

DOCUMENTATION ON SCENTED RICE OF GABIL DANINGKA, RONGJENG BLOCK, WEST GARO HILLS

History of Jaha rice cultivation in Gabil Daningka village under Rongjeng dev. Block:

Jaha or Joha rice is one of the species of aromatic rice traditionally grown in Gabil Daningka village under Rongjeng Development Block of East Garo Hills since ages (year not exactly known). It is mostly grown in lowlands in small pockets. The rice is used in making traditional curries known as pura or for medicinal purpose for curing a disease known as mibang napa. It is a disease where a man or woman suddenly collapses due to weakness. The uncooked rice is to be swallowed along with water. It is known to be a source of energy which gives them strength to carry out their cultivating activities. After harvesting the farmer organises a small feast as a thanksgiving for the good harvest.

Description and Characteristics:

The farmers of Gabil Daningka mostly cultivate three different sub variety of local Jaha or Joha rice, namely Jaha gipok, Jaha gitcak and Jaha gisim, which are named based on the colour of the grain.

- **Jaha gipok:** Plant height is medium. Maturity period is approximately 4 (four) months. Whitish or yellowish grain colour. Rice grain is smaller and finer. The grain are generally slightly sticky. It is used as both regular meal and special recipes in festivals like christmas and new year. Yield goes upto 8 mon per bigha. (1 mon=45kg).
There are again two types of Jaha gipok, smaller and bigger sized grains. The aroma of smaller grain Jaha gipok is stronger than the bigger sized grain Jaha Gipok.
- **Jaha gitcak:** Grows in lowland. Plant height is medium. The grain type is slim and red in colour. Mainly cooked during festivals or special occasions. Average yield is 5-6 mon per bigha.
- **Jaha gisim:** Compared to other Jaha varieties it has the strongest aroma. It grows well on medium lowland. Plant height is medium. Grain type is slim and black in colour. Rice cooks slowly. The rice gives a full feeling for a long time. It is possible to store for a long period without spoiling. Average yield is around 7-8 mon per bigha.

Cultivation practices:

Sowing : May

Transplanting : Last week of June or July

Raising of seedlings:

- a) **Preparation of seed bed:** Land is thoroughly puddle. Length and breadth of the seed bed may vary according to the convenience.
- b) **Manure:** In seed bed cowdung is applied and mix well with the soil.
- c) **Water management:** Irrigation water is properly applied to the surface soil of the nursery bed. Channels are made and water is let in into the beds from the water source.
- d) **Preparation of seed:** Seeds are kept immersed in water for one or two night in a jute bag. Seed bags are taken out of water and kept open air for sufficient period till the shoots sprout upto a length of 1-2 mm.
- e) **Sowing of sprouted seeds in the nursery:** Sprouted seeds are uniformly sown in the bed at the rate of about 1 kg/sq.m. Beds are watered after sowing.
- f) **Uprooting of seedlings:** Seedlings become ready for transplanting when its height becomes 15-20 cm with 3 to 4 leaves.

Intercultural operations: Weeding is done once or twice during growing season.

Diseases and pest: Gundhi bug, leaf cutter and stem borer.

Indigenous technical knowledge: To get rid of general pests confronted in rice field, farmers follow the following practices:

- To reduce the initial inoculums of general pests and disease, farmers burn the straw and stubbles in the field before ploughing or field operations.

- Bamboo perches are used in the rice field which allow the predatory birds to rest on it and thereby able to prey the insect pest comfortably.
- Dead crab shell or fish etc, are used as cure to attract the rice bug and later on they are killed mechanically.
- When the grains are filled any shinning strips of ribbons are tied across the field in bamboo poles to prevent the birds from eating the grains.

Harvesting

It is harvested during the second or last week of november or first week of december. The rice is harvested and grinded in traditional mortar and pastle to remove the straw and grains and stored in bamboo structures or earthen pots.

Market

- As it is grown only in small areas, most of the farmers cultivate Jaha rice only for family consumption.
- If abundant they sell it in local market at Rongjeng or in weekly market at Rongmil.
- During festive seasons Jaha rice are ordered from the farmers directly by some people.
- It is sold @Rs. 50 per kg in local markets.

Source: Binu. G. Momin

Village: Gabil Daningka

Block: Rongjeng Development Block

District: East Garo Hills