

Farmer in Andhra Pradesh's Chittoor scripts success story by growing rain-fed tomato crop

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Tomato farmer Ravindra Reddy

TIRUPATI: Ravindra Reddy, a farmer from Molakalacheruvu in Chittoor district, is reaping rich dividends and has become an inspiration to many. After suffering huge losses by cultivating groundnut in his 10-acre dry land, he switched to cultivating rain-fed tomato crop to get profits. The western areas in Chittoor district, such as Thamballapalle, Piler, Madanapalle, Punganur and Palamaner, have been recording low rainfall.

Hence, farmers in these areas have taken up cultivation of tomato as it requires less water. Tomato cultivation was taken up in about 35,000 acres, of which the crop in 5,000 acres comes under rain-fed cultivation.

The farmers, going for rain-fed cultivation method, will select good quality seeds and raise them as plants in the nurseries. They plant the tomato saplings in their farmland whenever there is a rain. It is not possible to provide water to the rain-fed crop.

In general, the tomato produced from the non-rain-fed cultivation cannot be stored for a longer period. But the produce from the rain-fed cultivation can be stored for a longer period and strong in nature. Ravindra cultivated rain-fed tomato crop in his dry land using natural farming method.

As the area has been receiving good rainfall this year, he along with other tomato farmers, has been getting good produce. He learnt that the rate for one kg tomato is only `10 at Molakalacheruvu and Madanapalle markets. As he cultivated the crop under rain-fed conditions, the produce will be stored for a longer period compared to others.

One of his friends, Satyanarayana, a resident of Chennai, advised him to export the tomatoes to the Andaman where the demand is very high. He was introduced to some traders who purchased the produce and exported it to Andaman. They fixed the rate at Rs 40 per kg for the tomatoes cultivated in dry lands. Based on their suggestions,

Ravindra separated the raw tomatoes in his land, packed them in wooden sandboxes and sent them to Chennai.

Reaping it rich with rain-fed cultivation

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