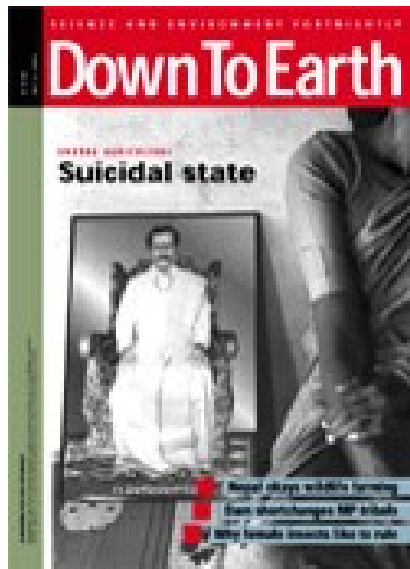


Transition to Organic/Natural Farming: Learning from Ground

Ramanjaneyulu

Centre for Sustainable Agriculture



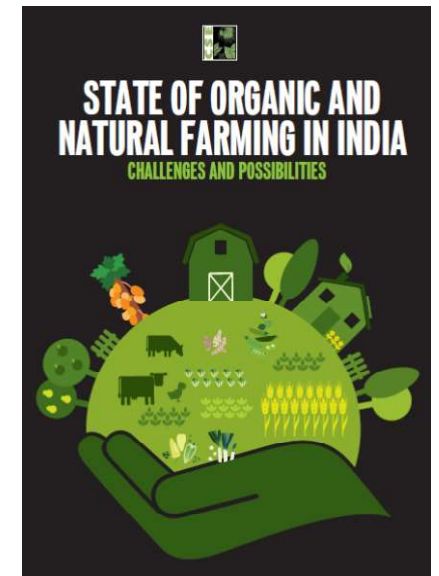
2004



2006



2009



2020

16 years of journey

- Agriculture has to shift to low energy, low water and low chemical production system
- Significant progress in understanding the need and processes to shift to organic/natural farming are better understood
- The benefits are clear and some more exploration may be required
- A livelihood centric approach to farming than technology centric approach seems to be working
- Using Practitioners in Extension is working well
- What seems to be working?
 - One, all have made use of locally adapted resource conserving technologies.
 - Two, in all there has been coordinated action by groups or communities at local level.
 - Third, there have been supportive external (or non-local) government and/or non-governmental institutions working in partnership with farmers.

Research, Extension and Education

Whose knowledge counts?

- Agroecological framework for research and innovation
- Valuing externalities
- New learnings
 - Recycling approach to nutrients
 - Non Pesticidal Management
 - Moisture harvesting from atmospheric water vapour
 - Benefits of farm designing-multiple crops, integrated farming systems
 - Community Extension Services
- Product and information based extension to knowledge based extension with experienced farmers as extension agents
- Changes in the curriculum to prepare for future challenges at various levels-breaking monopoly of ICAR is needed
- Integrating into school education

Practice: adapting to variances

- Understanding variances in experiences across various agroecological conditions and taking a scientific approach than a belief system
- Needs a problem solving and diagnostic approach than a solution driven approach
- Assessing learnings based on a agroecological lens than a conventional agriculture lens
- Shift towards more participatory approaches
- Building new models, new practices/products which can ease the drudgery reduction, cost effectiveness, quality assurance needed

Markets: making supply chains work

- Strengthening local markets
- Building infrastructure support-farmers markets, warehouses, processing units etc
- Some of the new FPOs can focus on organic/natural farm produce
- Quality Assurance issue
 - FSSAI legislation
 - PGS Certification System getting drifted
 - Issue of conflict of interest
 - Excessive focus on export markets
 - Lack of Space to accommodate variances

Policies: changing the support systems?

- Equitable support to farmers shifting to organic/natural farming
- Support for ecosystem services
- Transition support at the village/block/districts can be planned
- Key decisions on biosafety issues and regulating products/technologies which have high risks-GM crops, out dated pesticides, herbicides etc
- Long term investment in building alternative institutions and vision for farming and farmers in India





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