fragrance and produce **genetically bred katarni paddy seed** along with efforts to increase and propagate its export value, then its potential is really very high. We must hope, this study report will be useful not only to rice scientists, students, scholars and rice-traders, but also to the policy makers and administrators for planning both short-term and long term strategies to promote and harness the potential of katarni paddy.

We express our thanks to the DES, Department of Agriculture & Co-operation, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India for assigning this most significant study to this Centre. We will be failing somewhere, if effusive thanks are not extended to Dr. H O Sharma, Director, Agro-Economic Research Centre for Madhya Pradesh & Chhattisgarh, JLNK Vishwavidyalaya, Jabalpur, (MP), who provided valuable inputs in the form of comments on draft report of this study.

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