

**Developing a Culture of Sustainable Consumption and Lifestyle through Organic
Production and Consumption in the State of Rajasthan (ProOrganic II)**

Exposure Visit to Earth University

March 23-26, 2019

Objective

Seed banking is going to be an important activity under the ProOrganic II this year, so to get acclimatize the District Partners of the project with the process of this and to get familiar with the functioning of community seed bank and how we can implement this activity in our project area, this visit was undertaken. The visit also aimed to get the District Partners know about the different indigenous seeds, which are existing in our area and how can these be promoted in organic farming.



1. Day One-March 25, 2019

On March 25, 2019, RDP and seven project partners visited Earth University at Dehradun district in Uttarakhand state. The visit started with welcoming of the team by Mr. J. P. Khali (Farm Manager) at the farm.

- **Interaction with Mr. J. P. Khali (Farm Manager):** A brief introduction about ProOrganic II project was given and the Mr. Khali briefed about the history of Earth University and Navdhanya & issue of chemical farming. He told about the seed

saving campaign, which got started 35 years back by Dr. Vandana Shiva. Navdhanya is now working in 26 states of India with 3 lac farmer members and about 1000 community seed banks throughout. About the low trend in production of organic farming in the country and as a result, very small percentage of its consumption, he said that according to FAO report, we can feed the population two fold of India by adopting organic farming by 2050.



- **Field Visit with Mr. C. S. Bhatt (Field Coordinator):** Team then visited soil testing lab, solar dryer, biogas plant , community seed bank, dairy unit, vermicomposting unit at the farm. In community seed bank, they have collected 521 types of paddy, Rajma and many more diverse grains peculiar to mountain area. They are using the traditional methods to preserve the seed. The team also witnessed experimental plots, where they have grown mixed cropping of three crops, nine crops & 12 crops. The effects of different cropping systems in organic farming has also been showcased. Team also visited orchard of **Amrapalli** variety of mango, which is most convenient with Indian climate and is being preserved by way of preparing seedlings.
- **Interaction with Dr. Vinod Bhatt (Agronomist):** After lunch, team interacted with Dr. Vinod Bhatt, who has been associated with Earth University since last 22 years. Dr. Bhatt told that seeds are the gift of nature but some private companies have done the monopoly over them. He talked about Neem Patent by America and GMO seed patent by Monsanto and Bayer. He told that in ancient times, when no hybrids were there, our people used to save seeds by traditional methods. He told that by practicing monoculture, we have lost our biodiversity, which has resistant to protect from insects, diseases and weather conditions. So for successful organic farming, we need to use our native seeds, preserve and produce them.



- **Interaction with Dr. R. S. Rawat (Plant Breeder):** Dr. Rawat is a plant breeder and is associated with community seed bank since last 20 years. He suggested that to start a community seed bank in an area, where monoculture is practiced, identify the varieties of crops, which are having good results in organic farming. Then, we have to select the farmer, who is practicing organic farming in that particular area. We can make seed producers in the field, who can grow the seeds.

2. Day Two-March 26, 2019

Visit of Community Seed Bank at Bhatwadi Village, Jaunpur, Uttarakhand

Team visited one community seed bank at Bhatwadi village in Jaunpur district of Uttarakhand. The seed bank was set up in a school and teacher and one teacher was nominated for maintaining the records. During the interaction with villagers, they told that every farmer has a seed bank at their homes and they are preserving the seeds at their homes itself. Whenever, they require any seed from here, they take it then once the crop is harvested, they deposit the double quantity in the community seed bank. Thus the seeds are multiplying as well as preserved also. Mr. Arvind (Field Coordinator, RLEK) informed that this program has involved school children. Every Saturday, children come to school without their bags and learn basic skills of weeding, hoeing, seed sowing and other agricultural practices. He informed that every household has small place, where they grow their daily use vegetable in a mixed cropping pattern using the waste water of home, which is called by the name '**Sagoda**' in their local language. This is an old practice in mountain area, which has been practiced since ancient time. For preserving the seeds, they are using traditional methods like mixing with ash, use of neem leaves, use of vegetable fruits etc.



3. Highlights

- The area is lesser influenced by green revolution and farmers are still using traditional method in agriculture.
- Existence of more biodiversity and flora and fauna in this region and also people are environmental friendly.
- By adopting community managed seed system, people are preserving their traditional seeds and thus they are escaping from market lobby of seed selling companies.

5. Participants

ProOrganic district partners and RDP in the capacity of project team representative and the representative of Jaipur district as well.



6. Key Take Away from Exposure

- To set up a Community Seed Bank, it is important to know about the indigenous seed of different crops, which can be promoted in organic farming.
- To start community managed seed system in an area, where hybrid seeds are more pushed, we need to select seed growers.
- Traditional methods for seed saving can be adopted for proper functioning of these seed banks.
- The word Community Based Seed Bank can termed as 'Community Managed Seed System'