

Case Study – 1

Success Story on

Vegetable Growers Associations and Organic Cultivation of Vegetables

The project titled “improving livelihood of framers through sustainable organic vegetable cultivation by Vegetable Growers Associations (VGAs) in Tumkur taluk of Tumkur district” is being implemented by AVISKAR - NGO. This project is financially supported by NABARD to initiate organic farming in 3 villages covering 300 farmers and 60 master farmers. The objective of the project is to improve the livelihoods of rural poor through cultivation of vegetables using locally available resources and to establish institutional arrangements to achieve the sustainability in organic cultivation of vegetables.

Our approach in implementation of the project is “*Institutional – Ecological – Economic*” based. The specific activities and outputs were listed in the table would help in understanding the relationships between these dimensions.

| Institutional aspects | Ecological aspects | Economic aspects |
|--|---|----------------------------|
| Community mobilisation | Use of low external inputs | Less investment |
| Recognizing Master Farmers | Followed eco-friendly practices | Simple technology |
| Formation of VGA | Not used chemicals and fertilizers | Yield level |
| Capacitate VGA members | Used bio-fertilizers and organic manure | Quality of the produce |
| Farmer exposure to demo plots | Emphasis on revitalization of traditional knowledge | Fetches more price |
| Respect the farmers knowledge and opportunity to share their experiences | Less chance of pest / diseases outbreak on crops | Demand created |
| Established linkage with buyers | Good fruit / seed set in the crops | Income level of the farmer |

An initiative on organic vegetable cultivation was started after analyzing the situation and identifying the problems related to agriculture using PRA tools in the village. In the village meeting, around 12 farmers have come forward to adopt the package of practice (PoP) towards organic cultivation of tomato and potato crops. These farmers were observed the changes on crops and the impact of organic cultivation on yield of the crop. Finally, all these farmers were impressed upon the ultimate result of the organic cultivation of tomato and potato crops. The following were the common observations by organic growers in comparisons with modern cultivation of the same crops.

| Sl. No | Observations | Opinion by farmers |
|--------|-----------------------------|--|
| 1 | Germination percentage | Uniform |
| 2 | Moisture retention | longer time |
| 3 | Growth of the crop | uniform and robust |
| 4 | Chance of pest attack | negligible |
| 5 | Chances of diseases attack | negligible |
| 6 | Shape of the fruit | uniform and attractive |
| 7 | Yield of the crop | Almost on farm with modern agriculture |
| 8 | Response from the consumers | More demand for the produce |

Technology adoption by the organic growers

Organic vegetable growers in the selected villages were showed an interest in adoption of technologies since selection of seeds to harvest. The PoP followed by the growers in cultivation of tomato and potato crops were given below;

| Cultivation Practices | Technology adoption by the growers |
|------------------------------|--|
| Soil preparation | Soil and water management practices |
| Seed treatment | Treated with Arka microbial consortium (AMC), Trichoderma Viride and Panchagavya. |
| Sowing | Used young seedlings, wide spacing, mechanical control of weeds |
| Manure applied | Farm Yard Manure (FYM), enriched compost, neem cake, Jeevamrutha and bio-fertilizers |
| Pest and Diseases Management | bio-control agents and bio-pesticides |
| Yield | Grading and packing |

In all the 3 project villages, Two Vegetable Grower Associations covering 300 farmers were formed. These institutions are being well versed with their roles and responsibilities including procurement of inputs, mobilisation of farmers for the trainings, linkage with buyers / institutions, group certification, documentation etc. They are participating voluntarily in organizing organic melas, exhibitions, trainings etc related organic products.

Outcome of the project at village level

1. compost production using improved techniques are in practice
2. Farmers understood about preparation of bio-pesticides and use of bio-fertilizers.
3. PoP for organic cultivation of vegetable crops is being followed by many farmers.
4. Village level Master Farmers are engaged in building the capacities of other farmers in the village.
5. Organic vegetable grower associations are established in all project villages

Challenges faced in implementation of the present programme

1. Farmers shift from dependency on external inputs to low cost and locally available inputs.
2. Lack of standardized PoP for organic cultivation of vegetables.
3. Linkage with governmental schemes and research institutions for further reach.
4. Ensured market and networking with buyers of organic products

Support and collaboration required from Vegetable Growers Associations (VGAs)

1. Training cum demonstrations to farmers on innovative technologies organic farming in-time
2. Ensure availability of genuine seeds, improved varieties, bio-fertilizers etc
3. Further handholding support to Master Farmers
4. Continues follow up and regular visits to motivate the farmers towards organic farming

Feedback from selected beneficiaries:

1. **Renukaiah, Hosapalya:** Our knowledge and confidence level on organic farming has been improved due to the support of FTTF project. We expect further support under the project.
2. **Gangaramaiah, Kadarahalli:** Exposure visit to Shri Narayanareddy organic farm and other different training programmes we understood importance of organic farming techniques such as Jeevamrutha preparation, panchagavya, vermicompost manure and cultivation of green manure crops.
3. **Somla naik, Janupanahalli:** Farmers felt happy about they have received soil health cards in the village for the first time.
4. **Mutharaju, Janupanahalli:** Earlier we use go in search officers and scientists to get information. Now, many of officers are frequently visiting our plots and encouraging us to take up organic farming on larger scale.