

Category	: International Rice Research Conference
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Title of Entry	: Service provision model for quality rice seedling for monsoon fluctuations: Analysing business cases in monsoon risk regions in India
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**Abstract** : Predominantly rainfed lowland agroecology in eastern India, face problems of monsoon variability leading to forced use of weak, older and infested rice seedlings resulting in low rice productivity. To address this issue, International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) under Cereal Systems Initiative for South Asia (CSISA) project has introduced “Rice Nursery Enterprise” in eastern India by identifying and facilitating the potential nursery entrepreneurs through training, creating awareness and mobilizing stakeholders including seed suppliers. In this study, we analysed the nursery business case and its impact with the following hypotheses: 1) net return from rice nursery sale incentivise the entrepreneurs to take up the business, 2) rice seedlings purchased from the entrepreneurs is healthier and has positive impact on rice yield, and 3) customers prefer purchasing seedlings from the entrepreneurs to producing own nursery. Analysis is based on the survey of entrepreneurs, customers and traditional farmers in 2016 and a follow-up in 2017. The business case showed that an entrepreneur made a profit of 13.36 USD/ha of transplanted area from mat-type nursery and 11.42 USD/ha from normal-type rice nursery business. About 61.22% entrepreneurs who had started business in 2016 have expanded their business in 2017. By comparing the own nursery using farmers, the customers of nursery service benefited from using healthy rice seedling (0.44 t/ha yield advantages). The positive yield impact is also observed when it is compared with the previous year production when they used their own nursery (11% increase in production). Expanding and retaining customer base is essential in this business, and we found several entrepreneurs failed in retaining customers. About 80.56% of customers discontinued purchasing the rice seedlings in the following year mainly due to adoption of healthy seedling production by themselves (53.88%), transportation problems (25.43%), and financial (9.91%) issues. Whereas, 15.54% new entrepreneurs emerged from the same pool and started selling the seedling to farmers. This study concludes that rice nursery enterprise is a profitable business, but awareness and customer retaining strategies are important during establishment phase as the concept is new in these region.

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