

One of the important areas where RIB is concentrating its effort consistently for the upliftment of the marginalised communities is: agriculture. Agriculture is the way of living of small and marginal farm households and still provide 48% of country's employment, mostly for the landless households as hired agricultural workers. RIB's activities on agriculture are currently emphasised in north-western region of the country which is also high with respect to disadvantaged households. RIB, through its agricultural programmes is working to achieve three major objectives i.e. improving food security, enhancement of income and generating employment for the marginalised households. For achieving these objectives RIB's strategy is: conducting on-farm trials of the potential technologies developed by BRRI and other research institutes and dissemination of proven technologies among the farmers using Participatory Action Research (PAR, farmers called it as Gonogobeshona). For achieving these RIB (in collaboration with) is working with Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI), International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), Bangladesh Sugarcane Research Institute (BSRI), Wheat Research Centre (WRC) and Lac Research Centre. During 2005-2006 RIB played pioneered roles in coordinating the monga mitigation activities of GOs and NGOs under the banner of Northwest Focal Area Forum through piloting a project for popularising short-duration early maturing Aman rice varieties. Instead of transplanting seedlings direct seeded technology which was replicated in Nilphamari, Rangpur, Lalmonirhat and Kurigram districts. Successful piloting of the technologies generated enthusiasm among the farmers and participating organisations. Now cultivation shorter duration aman rice varieties (BRRI dhan 33, BINAdhan 7 and BUdhan 1) has become popular not for only monga mitigation but also for escaping drought in September. RIB is also successfully participating in screening submergence tolerant Aman rice varieties in partnership with BRRI and IRRI through STRASA (Stress Tolerant Rice for Africa and South Asia) project. As a partner of CSISA (Cereal System Initiative for South Asia) funded by Melinda Gates Foundation and implemented by IRRI-CIMMYT, RIB is engaged in implementing field trials for screening technologies that will reduce production cost without sacrificing yield (called Conservation Agriculture). Popularisation of lac cultivation among the landless Santal and mainstream low-income households also contributing in income enhancement. Cultivation of improved sugarcane varieties for processing and marketing superior quality gur (raw sugar) expected to generate significant number of employment for the hired agricultural workers during lean period of the year.