

# Package for cultivation of medicinal plants

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**Cuttack, Dec 28:** As crop diversification or multi-cropping systems have become the mantra for agriculture sector to enhance productivity as well as ensure better returns for the farmers, infusing medicinal plants into the rice-based farming system has emerged a very promising option.

Experts have projected a net return of more than Rs 1 lakh from one hectare of medicinal plant cultivation in a season.

The spin-offs from farming of medicinal plants include opening up avenues for self-employment for the rural youth through processing and

marketing of the yield.

The Central Rice Research Institute (CRRI) here has developed a comprehensive package, complete with technological knowhow, supply of seeds and planting materials, on cultivation of medicinal plants like 'brahmi', 'jalbrahmi', 'bhrungaraj', 'bhukadamba', 'kalakeshdura', 'panmadhuri', 'isabgol' and 'bacha' in rice-based cropping system.

According to scientists, by adopting 'brahmi' only, a farmer can garner a gross return of Rs 1.38 lakh per crop in addition to his normal kharif rice yield. The farmer has only to switch from rabi season rice cultivation to 'brahmi' plantation.

## Ensuring better return for farmers



After the harvesting of early rice in the last week of September, the fields should be prepared for 'brahmi' plantation.

Cuttings of the medic-

inal plant of high yield 'medha' and 'pragyashakti' variety are available at the CRRI. Adopting proper techniques, a farmer can harness two harvests, the

first after 120 days of transplantation and the second after 90 to 100 days of the first cutting. The land can be then utilised for rice cultivation in the next season.

CRRI Director Dr MP Pandey said that the yield in the first and second harvests is estimated to be around 40,000 kg and 30,000 kg per hectare respectively.

"The input costs including land preparation, procurement of planting materials, irrigation, harvesting, drying and storing is calculated to be Rs 36,000. Meeting it out, the farmer would earn a healthy income of Rs 1.02 lakh at the end of the season," Dr Pandey asserted.

Brahmi has use in several ailments ranging from disorders of the brain, epilepsy, rheumatism, respiratory diseases and even cardiac ailments. Apart from pharmaceutical use, commercial products like hair oil, rejuvenating soft drinks, lozenges, tea, health food and even leafy vegetables can be made from the wonder plant.

The plant can be used both fresh and dry and even in the juice form.

"With farmers taking up cultivation in earnest, opportunities for self-employment through processing industries and agro-medical units would open up for the youth in the region," Dr Pandey said.