

Organic Farming Promotional programmes in the State

NEED FOR ORGANIC FARMING

Advances in Agricultural research have propelled dramatic changes in farming practices over the last four decades resulting in a loss of natural habitat and species. Environmental pollution of ground and surface water from agricultural sources is on the rise. The current agricultural practices:

- damage soil structure,
- pollute the environment,
- create potential health hazards in food,
- reduce food quality,
- are energy intensive systems,
- involve intensive animal production systems which are ethically unsound and are economically costly to the society and more so to farmers.

Use of chemical fertilizers over last four decades in crop production has caused severe damage to both physical and chemical properties of soil besides reduction in soil flora and fauna and pollution of surface and ground water.

Substitution of a large number of species for only a few and the adoption of high yielding and uniform varieties from a genetic point of view, has caused a significant erosion in the genetic base of cultivated species. Many agricultural species, varieties and breeds played an important role in the human diet and traditional cultures are practically extinct over the last century.

ORGANIC FARMING

Organic farming aims at production of quality and safe agricultural products, which contain no chemical residues, following eco-friendly production methods and farming system that restore and maintain soil fertility. Organic farming differs in many ways from that of conventional farming. It is generally recognized that organic farming:

- does not pollute the soil and ground water with chemical residues.
- increases the biological diversity among plants and animals.
- reduces leaching of minerals from soil
- depends on and makes full use of natural, local and renewable resources.
- uses low energy inputs, and

➤ depends largely on natural equilibrium for crop protection.

PRINCIPLES OF ORGANIC FARMING

Organic agriculture and processing are based on a number of principles and ideas. They are very important and form the base of the system.

- To produce food of high nutritional standards in sufficient quantity.
- To interact in a constructive and life enhancing way with natural systems and cycles.
- To encourage and enhance biological cycles within the farming system involving microorganisms, soil flora and fauna, plants and animals.
- To sustain soil fertility and productivity.
- To promote judicious use and proper care of water, water resources and all life therein.
- To conserve soil and water.
- To use renewable on-farm resources in locally organised agricultural systems.
- To work with materials and substances which can be re-used or re-cycled, either on the farm or from outside.
- To provide proper living conditions to live stock which allow them to perform the basic aspects of their innate behavior.
- To minimise all forms of pollution that may result from agricultural practices.
- To maintain the genetic diversity of the agricultural system and its surroundings, including protection of plant, livestock and wild life habitat.
- To preserve and enhance traditional and indigenous knowledge in farming besides seeds and crop varieties.
- To consider wider social and ecological impacts of farming system.
- To produce non-food products out of renewable resources, which are fully degradable.

Considering all the aforesaid aspects, Government of Karnataka brought out Karnataka State Organic Farming during March 2004 and since then several promotional programmes were initiated in the State to promote Organic Farming.

MAIN OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY:

- To reduce the debt burden of farmers and enable to achieve sustenance and self respect
- To enhance soil fertility and productivity increasing life in soil

- To reduce the cost of production
- To improve farmers' income through production of quality produce
- To increase the food security by encouraging the traditional crops
- To increase rural employment opportunities
- To facilitate farmers' Self Help groups for most of their requirements
- To make environment safe and pollution free and also protect health of human beings and animals
- To equip the farmers to effectively mitigate the drought prone situation in rain fed and drought prone areas

Under the policy the following promotional programmes were taken up.

- Conversion of 100ha area into organic cultivation (organic village/site)
- Conversion of State Government and State Agricultural Universities farms into organic cultivation
- Documentation of existing organic farming practices to develop package of practices.
- Research in organic farming
- Training , publicity & propaganda
- Trade fairs and Organic Farming exhibitions in Krishimelas
- Market development for organic produce

Savayava Bhagya Yojane

As a first step towards promotion of organic farming in the State and as envisaged in para 5.9 of organic farming policy brought out during 2004-05, In the first phase Organic village / site programme was initiated in the year 2004-05 at district level to establish model organic farming site in around 100ha area in each of the district. Based on the results and success of Organic Village/Site programme at district level, the programme was extended to each taluka during 2006-07 . A third party evaluation of the programme by the three agricultural universities of the state showed positive impact of the programme. Based on this report supported by the demand by organic farmers and also the NGO's involved in the implementation of the programme, the programme was extended to convert another new 100 ha. area in each taluk during 2010-11.

Savayava Bhagya Yojane, a mega programme initiated during the later part of 2013-14 is an extension of the earlier Organic village/site programme to hobli level with few modifications in its implementation viz developing good

marketing linkages and market development to the organic produce of the state. Government order has been issued for implementation of Savayava Bhagya Yojane during 2013-14.

The programme is being implemented in association with the NGOS selected for each taluk transparently through e-tendering. NGO selected for the taluka has been entrusted with responsibility of bringing around 100ha under organic farming in each hobli of the taluka.

Important features of the programme:

- Programme implemented in 571 hoblis of the state, bringing around 53,829 farmers under the perview of the programme in around 63,677 ha.
- Programme implemented in association with the NGO's.
- In the implementation area (100 ha), the benefeciary farmers are organised into an associations and this association will be registered.
- Site Committe constituted comprising representatives from farmers associations, NGO representative and Department officer to prepare action plan for implementation of the Programme.
- District organic farming steering committee under the chairmanship of Joint director of Agriculture to approve action plans, inspection & monitering
- Advisory Committee(Technical Committe) under the chairmanship of Director of Agriculture and District level Steering committee under the chairmanship of District joint Director of Agriculture.
- High level committee under the chairmanship of Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture for monitoring and implementation of the Programme.

Various components carried out in each 100 ha block under Savayava Bhagya Yojane:

- Identifcation of the project area 100 ha contiguous block
- Bench Mark survey of Project area.
- The farmers of the area organised to form association & registeration of farmers groups.
- Site committee constitution comprising representatives from farmers associations, NGO representative and Department officer to prepare action plan for implementation of the Programme in that block.
- Training, Capacity Building, Study Tours & Field days.
- Publicity ó Pamphlets, Folders, Posters, Wall Paintings, C.D, Exhibition, Booklets.
- Green manure seeds, azolla pits, bio-digester units, Gobber gas units.

- Compost & Vermi Compost Units, cow urine pits, cement pits for preparation of liquid manure viz panchagavya, jeevanmrutha etc.
- Bio-fertilizers, organic manures, enriched manure, oil cakes etc
- Organic Seeds & Seedling.
- Perrineal Fodder seeds & cuttings
- Pest & Dieases management eg Bio- pesticides, parasites, predators etc
- Plastic drums for preparation botanicals
- Community Seed Bank, Community Library.
- Honney bee boxes & honney harvester
- Value addition, Processing, Packing, Marketing.
- Consumer Awareness programme.
- Photo Documentation
- Internal Control System & Group Certification.
- Documentation of Traditional Practices, Success Stories.

Convergence of line department programmes into the project area:

- Forest Tree saplings
- Forest nursery development
- Vegetable Kitchen garden.
- Cattle, Buffallo, goat, sheep, poultry, Fish
- Cementing of the cow shed floors to collect dung & urine
- Soil & Water Conservation structures.
- MNREGA

Apart from hobli level Savayava Bhagya Yojane, other organic farming promotional programmes being implemented during the current year are:

- Market Development for Organic Produce including Certification
- Evaluation and monitoring of the programme
- Publicity and Awareness programmes
- Research in Organic Farming and innovative projects
- Components/Units prerequisite to Organic farming at 90% subsidy to Scheduled Caste farmers.
