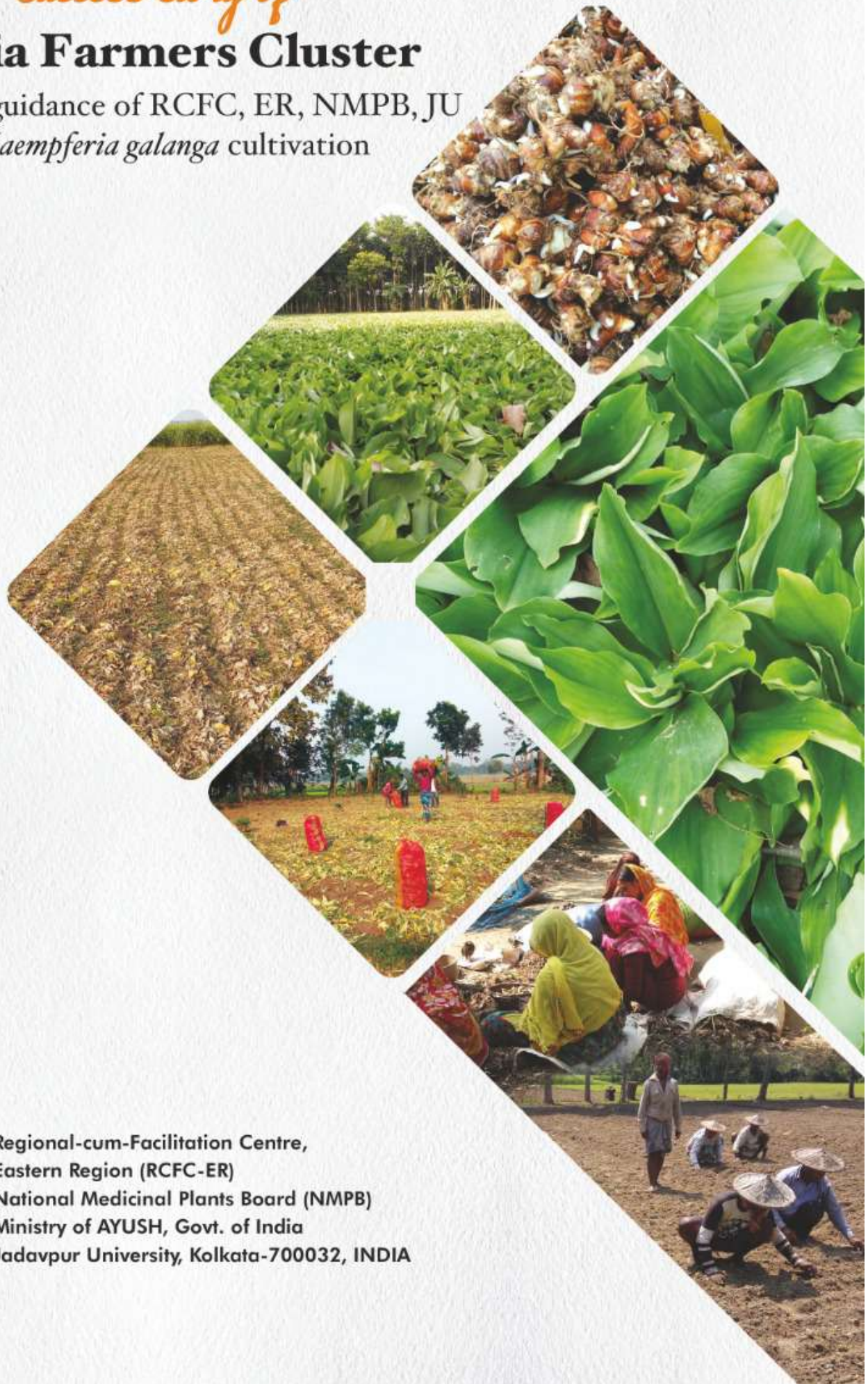


Success story of

Nadia Farmers Cluster

under the guidance of RCFC, ER, NMPB, JU
in *Kaempferia galanga* cultivation



**Regional-cum-Facilitation Centre,
Eastern Region (RCFC-ER)
National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB)
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National Medicinal Plants Board, Ministry of AYUSH, Govt. of India has established seven Regional-cum-Facilitation Centres in different regions, covering the country for holistic development of medicinal plants sector.

Regional-cum-Facilitation Centre (RCFC), Eastern Region (ER), is one of such Centres established at Jadavpur University during 2017-18 for serving the state of Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha and West Bengal. Since its formation, RCFC, ER has been organizing community level interactive training workshops at different places in its command area – to motivate the farmers and grass root level traders. The major objectives of these programmes are promotion of cultivation of commercially important Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (MAPs) and capacity building of the stakeholders of its basic value addition chain.

The participants of these programmes are mainly farmers who have either already been engaged in cultivation or interested in taking up cultivation of commercially important MAPs to increase their income – which is expected to positively impact their livelihood.

The responses of the participants of all these programmes are always very encouraging. The curriculum of these workshops includes different aspects of MAP cultivation, such as identification of various commercially important medicinal plants species, selection of species based on soil and climate conditions and market demand, nursery techniques for production of quality planting materials (QPM) of such species, agrotechniques related to field preparation, planting and intercultural operations, pest and diseases management, harvesting, post harvesting management of crops, grading, packing and storage, value addition and marketing.

Some farmers from District Nadia, West Bengal who had been engaged for cultivation of *K. galanga* (Ekangi) for a long time attended such trainings and interactive workshops. These farmers discussed their problem of rhizome rot diseases and poor yield from the local variety which resulted into loss of investment. They asked for QPM along with technical support to ensure commercial sustainability of their farming.



Growing *K. galanga* in the farmers field



K. galanga crop is ready for harvesting



A thorough investigation in this regard revealed that a large number of farmers had been cultivating *K. galanga* since 2000 in Nadia and Murshidabad district. The cultivation used to be very remunerative due to the high price of *K. galanga* rhizome and oil in the international market and its thriving export from India.

Unfortunately, the situation changed from 2010 onward and the farmers started facing problems of poor yield due to rhizome rot induced crop damage. A drastic reduction of revenues from farming followed which resulted in capital loss.



Harvesting of *K. galanga* crop

The problem reached its peak resulting in almost cessation of cultivation by 2015-16. The farmers, who depended on the *K. galanga* cultivation for their livelihood, lost their earning and also lost their savings and properties by losing the crop year after year.

K. galanga is a highly priced medicinal and aromatic plant of the Family Zingiberaceae. The plant is native to India, and is supposed to have originated in East Asia. It is cultivated mainly in South East Asia and China. In India it is mainly cultivated in Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal. The plant is propagated by splitting of rhizomes which are stored in cool dry place prior to planting. *K. galanga* is a shade loving plant and requires warm humid climate thriving up to an elevation of 1,500 m. An annual rainfall of 1500-2500 mm and rich loamy soil with good drainage are suitable for its cultivation. Generally, insects and pests are not reported in this crop. Leaf spot and rhizome rot diseases occurring during the rainy season can be prevented by proper treatment of planting materials, drainage and spraying with appropriate fungicide.



Disease infected Rhizomes of *K. galanga*

RCFC-ER, NMPB, JU took an initiative with technical and QPM support for cultivation of *K. galanga* through Nadia District Medicinal Farmers Cluster committee for improvement of crop yield and control of rhizome rot diseases during the year 2019-20. The cluster committee selected 5 (five) farmers of the group in Hanskhali block who were provided with QPM of *K. galanga* and technical support for proper organic farming technique along with pre-sowing rhizome treatment procedure. Adoption of these specific agro-techniques resulted in encouraging improvement in yield and 80–85% reduction in disease infestation.



Good Quality Rhizomes of *K. galanga*

After harvest, good quality rhizomes were separated and properly preserved. During the year 2020-21 the rhizomes were distributed to 15 (fifteen) farmers at different sites of Nadia district and also at Sitai block of Cooch Behar district for assessment of yield potential and diseases problem and also for multiplication to prepare disease free QPM.

It was observed that the crop yielded 15-20% better than local variety and disease hazard was reduced by 85-90% in almost all the sites. In this manner, the number of beneficiary farmers increased during 2021-22 to 50 (fifty). In the current year (2022), 76(seventy-six) farmers have taken advantage of the QPM and are cultivating the crop successfully.

Success of QPM support programme

Year	Number of farmers involved	Area of cultivation (in Acre)	Percentage of yield increased	Percentage of diseases problem reduced by
2019-20	5	1.65	Not evaluated	80-85%
2020-21	15	8.26	15-20%	85%
2021-22	50	21.48	15-20%	85-90%
2022-23	76	40.66	15-20%	90%

Development of appropriate agrotechnology and disease free quality planting materials and their successful adoption, inculcated hope in the farming community. *K. galanga* farmers are taking renewed interests in cultivation of their prized crop. Thus, the joint effort of RCFC-ER and leading farmers ushered a new era of sustainability and commercial profitability in the farming of a very important medicinal plant.

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