

Proceedings of the second Meeting of the Task Force on Organic Farming and Non-chemical Farming held on 30.07.2015 under the chairmanship of Dr. A.K. Singh, Vice Chancellor, Rajmata Vijayaraje Scindia krishi Vishwavidyalaya, Gwalior in Committee Room No III, NAAS, NASC, Todapur, New Delhi

List of participants is annexed.

At the outset, Dr. Vandana Dwivedi, Additional Commissioner (INM) DAC, New Delhi being the Nodal officer of the Task Force, welcomed the participants and with the approval of the chairman briefly informed the terms of references set for the Task Force. She also reiterated that PMO asked that the interim report of the Task Force has to be submitted by November, 2015 and final report by December, 2015. It was also informed that the minutes of the first meeting have been circulated among the members. She also informed that as decided in the last meeting the special invitees were requested to make a presentation in the areas of their expertise and experiences on organic farming. She informed that six new participants (special invitees) were participating this meeting to share their experiences with the Task force. Thereafter she requested the Chairman to conduct the proceedings of the meeting.

Chairman, welcomed the members of Task Force and observed that there are some potential areas for promotion of organic farming, which need to be identified and earmarked for promotion of organic farming. Some states have declared themselves “Organic State” and put in place their Organic Farming policy. The Task Force has to look in to their strategies and understood the trouble being faced by the states in implementation of their policy. Further he told that Uttarakhand has good market system whereas Sikkim lacks that.

Sh. Umendra Dutt sought the status of Organic States. Director, NCOF replied Sikkim will be fully Organic State by December, 2015. Chairperson said that North Eastern Region has high potential for carrying out Organic Farming. He further added that the concerned State Govts. have to be asked as to how they are going to implement organic policy. Chairperson told that line of action should be framed by October, 2015. To understand and see closely their progress and problems, it would be essential to hold regional consultations. All members supported this.

Dr. O.P. Rupela said that the Task Force should be Brain Storming Force. He wanted that region-wise statistical area under Organic Certification and Organic Market should be collected.

Shri Umendra Dutt opined that in order to come out with concrete policy recommendations based on critical analysis of ground situation to help the farmers engaged in organic agriculture and marketing of Organic produce, it is essential to have full-time services of a competent technical person. If needed, Chairman may bring this to the notice of the Secretary, A&C.

Dr Rupela mentioned that the Organic Farming should emerge as New Stream of Agriculture, further he said that the Task Force got wider objective that is about Organic Farming and Non-Chemical Fertilizer.

AA. Sh. Ananda suggested that the title of the Task Force should be Organic Farming or Non-Chemical Farming rather than Organic Farming and Non-Chemical Farming.

Ms Kavitha Kuruganti, Special Invitee pointed out that the ToR-II of the Task Force says to make recommendation for market based strategy. She was of strong opinion that market-based strategies are not and will not be enough to promote organic farming. Organic farming is a paradigm that is swimming against the tide, which also includes a tide of irrationality that markets ~~being~~ bring ~~in~~, into human decision-making. There are academic studies that are establishing that de-skilling and irrational choices are the result of the "social learning" happening through market based interventions, as opposed to "environmental learning" that happens otherwise. Market based strategies will also pose the immediate challenge of regulation, including regulation of certifiers, for instance, expansion of organic farming requires state-supported strategies and not just market-based strategies. Therefore, this ToR should be amended to read as "Recommending strategies to cover all aspects of development of organic farming" and not just market-based strategies.

~~Thereafter Chairman asked the participants to introduce themselves.~~ After the initial remarks made by the participants and their introduction, ~~round of introduction~~ Chairman invited special invitees for presentation.

I. Shri D.V. Raidu, IAS (Retd) Advisor, Farm Livelihoods NRLM, Learnings from Community Managed Sustainable Agriculture made presentation about the Sustained efforts to make agriculture as economically viable and ecologically sustainable activity, without compromising on yields and improving returns per unit of land and water. The mission behind all initiatives was to improve the quality of farmer's life, and improve the annual incomes of farmers in rainfed areas in particular and agriculture in general with integrated farming systems. He pointed out that CMSA aimed to address the following major causes of agriculture distress: (i) High costs of agriculture; (ii) Displacement of local knowledge; (iii) Unsustainable agriculture practices like monocropping; (iv) Indiscriminate use of chemical inputs and (v) Imperfect markets etc. He further pointed out that the strategy adopted for the Poorest of the Poor (POP) in CMSA was to facilitate the land lease to the landless laborers and promote CMSA in these lands. It was thus designed to achieve two objectives. One is that the PoP family should earn a net income of Rs. 50,000 in a year, and second one is by growing all crops, i.e. Paddy, vegetables and pulses, the PoP family shall have food security. Apart from selling the produce, they can save something for their own consumption. Further he informed about the initiatives taken for Rain Fed Sustainable Agriculture (RFSA). Radical soil and moisture conservation works which include conservation furrows for every four mts, trenches all around the field, farm pond, tress on conservation furrows etc. The main objective is to harvest rain water in-situ. Mounting cropping pattern in these fields with 5:1 and 7:1 ratio, including perennial Red gram, Castor, leafy vegetables, fruit plants and trees conservation furrows. In convergence with NREGS, RFSA is implemented in 211 districts. So far works executed for Rs. 185.18 crores. Improved cropping pattern to increase production is adopted in 61,247 Acres in RFSA fields. Farmer wise Income assessment from poly crops is under progress. The data received so far is very encouraging. Increase in incremental incomes per acre range from Rs.8,000 /- to 18,000/-. Most of these lands kept for subsistence farming under Jowar etc. CMSA ensures year round food security. Crop diversity and multistoried cropping systems ensures nutritional security to farm families. Perennial species such as redgram, moringa, guava and papaya take care of very critical nutritional requirements for the family throughout the year. Pesticide free produce is integrated into the existing food security scheme. He informed that poorest of the

poor (POP) strategy enabled 10,000 land less labour to access irrigated land and adopted SRI method of Paddy cultivation. This strategy increased availability of food grains at household level. Further CMSA methods enable the farmers to reduce expenditure on food grains.

SERP is acting at Greater Pace through NPM by reducing the cost of production, with high yield and no land mortgage, later the CSA is converted to community management Agriculture (CMSA) with 35 lakhs Acre of land. Aerobic composting (NADEP) would be the better one for composting process, quality of compost should not be judged not only by testing NPK but considering Biological Enzymes, Microbial Population etc.

Dr. O.P. Rupela proposed to visit SERP and other models to learn more about them.

II. Shri Kapil Shah opined that we can't promote organic farming with mindset of chemical farming. Nutrient recommendations came from Wisconsin and copied by us for implementation in our fields. There is need of main streaming the promotion of organic farming for which a commitment is required. Hence there is need for paradigm shift. He opposed the name of organic farming scheme as Paramparagat Kheti as it reflects to subsistence farming while present day Organic farming is not subsistent farming. There is no decline in yield from first year itself. He stressed on need of training of farmers at family level, phasing of fertiliser usage restriction, marketing, farmer shops and awareness of consumers and farmers both. Most important is to improve standards for organic inputs. He also mentioned briefly the Gujarat scenario for promotion of organic farming that there was political will, officers asked farmer experiences not only KVKs and SAUs views. Chief Minister himself visited farmer's field (Patel Farm). He called public consultation at several places including AAU, Anand and had dialogue with chief Executives of such organizations. Then he released the organic policy with duly assigned role of KVKs and tribal's. Hence the expectations from this task force are to device tools for change of mindset, availability of adequate resources, involve people, and create some new criteria, review syllabus, and revival of extension and organic consultations. He also raised the issue that why government is not putting ban on use of spurious imported chemicals. He opined that public consultation should be one each for Hills, rain-fed areas, tribals, and women.

III. Ms. Kavitha Kuruganti, National Convener of Alliance for Sustainable & Holistic Agriculture (ASHA) made a presentation on the approach towards organic farming and highlighted various important aspects to be taken into account. She began by saying that organic farming is the best approach to actualize the key policy shift that the National Policy for Farmers of 2007 envisions: that of shifting the focus to well being of farmers and not just on production and productivity. Despite the policy being announced in 2007, no concrete moves are seen in implementing this shift in policy discourse. Promotion of organic farming on a large scale will ensure this, she said, because it incorporates sustainable productivity improvements, social equity and empowerment, profitable livelihoods, dignified lives and safe/nutritious food.

She said that the approach to organic farming should be very different from what the 'mainstream agriculture' is centered around. She emphasized that OF has a (i) Livelihoods approach; (ii) Food safety approach; (iii) Social equity approach (allowing the empowerment of the most marginalized). She said that very often, OF is discussed only in the context of trade, commerce and export markets ignoring the above key facets of OF. She also stressed on:

i) How organic farming will move forward if the focus is not on women farmers, Adivasi farmers and **smallholders, and that. It is also their need for social groups to adopt organic farming for sustainable livelihoods.**

ii) Women are central to the promotion of organic farming as seen in large scale experiences around the country, and that organic farming will be a great tool to empower women and help them meet both strategic and practical needs.

iii) Need of 'symbiotic' relationship and that efforts in OF should focus on smallholders.

iv) Adivasis whose are intimately linked to the state of the forest's biodiversity, promoting organic farming ('intensification of organic farming') in tribal pockets is important, to ensure that their overall livelihoods are protected.

v) the need to focus on seed diversity revival, that too community-controlled, in any promotion of OF.

vi) NARS seed breeding programmes should be undertaken in non-chemical, organic (rainfed) growing conditions to assess potential of new varieties.

vii) there are some essential components for OF to spread and take root on a wider scale viz. awareness campaigns; Intense extension support; practicing farmers as resource persons; capacity building systematically, including of agriculture department officials & agricultural scientists; Collectivization; Internalizing of all inputs & processes; Address marketing constraints; Create localised markets ; subsidized fully from govt. She also pointed out that promotion of organic farming should go hand in hand with strict regulation of Chemical/GM agriculture, including aggressive marketing.

IV. Dr. Krishan Chandra, Director, NCOF made a presentation about various R&D activities undertaken by NCOF and RCOFs viz; liquid formulation of NPK biofertiliser consortia with higher shelf life of more than 2 years; isolation of potash mobilizing bacteria; liquid formulation of biopesticides etc. He also highlighted the recent development with regards to the training and demonstration programme being undertaken by NCOF and RCOFs in Sansad Adarsh Gram under SAGY for promotion of organic farming i.e. PKVY scheme. The annual target in this regard is 300 Adarsh Gram for the year 2015-16. He also presented the proposed restructuring of NCOF and RCOFs to meet the growing demands of organic products as well organic farming. The proposed restructuring includes the Marketing portal for organic products, package of practice of organic crops, web portal on organic inputs, R&D at NCOF and RCOFs, publicity activity and capacity building.

Dr O.P. Rupela enquired that GOI is promoting biofertilisers and biopesticides for integrated nutrient management or for organic farming .Is government pushing organic farming as input driven as there is huge gap in demand and production of biofertilisers and biopesticides in the country.

V. Dr Ravi Sankar, Pr Scientist, IIFSR, Modipuram informed about existing Academic courses on organic farming that Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)-Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi has a course on Principles and Practices of Organic Farming (AG604) with 2+1 credit hours at post graduate level. Some of the State Agricultural Universities (SAUs) are also offering courses on organic farming at post graduate level. In fact, three State Agricultural

Universities (SAUs) viz., CSK Himachal Pradesh Agricultural University, Palampur (Himachal Pradesh), University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad (Karnataka) and Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore (Tamil Nadu) are having separate departments for carrying out research on organic farming and sustainable agriculture. Indira Gandhi National Open University is offering a certificate course on organic farming. Amity Institute of Organic Agriculture (AIOA) under Amity University, Noida is offering M.Sc. (Organic food production and certification) and PhD (Organic Agriculture) degrees. National Centre for Organic Farming, Ghaziabad is conducting certificate courses on organic agriculture on a regular basis. He further informed about ICAR is promoting research and development on organic farming through a Network Project on Organic Farming (NPOF) involving 11 State Agricultural Universities, 8 ICAR Institutes/Centres and 1 Deemed to be/Special heritage university, since 2004. ICAR also implementing Network project on Organic farming in Horticulture crops from 2014-15 with the objectives of evaluation of suitable organic amendments for meeting the nutrient requirement, developing an organic package for different horticulture crops. This network includes 9 ICAR research Institutes.

He mentioned that the time between the start of organic management and certification is called conversion period. It is necessary to maintain organic and non-organic fields separately. In the long run, the entire farm including livestock should be converted into organic. The conversion period is decided based on the past use of the land and ecological situation. Generally, the conversion period is two years for annual crops and three years for perennial crops. However, the conversion period can be relaxed based on the verification by third party certification agency if the requirements are fully met. During conversion, steps should be taken to maintain bio-diversity. He showed the per cent change in the yield of major crops during conversion (1-3 years) and afterwards. Overall, the yield starts improving or on par with chemical management from 3rd year onwards except wheat.

VI. Shri Anjanayelu, Centre for Sustainable Agriculture, Telangana made a presentation highlighting the need to: reduce cost of cultivation, have community enterprises, reduce risk of crop failure, focus on need to improve productivity, put in place an extension system acceptable to farmers. He cited an example of Yenavabi-Organic Village having farmer's cooperatives and federation. He pointed out that agriculture in our country is in ecological frame work. Bee population is coming down which will impact on pollination and vegetable yield already came down in West Bengal. There is need to inform farmers maximum choice and promote knowledge based decision making system among farmers. Biomass available in the villages needs to be informed to farmers. Incentivize system to be created for adopting better methods. Make available loan to the farmers. Raising 30 % tax on FPOs is unviable.

Dr. Rupela explained the activities of Non Pest Management (NPM), Centre for Sustainable Agriculture (CSA) who were successful in controlling of Rate Caterpillar by Community Borne Fire Action , this problem was sought by the Government of A.P.

VII. Shri Ananthoo from Organic Farmers Market, Chennai & ASHA made presentation on Empowering Markets for Organic Producers and Consumers and highlighted vast scope for improvising the marketing of organic produce. He suggested several innovative ways of marketing the ReStore, OFM, Eco Farmers

market etc. to revolutionize the marketing. However, Government supports for appropriate investment are needed in the areas like storage yards for organic produce, assistance for transportation and post-harvest value addition etc.

All agreed for holding a National Consultation- a two days programme on 31st August to 01st September, 2015 comprising 50-60 members of Organic Farmers marketing and business. In addition, five regional consultations will be held in consultation with the members of the Task force, details of which will be worked out separately.

Meeting ended with Vote of thanks to the chair.
