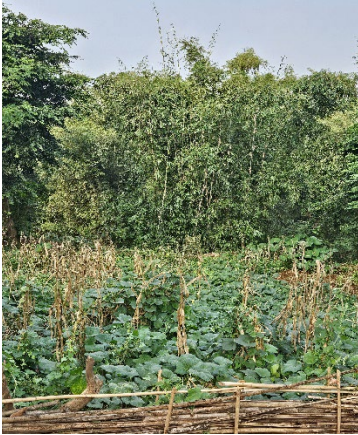


Changes in Store for Malto Ethnic Family

In the hills of Pakur District, Jharkhand State, in the eastern part of India there live the reclusive Malto tribe. This ethnic group are also called 'Pahardia' because they live in the hills (*pahad*). Mr. Goliya Pahadiya (46) and wife Jabri Pahadin (45) are farmers in the village of Jamkander. They have raised 5 children – 4 of whom are married- and now even have some grandkids. They grow a variety of crops; corn, sorghum, jute, mustard, cowpeas, pigeon peas, and horse gram.



Tearfund Canada's partner EFICOR have worked for years with the Malto community, and several years ago started a food security project in 21 small villages of Pakur District. The local farming for centuries has been slash and burn, which worked when the people had a lot of land and the ability to move every few years to a 'new' plot that they had cleared from the forest. But now with growing population pressure, and reduced landholding the slash and burn farming was proving to be unsustainable, as organic matter was being burnt off and the bare soil was washing away in the rain, leaving fields full of stones. Goliya is a more progressive farmer so he and Jabri got training from EFICOR on conservation agriculture, as well as gardening. They – like others in the community- have now stopped burning when they clear new fields, trying to save all the organic material

for mulch. They also followed the advice of the project agriculturist for their conservation agriculture corn and planted a cover crop (see picture above with pumpkins, but often legumes are intercropped with the grain). As taught, they also did micro-dosing of DAP fertilizer (nitrogen and phosphorus) mixed in the planting hole with composted manure. They were impressed with how healthy the corn plants were as well as how big the cobs were (see picture on right of corn stored).

Goliya and Jabri estimate that their conservation agriculture corn yielded about 50% more than the traditionally farmed corn, plus they had cover crops. They are pleased with the project and look forward to participating in the project and further learning next year.

Tearfund Canada is one of the 7 members of CFGB supported by Bluewater Growing Project.

