

Sabujayan project to check soil erosion to revolutionise Nadia district



Kolkata: Sabujayan project taken up to stop soil erosion by planting Vetiver grass along river banks by the Panchayat and Rural Development department with funds that are made available under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is likely to create a miracle in Nadia district soon. The project named by the Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee was inaugurated at a function at Tehatta in November, 2015. Steps have been taken to plant Vetiver grass along the banks of rivers Bhagirathi, Jalangi, Mathabhanga, Churni, Padma and Ichamati which pass through the district. Vast areas of the district get flooded and there is massive soil erosion. To compact the formidable looking problem of

soil erosion, the project has been taken up. Vijay Bharti, District Magistrate of Nadia maintained that till today, plantation of Vetiver along 40.82 km riverbank had been completed and by September, more than 200 km plantation would be made. The total area where the grass will be planted will be around 786 km. The Sabujayan project has been divided into three parts, namely, nursery raising, plantation along the riverbank and handicrafts making, by using the upper part of the Vetiver plants for the livelihood of the economically challenged Self Help Group members attached with the plantation and nursery raising. Vetiver grass is available in Tamil Nadu but it is both time consuming and expensive to bring the saplings and plant along the river bank. To reduce expenditure, 12 lakh Vetiver slips from Tamil Nadu were brought from December 2015 to April, 2016 and planted in 67 nurseries. Now, 2.5 crore saplings have been made from 12 lakh Vetiver slips. The grass grows very fast and roots go 30 feet below preventing the soil

from erosion. Extensive training and awareness drives have been conducted in the district, block and gram panchayat levels. Nodal officers in the block and gram panchayat levels have been selected and sensitised for the successful launching of the project.

Vetiver experts from national and international levels have been brought to visit the nurseries to make the project foolproof. P Vincent, popularly known as the “Vetiver man of South” visited the sites at Nakashipara and Dhubulia on June 24. He held technical session with all field level officials related to the project. Earlier, he visited the district along with Paul Truong, technical director of The Vetiver Network International. Vincent expressed satisfaction over the functioning of the project. If successful, the project will be implemented in other districts to prevent soil erosion which is a major problem in many districts like Murshidabad where crore of rupees are spent.