

### 13. SVCP team participation in ACIAR annual review and planning meeting

SWCP partners and collaborators participated in ACIAR annual review and planning meeting in July in Karachi. ACIAR partners shared the project progress through pictorial presentation. Project leader presented SWCP project to the agriculture ministries and high delegates from Sindh and Punjab. Project manager shared project communication plan with participants. Regional M&E coordinator of CABI gave a compressive presentation on an M&E model which was set as an example for other ACIAR projects of Pakistan. The research officers and all partners of SVCP participated in the meeting and shared their field experiences. During the meeting collaborations were established with Best Cotton Initiatives (BCI) in Sindh, Establishment of Model Farm Project Government of Punjab and Engro Corporation Pakistan.



### 14. Success story – Punjab

#### Promoting vegetable nurseries as small-scale enterprises

Healthy seeds and seedlings are the first and essential requirement for achieving higher yield of any vegetable crops. Now a days, vegetable growers have become more conscious about quality seeds or seedlings. In Pakistan, vegetable nurseries, especially tomatoes and chilies, are grown conventionally in the field, which are mostly affected by different soil borne diseases and insect pests. This traditional method of seedling production also requires more seeds to achieve the recommended plant population in the field, due to which it becomes more expensive for small land farmers. These seedlings are up rooted when mature and sold or transplanted as bare-rooted by farmers. Root and sometimes stem of seedlings get damaged during uprooting and transplanting, therefore seedlings are more vulnerable to disease attack. Keeping in view this important challenge of smallholder farmers, SVCP production team (Punjab) has developed a growing media from locally available substrates (coco coir, sugarcane press mud and rice hull ash) under the ACIAR funded project “Strengthening vegetable value chains in Pakistan for greater community livelihood benefits”. This media is two times cheaper than commercially available peat moss. After the training by the project team,



the farmers, including Mr. Allah Bachaya and Mr. Ashiq Hussain among SVCP farmers community in Muzaffargarh, adopted this media and are growing tomato nursery in this media. They said that they are very happy to use this local media because they are getting healthy nursery. Because this media encourage root growth and seedlings are healthier compared to seedlings grown in peat

moss and those raised by conventional method. They will harvest tomatoes earlier due to transplanting of healthy nursery without transplanting shock in the main field. So, they will fetch good price (~ 20%) from the market due to early harvest of their produce. They also said that cost of seeds is also reduced by 50% due to good germination of seeds in this media and this will also be a source of regular

assistance and support to women and youth to flourish this business. Because women and youth have no idea regarding these local substrates so they can take advantage of this intervention and adopt this opportunity as a business to earn money.

## 15. Success story – Sindh

### Women empowerment and leadership skill development



Village Loung Khan Soomro is a typical remote village in district Khairpur of Sindh Pakistan. Women of this village share the similar status as other rural women in Sindh province. Mrs Azeema is a 46 years old woman who likes other women of village daily jousts with the life due to minimum resources. Her main source of income is only two buffaloes from which she earns income and tries to meet the expenses of her family.

The SWCP project provided the opportunity to the women of Loung Khan Soomro to learn the skills of developing value-added products in their own homes. Value addition team from Sindh Agriculture University

trained the selected members of the rural community in developing value added products. Trainings furnished the leadership qualities of Mrs Azeema. Under her leadership other women get organized and started to produce quality value added products such as pickles and green chili chutney. The next challenge for this newly formed group was the marketing of their products, which was not due to lack of skills but due to gender restrictions in the society where women are discouraged to do marketing in local town. Ms Azeema had ingenious idea. She interacted with male members of her immediate and extended family. She selected the suitable persons from her family and motivated them to go out

for marketing. She organized a group of male members and start sending them to different local markets, where they can meet with prospective customers to introduce their products. In the starting, they didn't get satisfactory response but with perseverance of Mrs Azeema they gradually started getting orders from different retailers. In recent visits they approached Ranipur and Khairpur markets from where they got sufficient supply orders and have agreed for a certain payment order from retailers. Mrs. Azeema is expecting to get more orders in near future which will bring positive change in the lives of her group and their families.