

## Activists want GMO-free and chemical-free India by 2020

Source: <http://www.dnaindia.com/> Sat, 21 May 2016-

*"We want GMO-free and chemical-free India by 2020." - Founder of Navdanya, Vandana Shiva.*



A group of activists promoting organic farming launched 'jaivik kranti' (organic revolution) against genetically modified crops and use of pesticides in agriculture for protecting biodiversity through a five-year action plan.

The group also organised a dialogue today where state government representatives from Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Telangana held discussions on farmer suicides, biodiversity loss, drought situation in the country and pulses and oil seed crises.

The group will target 11 states and 101 cities across the country to create 1001 'javik grams' (organic villages) with the support of 5,000 local women's food processing units. Each 'jaivik gram' will have a seed bank and an operation 'ghani' (cold press) and 'chakki' (flour mill).

"We want GMO-free and chemical-free India by 2020. We want governments and ordinary citizens to realise that the GM miracle and chemical miracle is false miracle. We have paid too higher prices and we will not pay that price because we have better systems," environmental activist and founder of Navdanya, Vandana Shiva.

She was addressing a press conference on the issue that was also attended by Maharashtra MP Sanjay Dhotre and Maharashtra governments' Special Task Force Chairman Kishore Tiwari.

"The problem of farmer suicide and water loss in Maharashtra is caused by killer crops like sugarcane and BT Cotton. More than 50 per cent of the area in Vidarbha and Marathwada should be given food crop cultivation including pulses, oil seeds and millets," Kishore said.

The government has recently capped royalty for the new genetically modified (GM) traits at 10 per cent of the maximum sale price of BT cotton seeds for the first five years in a bid to regulate the cotton seed market

## Oriya scientist on 'Make India' organic mission

April 29 2016, Orissa Post



**Manish Kumar**  
Post News Network

**Bhubaneswar:** A farm scientist who left Orissa in search of better career prospects in London in 1998 has now vowed to serve his state. The 57-year-old scientist is on a project to turn Indian agriculture totally “organic”.

Nilamadhab Nanda, an alumnus of Orissa University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT), is an MBA pass-out from California state university (2005). He developed a sea weed-based farm input at his London lab which could potentially multiply harvest. Nanda claims his product has been tested in several countries and has proved its worth in an organic way.

“The input has been prepared by taking enzyme extracts from 97 different sea weed varieties. It is natural and completely organic which could give an impetus to organic farming in India. This product has been certified by the US department of agriculture (USDA) and other reputed global organisations,” claimed Nanda.

The farm input is present in the form of a powder which is blended with water into a solution which is sprayed over the crops to raise productivity.

Nanda, who has returned to Bhubaneswar to extend the technological benefits in the state, has already started his work. “I have tried to bring the technology to around 4, 500 gram panchayats in the state. In Orissa this input has been tried on a number of crops except on tea and tobacco and the results have been overwhelming,” added Nanda.

However, Nanda also plans to extend the benefits of the innovation to other parts of the country. He has tried his products in 18 states and other countries in Europe and Australia. Nanda intends to try it in more states to ensure organic farming gets a boost in the country. Nanda started his firm in Jatni in 2015 to make replicas of the technology and reach out to more farmers to pursue them abandon the practice of using harmful chemical fertilisers in their fields.

When asked about the motivation for coming back to the state, Nanda said, “I am about reaching 60 and I want to bring down the benefits of innovation to my state and my country. I dream of making the country’s farming complete organic by 2020. My move is a step in this direction.”

Source: [www.orissapost.com](http://www.orissapost.com)

## Stand-up sessions spreading organic farming

Sangamesh Menasinakai| TNN | Jun 4, 2016



HUBBALLI: Stand-up comedy shows have been popular in the state in recent years. They have been part and parcel of many family and social gatherings to enthrall audience. Seeing their popularity, a farmer has coined 'Stand-up organic sessions' to relieve farmers from financial crisis. He is addressing farmers' fraternity during marriages, birthdays and other family celebrations to create awareness about sustainable agriculture and how to tackle drought and other natural calamities.

Sharing his experiences with TOI, Sureshgouda Patil, 47, a progressive farmer of Hulkoti village in Gadag district, said that he has been delivering lectures on organic farming from 2004. 'In the starting 4 years, my lectures were restricted in Gadag itself. Then I joined as subject matter specialist on organic farming at KH Patil Krishi Vigyan Kendra Hulkoti in 2008 and improved my knowledge there till 2011 while training farmers. During this period I got many opportunities to interact with agriculture scientists' he recalled.

Sureshgouda, who has a Diploma and is a BSc drop out, recalled that earlier he was using chemical fertilizers and pesticides for agriculture activities. 'In 1990, I

said good bye to chemicals based farming and shifted to organic system. As many as 56 acres of land, on which 14 family members were depending, was destroyed drastically and soil was worsened. It reformed gradually after organic farming activities' he mentioned.



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When asked about `stand-up organic sessions', he said that he has been training farmers in workshops organized by agriculture, horticulture departments and various social organisations. `We find only farmers, family heads in such workshops. When drought was indicated in the state, last year, I thought of sensitising dependents of farmers. If mother, wife, sister, children gets knowledge about organic farming, then the farmer can move ahead. There will be some apprehensions among family members over adopting organic farming, which is fruitful sustainable form in nature. As I was observing stand-up comedy in family occasions, I intended to present stand-up organic sessions during such celebrations. As of now, I had addressed a dozen of such occasions in a year' he explained.

Parvatevva Arali, a farmer in Shirahatti taluk, said that she had invited Sureshgouda to speak about organic farming on the occasion of her son's marriage. `As he elaborated in very common words with simple instances, his words reached everyone including children. Even outside attendees started discussing about sustainable agriculture' she commented.

Ganesh Gowda, another farmer in Lingapura, Shivamogga district, shared that Sureshgouda's speech, organized during house warming ceremony, has floated a

debate among farmers' families, who are falling behind and chemicals and BT crops. 'His move will bring positive change among farmers fraternity even to tackle calamities like drought and floods' he opined.

'Sureshgouda has been innovative and enthusiastic enough on sustainable agriculture issues. He has developed a good network of like-minded experts and organizations. His studious nature has been helpful to enrich his knowledge', said Vitthal D Vaikunthe, Agriculture Scientist, HK Patil Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Hulkoti.

## From barren land to an organic farm

*Prathima's chemical-free produce has become quite famous in the neighbourhood. SANAA PARPIA takes a tour of the farm in Kolapakkam*



Medicinal plants such as Vallarai Keerai and Mudakathan Keerai are also grown here. Photo: M. Karunakaran

Three years ago, when Prathima Ganeshram was sipping her cuppa in the evening, the idea of transforming her 12-acre barren land into an organic farm struck her. For a woman born into an agricultural family, this was not surprising.

She drew inspiration from the writings of G. Nammazhvar, an organic farming scientist, and Subash Palekar, an agriculturist.

However, she did not find much encouragement from the people around her, who said her plan would come a cropper. But, she was determined to go ahead with her idea. Her husband, M.K Ganeshram, was a great support. With Ganeshram extending financial help, she started working on this idea which led to the establishment of 'the Asoka Organic Farm,' in Kolapakkam, near Omega International School.

"My first task was to educate the farmers," says Prathima. After series of discussions, she showed them the advantages of organic farming.

"I myself had to learn a lot about organic farming and for that, I read a lot of books," she says.

She tried growing different varieties of fruits and vegetables such as banana, pumpkin, watermelon, brinjal, ladies finger, beans, ivy gourd and tomatoes.

She received a boost when buyers from across the city started coming to buy from her farm. "Nearly 40 to 60 people come here every day," she said.

While local residents come every day, people from other localities such as Pallavaram, Tambaram, Guindy, Pallikaranai and Chromepet also visit the farm.

Prathima also has a herbal garden, where she grows medicinal plants such as Vallarai Keerai, Mudakathan Keerai and Moringa Keerai. These are sold at Rs.20 a bunch.

The farm is also well-known for its A2 farm fresh milk. It has six Indian cows.

"Organic farming is not a 9 to 5 job. Farmers must rise before sunrise and leave after sunset," says Prathima. There are about 10 farmers including five women working at the farm. They spend most of their time plucking, weeding, watering crops and making cow dung manure.

Their natural manuring techniques also include vermicomposting and creating fish manure. The daily leftovers in the farm are used to make manure or are used for feeding the cows.

Prathima says that the advanced drip system, use of sprinklers and a 6kv solar panel used to generate electricity have made irrigation easier.

Prathima says that she regularly organises workshops on terrace farming and organic kitchen gardening.

The farm is open for educational field trips, wherein children can learn about farming. There are plans to open up the farm to visitors, who would be provided a cycle to go round the place. Prathima can be contacted at 9789186868.

Source: The Hindu, April 24, 2016.



## Cow urine kills farm pests in India's first fully organic state

**The Gulf Today, July 20, 2016**



SIKKIM: Nimtshreng Lepcha seeps medicinal leaves in cow urine and sprays the brew over his tomatoes. It's the main way pests are repelled on his farm in the Himalayan foothills and across the northeastern state of Sikkim, the first in India to go fully organic.

For more than a decade, Sikkim's 66,000 farmers have shunned chemical weed killers, synthetic fertilisers and gene- altered seeds. Their return to traditional farming methods has made the tiny state, sandwiched between China, Nepal and Bhutan, a testing ground for a counter movement to the Green Revolution, the half-century-old system that relied on modern seeds, chemicals and irrigation to boost crop yields and stave off hunger.

Now, faced with health and environmental problems ranging from poisoned waterways and degraded farmland, to antibiotic- resistant bacteria and diet-linked disease, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is backing Sikkim's approach as a safer, more sustainable way to produce food, support farm jobs and reduce the nation's fertilizer bill.

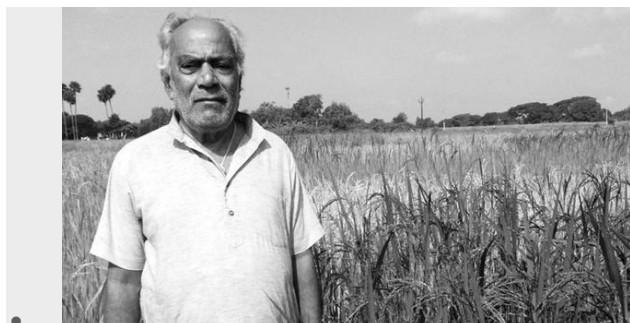
"Other states can take a lead from Sikkim," Modi told political leaders in the nearby state of Meghalaya last month. "The North East can become the organic food basket for this country. Organic products are going to be increasingly used widely," he continued, and the practice "will contribute immensely to the income of the people and the region."

### Employment Boost

India already has some 650,000 organic producers-more than any other country. Expanding the industry could boost employment by 30 percent through recycling resources, and certifying, marketing and packaging products, a parliamentary committee said in a report in August, without giving a time frame.

## From farmland to school textbooks, Natabar Sarangi sows seeds of success

By Indian Express, Published: 18th May 2016



Natabar Sarangi in his paddy field at Narisho village of Niali block in Cuttack district | Express

CUTTACK: Organic farming techniques of Natabar Sarangi, a noted farmer and seed collector of the district, have found place in Class IX curriculum of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

Natabar's techniques have been taken as an example in 'Indian Agriculture' subject of Social Studies books of the two States where students are now studying how to grow high-yielding indigenous varieties of paddy without using chemical fertilizers and pesticide.

Natabar, an octogenarian, is a resident of Narisho village in Niali. A retired school teacher, Natabar has been practising organic farming for more than a decade and has been able to conserve more than 400 varieties of indigenous paddy seeds which are now on the verge of extinction.

He says some of his natural varieties yield over 20 quintals per acre, much higher than the so-called 'high-yielding' varieties that farmers generally grow using chemical fertilizers and pesticides. And he spends much less by using organic compost and natural pesticides. The main ingredients of his bio-fertilizer are cow dung, waste vegetables, fruits and greens which are available daily free of cost.

Earlier, Natabar used chemical fertilizers and pesticides after being lured by some officials and traders. However, one of his labourers engaged in sprinkling Carbofuran (a highly toxic pesticide) fainted in an hour of application of the chemical. He also found scores of dead snakes, snails, frogs and earthworms in his field and realised how these chemicals poisoned the natural system. Natabar then switched to natural farming. So far, Natabar has been able to preserve more than 400 varieties of paddy seeds which he grew in his own five acres land and those in the vicinity.

Natabar says the seeds, which are pest resilient, require less water and can survive in adverse weather condition and are suitable for organic farming. Moreover, the varieties of paddy produced from indigenous seeds through organic farming have a special taste, aroma and high nutritional value. Many of these seeds are also resistant to drought, flood and

saline water. Using these indigenous seeds considerably decreases the cost of farming too, he says.

Currently, Natabar is producing traditional seeds on about 12 acres of land at his village for demonstration purpose. Natabar, who has set up 'Desi Dhana Chasa Gabesana Kendra' (a research centre) near Kundhei Canal side in Niali, also imparts training to farmers on techniques of organic farming techniques.