

## ADRA's SRI Progress in Bangladesh

- Reported by Gopal Chowhan, Member SRINNB (SRI National Network Bangladesh, September 20, 2021)

ADRA (the humanitarian arm of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church that delivers relief and development assistance) has been implementing SRI for about a decade in Mymensingh and Manikganj regions of Bangladesh in order to improve food security in the farming communities there. ADRA collaborates with the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) of Ministry of Agriculture and uses Participatory Action Research (PAR) approaches.

ADRA's program staff provided training to farmers and organized SRI demonstrations with the participation of the rice farmers. The farmers observed the method during field demonstrations and the results were shared during the crop harvest with community farmers. The farmers also observed the yield performance of the SRI and control fields. The higher yield obtained in the SRI fields encouraged the farmers to adopt SRI methods in their own field. It was surprising to the farmers to get higher production with the same rice variety under similar cultural management with the main difference being plant spacing - 25cm x 25cm for SRI plot and 15cm x 15cm for the traditional method. Farmers planted one or two seedlings per hill with SRI while the control farmers used four or five seedlings per hill, the amount traditionally planted. The age of the SRI seedlings was 20 days for winter rice while the control farmers mostly used seedlings over 30 days old. The SRI plots also applied alternate wetting and drying irrigation and used manual rotary weeders. The average yield from the SRI fields was around 25% higher than the control plots, whereas production cost was almost same. However, the farmers opined that SRI production costs might be reduced further by using less irrigation and fewer seedlings in the field.



In Manikganj area, during the last *Boro* (winter) rice season (2020), a total of 94 farmers were trained in SRI methods; 468 farmers followed SRI methods in their 7,826 decimals area with the two rice varieties released from Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI) BRRI-Dhan29 and 58. Yields of the SRI fields averaged 35 kilogram per decimal, while the control field was 28 kilogram per decimal.



ADRA Mymensingh area has been promoting SRI for about 10 years and trained several hundred farmers covering a larger geographical area for the both monsoon and winter rice season. A total of 50 SRI trial plots were demonstrated by the *Amon* farmers with BRRI Dhan 34, 49, 52, and 75 rice varieties. The SRI farmers achieved 35% higher rice yields compared to the control plots of traditional practice; the biomass production was 26% higher during the last *Amon* (monsoon season). Presently there are around 2,000 farmers who have been following SRI cultivation methods. The number of farmers and rice cultivation area for SRI method will doubtless continue to increase as a result of higher yields without any increase in production costs.