A good number of Cooperatives, Farmers' Organizations, Trusts, Self-Help Groups, etc. are associated with the Project for up-scaling the area and the production technology of premium aromatic rice varieties in areas (native to specific Bengal aromatic rice cultivars) of West Bengal.

Preparation of 98th Report of Standing Committee on Commerce

A total of 11 meetings of the Standing Committee on Commerce were held during the period from 14 February to 25 July, 2011 for consideration of the proposals submitted, oral presentations, etc. as well as for finalization of the 98th Report on “Export of Food grains—Premium Non- Basmati Rice & Wheat.”

Prof S.K. Mitra, Dean, Post Graduate Studies made an oral presentation of the said proposal before the Standing Committee on 2 May, 2011. He touched upon various aspects of export prospects for rice, such as:

“The University is researching the Gobindabhog and Tulapijanji variety, which is premium non-Basmati rice. Most aromatic varieties of rice are low on productivity and hence need to fetch almost double the price of normal varieties to be remunerative to farmers.”

(Para 3.5.3, p. 27)

Recommendation for Export of ‘Gobindabhog’ and ‘Tulapijanji’

The Report on “Export of Food grains—Premium Non- Basmati Rice & Wheat,” prepared by the Standing Committee on Commerce was presented in the Rajya Sabha on 11 August, 2011 and subsequently accepted for future course of action on the part of the Government of India. The salient points mentioned in the Report are:

“...The Committee feels that India produces some fine quality non-Basmati varieties also such as Sona Masuri, Matta and Ponni, Gobindabhog and Tulapijanji etc. These varieties are very good quality rice and are bound to be appreciated by international buyers. Further, the Committee observed that from the year 2002-2007, India was exporting some quantities of wheat and non-Basmati rice, which suddenly stopped afterwards. This will cause confusion in the world market and India’s absence will pave the way for competing countries to step in.” (Para 4.3.5, p. 36)

The Committee feels that there are many States in the country that produce various premium varieties of rice. For export of rice, like any other commodity, foreign buyers have their own parameters in terms of hygiene, quality, use of insecticides and pesticides, etc. Accordingly, the Committee recommends that the Government should come out with a planned policy whereby, all types of premium rice varieties should be considered for testing and research and those varieties that fulfill international norms may be encouraged for export.” (Point 13, p. 44)

Gobindabhog and Tulapijanji: Recommendation for Export by Parliament of India

Our university is thankful to the Hon’ble Chairman and the Members of the Standing Committee on Commerce, Parliament of India for consideration of our proposal and recommendation for export of ‘Gobindabhog’ and ‘Tulapijanji’ rice.

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The State of West Bengal has precious wealth of genetic diversity in aromatic rice (Singh et al., 2000; Shobhobanri and Krishninal, 2001 and Deb, 2005). It is estimated that about 3,00,000 t of such premium rice cultivars are produced every year in the state (Bhattacharya, 2003), which have different end-uses like cooked table rice, dessert (payash), biliyani, etc. Among 25-30 scented rice landraces, one small (Gobindabhog) and one medium-grained (Tulapijanji) cultivars are very popular in domestic market for their excellent quality features and considerable potential for the international trade. The morphological, physical and bio-chemical

Bengal Aromatic Rice: ‘Gobindabhog’ and ‘Tulapijanji’

The State of West Bengal has precious wealth of genetic diversity in aromatic rice (Singh et al., 2000; Shobhobanri and Krishninal, 2001 and Deb, 2005). It is estimated that about 3,00,000 t of such premium rice cultivars are produced every year in the state (Bhattacharya, 2003), which have different end-uses like cooked table rice, dessert (payash), biliyani, etc. Among 25-30 scented rice landraces, one small (Gobindabhog) and one medium-grained (Tulapijanji) cultivars are very popular in domestic market for their excellent quality features and considerable potential for the international trade.
RKVY Project on “Promotion of Bengal Aromatic Rice through Improved Production and Processing System”

A multi-Institutional RKVY Project entitled “Promotion of Bengal Aromatic Rice through Improved Production and Processing System” was sanctioned by the Government of India via State Level Sanctioning Committee (SLSC) of West Bengal for a period of four years from 2008 to 2012. The work programme of the Project is designed for development of a ‘production to consumption system’ model for two aromatic landraces of West Bengal through a well-organized consortium, comprising Bidhan Chandra Krishi Viswavidyalaya (BCKV) as the Lead Centre, and Uttam Banga Krishi Viswavidyalaya (UBKV), Bose Institute (BI) as the Cooperating Centres.

Research Programme

A good number of research programmes on Gobindabhog and Tulaiapanji rice are being conducted at BCKV and UBKV, the State Agricultural Universities (SAUs), during the period 2009-2011 on the following aspects:

- Up-gradation of production, processing and storage technology
- Improvement of grain quality parameters, value-addition, organic certification, etc.

Technology Dissemination and Large-scale Cultivation

The integrated extension services like group discussion, farmers-scientists interface and training programmes were organized for motivation and capacity building of the stakeholders in target areas. As a result, Gobindabhog is cultivated in farmers’ fields in Nadia (7 blocks), Hooghly (1 block), North 24 Parganas (1 block) and South 24 Parganas (1 block) districts; while Tulaiapanji is grown in Uttar Dinajpur (4 blocks) and Dakshin Dinajpur (1 block) districts under technical supervision of the Scientists of the two SAUs during 2009-2011.

In addition, Gobindabhog is largely cultivated by the farmers of Burdwan, Nadia, Hooghly, Bankura, and North 24 Parganas districts during kharif season; while Tulaiapanji is being cultivated intensively in Uttar Dinajpur and Dakshin Dinajpur districts of North Bengal for hundreds of years.

Release of ‘Gobindabhog’ Rice Packet and Development of Model Value-Chain

With up-scaling the area and production technology of Gobindabhog rice in Nadia district, the farmers of different Co-operatives, Trusts, Self-Help Groups, etc. regularly visit our University with their produce for milling at the Paddy Processing Centre, Faculty of Agricultural Engineering and make packets of quality rice.

At the RKVY Review Workshop held at our University on 27 May, 2010, Dr. Sanjeev Chopra, IAS, Principal Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Government of West Bengal and Shri Ginn Pal, IAS, Additional Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India, released ‘Gobindabhog’ rice packets produced by the farmers under the technical supervision of the Scientists of BCKV. The Hon’ble Vice Chancellor, the Deans, Directors and other dignitaries appreciated the concept and effort to develop a value-chain system for Gobindabhog rice.

The Co-operatives, Trusts, Farmers’ Groups, etc. sale their Gobindabhog rice packets to varied customers through ATIC sale counter at BCKV, Agriculture Fairs etc. Thus, a model value-chain system for Gobindabhog rice developed under RKVY Project needs active support and cooperation from the Government, Business Organizations, and the farmers’ organisations, SAU etc. for long-term sustainability.

Organic Certification

Organic certification of Gobindabhog rice-based cropping system in about 9.8 ha of land (University Farm and two farmers’ fields) in Nadia district has been started since June, 2010. IMO Control Private Limited is the Organic Certification Agency for the programme, which is accredited by APEDA under the Ministry of Commerce and Industries, Government of India. It is expected to achieve the ‘India Organic Logo for Gobindabhog rice’ during 2012-13, which may facilitate the export of ‘Organic Gobindabhog’ in near future.

Notification by Rajya Sabha Secretariat

A Public Notice issued by Rajya Sabha Secretariat, Standing Committee on Commerce was published in the National Dailies during October, 2010 for inviting views / suggestions / comments from experts / institutions / organizations on the subject of ‘Export Promotion Schemes pertaining to Agricultural & Processed Food Products’.

Submission of a Proposal on “Promotional Strategy of Export of Bengal Aromatic Rice (‘Gobindabhog’ and ‘Tulaipanji’)”

Dr. Mrityunjay Ghosh, Associate Professor and Principal Investigator of RKVY Project prepared a Proposal on “Promotional Strategy for Export of Bengal Aromatic Rice (‘Gobindabhog’ and ‘Tulaipanji’),” which was duly forwarded by the Vice-Chancellor and submitted to the Standing Committee on Commerce on 29 October, 2010. The Proposal included the salient strategies, namely:

- Development of Export Policy of Bengal Aromatic Rice (‘Gobindabhog’ and ‘Tulaipanji’)
- Promotion of market-driven commercial cultivation along with buy-back system like ‘well-established value-chain system for Basmati’ in Northern India
- Commercial introduction programme in International / Global Trade Fair
- Strengthening of research efforts for Bengal Aromatic Rice
- Establishment of a new ‘Bengal Aromatic Rice Agri Export Zone’ in West Bengal

The Team for the Proposal

Dr. M Ghosh is the Principal Investigator of a multi-Institutional RKVY Project on ‘Bengal Aromatic Rice’ along with Dr. G Mondal, CCPI, UBKV and Dr. T K Ghose, CCPI, Bose Institute. Besides Dr Ghosh, the Project team at BCKV includes Dr A Biswas, Dr S Mukherjee, Dr D Mizumder, Dr A Bhattacharya, Dr K Karmakar, Dr B N Panja, Dr S K Pal, Dr K K Kolie, Dr B C Patra, Dr P K Biswas, Dr K K Senapati and Dr K K Goswami along with the Research Fellows, Office Assistants and Project Assistants.