

GS Venkatesh, a SA farmer competes with conventional farmer:

Mr. G.S. Venkatesh is a 25 year young man of Gandlaparthi village of Rappthadu mandal in Anantapur Dist. He belongs to a traditional shepherd family. In 2002 his family had purchased some land and started doing agriculture. As he is a small farmer having 4.5 acres of land, Venkatesh joined one of the SMGs promoted by AF EC. Earlier Mr.Venkatesh cultivated mono crop of Groundnut like many other farmers in the District. He had dug 11 bore wells in his land and only two bore wells were partially successful. He continued with GN crop in spite of continuous failures. His debt burden had increased because of bore wells and crop failures.



Due to his regular interaction with AF staff and attending campaigns and meetings of AF EC on sustainable Agriculture, Mr.Venkatesh understood LEISA practices and developed interest for it. By the year 2010, Venkatesh started experimenting SA in his land with support of AF-EC.

He reduced extent of GN crop and started crop rotation with Jowar, Vegetables and other crops according to the season. He followed all the SA protocols advised by AF EC. Venkatesh observed the improvement in land fertility after following SA practices. His cost of cultivation has gone down while his crop yields have improved.

Venkatesh shared his experience in SA with his friends and fellow farmers. His friend & neighboring Farmer Adinarayana challenged him on the efficiency of LEISA methods and so they both decided to try this out practically. During Kharif 2013, they both allocated 0.5 acre of plot in their own lands for this experiment. Venkatesh decided to grow crop in SA methods while his neighbor decided to grow in conventional method. Both have grown same crop 'Ladies finger' in the allocated plot with same variety of seed. The crop duration was 4 months.

The Cost of Cultivation and crop yields of both plots are as follows:

Details	SA plot of Venkatesh	Conventional plot of his friend
<i>Cost of Cultivation</i>		
Fertilizers	500	2500
Pest control	300	6000
Labour	4200	4700
Other costs	5000	5000
Total COC for the plot	Rs 10,000/-	Rs 18,200/-

<i>Crop Yields & Incomes</i>		
No of crop cuttings	30	27
Yield per crop cutting	180 kg	200 kg
Total Yield	5380kg	5400kg
Total Income	Rs 43000/-	Rs 43200/-
Net income	Rs 33,000/-	Rs 25,000/-

Venkatesh applied basal dose of Jeevamritham to his crop every week. He sprayed Neemastram once a month to control pests. He treated his plants with the solution of cow dung and urine after every cutting of vegetables. On the other hand, his friend intensively applied chemical fertilizers like Urea, DAP etc and sprayed chemical pesticides regularly like any other farmer of the village. Both of them sold vegetables in Dharmavaram market.

Though the crop yield of Mr.Venkatesh was little less than his neighbor his net income was Rs 8000/- more because of low costs of SA inputs. The quality of vegetables grown in SA method was appreciated by traders and consumers. This episode has been keenly observed by the other farmers and members of SMGs. They all feel curious about the SA practices and their performance and are approaching Venkatesh for advice.