



# Miss Susama Bhuyan: A Successful Maize Farmer



**M**iss Susama Bhuyan is an active farmer from Ukrasing village, Rayagada block, in Gajapati district, Odisha.

## **Chheligada Maize Cluster and Transformation:**

In March 2021, Miss Bhuyan participated in an awareness program organized by the Maa Ramachandi Foundation. This program proved fruitful for her future. She gained valuable knowledge, techniques, and technologies for maize cultivation. By applying her training, she successfully harvests maize twice a year, becoming a leading maize farmer in the Rayagada block.

## **Background and Challenges:**

Miss Bhuyan belongs to a scheduled tribe family in Ukrasing village. Maize cultivation on her one-acre land is her primary source of income. She aims to support her entire six-member family with this income. The entire family was previously illiterate due to the prevailing mindset against girls' education. However, Miss Bhuyan understands the importance of education, especially for girls, in breaking the cycle of poverty. Despite societal pressures that view girls as a burden, she defied expectations and is now a graduate student.

## **Leading by Example:**

Miss Bhuyan's success extends beyond her own farm. She has engaged 36 other families in maize cultivation and value-added maize product preparation.

## **Pre-Training Struggles:**

Before attending the training program, Miss Bhuyan faced several challenges:

- **Limited harvests:** She could only cultivate maize once a year.
- **Exploitation by middlemen:** Middlemen interfered with purchasing quality maize seeds, often at unfair prices.
- **Financial constraints:** Poverty limited her ability to invest in better farming practices.
- **Low income:** Her average income was only Rs. 4000.
- **Reliance on middlemen:** She had no control over the selling price due to dependence on middlemen.

- **Traditional methods:** Farming relied on chemical fertilizers, traditional technology, and low-quality seeds.
- **Low production:** These factors resulted in low maize production.
- **Limited market access:** There were challenges in finding buyers for her produce.

#### **Post-Training Transformation:**

The Maa Ramachandi Foundation, a non-profit organisation working in Odisha's backward districts, provided Miss Bhuyan with the necessary training and resources.

- **Improved techniques:** She learned about irrigation facilities (clevis/wells) and other accessories to boost production and income.
- **Scientific practices:** She gained knowledge about soil testing, nutrient management, and systematic crop practices, leading to better yields and reduced vulnerability to pests and diseases.
- **Organic options:** The organisation promotes organic maize cultivation for its health benefits and global demand. Miss Bhuyan and other participants are actively involved in this initiative.

#### **Success and Recognition:**

- **Increased production:** Maize plants now weigh 2-3 kg each.
- **Value-added products:** Miss Bhuyan prepares silage, a nutritious feed for dairy animals, from maize stalks.
- She has become a role model for women farmers in the Gajapati district.
- **Expansion:** Inspired by her success, Miss Bhuyan has leased an additional two acres for maize cultivation. Other farmers are following her lead.

