CUTS International

Developing a Culture of Sustainable Consumption and Lifestyle through Organic Production and Consumption in the State of Rajasthan (ProOrganic Bridge Year, 2021)

Synthesis Report

Strengthening the Community Managed Seed Cells 2021

Background

Agriculture in India, the pre-eminent sector of the economy, is the source of almost two-thirds of the country's workforce. The contribution of agriculture to India's economic growth is as significant as the role of industry and services. However, organic farming is not a new concept in India, and it has been followed since ancient times. It aims to keep the soil fertility, cultivate the land and grow crops using organic inputs. The other biological materials and organic waste's microbes release nutrients to crops for increased sustainable production in an eco-friendly, pollution-free environment.

Organic farming is a holistic production management system that promotes agro-ecosystem health, including biodiversity and soil biological activity. It is the best alternative to establishing a possible relationship between the earth and humanity. Increasing awareness about the safety of food consumed is realised by reducing the harmful impacts of chemical-based agriculture. Notably, organic agriculture occupies only one percent of the global agricultural land, making it a relatively unused resource for one of the most significant challenges the world faces today, like deforestation, wildfires and extensive destruction of the environment. In India, organic farming contributes to 2.5 percent of the total geographical area, which needs more attention.

ProOrganic II

With the support from the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC), CUTS is implementing a project 'Developing a Culture of Sustainable Consumption and Lifestyle through Organic Production and Consumption in the State of Rajasthan (ProOrganic II)' from April 01, 2017-March 31, 2021 in 192-*gram panchayats* of 10 selected districts of Rajasthan (India). The project's main objective is to fill the identified gaps and sustain the acquired momentum to achieve the expected outcomes of a better ecosystem by promoting organic consumption.

One of the project's primary objectives is to promote sustainable consumption and production from a vital aspect of a sustainable lifestyle, broadly consistent with environmental and social factors and the education and empowerment of consumers. The bridge year from April-December 2021 focused on gathering the ground evidence for more concentrated work towards model organic villages in selected districts. The aim was to showcase the project's long-term impact on the ground.

Community Managed Seed Cell System

In ancient times, when no hybrid seeds were there, farmers used to save seeds by traditional methods. By practicing monoculture, we have lost our biodiversity, resistance to insects, diseases, and weather conditions. So for successful organic farming, there is a need to use native seeds to preserve and produce them.

Even now, this practice is one of the most vital elements to address the availability of good quality seeds at farmer's arm length. Community-managed seed cells established in various parts of India under different schemes and programmes have enhanced the resilience of smallholder farmers of communities and households. These were most affected by climate change by securing improved access and availability of diverse, locally adapted crops and varieties. This helps smallholders restore related knowledge and plant management skills, including seed selection, treatment, storage, multiplication, and distribution.

Community seed banks are the source of local genetic diversity that is often adapted to prevailing climate conditions, including biotic stresses. They are instrumental in contributing to community-based strategies for adaptation to climate change. However, community seed banks have received little attention in the literature on climate change adaptation. As climate change significantly impacts agricultural production, growing local varieties, which have a high degree of genetic diversity, is highly important because these varieties can better withstand and adapt to environmental stresses and changes.

Community seed banks helped preserve local seeds of the most adapted varieties for the region. The smallholder farmers' collectives mutually selected the most suitable types for an area. Still, after identifying the best varieties, the community seed bank plays a vital role in maintaining the availability of good quality local seeds. Smallholders diversify their crops and types to reduce the risk of total production failures and strengthen family resilience.

Need to Include this Activity

This unique activity started on the ground in 2019-20 to train target district progressive farmers to develop skills to protect, preserve, and promote indigenous seeds in organic farming. It was introduced in all the 10 targeted districts.

When a farmer adopts organic farming, he requires traditional and organic seeds for sound production. But he cannot find these seeds except some. There is no proper mechanism at the government level to provide organic and traditional seeds to farmers

who are willing to shift towards organic farming. When a farmer shifts to organic farming at the first step, he uses the hybrid seeds that cannot perform good production in organic farming techniques. Then farmers get demotivated and return to chemical one. To minimise this risk, there is a need to begin with traditional and organic seeds. It is for this reason, the activity was involved in this project for better outcomes.

Need to Consolidate and Strengthen Seed Cells

The work commenced in 2019 under the project was recurrent in 2020-21. Such structured activity requires more focus and in-depth work by farmers. Hence, similar activities were held during April-December-2021 and the same seed cell with the same partner. To cover a wider area and more number of farmers in these seed cells, work was done in a focused manner. The community seed cell is a long process, hence, there is a need to continue this for at least four to five years.

Feedback Meetings

After the initial Knowledge Sharing Meetings in all the targeted ten districts with the selected farmers, who have switched over from chemical to organic farming, there have been Feedback Meetings. The objective to hold these meetings also worked through a three-pronged approach, i.e., to discuss establishing seed cells, consider difficulties in selecting them, and guide the target farmers to take it forward.

Details of Meetings

S. N.	District	Block	Gram Panchayat	Date
1.	Jaipur	Bassi	Tunga	July 22, 2021
2.	Kota	Laadpura	Bhadana	July 29, 2021
3.	Bhilwara	Suwana	Parwaton ka Aakola	August 12, 2021
4.	Jodhpur	Mandore	Manaklav	August 31, 2021
5.	Jaipur	Bassi	Tunga	September 09, 2021
6.	Jhalawar	Khanpur	Rajpura	September 20, 2021
7.	Udaipur	Salumbar	Bambora	November 08, 2021
8.	Sawai Madhopur	Sawai Madhopur	Sawai Madhopur	December 03, 2021
9.	Chittorgarh	Chittorgarh	Chittorgarh	December 08, 2021
10.	Pratapgarh	Pratapgarh	Pratapgarh	December 08, 2021

Outcomes

- The presence of local champions, the strong support from the local executives, farmer-volunteers, capacity building, and community empowerment are some of thesuccess factors identified during the activity.
- As a modality for technology delivery, the Community Seed Cell provided management practices on seed health, crop diversification, the introduction of improved and tolerant varieties, opportunities for market integration, and conservation of traditional types for active use.
- New seeds developed by farmers of one district were shared with other district farmers through the community seed cell system to avail benefits.
- Different vegetable seeds, such as Bottle Guard, Cucumber, Chilli, Tomato, Cluster Beans, Okra, and Grains & Pulses according to availability in other districts, werecollected and preserved at the local level.
- The sharing with farmers in other districts will be based on the quantity.
- The target groups followed the principle of 'learning-by-doing as the best management options to ensure seed purity and quality of seeds they produced on-farm.
- Farmers have started using traditional methods to preserve the seeds, like mixing with ash, neem leaves, vegetable fruits, etc.
- Identified committed farmers who processed seeds from various individuals/groups and shared these among themselves
- Focus was on multiplying the collected seeds distributed to the farmers
- The area and number of farmers have increased substantially in the bridge year
- Multiplication of seed was measured by quantity received at seed cell, and partners were instructed to engage more farmers

Conclusion

The CUTS project team monitored the activity and ensured that at least one member of the project team attended the ground-level training. The farmers engaged in organic farming can understand the importance of locally-adapted varieties of different crops. They are coming forward and adopting the concept of seed cells. These seed cells will ensure community engagement, and farmers will be self-dependent in the sector of seeds. However, it can take time to reach a broader community but will be beneficial in the future for an individual farmer.

Glimpses & Media Coverage

किसानों को बीज के बारे में दी जानकारी

तूंगा. कस्बा स्थित नारड्या कृषि फार्म हाउस पर गुरुवार को किसान बाबूलाल शर्मा की अध्यक्षता मे ग्रामीण आर्थिक सामुदायिक पुन निर्माण व विकास संस्थान के सहयोग से किसानों की बैठक का आयोजन हुआ। बैठक मे सहायक कृषि अधिकारी शिमला मीणा ने किसानो को परंपरागत तरीके से बीजों को रखने के बारे मे जानकारी दी व किसानों की आय दुगुनी करने के लिए किसानो को उन्नत खेती के तरिके समझाये गये वहीं जैविक खाद से ही खेती करने पर बल दिया। इस दौरान किसान राजेन्द्र शर्मा,

तूंगा. किसानों की बैठ
करने के गुर सिखाते
अधिकारी शिमला।

नीरज पांचाल, स
रामचन्द्र बैरवा,
सैनी, घनश्याम,

जैविक बीज बैंक स्थापित करने की घोषणा

कोटा । जैविक खेती को बढ़ावा देने के लिए तथा उसमें किसानों व आम जन का विश्वास

अधिकारी धर्मेंद्र चतुर्वेदी ने बताया कि पिछले 8 वर्षों से जैविक खेती आधारित भोजन के लिए आने वाले

चानसी ने इसमें स्वयं की ओर से अनाज देने का वादा तथा आर्थिक सहयोग देने कर आश्वासन दिया है। जिला स्तर पर यह सामुदायिक स्तर का पहला जैविक बीज बैंक बनेगा। इससे किसानों व उपभोक्ताओं को लाभ होगा। बैठक में गायत्री कौशिक परिवार के सुचालक यज्ञदत्त हाड़ा ने जैविक कृषि को अपनाने पर जोर दिया। जल बिरादरी के बृजेश विजयवर्गीय ने कचरा प्रबंधन और रेवड़ियों का कचरा पांईट नहीं बनाने का आव्हान किया। कृषि पर्यवेक्षक

किसान जैविक खेती के जरिए खाद, बीज के लिए बाजार की निर्भरता को कम करें

बीज बैंक कार्यक्रम में मौजूद किसान और अतिथि।

राजेश ने धन्यवाद ज्ञापित किया।

दमामी, धाकड़खेड़ी की एएनएम सरोज यादव, मोटरों का खेड़ा की एएनएम ओमना केवी ने विचार व्यक्त किए। कार्यक्रम में कट्स के राजेश कुमार खोईवाल एवं प्रतिभा अजमेरा समेत महिलाओं, किशोरी बालिकाओं, आंगनबाड़ी कार्यकर्ता, आशा सहयोगिनी ने भाग लिया।

जैविक खेती की शुरुआत के लिए परंपरागत बीजों का होना आवश्यक

कास| सवाई माधोपुर

किसान को जैविक खेती करनी है

आए राजदीप पारीक ने बताया कि परियोजना के अन्तर्गत हर जिले में एक बीज बैंक की स्थापना की गई है, जहां से किसान अपनी जरूरत

किसानों को दी बीज तैयार करने की जानकारी

असनावर। किसान को यदि अपनी खेती में लागत कम करनी है तो अपना बीज तैयार

कट्स इंटरनेशनल के संयुक्त तत्वावधान में जैविक बीज संग्रहालय की बैठक का हुआ आयोजन

P3 Police Public Politics

दौसा। जैविक बीच संग्रहालय का फीडबैक बैठक का आयोजन एसजीवीएस दौसा एवं कट्स इंटरनेशनल जयपुर के संयुक्त तत्वावधान में जैविक बीज संग्रहालय की बैठक का आयोजन हरित ऑर्गेनिक फार्म खटवा पर आयोजित किया गया, कृषि विज्ञान केंद्र दौसा से वरिष्ठ वैज्ञानिक एवं अध्यक्ष डॉ.बीएल जाट की अध्यक्षता में आयोजित की गई, जिसमें उन्होंने बताया कि यह लाइब्रेरी बहुत बड़ा कार्य कर सकती हैं व लोगों की सोच बड़ी होनी चाहिए जैसे आप इसके अंदर से बीज ले जाते हैं जब

आप की फसल उत्पादित होती है और उसमें से जो भी श्रेष्ठ बीज हो उनको इकट्ठा कर लो और लाइब्रेरी में जमा करा दो जिससे और किसान भी उसका लाभ लेसके बीज वापिस से एक दिन वह आएगा जब देश की सर्वश्रेष्ठ जैविक बीज संग्रहालय में इसकी गिनती होगी लिहाजा जिलें की पहली जैविक बीज संग्रहालय होने के कारण इसमें सभी का योगदान सुनिश्चित होना चाहिए विशेषकर जैविक किसान इसमें ज्यादा से ज्यादा हिस्सा लेवे और समय पर बीज उत्पादित करके जमा कराने का कार्य करें अंत में संस्था निदेशक ओ पी पारीक ने बताया कि इसका उद्देश्य किसानों को निशुल्क बीज प्रदान किया जाता है जिससे जब उनकी उपज उत्पादित होकर आती है तो इसमें दोगुना बीज जमा कराने का संकल्प किसान लेवे साथ ही एक दिन वह समय आ जाएगा जब यह बहुत बड़ा रूप ले लेगी और विस्तृत कार्य होने लगेंगे जिससे किसान को पारंपरिक बीज निशुल्क मिलने लगेगा। जिससे पर्यावरण संतुलन एवं स्वस्थ प्रकृति के साथ-साथ स्वस्थ समाज का निर्माण संभव होगा।