

Report

Experience sharing cum learning workshop

Submitted to:



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Introduction:

Experience sharing and learning workshop was organized in Kasdol office on 15th October 2024. This workshop was organised for the old and new, demo and scale up farmers from project intervention areas from different panchayats.

The objective of this farmer to farmer experiences sharing workshop were:

- To create a platform for knowledge and experience sharing in practices of organic and climate resilient agriculture practices for long term sustainable farming.
- To familiarize farmers to learn on how organic and agro ecological based farming is practiced and benefited in another cluster.
- Promote networking and strengthen linkage among the farmers from the different villages.

At the beginning of the workshop participants were greeted by the field coordinator. Farmers from “sustainable tribal livelihood project” were also invited to this workshop as they are practicing ecological farming and agro ecological activities for last six years. Project coordinator Kavita said a word of welcome to everyone. She then briefly introduced the objectives of this workshop. Followed by project Director Abhishek ji he said, this workshop is aimed to foster a collaborative environment where farmers could exchange experiences of their field and to give insights on organic farming and explore its potential benefits for regional agriculture.

This workshop is just the need of the hour. It's not limited to just farmers but every one of us. While explaining “Jaivik Kheti” Abhishek Ji said “Jaiva” means “Jeev” life. We have life in nature. The main aim of organic agriculture is to improve the health and to save the life of the soil, crops, human and ultimately environment. Secondly, practicing organic and climate resilient agriculture will help for sustainable agriculture. He mentioned about the journey of the Punjab's from “Green revolution’ to food surplus to, today's running of “Cancer Train” due excessive use of chemical fertilisers. He shared number of examples of the harmful effects on soil, health, water, fertility, barren land, displacements of people etc.



The discussion followed on how organic farming improves soil health, by using techniques such as mix or crop rotation, composting, and the use of organic fertilizers and bio-pesticides. How these practices enhance soil structure and improve water retention capacity, resulting in healthier plants and increased crop yields. By using bio-pesticides and natural pest control mechanisms, organic farming reduces the need for harmful pesticides, protecting human health. How bio pesticides controls pests and diseases while not harming the human and environment, its positive impact on the and last but not least, how organic food is free from harmful chemicals environment, ensuring that the food we consume is free from harmful chemicals and supports healthy lifestyle. Farmers shared their experiences regarding old lost techniques and practices

which were contributing positively towards agriculture and environment. The economical viability was also worked out during discussion and how organic farming is profitable in terms of economics and other benefits were described and discussed. Abhishek ji said that the widespread adoption of organic farming practices can lead to a more sustainable and resilient agricultural sector. Organic farmers can mitigate the negative impacts of climate change, such as droughts and extreme weather events. He stated that shift to organic farming from chemical farming resulted in considerable reduction in cost of cultivation, improvement in the soil health and better yield. He also mentioned about the advantage of organic farming considering the lesser input requirement and reduced cost.

In second half the workshop was continued by exchanges on the good cultivation practices of the organic and climate resilient practices by the project intervention farmers followed by open house discussion. Shivkumar, STL project farmer from Bitkuli village shared that, he started practicing organic farming in 2019 initially on the piece of 2.5 decimal land and today he has expanded the agroecological farming practices on 8.5 acre of land. In 2.5 acre of land he is practicing total organic practices. Production of organic harvesting, he keeps for his own consumption. In other area he has minimized the use of chemical fertilizers and using bio-pesticides. Further he added that, he has developed diversity plot in 40 decimals of land in which he is growing 26 types of indigenous seeds. He didn't forget to say that looking at the results of the organic farming he has decided to continue to do only organic agriculture. It was shared by the farmers that in forest villages they do not experience "Bhura Maho" disease unlike the farmers of the plain area. And it seems they were quite happy regarding this. But farmers are unaware of the reasons for the same.

Demo farmer Santosh Jagat from Saraipali village raised the question regarding less paddy production in first year as he practiced SRI vidhi and used organic pesticides. He was answered by farmer Krishnakumar from Khudmudi village that after using chemical fertiliser for so many years soil needs to have time to rejuvenate though in the first two years the production will be little less but from third year there will be best results. He also stresses on the less expenses compare to expenses on chemical pesticides/fertilizers.



Farmer Krishnakumar from khudmudi panchayat said he have started to practice organic farming since 2019. Initially in 40 decimals and now have expanded in 04 acres of land. He shared his various experiences and challenges. Further he said "Ghana Jeevamrut" is more lasting compare to liquid Jeevamrut which needs to use within 8/10 days. He also added that due to organizations various agro ecological interventions, trainings, exposure visits and inputs have made him to practice organic farming for last six year giving him sure benefits in production, finance, health etc. Proudly he added he became the master trainer and now acts as resource person for organic agriculture both for organisation and Government department. All

the credits he gives to the timely interventions of the organizations' inputs, trainings, exposures visits, support and guidance.

New scale up farmer Kahnaya Paikara from Bhimbhori village shared that “so far he has spent only app 3500/- on pesticides other time he has to spent more than ten to fifteen thousand on the chemical pesticides.”

Last year demo farmer Kumar Bariha from Gudaghad added that he was waiting for the organizations guidance and support on organic farming in his village as he has experienced the results of organic farming from other panchayats. He has harvested 40 katti organic dhan by spending less than 3/4 thousand.

New farmer said that he was worried about his farm as he was watching and comparing his brother's farm who was not practicing organic farming. But “after few days and after using weeder he saw the differences in both the fields.”

Demo farmer Sevakram Paikara from Bafra was proud to share that “at present there are not less than 22/25 kansi to each paddy”

Lastly, while sharing the challenges shortage of laborers for line sowing was the concern of the farmers. As it is time consuming and tedious they added. Preparation of different bio-pesticides and their use on the diseases and pests, this discussion interested the participants because they were thirsty to know the means of fighting against diseases that arise in their fields. Some of them shared benefits about “T” stand they used in their farm. All the participants shared laughter movement when one of the farmers said that he didn't practice the organic farming because he was sacred that after giving seeds, he will have to give back production.



In his concluding remark Abhishek ji, mentioned the need to focus on doubling of farmers' income. He said organic farming needs smallholders, since big holders tend to go in for mono cropping and machines; on the other hand, smallholders need organic farming for profitability. To achieve and improve food security in this region, it is widely agreed that small and middle holder farmers need to increase their productivity. High lightening the importance, scope and need for adopting the organic farming.

The widespread adoption of organic farming practices can lead to a more sustainable and resilient agricultural sector. By reducing reliance on synthetic inputs, organic farmers can mitigate the negative impacts of climate change, such as droughts and extreme weather events. Additionally, organic farming promotes local food production, reducing dependence on long-distance transportation and huge expenses. He stressed the importance of organic farming in feeding the farmers and his/her family and further country a safe food.



A vote of thanks was given by the project coordinator Kavita. She made a closing statement by saying that we believe that farmers learn most effectively from their peers who face similar challenges and possess local knowledge and context-specific strategies for dealing with them. The workshop was concluded with the hope of exchange of insights and experiences among farmers' serves as a supporting for enhancing organic farming practices and encouraging community resilience.

Conclusion:

- The participants were satisfied with the organisation of this experience sharing workshop as they learned about useful organic farming methods and success stories.
- They recognized that the various interventions taught them the methods that provide many benefits at the practical level.
- They admitted that they could easily use the techniques learned in this project starting with seed selection, seed treatment, use of bio- pesticides, organic and climate resilient practices etc can build a sustainable basis long term farming.
- This workshop provided the opportunity to have a one-to-one discussion with the farmers which was a chance for them to ask detailed questions and learn from their peers.
- The workshop ended with echoing messages of the importance of organic and climate resilient agriculture practices.
- The workshop was attended by 49 farmers.